

ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL WELLBEING
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Special Meeting held 28th March 2012

PRESENT: Councillors Mazher Iqbal (Chair), David Baker, Denise Fox,
Bob Johnson, Alf Meade, Pat Midgley, Robert Murphy, Joe Otten,
Geoff Smith and Joe Taylor

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE FROM MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Apologies for absence were received and a substitute attended the meeting as follows:-

Apology

Councillor Cate McDonald
Councillor Tim Rippon

Substitute

Councillor Bob Johnson
No substitute nominated

2. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

No items were identified where a resolution may be moved to exclude the public and press

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

There were no petitions submitted and any public questions would be dealt with in the next item.

5. CALL-IN OF THE CABINET HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE DECISION ON 20 MPH SPEED LIMITS

5.1 The Committee considered the decision of the Cabinet Highways Committee taken at its meeting held on 8th March 2012, relating to the implementation of a strategy for the introduction of 20 mph speed limits in Sheffield.

5.2 Signatories

The lead signatory to the call-in was Councillor Robert Murphy and the other signatories were Councillors Joe Otten, Shaffaq Mohammed, Jillian Creasy and Paul Scriven.

5.3 Reasons for the Call-in

The signatories had confirmed that they wished to scrutinise the decision relating to the implementation of a 20 mph speed limit strategy in order to further scrutinize the evidence base for the recommendations of the report of the Executive Director, Place, presented to the Cabinet Highways Committee on 8th March 2012.

5.4 Attendees

- Councillor Leigh Bramall (Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport)
- Councillor Jillian Creasy
- John Bann (Head of Transport and Highways)
- Simon Nelson (Traffic Management Engineer)

5.5 Councillor Robert Murphy asked the Committee to look at the Cabinet Highways Committee's recommendation to endorse the implementation strategy for the introduction of 20 mph speed limits in Sheffield as he considered it to be a somewhat timid approach. He particularly questioned implementation by using small pilots as opposed to covering wider areas, as had been the case in Portsmouth, and directed the Committee to the comments concerning the effectiveness of this approach in Appendix A to the report. Councillor Murphy also referred to the culture change required if people were to understand that 20 mph was an appropriate maximum speed to travel in residential areas. He also questioned the need to include a school in the 20 mph zones, as they were closed for 40% of the year and the roads adjacent to them were only busy at opening and closing times. Furthermore, the '20'sPlentyforSheffield' website claimed low accident statistics around primary schools. Councillor Murphy was also critical of the proposal to split spending on the implementation of the strategy between the Community Assemblies as he considered it would be less efficient and cost effective than concentrating on a small number of larger schemes.

5.6 Councillor Jillian Creasy felt that no good evidence had been presented in the report that the inclusion of a school in each zone was beneficial. She added that it would be better to have a City-wide strategy to provide direction and give an indication of how the outcomes would be achieved, as had been the case with the Parking Permit strategy. She also considered that a City-wide approach could involve the Health Authority and felt that the proposed approach would do nothing to lever in partner funding.

5.7 Issues Raised by Signatories/Public Questions

Responses were provided to the above issues raised by the signatories and to questions raised by Mr Alan Kewley, concerning public opinion, cost and effectiveness, as follows:-

- Community Assemblies were expected to take part in the development of the strategy and people would be able to raise issues at their meetings. It was considered that there was a general feeling of support for the strategy and involving the Community Assemblies was part of this.
- It was the intention to co-ordinate the implementation of the strategy with the implementation of the Highways PFI (Private Finance Initiative) contract where appropriate, but it should be noted that any additions to the PFI contract would incur an additional cost. The initial rollout of the PFI contract would take between 5 and 7 years.
- Private funding from developers would be welcomed as a contribution towards the implementation of the strategy.
- It was preferable to introduce the strategy on a staged basis as a City-wide rollout would take up all of the current Local Transport Plan (LTP) funding allocation.
- If only a couple of areas were covered by the 20 mph speed limit, this would exclude large parts of the City, so engaging with the Community Assemblies would ensure that each area benefited and would fit with the available budget. Following the initial introduction of the strategy, further areas would be allocated, subject to budget, on the basis of the worst first, until all appropriate residential areas of the City were covered.
- The inclusion of schools provided a strong opportunity for public buy-in of the strategy.
- Evidence should be considered from a range of sources rather than purely from the '20'sPlentyforSheffield' group.
- Sheffield was one of the first big cities to implement a speed limit strategy such as this and it should be welcomed.
- Members of the Transport and Highways Division had addressed all of the Community Assemblies regarding the strategy, with the South West Community Assembly perhaps being the most active in discussing it. Liaison and consultation with the Assemblies would continue.
- Steps were being taken to encourage private developers to contribute to low speed measures.

- Behaviour change was critical to the success of the strategy. This was a long term process to be addressed by an ongoing communications campaign.
- It was considered that this form of implementation reflected a measured approach and the differences between Sheffield and Portsmouth were highlighted in the report.
- The importance of getting the debate out to the Community Assemblies was emphasised along with the need to respond to the positive feeling from the Community Assemblies.
- It should be recognised that there were a significant number of road accidents around schools and that the wider areas around them would be in the 20 mph zones.
- The importance of engaging with schools and parents was highlighted.

5.8 Questions from Members of the Committee

Members of the Committee raised a number of questions and the following responses were provided:-

- During the first 2 years of implementation, one scheme per Community Assembly would be introduced and subsequently schemes would be introduced on a worst first basis. Schemes would be assessed on a rolling basis, being compared with others in the City and with those in other cities. Any resultant reduction in the number and severity of accidents would be considered a success, but such changes would be difficult to identify in the short term. However, it was about more than just speed and accident reduction in that there was a quality of life argument to consider, including making residential streets more attractive for walking and cycling.
- The Council was learning from some of the schemes which had been introduced in other cities, such as Portsmouth and Newcastle, but these had only been in operation for 2/3 years, and ideally 5 years' accident data was needed to undertake a proper evaluation. Public opinion could also be seen as reflecting the success of the initiative.
- The analysis of traffic speed data had shown that initially the introduction of 20 mph zones typically resulted in a 1 to 2 mph reduction in average speeds and it was known that, over time, this would contribute to a reduction in the number and severity of accidents. It would also be possible to assess how residents felt about the effect a 20 mph zone would have in a particular area.
- 20 mph zones did not divert money away from accident reduction measures on main roads, where most accidents were found to occur.

- Due consideration would be given to any Community Assembly putting forward convincing arguments against the introduction of a 20 mph zone in its area. It may be that a Community Assembly would wish to suggest additional locations for consideration from its own budgets.
- Each Community Assembly would be supplied with the relevant accident data and an indication of potential suitable locations, but it would be up to the Community Assembly to nominate a particular area for the first tranche of centrally-funded schemes.
- The Police may undertake enforcement of specific issues, but any reduction in speeds would constitute a significant advance forward, with the attendant knock-on effects.
- Based on the experience in Portsmouth, a blanket approach would take up all of Sheffield's LTP allocation. In Newcastle, it had cost approximately £1.4m to adopt a blanket approach, whilst it was anticipated that a City-wide scheme for Sheffield would cost in the region of £2.5m to £3m. Given Sheffield's total allocation for LTP this year was £3m, a City-wide roll out was therefore not feasible and so a staged roll out was being pursued.
- The Stradbroke scheme covered approximately 70 streets and some schemes would be bigger and some smaller. In Portsmouth it had been possible to define the residential areas into 6 zones, but in Sheffield there were smaller residential areas, and consequently more entry points, which would have an effect on cost. [Post meeting note. The Stradbroke scheme actually contains 40 streets with five entry points.]
- Steps would be taken to ensure that Highways officers provided consistent information to the Community Assemblies about the extent and cost of the 20 mph zones.
- It was possible to identify a budget for the 20 mph zones in the seven Community Assembly areas and the importance of carrying public opinion was emphasised.
- If larger areas were considered, there would be no cost benefits as there would be more classified roads cutting through them and consequently more entry points into the 20 mph speed limit areas. There could be some saving though on consultation and advertisements for Traffic Regulation Orders.
- Work was being undertaken with Newcastle and Liverpool to assess the cumulative effect on City-wide public opinion on the introduction of 20 mph zones. It should be noted that Central Government were not providing the same kind of lead in relation to these zones as had been the case with, for example, the drink driving campaign.

- Whilst the Police would not routinely enforce 20 mph limits, they were prepared to work with the Council in this regard and were keen to be involved in the design and development of the schemes.
- The Community Assemblies would be supplied with the relevant data and would then choose which school was to be included in the 20 mph zone. The policy was to include at least one school. As with any policy, Community Assemblies could request an exemption in exceptional circumstances, if there was strong support to not include a school.

RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the contents of the report together with the comments made and responses provided;
- (b) notes the decision of the Cabinet Highways Committee at its meeting on 8th March 2012, to endorse the implementation strategy for the introduction of 20 mph speed limits in Sheffield;
- (c) recommends that no action be taken in relation to the call-in decision; and
- (d) makes no recommendation with regard to issues arising from the call-in being added to the work programme of an existing Scrutiny Committee.

(NOTE: Prior to the passing of the above resolution, two alternative resolutions were each moved by Councillor Robert Murphy and seconded by Councillor Joe Otten, namely that:-

- (a) “The Committee refers back the decision endorsing the strategy for the introduction of 20 mph speed limits with the recommendation to prioritise large area default limits as opposed to small pilot schemes.”

This alternative resolution was put to the vote and negated; and

- (b) “The Committee recommends the removal of the requirement to include schools in the original pilot areas.”

This alternative resolution was put to the vote and negated.)