

QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 26 MAY 2021

(1) PUBLIC QUESTIONS

a) Question from Keith Thomas Quarndon Community Group to Councillor K Athwal, Cabinet Member for Highways Assets and Transport (Not attending)

Extensive data from across England shows that 20mph road traffic speed limits in residential streets, and villages, deliver many benefits including:

- reduced road accidents and casualties;
- reduced pollution;
- stimulation of active travel;
- reduced social and racial inequality;
- the right to safe mobility for the vulnerable;
- improved well-being.

DCC previously rejected use of “signed only” 20mph limits following the Padfield trial. However, this **single** trial has no statistical significance, unlike the data from across England where “signed only” 20mph speed limits have been successful.

DCC’s approach of considering 20mph speed limits piecemeal under the Highways Safety Schemes budget is highly inefficient. The cost of changing 30mph signs to 20mph for a local area may be only £5k, but design, regulation and consultation costs for each individual scheme may exceed £50k.

By thinking holistically and generically, some county councils – such as Lancashire – have eliminated the waste involved in a piecemeal approach, and have successfully, affordably, and rapidly introduced 20mph speed limits.

Will the new DCC cabinet think differently about introduction of 20mph speed limits and establish an efficient generic mechanism to allow 20mph “signed only” limits to be rapidly introduced where strong support is demonstrated by local communities?

Cllr Athwal’s response:

Derbyshire County Council is always open to the use of 20mph speed limits where appropriate. There are already **twenty-three** 20mph zones (including physical traffic calming measures) within the County and **three** ‘signed-only’ 20mph speed limits.*

DCC's policies on the implementation of 20mph speed limits are based upon the DfT's latest national research published in Nov 2018. This research generally tallies with the outcomes of our Padfield trial. As the case studies contained in the national research are all urban areas, the Padfield trial provided further evidence in a village setting.

Considering a 20mph speed limit as a specific measure alone isn't always an appropriate intervention given that every casualty reduction scheme is different (based on collision types, environment, etc). It is part of the toolbox along with other measures for use when and where appropriate.

DCC always tries to work collaboratively with other local authorities and is an advocate of information sharing. Having liaised with Lancashire CC about their roll out of 20mph speed limits this was achieved over a 5 year period (2011 and 2016) and covered 242 separate residential areas at a cost of just under £5.8m. Collision figures measured in 2017 following the implementation showed a small decrease in "slight" injury collisions, but, a small increase in people killed or seriously injured.

DCC is developing proposals for two further 20mph trial sites and these will be evaluated alongside national data. This will help to shape the authority's policies going forward.

*To clarify, 20mph **zones** use traffic calming measures such as road humps or build outs to reduce vehicle speeds, making the area largely self-enforcing. 20mph **limits** are roads where the speed limit has been reduced to 20mph, but, there are no physical measures to reduce vehicle speeds within these areas. Drivers are alerted to the speed limit with boundary signs and repeater signs.

(2) COUNCILLOR QUESTIONS

a) Question from Councillor E Fordham to Councillor B Lewis, Cabinet Member for Strategic Leadership, Culture, Tourism and Climate Change

Of the trees that are due to be planted as part of our commitment to tackle climate change, how many will be fruit trees and how many community orchards will be created in Derbyshire with such planting?

b) Question from Councillor E Fordham to Councillor B Lewis, Cabinet Member for Strategic Leadership, Culture, Tourism and Climate Change

What measures will the Council take to review links with its sister city in Yangon District, Shanghai, given the on-going repression of the Yughur people which includes forced re-education, forced labour, forced sterilisation and imprisonment?

c) Question from Councillor R George to Councillor K Athwal, Cabinet Member for Highways Assets and Transport

I was pleased to see that the Conservatives' manifesto stated that they "commit to working with residents and partners to improve road safety throughout Derbyshire."

That has not been my experience and that of communities in Whaley Bridge for the last four years. Even road safety improvements recommended by formal risk assessments to protect our School Crossing Patrol staff at Whaley Bridge and Furness Vale have been refused in recent months.

Our School Crossing Patrol staff have to practically take their lives into their own hands to protect our children and families on dangerous roads, and even they are being refused recommended road safety measures.

This experience is mirrored by communities across Derbyshire who request road safety improvements and find assessments are not being done, even in areas of multiple accidents, or their concerns are dismissed.

How will this administration improve on the very poor experience of communities in Whaley Bridge who have requested road safety reviews and improvements and been refused?