

**MEETING OF THE
HIGHWAYS BOARD**

ON

TUESDAY 16 DECEMBER 2003

AT

7.00pm

AGENDA

**Civic Offices
Shute End
Wokingham
Berkshire**

**Doug Patterson
Chief Executive**

**WOKINGHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL
AGENDA INDEX**

PART 1

Committee: **Highways Board**
Date: **Tuesday 16 December 2003**

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5.00	ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION To consider reports relating to the matters listed in the Index.	
6.00	ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT A Supplementary Agenda will be issued by the Chief Executive if there are any other items to consider under this heading	

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To: The Chairman and Members of the Highways Board

A Meeting of the **HIGHWAYS BOARD** will be held at the Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham on **Tuesday 16 December 2003 AT 7.00pm**

Doug Patterson
Chief Executive
8 December 2003

Members:-Bob Haacke(Chairman), David Chopping(Vice Chairman), UllaKarin Clark David Lee, Mrs J Lissaman, Fiona Rolls, Paul Swaddle and Mrs D Tomlin

AGENDA PART 1

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TITLE VEHICLE ACTIVATED SIGNS

FOR CONSIDERATION BY HIGHWAYS BOARD – 16TH DECEMBER 2003

REF NO HB/161203/7

REPORT PREPARED BY KATE FULLER – WOKINGHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL/ MOUCHEL PARKMAN

SUMMARY

To inform Members on the development of the policy and provisional programme for Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS).

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Highways Board advise the Executive to:

- a) approve the proposed policy for vehicle activated signs based on the details outlined in paragraphs 9 and 10.
- b) authorise the feasibility, assessment and further development of the 2003/04 programme of VAS based on the details outlined in paragraph 16.
- c) authorise the feasibility, assessment and development of the 2004/05 programme of VAS based on the details outlined in paragraph 17.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Complete Separately for Capital and Revenue	Capital
How much will it cost/save this financial year?	£100,000 has been identified from the Capital Programme from previously unallocated funds to continue to develop the programme of Vehicle Activated Signs.
How much will it cost/save next financial year (and thereafter)? Include a table if the implications vary over time	N/A
Is there sufficient budget (or grant funding) available this year? – if not, quantify the Supplementary Estimate OR if savings, also quantify.	N/A
Is there sufficient budget (or grant funding) available next year & onwards? – If not, quantify the unfunded commitment & timescales OR if savings, also detail.	N/A

Other relevant financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

N/A

List of Background Papers

TRL Report: Vehicle Activated Signs- a large scale evaluation 2002
Traffic Advisory Leaflet: Vehicle Activated Signs March 2003

Held by Kate Fuller, Team Leader – Traffic Management and Road Safety	Dept Highways
Telephone No 0118 974 6304	Email kate.fuller@wokingham.gov.uk
Date	Version No.

NB All reports seek to identify environmental, community safety, customer care and equal opportunities implications. Consultation with residents and organisations which has or is about to take place, will also be reported.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1. There is an established link between vehicle speeds and road accidents. The Council's Road Safety Strategy has a specific aim, to achieve the Government's 10 year casualty reduction targets by 2010. The aim is to reduce casualties compared with the average for the period 1994 – 1998, as follows:
 - A 40% reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured in road accidents;
 - A 50% reduction in the number of children killed or seriously injured and;
 - A 10% reduction in the slight casualty rate, expressed as the number of people slightly injured per 100 vehicle kilometres.
2. As part of the Public Service Agreement between the Council and the Government, the aim is to achieve the Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI) targets by 2007, which is a very challenging objective.
3. On rural roads, driving too fast for the conditions is more likely to be a contributory factor than driving in excess of the speed limit. Driver error is a major contributory factor in 95% of all accidents, therefore encouraging drivers to drive at an appropriate speed to suit the conditions is very important.
4. There are many different rural road safety engineering measures that engineers have at their disposal for treating accident sites, including vehicle activated signs (VAS) . These signs have been developed and are now a permitted sign under the Government's Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD) 2002 which came into force on 31 January 2003.
5. Through the various demonstration projects and trials, these signs have been used with the specific objective of slowing vehicles down before they reach a specific feature, such as a bend or a junction. They have also been used in some instances to encourage drivers to comply with speed limits particularly on the approaches to villages. They have been located where there is a history of personal injury accidents.
6. The basic principle behind VAS is that drivers exceeding a predetermined threshold speed will trigger the sign, which will then display the specific hazard or speed limit, sometimes with a message to slow down.
7. According to the study conducted by TRL on behalf of the Department for Transport (DfT), the VAS have been very effective in reducing speeds, particularly those faster drivers who currently contribute disproportionately to the accident risk. The study also indicated a substantial reduction in accidents at the predominantly rural locations where these signs were installed.

8. In accordance with government advice and regulations, VAS are used in four designs:

- Reinforcement of speed limits.
These are most often used on the approach to a village or built up area or where changes in speed limit occur. VAS have also been found to be effective in areas where speed limits are frequently ignored by motorists travelling at excessive speeds.
- Bend warnings.
VAS have been successfully placed in areas where drivers often travel at excessive speeds for the road conditions, and where excessive speed has been the primary cause for personal injury accidents. Bend warning signs were developed to deal with the problem of accidents involving loss of control due to excessive speed and are particularly effective as speed limits are inflexible and may not reflect a sensible speed for the road conditions.
- Junction warnings.
VAS have been used to warn motorists of a hazard, such as junctions, where a number of personal injury accidents have occurred. VAS with a junction warning design have proved to be as effective at reducing vehicle speeds as the bend warning signs detailed above, with an average decrease in speed of 7 mph. Junction warning signs were introduced to tackle the problem of speeds that were unsuitable for the conditions as many collisions at junctions are caused by driver error when approaching the junction and failing to correctly estimate the speed of an approaching vehicle.
- Safety camera repeater sign.
VAS displaying a safety camera repeater have been found to be effective in substantially reducing speeds along the road in which they are situated, and consequently have been found to reduce personal injury accidents. It has additionally been found that safety camera repeater signs appear to give a greater degree of accident reduction than was achieved with safety cameras alone.

9. **Criteria for siting**

When considering the use of speed-activated signs the following considerations should be taken into account:

1	The location should normally have a history of personal injury accidents (PIAs).
2	Inappropriate speed should have been a contributory factor in the PIAs
3	Alternative fixed signs should have been considered in the first instance.
4	The vehicle-activated sign is not used as a repeater sign.
5	The sign should be in accordance with the TSRGD 2002. Alternative signs may be considered with authorisation from the DfT.
6	The sign should be located in accordance with Chapter 4 of the Traffic Signs manual.
7	Consideration should be given to the source of power, whether it is supplied from the mains, solar or wind powered. Consideration should also be given to the visual impact, and susceptibility to theft or vandalism.

10. **Implementation**

Any VAS must be implemented in accordance with the TSRGD 2002, and located in accordance with Chapter 4 of the Traffic Signs Manual. As with the placement of any warning signs, placing a sign too close to the hazard could make them ineffective.

11. **Sites previously agreed**

The Highways Board has previously resolved to introduce two sites one in Bearwood Road and the other in New Wokingham Road.

12. **Programme/Assessment**

A further eleven locations have been identified for assessment following analysis of the accident records database over a period of three years (01 August 2000 to 31 July 2003). The eleven locations and accident information are as follows:

Location	No of Accidents	No of Casualties	Accident General Characteristics
B3349 Basingstoke Road, Shinfield	33	49 1 fatal 8 serious 40 slight	Excessive speed Careless/Thoughtless behaviour Looked but did not see Aggressive driving
Sutton Seeds roundabout A4/A3290 junction, Earley	28	39 3 serious 36 slight	Slippery road Excessive speed Failed to judge other's path or speed Looked but did not see
A329/ A329(M) Coppid Beech roundabout, Wokingham	17	26 4 serious 2 slight	Failed to judge other's path or speed Inattention Slippery road
A4130 White Hill, Remenham	16	25 1 fatal 6 serious 18 slight	Excessive speed Looked but did not see Failed to judge other's path or speed
Mereoak Lane, Shinfield	16	20 20 slight	Excessive speed Slippery road Careless/thoughtless behaviour Inexperience of driving Lack of judgement of own path
Lower Wokingham Road, Wokingham Without	9	14 1 fatal 2 serious 11 slight	Excessive speed Impairment/alcohol Slippery road
Ruscombe Road, Twyford	6	13 3 serious 10 slight	Failed to look Looked but did not see Inattention

Location	No of Accidents	No of Casualties	Accident General Characteristics
Waterloo Road, Wokingham	8	12 2 serious 10 slight	Failed to judge other's path or speed Careless/Thoughtless behaviour Looked but did not see Inattention Excessive speed Lack of judgement of own path
Twyford Road From Matthewsgreen Road to the M4 motorway bridge.	8	13 1 serious 12 slight	Looked but did not see Bend/winding road Slippery road Lack of judgement of own path Excessive speed Failed to look Careless/Thoughtless behaviour Panic behaviour
A321 Sandhurst Road, Wokingham	2	7 3 fatal 1 serious 3 slight	Lack of judgement of own path Excessive speed Inexperience driving Aggressive driving
Nine Mile Ride, between A321 Sandhurst Road/Lower Wokingham Road and Rail Bridge	5	5 5 slight	Excessive speed Inattention Slippery road

13. Following the initial analysis, site visits were carried out at all locations to determine whether they were suitable for a VAS. The observations and recommendations were as follows:

B3349, Basingstoke Road, Shinfield

There have been a number of accidents along the length of this road and it is therefore considered that a vehicle activated sign is likely to be beneficial. Further investigation is necessary to determine the number of VAS required and where they would be most effectively located to achieve the desired accident reduction.

A4/A3290 Sutton Seeds roundabout and A329/ A329(M) Coppid Beech roundabout

These junctions were investigated as part of Local Safety Schemes in 2002/2003. Proposals for VAS were sent to GOSE for approval, which was subsequently denied because GOSE was awaiting the results from the TRL report.

Further investigation is required to determine how the VAS would work and achieve the desired casualty reduction. GOSE approval is still required as the type of signs that could offer a potential solution are currently not included in the TSRGD 2002.

A4130 White Hill, Remenham

Following a site visit and accident investigation, it is considered that a VAS located at a bend with poor visibility along this road is likely to be effective. It is necessary for further investigation to be carried out to determine whether a VAS would be

required on both sides of the road as four out of the five accidents on the bend were travelling in one direction.

MereOak Lane, Shinfield

A VAS could be effective if it were located on the bend with poor visibility towards the northern end of the road. Further investigation is required to determine whether a sign is required on both approaches to the bend.

Lower Wokingham Road, Wokingham Without

This road is unlikely to benefit from a VAS sign at this time. It was resolved at the 17th September Highways Board to reduce the speed limit on Lower Wokingham Road to 40mph after which surveys will be undertaken for the possible siting of a VAS.

Ruscombe Road

A VAS at this location is unlikely to be effective because the accidents that have happened at this location are primarily due to driver error.

Waterloo Road

No accidents have occurred along this road within the Wokingham boundary and consequently a VAS is unlikely to be suitable for this road.

Twyford Road

This road is unlikely to benefit from a VAS at this time because the accidents which occurred at this location were primarily due to driver error.

Sandhurst Road

In April 2002 there was an accident that resulted in 3 fatalities, 1 serious injury and 1 slight injury. Following the accident an investigation was carried out on the section of road at which the accident occurred and results of the investigation were reported to the 8 July 2002 meeting of the Highways Board. It was resolved to investigate the feasibility of introducing a 40mph or 50mph speed limit, along with providing a Safety Camera

At the 17 December 2002 meeting of the Highways Board a scheme was approved to introduce a 50mph speed limit on Sandhurst Road, subject to funding being identified. Funding has now been allocated and the speed limit is due for implementation following a period of statutory consultation. A safety camera at this location did not meet DfT criteria and this was included in the report to the December meeting.

Given the anticipated reduction in the speed limit and indications that both of the accidents could have occurred as a result of driver error, it is considered that the provision of a vehicle activated sign at this location is unlikely to be effective.

Nine Mile Ride

This road is unlikely to benefit from a VAS as the accidents along this road were intermittent along its length and the causation factors for the accidents were predominately driver error and not excess speed.

16. **Current Proposed Programme**

Number	Location
1	Bearwood Road, Wokingham
2	New Wokingham Road, Wokingham Without
3	Sutton Seeds and Coppid Beech (GOSE approval required)
4	B3349 Basingstoke Road, Shinfield
5	A4130/White Hill, Remenham
6	MereOak Lane, Shinfield

17. **Future Programme**

Following Members' support and commitment to develop a programme of assessment and implementation of VAS as a measure to improve road safety, a number of additional requests have now been received. These requests have been added to a list and it is suggested they be included in a programme of assessment for future VAS Implementation Programme as follows:

Vehicle Activated Signs Assessment Programme	
Number	Location of request
1	Nashgrove Lane, Finchampstead North
2	Kiln Ride, Finchampstead North
3	Finchampstead Road between Barkham Ride and Gowrings Corner
4	Fleet Hill, Finchampstead South.
5	Nine Mile Ride on approaches to California Crossroads
6	Old Forest Road, Emmbrook
7	Oxford Road, Emmbrook
8	Emmbrook Road, Emmbrook
9	Arbor Lane, Winnersh
10	Church Drive on bend with Chatsworth Avenue, Winnersh
11	Waingels Road, Charvil
12	A4 (40mph section in Charvil)
13	Ellis Road, Wokingham Without
14	Greenwood Road, Wokingham Without
15	Hatch Ride, Wokingham Without
16	Pinewood Road, Wokingham Without
17	Merryman Drive, Wokingham Without
18	Rectory Road, Wokingham
19	Warren House Road – into Keephatch Road
20	Wiltshire Road between Bell Foundry Lane and Rectory Road, Wokingham
21	Keephatch Road, Wokingham
22	London Road, Wokingham
23	Bean Oak Road, Wokingham
24	Rose Street, Wokingham
25	Colemans Moor Road, Woodley
26	Mohawk Way, Woodley
27	Reading Road, from Headley Road to Shepherds Hill Roundabout
28	Beechwood Avenue
29	Barkham Road, Evendons
30	Woosehill Spine Road, Evendons
31	Evendons Lane, Evendons
32	Hinton Road, Hurst

33	Lodge Road, Hurst
34	Davis Street, Hurst
35	A321 The Street, Hurst