

ENVIRONMENT AND ATTRACTIVE CITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
15 FEBRUARY 2010

POLICY DEVELOPMENT & REVIEW 2009/10 – TASK AND FINISH GROUP UPDATE

Report of the Chief Executive

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: SP5: Attractive and Inclusive City

CORPORATE PRIORITIES: CIO1: Delivering Customer Focused Services, CIO4: Improving Partnership Working to Deliver 'One City'.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To receive an update report on the work of the Committee's Task and Finish Group on the introduction of 20mph zones.

2. Background

- 2.1 On 18 June 2009, the Committee agreed to undertake a policy review on issues relating to traffic issues and network management in the city.
- 2.2 The Committee also agreed to establish a Task and Finish Group to help undertake detailed research on this issue. The Group comprises Councillor E Gibson (Chair), Councillor John Kelly and Councillor Peter Wood. Over the year, the Group has met regularly and provided periodic progress reports on their work in order that it can feed into the final report of the Committee.

3 Task and Finish Group – Current Position

- 3.1 Councillor E Gibson, Chair of the Task and Finish Group will provide an update on the work of the Group.
- 3.2 On 19 January 2010, the Group visited North Tyneside Council to find out more about their experience of introducing 20mph zones and tour a number of sites order to view at first hand the signing and infrastructure in place. The visit was hosted by Paul Fleming (Team Leader, Traffic and Road Safety) and Andrew Flynn (New Development Manager).
- 3.3 North Tyneside Council is now in the fourth year of a five year programme to introduce 20mph zones into the city and these are now an integral part of the Council's Road Safety Strategy and Council Plan. It was emphasised that the introduction of 20mph zones should not be seen in isolation but as part of a range of safety measures including education programmes, enforcement and infrastructure works. It was also important to recognise the links with other policy areas including environmental improvements, planning, the encouragement of cycling and walking and safety around schools. The introduction of 20mph zones reflected a proactive approach to speed management and road safety.

- 3.4 While the Council had divided the city into a number of areas, the introduction of 20mph zones had been progressed evenly across the city with priority given to schools and residential areas. It was anticipated that by 2010, there would be a 20mph zone outside all of the city's schools, with residential estates completed by 2012. All new developments and regeneration schemes were being designed to include appropriate safety measures for the introduction of 20mph.
- 3.5 With regard to the actual introduction of the 20mph zones, suitable areas were first identified and traffic speed surveys undertaken. If the average speed was 24mph or less then this was considered suitable for a 20mph zone (signs and roundels only). If average speed was above 24mph then traffic calming or other measures such as flashing lights needed to be considered. It was necessary that the schemes were self-enforceable as they will not be enforced by the Police.
- 3.6 In terms of consultation, North Tyneside used a standard consultation format, with initial consultation taking place with local ward members and local statutory bodies. Experience had shown the public were generally supportive of the introduction of the zones and that Ward Councillors a vital part of the consultation process. There had been initial objections in certain parts of the city and these areas were being revisited with a more comprehensive consultation exercise taking place, including residents meetings.
- 3.7 The Council had tried to use the minimum engineering solutions compatible with reducing road speeds, with treatments focused on the entrances of estates. This had helped to avoid the extensive use of often unpopular engineering solutions and resulted in less street clutter. The effect of the zones on road speeds are closely monitored and if they were shown to be not having the desired effect then additional engineering works would be considered. However, after survey have shown areas to be largely compliant.
- 3.8 The scheme had been introduced at relatively low cost, with around £200,000 being set aside in the Local Transport Plan. Every effort was also made to maximise available funding from developers as part of new development and regeneration schemes. The estimated cost of for a larger zone is around £5-6,000. This compared for around £30,000 for a fully traffic calmed area.
- 3.9 The effect of the zones on casualty reduction had not been closely examined. However, recent studies in London and Portsmouth had indicated their effectiveness on accident reduction. Evidence from British Medical Journal on the effect in London Borough's suggested a 40% reduction in road casualties, pedestrian injuries reduced by one third and a 17% reduction in cycle accidents. Portsmouth had seen a reduction in speed of 1mph which equates with a 5% reduction in accidents.
- 3.10 In relation to parking around schools, the Council had sought to take a pragmatic approach and try to balance the different priorities of car users and local residents. However, child safety was always the key factor and the Council were seeking to introduce camera cars to monitor and patrol problem areas.

4 Next Steps

The next meeting of the Task and Finish Group is scheduled for 18 February 2010 when the Group will receive a report from Richard Hibbert (Jacobs Consultants). It is anticipated the draft final Group will be reported to the Committee on 15 March 2010.

5. Recommendation

- 5.1 Members are recommended to consider the evidence provided as part of their study.

Background Papers

Local Transport Plan 2006-11
Sunderland City Council Parking Strategy

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