

Warwickshire Speed Management Strategy

September 2024

1. Introduction

This strategy is a coordinated approach to the issue of speed which states objectives and develops proposals to address the management of speed in ways that result in roads that are safer for all, and takes into account the needs of local communities. This strategy aligns with the overall strategy for safer travel in Warwickshire's Local Transport Plan.

2. Speed Management

2.1 Successful management of speed will be achieved only by the County Council, Warwickshire Police, Borough and District Councils, Parish Councils and other community organisations working together.

The benefits of managing speed to better suit the local environment are:

- A reduction in the number of casualties on the road.
- A reduction in demands on the emergency services.
- Improvements to the quality of life in local communities.
- Encouragement of more environmentally friendly methods of travel.
- Improvements in the environment for walking, cycling and horse riding.

To do this, we need to utilise a combination of the three 'E's:

- Education - to influence for the better the ways in which people drive, walk and cycle.
- Engineering - to design and improve roads in a way that encourages safer and more responsible driving.
- Enforcement - to work with the Police to carry out targeted enforcement where there are significant road casualties or where unacceptable speeding is a problem.

2.2 The overall objective is to attempt to alter the culture of the many drivers who consider that they alone can judge what speed is appropriate, into one in which a more responsible attitude prevails.

3. Why is Speed a Problem?

3.1 Speeding and accidents are closely related. When a hazardous situation arises, the greater the speed, the greater the risk that an accident will occur. The greater the speed of those involved in an accident, the more serious the consequences will be.

3.2 Research shows that speed was a major contributory factor in around one third of all traffic accidents.

3.3 Drivers travelling too fast do not just put themselves at greater risk. They also

endanger more vulnerable road users and adversely affect the environment of the communities through which they pass.

- 3.4 The great challenge is to change the culture of drivers. Many drivers view their speed as a matter for their personal decision based on their own values. We need to change this so that they give due consideration to the impact it has on the communities through which they pass.

4. The Role of the Driver

- 4.1 Influencing the attitude of drivers is therefore a key element of any strategy. Research at the University of Manchester categorised those drivers who are most likely to be involved in speed related accidents into three groups:

- Error makers: those who do not look.
- Lapsers: those who do not think.
- Violators: those who do not care.

- 4.2 It is these three groups of drivers who most need to alter their approaches to driving by taking a more responsible attitude to other road users. This requires a culture change, so that the community finds driving too fast as socially unacceptable as drink driving.

- 4.3 However, it is not just these drivers who are the problem. We all drive too fast at times. There is a collective feeling that it is acceptable because everyone else does it and the chances of being detected and prosecuted, except at camera sites, is very small. Once again, it is necessary to change the culture, as this attitude can be passed on to our children when they start driving.

- 4.4 The majority of drivers do not speed significantly through their own communities, since they have an affinity with the people who live and work there. Many however, do so through other communities.

5. Speed Limit Decisions

- 5.1 Warwickshire County Council uses the Department for Transport Circular 01/2013 as the base for setting speed limits. A link to this circular is provided here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/setting-local-speed-limits>

- 5.2 The Circular 01/2013 states that speed limits should encourage self-compliance. The speed limit should reflect the function of the road and the road environment. For it to be effective, the reasons for a limit need to be apparent. If a speed limit is set unrealistically low for the particular road function and condition, it may be ineffective, and drivers may not comply with the speed limit.

- 5.3 Factors that are considered in speed limit decisions are:

- History of Personal Injury Collisions (PICs)
- Road Geometry and Engineering
- Road Function
- Composition of Road Users

- Existing Traffic Speeds

- 5.4 A principal aim in determining appropriate speed limits should, therefore, be to provide a consistent message between speed limit and what the road looks like, and for changes in speed limit to be reflective of changes in the road layout and characteristics. This includes the level of road-side development.

6. The Strategy Objectives and Their Implementation

- 6.1 The Strategy is formed of a set of objectives, each aimed at a particular problem associated with speed that is encountered in Warwickshire. This is followed with a statement setting down the Council's policy with respect to the objective.
- 6.2 The Strategy acknowledges and builds on many of the existing initiatives with regard to vehicle speeds and safety in the county. It then aims to add to and improve on these existing initiatives.
- 6.3 The Strategy is set out in a way that new developments, guidance and technologies can be accommodated and taken account of in the future.
- 6.4 In order that each policy can be followed, the Strategy identifies a number of actions that would need to be approved and funded for implementation in future years.
- 6.5 The timescale for delivering the strategy will depend on the funding available.

7. The Objectives and Policies

Objective SMS 1 - Education

To increase the awareness of drivers to the problems caused by inappropriate speed, and foster a more responsible attitude to driving at an appropriate speed for the road conditions.

Policy SMS 1

The County Council, with the support of Warwickshire Police, will continue to support national speed campaigns by local initiatives, with local campaigns and events aimed at raising the profile of the use of appropriate speed.

Objective SMS 2 - Education

To work with young drivers to improve their understanding of speed issues.

Policy SMS 2

The County Council will continue work with its partners to promote programmes to make young drivers, and those approaching driving age, more aware of the problems caused by inappropriate speed, and to foster a more responsible driving attitude.

Objective SMS 3 - Education

To assist communities with perceived speeding problems to take ownership of local issues.

Policy SMS 3

The County Council will work with Warwickshire Police, other local councils, and other bodies to give support to local communities that wish to promote safer driving and reduced speeds in their areas.

Objective SMS 4 - Education

To encourage drivers detected speeding to undergo training as an alternative to prosecution.

Policy SMS 4

The County Council will continue to work with the police to provide Speed Awareness workshops for drivers detected speeding as an alternative to prosecution.

Objective SMS 5 - Education

To encourage local businesses and employers to implement an Occupational Road Risk Policy, which will include speed issues.

Policy SMS 5

The County Council will offer training:

- To help local employers to fulfil their health and safety obligations by managing occupational road risk.
- To help occupational drivers to adopt safer driving practices.

Objective SMS 6 Engineering

To ensure that new and improved roads within the County are constructed so that their layout encourages responsible driving and more appropriate speeds.

Policy SMS 6

The County Council will continue to require that new and improved roads are designed and built to appropriate standards. In addition, they will require that the layout of these roads will encourage safer driving generally, and will generally discourage inappropriate speeds in environmentally sensitive areas.

Objective SMS 7 - Engineering

To gather data on road accidents to assist in the reduction in the number of speed related road casualties.

Policy SMS 7

The County Council will continue to work with Warwickshire Police to provide and analyse all available road accident data for those working towards reducing road casualties within the county, and where appropriate, to identify problems associated with inappropriate speed.

Objective SMS 8 - Engineering

To reduce casualties at those sites where significant numbers of accidents have occurred where speed was a factor.

Policy SMS 8

The County Council will work to reduce casualties at those sites with the worst records. At the sites where significant numbers of the accidents were speed related, particular attention will be paid to using methods to reduce speeds to more appropriate levels.

Objective SMS 9 - Engineering

To have in place a policy for the setting of local speed limits.

Policy SMS 9

The County Council will use the guidance in DfT Circular 01/2013 to assess and set local speed limits.

Objective SMS 10 - Engineering

To have in place appropriate speed limits on all county roads.

Policy SMS 10

The County Council will follow the recommendation of DfT Circular 01/2013 that: 'Consistent with their duty in respect of road safety, traffic authorities will wish to focus on the use of speed management measures, including more appropriate speed limits, or a combination of these

measures, on those roads (not just on A and B roads) with the most pressing problems of collisions and injuries, or where there is a widespread disregard for current speed limits'.

Objective SMS 11 - Engineering

To reduce the environmental impact of speeding traffic in villages.

Policy SMS 11

The County Council aims to ensure all villages in the County have a 30 mph speed limit where this can be achieved in accordance with its speed limit policy. Engineering measures will be employed where necessary to help reduce speeds to levels appropriate for a lower speed limit.

Objective SMS 12 - Engineering

To take advantage of opportunities which arise to further reduce speeds in certain environmentally sensitive areas by considering the introduction of 20 mph speed limits or 20 mph zones where appropriate.

Policy SMS 12

The County Council will consider the use of 20 mph speed limits or 20 mph zones where appropriate in accordance with the speed limit policy. Engineering measures will be employed where necessary to help reduce speeds to levels appropriate for a lower speed limit.

Objective SMS 13 - Engineering

To ensure that drivers are at all times aware of the speed limit of the road on which they are travelling.

Policy SMS 13

The County Council will regularly review and, where necessary update, the type, number and locations of all speed limit signs.

Objective SMS 14 - Enforcement

To provide improved levels of speed enforcement.

Policy SMS 14

The County Council will continue to press Warwickshire Police to carry out an increased level of speed enforcement, particularly where there are justifiable community concerns over speeding.

Objective SMS 15 - Enforcement

To reduce speeds where high levels of casualties have occurred, but where the installation of more conventional methods of casualty reduction treatment are not possible, or have been tried and significant levels of casualties continue to occur.

Policy SMS 15

The County Council will use safety cameras as part of its integrated strategy to reduce casualties. We will use them as a last resort where the evidence shows they are the most cost-effective way of reducing casualties at a particular site or route.

We will adopt the recommendations of DfT Circular 1/2007 subject to the following amendments and additions:

- Sites and routes will be prioritised on the basis of their casualty history and safety cameras will be considered as part of any engineering treatment or measure where it is the most effective method of reducing road casualties.
- Safety camera enforcement will be carried out in an entirely open and conspicuous way, but advance signing will only be used where it is likely to help reduce casualties.