
COMMUNITY PURCHASE AND MAINTENANCE OF SOLAR POWERED SPEED INDICATOR SIGNS AND VARIABLE MESSAGE SIGNS

Report by Service Director Assets & Infrastructure

EXECUTIVE

20 AUGUST 2019

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report proposes allowing communities to purchase and erect their own solar powered speed indicator signs for 30mph and 40mph stretches of roads.**
- 1.2 Feedback from communities where similar speed indicator signs have already been erected has been positive and there are a number of communities who have requested these signs beyond the normal parameters the Council could justify installation.
- 1.3 The efficacy of these signs as traffic calming features is not definite. However, many other Local Authorities allow their installation due to the perceived 'comfort' they provide to communities.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 I recommend that the Executive Committee agrees to allow community organisations to purchase and erect solar powered electronic speed indicator signs on the following conditions:**
 - (a) Council Officers will approve the location of the signs which will be on 30mph and 40mph stretches of road only;**
 - (b) The signs (to standard BS12966) are to be installed by an approved contractor;**
 - (c) Appropriate maintenance of the signs to be arranged;**
 - (d) Appropriate insurance for the signs to be arranged;**
 - (e) End of life disposal of the sign is to be arranged at the appropriate time**
 - (f) The cost, purchase, installation, insurance, maintenance and end of life disposal of the signs is to be borne by the community organisation; and**
 - (g) The Council reserves the right to remove and retain a sign for the community organisation to collect and repair or to dispose of if it is not maintained.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Historically, the Council has managed temporary speed indicator signs in a variety of locations throughout the region within 30mph and 40mph areas. These 'smiley face' signs have proved popular with residents although they are only effective in the short term. These signs are battery powered and require considerable staff time to erect, charge and remove and are of an age and condition where they are no longer fit for purpose nor economically viable to repair.
- 3.2 The Safety Camera Partnership have a number of strategically placed electronic 30mph signs located where there is a history of inappropriate vehicle speeds and a lack of compliance. The Safety Camera Partnership have responsibility for maintenance of their signs.
- 3.3 The Traffic and Road Safety Team carried out an exercise last year to identify sites where speeding vehicles were an issue and have installed 16no fixed site solar powered speed indicator device signs that display the speed of a vehicle on approach. To date most of these signs have been welcomed and reports from the communities of speeding vehicles appear to have reduced so far. These signs will continue to be maintained by the Council.
- 3.4 Many requests are made from communities for electronic signs and in most instances the requests are based on a perceived speeding issue rather than a real speeding issue. These requests have generally been turned down in the past as resources have been directed to where there is evidence of need.
- 3.5 Not all other Local Authorities are of the view that an evidence base is required which demonstrates speeding is occurring and have taken a more flexible position in allowing communities to install these signs, at the communities' cost, in response to discussions regarding real versus perceived speeding and in circumstances where the Council could not justify the installation.
- 3.6 It is suggested that if local communities formally agree to purchase, install, insure, maintain and at end of life dispose of electronic speed signs using type approved signs (BS12966) through the use of an approved contractor, then Council Officers will determine the safest and most appropriate location in agreement with the local community on 30mph or 40mph limit roads. The Council will reserve the right to remove any signs which are not adequately maintained and retain these signs for the Community to collect and repair, or to dispose of.
- 3.7 For clarity, while Council Officers will work with the community to ensure successful installation in the most appropriate location, the Council will have no further duty or obligation towards on-going revenue repair or maintenance costs for these signs.

- 3.8 The Council will continue to work with communities to identify areas where real speeding and accidents are of concern and consider the most appropriate road safety interventions. The community signs are intended to complement and support existing infrastructure already in place to slow drivers, such as the presence of street lighting, road signs, lining, etc.

4 IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Financial

There are no capital costs to the Council if a community enters into an agreement. Officer 'benefit in kind' costs would support the communities who wish to buy their own. It is thought the cost to a community organisation to purchase, erect, insure and maintain a type approved solar powered sign would be in the region of a one off cost of circa £4,000. An ongoing maintenance contract is likely to cost approx. £200 per annum, depending on supplier. Community organisations can investigate the possibility of Community Council insurance for coverage if declared on the annual policy.

4.2 Risk and Mitigations

- (a) By agreeing to allow communities to purchase their own electronic signs this offers a form of community empowerment and allows communities to decide if their perception of speeding is sufficient to warrant this investment. If communities do not have the option to purchase their own signs where there is a perceived speeding issue then Council Officers may continue to turn down these requests.
- (b) Some communities may have more disposable income than others, but where there is an evidence led concern over real speeding the Council will continue to fund appropriate measures. The report fully describes all the elements of risk that have been identified in relation to this project and no specific additional concerns need to be addressed.
- (c) Risk of signs in inappropriate/unsafe places – mitigate by Council retaining right of veto.
- (d) Risk of signs being installed incorrectly and constituting a risk – mitigated by supervised use of approved contractors only, and right of council to remove where not maintained.

4.3 Equalities

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out on this proposal and it is anticipated that there are no adverse equality implications.

4.4 Acting Sustainably

These signs would be solar powered, with no adverse effects on sustainably.

4.5 Carbon Management

No effects on carbon emissions.

4.6 Rural Proofing

This new policy will be available to those in rural areas where there is a 30mph or 40mph speed limit

4.7 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

No proposed change to the Scheme of Administration.

5 CONSULTATION

5.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Chief Officer HR, Corporate Communications and the Clerk to the Council have been consulted and any comments received have been incorporated in the final report.

Approved by

Name – Martin Joyce

Signature

Title – Service Director Assets & Infrastructure

Author(s)

Name	Designation and Contact Number
Philippa Gilhooly	Traffic and Road Safety team Leader 01835 825089

Background Papers: [insert list of background papers used in compiling report]

Previous Minute Reference: [insert last Minute reference (if any)]

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