

Thomas Haworth

To: Julie Furneval
Subject: RE: Speeding in Wroughton - next steps

From: Julie Furneval <JFurneval@swindon.gov.uk>
Sent: 07 September 2026 15:08
To: Thomas Haworth <deputyclerk@wroughton.gov.uk>
Cc: Philip Martlew <PMartlew@swindon.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: Speeding in Wroughton - next steps

Hi Thomas

Thank you for your email, and I hope you have also had a good summer.

I have reviewed the points raised following your Planning and Highways Committee meeting, along with the speed survey results and the previous response provided by Philip.

Based on the results of the three surveys, the 85th percentile speeds fall outside the current criteria set out within SBC's Speed Indicator Device (SID) Policy. As a result, the sites would not currently meet the Council's criteria for the deployment of a SID.

It is important to distinguish between a SID and a Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS), as they are different types of intervention.

A Speed Indicator Device (SID) is generally a portable/temporary feature, normally deployed on a rotational basis at approved locations. SIDs are governed by the Council's SID Policy, which sets out the criteria that need to be met before a location can be considered for deployment.

A Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) is a permanent traffic sign forming part of the highway infrastructure. Unlike a SID, a VAS does not collect or store vehicle speed data. Its purpose is to reinforce an existing speed limit by displaying the prescribed speed roundel when a vehicle exceeds a predetermined activation threshold.

A permanent VAS should not, however, be viewed as an alternative to a SID where a site does not meet the SID criteria. The Council would only consider introducing a permanent VAS where there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate a speeding problem and where a permanent intervention could be justified as an appropriate and proportionate response.

In this case, the available speed survey data does not provide evidence of a speeding problem at these locations. The recorded speeds, including the 85th percentile speeds, do not support the introduction of a permanent VAS. Consequently, based on the current evidence, we would not recommend the installation of a permanent VAS at these locations.

Other possible speed interventions

There are a range of engineering and other measures that can potentially be considered to influence vehicle speeds. These could include traffic calming measures, changes to the road layout,

carriageway narrowing, gateway features, changes to road markings, priority working arrangements or other appropriate highway measures.

However, the availability of these measures does not mean that they would automatically be appropriate or justified at these locations. Any proposal for a physical or permanent intervention would need to be supported by a sufficiently robust evidence base demonstrating an identified road safety or speed-related problem.

This would include consideration of the available speed data but would also need to take account of other relevant information, including the collision history at the locations. The nature, frequency and severity of any recorded collisions would be important in determining whether there is an identifiable road safety issue that could potentially be addressed through an engineering intervention.

As part of establishing whether there is a wider speed or compliance issue, we could also ask Wiltshire Police to consider targeted enforcement at the locations. This would provide an additional source of evidence as to whether there is a persistent problem with vehicles exceeding the speed limit and whether enforcement action is required.

Feedback from the Wiltshire Police could also help to establish the nature and extent of any problem, for example, whether vehicles are being stopped, whether warnings are being issued, or whether there is sufficient evidence for further enforcement action such as Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs). This information could then be considered alongside the speed survey and collision data when determining whether there is sufficient evidence to justify any further investigation or intervention.

It is important to recognise, however, that enforcement activity would be a matter for Wiltshire Police to determine based on their own assessment and operational priorities, and the Council would not direct the Police as to what enforcement action should be taken.

Consequently, while there may be other options available in principle, we would not recommend progressing a physical or permanent speed management measure without sufficient evidence to demonstrate that there is a problem requiring intervention and that the proposed measure would be an appropriate and proportionate response.

85th percentile and mean speeds

I am aware of the more recent DfT guidance and the increased emphasis on considering mean speeds alongside other evidence when assessing speed management.

However, it is important to distinguish between national guidance and the Council's current operational policy. The current SBC SID Policy sets out the criteria for the deployment of SIDs, including the use of the 85th percentile speed. Until that policy is formally reviewed or amended, the existing criteria remain applicable when determining whether a location qualifies for a SID.

Mean speed can provide useful additional information when considering the wider speed environment and whether a location may warrant further investigation. It would not, however, in itself override the current SID policy criteria.

More broadly, when considering any permanent speed management measure, we would look at the overall evidence rather than relying on a single measure of speed. This would include speed survey results, collision data and the wider characteristics and function of the road.

In this instance, the available survey results do not indicate a level of speeding that would provide an evidence base for introducing a permanent VAS or other significant speed management feature.

Wroughton and Chiseldon

In relation to the question about why SIDs may be present in Chiseldon but would not currently be supported in Wroughton, I would be cautious about drawing a direct comparison based solely on the recorded speeds.

Existing SIDs do not necessarily demonstrate that a location would meet the Council's current criteria if it were assessed today. Some existing installations may have been approved under previous arrangements or policies, and the circumstances and criteria applying at the time may have been different.

It should also be noted that, as part of our recent review of SID locations, the Traffic Management and Road Safety Team has identified one SID location in Chiseldon which does not appear to have the required permission under the current Council SID Policy. The team has raised this matter with Chiseldon Parish Council for clarification.

This demonstrates why the presence of an existing SID should not, in itself, be taken as confirmation that a location meets the current policy requirements. Each proposed SID location needs to be considered against the current policy and the available evidence.

The Council's SID Policy is intended to ensure that SIDs are deployed consistently and at locations where there is sufficient evidence to support their use. Where existing installations are identified as not complying with the current requirements, these will need to be addressed through the appropriate process.

Therefore, if Members are comparing the locations in Wroughton and Chiseldon, the most appropriate response would be that the presence of a SID in Chiseldon does not necessarily mean that the location would qualify for a new SID if it were assessed under the current policy.

Could SIDs nevertheless be installed at the three locations?

On the information currently available, the answer would be no, not under the current SID policy. The survey results do not meet the current criteria, so I would not be able to recommend that the Council approve SID deployment at these locations.

Equally, the installation of a permanent VAS would not provide a route around the SID criteria. A permanent VAS is a separate, permanent highway intervention and would itself require evidence demonstrating that there is a speeding problem which justifies its installation. The current survey results do not provide that evidence.

While there may be other interventions that could potentially be considered, these would also require an appropriate evidence base before they could be progressed. This would include consideration of the available speed data and, importantly, the collision history at the locations. Without sufficient evidence of an identified road safety or speed-related problem, we would not recommend introducing a permanent or physical intervention at this time.

It is also worth emphasising that the purpose of the speed surveys is not simply to determine whether a particular type of sign can be installed. The data should be used to understand the existing speed environment and determine whether there is evidence of a problem that would justify intervention.

On the evidence currently available, the survey results do not demonstrate a speeding problem at these three locations and therefore do not provide sufficient justification for either a SID or a permanent VAS. Any consideration of alternative measures would similarly need to be evidence-led and supported by sufficient data, including collision data where appropriate.

I hope this helps to provide some clarity for the Committee and gives you a basis for responding to any follow-up questions from Members.

Kind Regards

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