

## Questionnaire to Parishes (parish meetings/Parish and Town Councils): Vehicle Activated Speed Signs and Speed Indicator Devices

Dear Chair,

North Yorkshire County Council's Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee is undertaking a review to look at whether to provide parish councils with the opportunity to fund the **purchase and maintenance costs** of Vehicle Activated Speed signs (VAS) or Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs). As part of the review, parish councils are being surveyed to find out how many would be prepared to pay for the purchase and maintenance costs of a VAS or a SID if there are perceived issues of speeding in their local area; and their reasons for not taking part in other initiatives notably the Community Speed Watch initiated by North Yorkshire Police.

**Vehicle activated signs** (VAS) are roadside signs that have a fixed display showing the speed limit using an LED array in the form of a standard speed sign diagram as per Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 (TSRGD 2016). They display a message when they are approached by a vehicle exceeding the speed limit or going too fast for the type of road. They can be used for enforcement purposes.

**Speed Indicator Devices** (SIDs) have a dynamic display showing the actual speed of the approaching vehicle using an LED array. These signs are **not** prescribed in the TSRGD 2016 and cannot be used for enforcement purposes. Consequently they are not currently supported by NYCC Highways unlike VAS.



*Vehicle Activated Sign*

*Speed Indicator Device*

Criteria for deciding which parishes would be eligible to purchase and maintain VAS or SIDs would need to be agreed with North Yorkshire County Council, including consideration being given as to whether parishes would be required to rotate the signs and how frequently. The Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee will also be considering factors such as ensuring that the signs purchased and maintained by parishes are consistent countywide both in terms of design and location. Controls to minimise proliferation or overuse will also be considered.

### The current arrangement:

The current arrangement in North Yorkshire is that there is a programme for the use of **temporary Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS)** at some suitable locations. The programme provides for a VAS to be installed on a temporary basis for a number of 6 week periods in a year. This option is co-funded by North Yorkshire County Council and the local Parish or Town Council. **Participating communities do not own the signs**; the signs remain the property of North Yorkshire County Council. North Yorkshire County Council pays for maintenance and repairs to be made to these signs when they stop working or get damaged, which can cost £500 - £600 each time.

The existing temporary VAS Protocol was developed for those communities with local speeding concerns but which, following assessment through the Speed Management Protocol, fell below the threshold required for further action by the 95 Alive Road Safety Partnership.

In 2013/14 a temporary VAS pilot was carried out. Eligibility for inclusion in this 'Initial Phase' was based on historic data obtained largely through the Speed Management Protocol. Where a site had already been assessed as Category 3 (high speeds with low casualties) or Category 4 (low speeds with low casualties), selected local communities (willing to fund the rotation and installation costs) were offered a temporary VAS. The final list of communities invited to participate in the 'initial phase' were selected by a prioritised random draw.

Following the end of the pilot ('initial phase'), the way forward including the Prioritisation Process was approved by the County Council's Executive. Each of the 31 participants were given three six week deployments of at least one VAS over the course of 12 months.

This approved way forward allowed for the expansion of the Vehicle Activated Signs protocol with a charge to be applied to participating communities, of a minimum of £3500+VAT over four years. The charge includes the one-off cost of installation of a retention socket (£500), rotation costs (£350 per sign per year), and officer time of £400 per year, as well as a share of the cost of the additional signs that were purchased. Participating parishes can share the costs with other local parishes in their area.

The agreed way forward allows for communities that raise speeding concerns through the Speed Management Protocol and are assessed as Category 4 to be offered the option of participation in the temporary VAS process.

There are now 30 signs deployed on a rotating basis across the county. As all of the current signs are fully utilised, any additional parishes which wish to join the scheme would have to contribute towards the cost of additional signs as well as the costs detailed above.

The current programme has two years left until the first of the current arrangements expire.

Speed Indicator Devices are not in operation in the county.

Why are the Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee investigating the opportunity for parishes to fund the purchase and maintenance costs of Vehicle Activated Speed signs (VAS) or Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs)?

A number of County Councillors have reported that more parishes would like to deploy VAS in their areas due to speeding concerns and that the current arrangements set out above do not cover all areas that would benefit from VAS. At the meeting of the Transport, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 31 October 2017, a number of Members felt that a change in the protocol would be advisable to relax the rules to allow communities to purchase and maintain VAS under certain prescribed conditions to allow more parishes beyond those currently participating to have the benefit of VAS.

North Yorkshire County Council Officers have calculated that the 'real life' costs to a parish of purchasing and maintaining a **Vehicle Activated Speed sign**, would be as follows:

- Sign Assembly Material Cost (per sign, solar panel, post and socket) = £3,000
- Installation & Rotation costs (per sign) over four years = £2,000
- Typical Maintenance Costs (per sign and including damage repairs) over four years = £1,500

Officers have therefore calculated that, **on average**, each sign costs approximately £6,500 over 4 years to continually install and maintain. Beyond the four year point, the maintenance and rotation costs will continue.

**Permanent VAS** is covered by a different protocol, and in North Yorkshire they are used as an intervention of last resort where every other intervention has been tried and there is still a speed related collision history.

Currently **Speed Indicator Devices** are not in operation in the county but the task group has undertaken research on the policies of other county councils in England. Of those councils that responded to us and use SIDs, the purchase costs range from £1700 exc. VAT to £5,000 exc. VAT and installation costs are in the region of £250 and £350. Maintenance costs were not provided. Again as with VAS the cost varies according to supplier, length of warranty (1 to 6 years), size of the sign (which also determines whether an additional post is required), type of power required for the sign (battery/solar or electricity) and the range of features including speed data collection (blue-tooth download facility).

In addition to VAS, North Yorkshire Police has introduced an initiative called **Community Speed Watch**. Community Speed Watch is another means designed to support local communities to improve road safety by allowing residents to address speed concerns in their community. Following site risk assessments and training conducted by Police Support Volunteers, local residents are given speed monitoring equipment and will record the details of vehicles exceeding the signed speed limit. First and second time offenders will receive advisory letters asking them to address their driving behaviour and remain within the speed limit at all times. On the third offence, details are passed to North Yorkshire Police's Road Policing Group who will attend the offender's address. More information can be found here: <https://northyorkshire.police.uk/what-we-do/road-policing/community-speed-watch/>