

Speed Activated Devices

Introduction

At the Development Committee Meeting on 26 May 2021, it was resolved that some investigation be done about the designation of rural roads and the possibility of using a speed activated device on Cross Stone Road/Hey Head Lane with the aim of reducing the speed of drivers on that road to a level more in keeping with the features of the road.

Rural Roads

In general, the speed limit of single lane rural roads in the UK is 60MPH. When researching the internet on this issue it seems that speeding on rural roads is a National issue, not limited to Todmorden. Reference was found to the possibility of this issue being investigated in the future. However, this could be a long process.

Calderdale Council has the authority to vary speed limits on roads where it is seen fit. Emails have been exchanged with Ian Turner, the Road Safety Officer for Calderdale and the intention is to monitor the speed of traffic on Cross Stone Rd and to review the accident statistics. This work has been delayed because of Covid19 as resources are needed elsewhere.

Most drivers realise that 60MPH is an inappropriate for a steep and winding country road such as Cross Stone Rd/Hey Head Rd. However, some drivers do not heed the local conditions of the road and travel at speed – possibility over the allowed 60MPH.

Traffic Calming

The Government decides what devices may be allowed for traffic calming. These include the installation of features such as ‘sleeping policemen’ and speed activated devices.

There is ‘evidence’ online about the beneficial impact of speed activated devices, for example, Tetbury Parish Council reported a 24% drop in the highest speed on their targeted road within just one month of installation. The 40mph road had motorists speeding at a dangerous 61.5mph, but with an eye-catching Vehicle Activated Speed sign, this top speed reduced down to 45.7mph after 25 days of being in use. The flashing signal reminded drivers of the prevailing speed limit, and the data gathering function was used to determine which sites within the village benefitted most from its deployment. The unit used was sufficiently portable to enable it to be rotated between separate locations on a regular basis. Tetbury Parish Council is planning to liaise with the local constabulary to provide data from the unit to help them target the most effective periods to deploy mobile enforcement cameras.

Westbury Parish Council has also advised that their use of a vehicle activated sign has been used to reduce the speed of drivers on local roads.

Speed activated devices are already used elsewhere in Calderdale, for example, at Ryburn.

Results collected from the signs cannot be used to prosecute speeding motorists, though the reports and data can be used by councils and Local Highways Authorities to help set-up speeding enforcement procedures.

Options for Speed Checking Available

1. *Neighbourhood Team Checks:*

When liaising with Daisy Wilde, there is an option for the Neighbourhood Team to do speed checks. This would involve the wardens using a speed indicator device (SID) on Cross Stone Rd and Hey Head Lane. This would need to be done on a straight stretch of road with a pavement, not blocked by vehicles. Initial tests would take place during the daytime when pedestrians are most likely to be out and about (usually outside of rush hours unless specifically requested) as that is their primary concern, however all results are forwarded on to Highways and the Police for further investigation and action if the speeds recorded confirm that there is an issue. The Neighbourhood Team usually visit each site twice initially though if results warrant it this can be increased. The traffic speeds are recorded for an hour at each location. They have tried longer periods but find that news of their deployment at a specific location starts to circulate the longer they are present and this information could affect the overall results as drivers may hear they are present and deliberately slow on approach. The Neighbourhood Team are not legally allowed to carry out covert recording.

However, at present the two wardens who cover the Upper valley are working in Todmorden doing engagement due to the rise of Covid Delta variant. Daisy advised that as soon as they can resume speed checks they will do so.

2. *Purchase of Vehicle Activated Signs:*

These are signs that display a message conditional upon the presence, or speed, of a road vehicle. These can display the speed of a passing vehicle, the speed limit or a smiley face, These are available as fixed or mobile signs which can be mains, battery or solar powered. There is the option to have data capture which can be used whilst the sign is working or when it is switched off (to monitor if speeds rise again when the sign is off).

There are several suppliers on the internet. However, the purchase and siting of any speed activated device would need to be done through Ian Turner and Calderdale MBC's preferred supplier is Solagen.

Daisy Wilde has provided some initial costings as a guide. These are below. Specific pricings can be sought if required.

Permanent Vehicle Activated Sign	Cost
Supply and install of solar powered sign	£4,500
Supply and install of single post	£430
The cost of sentient remote monitoring and data collection (per annum) - optional	£200
Highways staff time	£500
Total	£5,630

Mobile Vehicle Activated Sign	Cost
Supply and install of battery powered sign	£2,900
Starter pack	£720
Spare batteries	£175
Installation kit	£150
TCX data collection package (one-off) - optional	£650
Highways Staff time	£500
Total	£5,095

Other potential costs to bear in mind:

- The cost of moving a mobile VAS to another location - £200.
- Repair costs should the sign break down when it is out of warranty.

Susan Miles 16 June 2021