

ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
LONDON ROAD SAFETY COUNCIL - JULY 2010

Chris Feltham, Policy Manager, Road Safety, Transport for London

Chris Feltham gave a presentation on 20 mph zones, how they are presently funded and how and why they are effective. He spoke about why using traffic calming measures make roads safer. He then went on to ask if "humps and bumps" are the only answer as 75% of the British public favour traffic calming schemes but only 43% of drivers support the speed humps. TfL have investigated alternatives and have trialled time over distance speed cameras to enforce 20 mph over Tower Bridge (permanently) and in Upper Thames Street (during road works). TfL are keen to research the potential benefits of this technology. Four sites in Camden, Hackney, Southwark and Waltham Forest were originally selected for a pilot study. Chris said, however, that there are challenges ahead. There are ambiguous routes, future funding is unsure and public acceptance is needed. He also reported that owing to procurement rules and financial reviews at TfL, the pilot schemes are now under review but it is still the intention to undertake them in this financial year.

Angela Gill, Network Manager, Portsmouth City Council

Angela Gill gave a presentation on the implementing and evaluating of the Portsmouth Citywide 20 mph speed limit. She explained that as an island, Portsmouth had 3 strategic entry and exit routes, a network of distributor roads and a densely populated residential road system. In 2004 a Traffic Calming Review was undertaken. A Safer Routes to School scheme was installed in the north of the city and a 20 mph speed limit scheme was undertaken in Queen Street. The Citywide 20mph speed strategy was developed following the success of these schemes. There was extensive consultation with the police who agreed not to object, neighbourhood forums, statutory advertising in The News with articles, TV and radio interviews etc. Monitoring of the scheme has been carried out sponsored by the DfT by an independent consultancy. Angela gave details of the evaluation process and key findings. There were wide variations between the 6 sectors of Portsmouth. Angela said that there was also a qualitative survey undertaken. The conclusions were that engineered zones achieve larger speed reductions than signs alone. Within an area-wide application of 20mph sign only limits, those roads with average speeds higher than 24 mph may benefit from significant speed reduction, but not to the extent that the limit is self enforcing. There were mixed outcomes when assessing the level of impact on anticipated qualitative aspects. The evaluation of area-wide schemes relies on good quality data and an appropriate evaluation design. A three year "after" period data is needed to establish whether the casualty reductions significantly exceed the national reductions.

There followed a Question and Answer session:

A question was asked about the white lines on existing humps and could they be more prominent. Chris Feltham said that the maintenance responsibility is with the Borough and they should make sure they are visible.

Cllr Rutter asked why average speed cameras are in use on motorways when there are no workmen in evidence. Chris said that the cameras on motorways are the responsibility of the Highways Agency and they may be turned off although the motorist may not be aware.

There was a question about the funding. Chris said that TfL are funding the trial and are looking to Boroughs for help in the consultation.

Cllr Fothergill asked the cost of installing the equipment. Chris said this varies from site to site. The pilot cost £½ million to fund and ongoing maintenance is part of the trial. The maintenance cost of Boroughs to take over is unknown at present. Angela said that the Portsmouth scheme cost half of what was expected. The cost was £600,000 but there are 7 roads which are identified as needing road humps as well as repeat signage.

Cllr Jamu said that any scheme needs publicity to educate the local residents to see the

benefits such as low pollution, lower car noise as well as road safety. He said that enforcement is necessary. Angela said that in Portsmouth they are trying to educate at the same time as enforce with either the payment of a fixed penalty fine or offering half an hour of training by the Fire/Police service. Angela said that there was a huge amount of publicity when the scheme started, not always positive but that now the media have been supportive. Awareness of the scheme does result in self enforcement.

Chris Feltham spoke about the changes in the speed limit on the A13 from 40mph to 50 mph with camera enforcement. He also said that it is a national requirement to review all speed limits by 2010.

Mayor Cllr Ahmad asked about the stopping and speeding up in Average Speed Zones. Chris Feltham said that a very small minority of drivers would benefit from this action. He also said that the perception is often that this is a money making exercise. Chris said that there should be transparency and publicity on how cameras have saved lives.

There was a question on the poor maintenance of speed humps and who was responsible if a car is damaged. Chris said that the Highway authority in the Borough concerned is responsible and that speed humps should be regularly checked and maintained.

Amy Aeron Thomas, RoadPeace asked how Portsmouth got their Police force to agree not to object. Angela said that they used an evidence-led approach to demonstrate that lowering of speeds in residential roads was beneficial. It was not easy as they were determined to object but it was tackled at high level and they were asked to focus on the need to improve road safety.

Ron Brown asked how Portsmouth got the media on their side. Angela said that the first report called Portsmouth the "Tortoise" town and a reply letter was sent and printed in what was being done and why. The media then started to support the zones rather than be critics.