

**POLICE OBJECTIONS TO 30MPH SPEED LIMITS  
IN HERTFORDSHIRE VILLAGES**

*Report of the Director of Environment*

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**1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1 To inform members of objections made by the Hertfordshire Constabulary to the installation of new 30mph speed limits at some sites in North Hertfordshire, and to seek agreement to a standard response to these and any future objections.

**2. Summary**

- 2.1 The policy agreed by members in October 1999 revised the criteria for providing 30mph speed limits in areas where people live, requiring consideration of a 30mph limit in villages or hamlets with 10 or more dwellings in close proximity. The aim was to improve the quality of life of people affected by roads with current national (60mph) speed limits.
- 2.2 A programme for implementation has been developed, with sites in North Hertfordshire planned as the first area for installation. Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) were advertised and six weeks after the closing date for responses, the Roads Policing Unit submitted a list of objections for consideration. The objections are summarised in the report, with five sites receiving formal objections, and several other sites identified as sites where the limits will not be supported by police enforcement. Installation has been completed in the North Hertfordshire area other than at the sites for which formal objections were received.
- 2.3 Receipt of the objections has raised the issue that a standard response is needed to these and possible further Police objections, if the installation programme for 2000/1 is to be completed as planned.
- 2.4 The Roads Policing Unit expressed strong concern at the proposals to implement a 30mph speed limit in Langley, in the light of new DETR research published since the adoption of the new policy. Officers also share these concerns and a report will be prepared for Cabinet to consider an amendment to the existing policy.

### **3. Conclusions**

- 3.1 The policy to implement 30mph limits in villages was introduced as a measure to improve quality of life for people affected by roads with a national 60mph speed limit.
- 3.2 Police objections to Traffic Regulation Orders delay the implementation of programmes. Where officers are confident, after consideration, that the introduction of a 30mph limit would not result in increased accidents, objections could be overruled as standard practice to ensure progress.
- 3.3 Where officers share police concern about the possibility of increased accidents at sites, then either an amended policy should be considered, or where appropriate, the objection brought to Development Control Committee for decision.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1 In March 2000 DETR published 'New Directions in Speed Management', a review of national policy. In it they recommend 'working towards 30mph being the norm for villages'
- 1.2 This supports Hertfordshire's policy of implementing 30mph speed limits in villages or hamlets consisting of 10 or more dwellings, where local consultation shows that the lowered limit is wanted. The North Hertfordshire area was selected as the first for implementation of the new speed limits where appropriate, and local consultation processes began. A TRO was published, covering the identified sites, and the Roads Policing Unit submitted a list of objections for consideration, which arrived 6 weeks after the advertised closing date.
- 1.3 The list indicated that the Roads Policing Unit opposed some of the proposed 30mph speed limits, and would not support, ie not enforce, some of the others. The reasons were various, but included not having a safe place to park and stop drivers, and that in some cases the current 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds were not high enough to warrant the enforcement that would be expected if a speed limit were to be implemented. However, local community police officers have indicated that they wish to support local 30mph limits with an educational approach, including the use of hand held cameras. The Roads Policing Unit also supported some of the proposed sites.
- 1.4 The objections relate to the TRO for the implementation of 30mph limits at Radwell, Rushden, Langley, St Paul's Walden, and Bygrave. Details of the objections are given in Appendix A, but further discussions with police have indicated that they would support the introduction of a 40mph limit in Bygrave.
- 1.5 The Police response included concern, shared by officers, that one site in particular (Langley) has high current 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds, such that without considerable traffic calming work, the desired 30mph limit will not be achieved. This would result in drivers who continue to maintain high speeds coming into proximity with drivers complying with the new limit, causing 'bunching', identified in new research by DETR as possibly leading to increased accidents. In the light of this research a paper will be prepared for Cabinet to consider whether the current policy should be amended.
- 1.6 Due to road layouts and the current speed of traffic, officers have no concerns about introduction of 30mph limits in Radwell, Rushden, Bygrave and St.Paul's Walden and would wish to continue with planned implementation.
- 1.7 The report to Environment Committee 12<sup>th</sup> October 1999 had indicated that Police were likely to have difficulty in resourcing additional enforcement programmes. This had been the existing situation for some time and as a result standard practice agreed with members was to implement speed limits without police agreement where necessary.
- 1.8 There has been strong local support for all proposals at public consultation. During the consultation members of the public have said that they believe that installation of the new speed limits without traffic calming measures will bring about a perceived improvement in road safety and quality of life.

- 1.9 The North Hertfordshire Highways Partnership Panel minuted a request that their wish to see the speed limits installed as planned should be included in any representation to Development Control Committee. A letter was received from RM and SM Crump of Buntingford, requesting that the Committee overrule the police objections to the proposed limit in Rushden.
- 1.10 The process of reporting the Police objections to Development Control Committee has delayed implementation of the new speed limits at some sites. An agreed standard response to objections is required to ensure that the programme is not further delayed if additional objections to TROs are submitted.
- 1.11 Where officers are confident that the implementation of 30mph limits will not increase the likelihood of accidents occurring, the police objection could be overruled as standard practice. Where officers share concerns about implementing a 30mph speed limit at a particular site, then application of an amended policy should be considered, or if necessary, the objection brought to Development Control Committee for decision.

## **2. Conclusion**

- 2.1 The policy to implement 30mph limits in villages was introduced as a measure to improve quality of life for people affected by roads with a national 60mph speed limit.
- 2.2 A standard response is needed to enable officers to progress the installation programme if further police objections are received when the next tranche of TROs is published. Officers should seriously consider any objections, but continue with the introduction of a 30mph limit, without police support if necessary, where they are confident that unacceptable variances in traffic speed will not result.
- 2.3 Where officers share police concern that accidents might increase at a site following implementation of a 30mph limit, then either an amended policy should be implemented, or where appropriate the objection should be brought to Development Control Committee for decision.