

**HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
TUESDAY 25 NOVEMBER 2003 AT 10.30AM**

REVISED AGENDA ITEM 15.1

NOTICE OF MOTION – STANDING ORDER 8(5)

Speed Limits on Residential Roads

J T Metcalf to move: -

“That this Council welcomes the call from the Health Development Agency (in the attached Press Release) for speed to be cut to 20mph on residential roads to reduce children’s deaths and injuries by 67% and the Council will therefore expect measures to reduce speeds to 20mph on residential roads wherever possible to be included in the Local Transport Plan.”

HEALTH DEVELOPMENT AGENCY PRESS RELEASE DATED 30/10/2003

(Referred to in notice of motion item 13.1)

Cut speed to 20 mph to save lives, says Health Development Agency

"The Health Development Agency is calling for speed to be cut to 20mph on residential roads to reduce children's deaths and injuries by 67%. If put into practice, this simple proven method of accident prevention can save around 13, 000 children from death or injury on the roads each year. Road injuries are responsible for 20% of all deaths of children in England. These issues are highlighted in an evidence briefing from the Health Development Agency. The report, 'Prevention and reduction of accidental injury in children and older people' provides the evidence on the best ways to improve the safety of these vulnerable groups based on a review of research from around the world.

This call for action to save children's lives comes as the Health Development Agency holds its first national conference on "Health Inequalities and Delivery" today in London. The evidence also highlights that children from poorer social classes are at a disproportionately higher risk of accidental death and injury than children from richer groups. Road accidents show one of the worst differences in health impact - or in other words, health inequality - where the death rate for pedestrian accidents is 5 times higher for children from the lowest social class compared to those from the highest social class.

Paul Streets, Chief Executive of the Health Development Agency said:

'It's shocking that in 21st century England, children are more likely to die because of the social class they are born into. The difference in road injury rates between poor and rich children is a stark and unacceptable example of health inequality. It's a fact that our health doesn't just depend on choices we make - there are a host of issues outside of our control that can affect our health and even how long we live. However, there is a chance to control many road injuries - the safety of the roads must be prioritised to protect our children, and particularly children from disadvantaged households. We know what works - it's time to use that knowledge and save young lives.'

One of the evidence briefing indications is that more research into social inequalities and injury prevention is needed, as there is most scope for improvement in deprived communities. If children from social class V achieved the same safety levels as those in social class I then many young lives would be saved. The need for 20mph speed restrictions in areas of higher pedestrian activity is supported by the findings of the Accidental Injury Task Force report to the Chief Medical Officer, which recommended they be introduced as a priority. Research by the IPPR reaches the same conclusion. Based on its evidence, the Health Development Agency will be working with local authorities to support the implementation of 20mph zones

in disadvantaged areas to reduce the disproportionate toll of road injury suffered by these communities.

Professor Mike Kelly, the Health Development Agency's Director of Research and Information said:

'As well as putting 20mph speed restrictions into place, there needs to be a firm resolve to enforce these measures. Drivers all too often ignore restrictions by driving too fast - but they should remember that at 20mph, 1 in 20 child pedestrians are killed but at 40mph this rises to 17 in 20. Schemes such as those implemented in Hull have been hugely successful in reducing car speeds and reducing road deaths and injuries - over 300 accidents have been prevented in the city since the 20 mph zone implementation. Roads have been car-focussed for too long, it's time for a balance that improves safety for the whole community.'

The Health Development Agency evidence briefing "Prevention and reduction of accidental injury in children and older people" is available at www.hda.nhs.uk or by calling 0870 121 4194."

(The Health Development Agency www.hda.nhs.uk is the national authority on what works to improve people's health and to reduce health inequalities. We work in partnership across sectors to support informed decision making at all levels and the development of effective practice.)