

**THE TRAFFIC SIGNS REGULATIONS AND  
GENERAL DIRECTIONS 2002**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To report changes to the traffic signs and road markings used on the public highway introduced by the “Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions, 2002”.
2. To establish criteria for the use of certain newly prescribed signs and markings.

**Background**

3. The Department for Transport has published the “Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions, 2002” which replaces the 1994 document. In the eight years since then, new signs and markings have been used by the County Council and other authorities. Previously, special authorisation for their use was required from the Department for Transport.

**The Main Changes**

4. The main changes are:-
  - (a) **Parking and Waiting Restrictions** - “No waiting at any time” plates are no longer required with double yellow lines if the prohibition applies at all times throughout the year. No time limit has been set for the removal of existing signs although the Department “anticipates” their removal within a four-year period.
  - (b) **Bus Stop Clearways** - Where an area is marked to indicate a Bus Stop, that area will now automatically become a clearway and will be identified by a solid yellow line at the edge of the carriageway. Previously, Bus Stop Clearways could only be provided by means of a Traffic Regulation Order. However, the Clearway restrictions will not automatically operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week - signs will be provided to indicate when such restrictions apply. Bus Stops that are shown only by the provision of a “flag” will not be affected. The conversion of standard Bus Stop bays to Bus Stop Clearways must be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2006 or the existing bay markings should be removed.
  - (c) **Carriageway Speed Limit Roundel Markings** - These markings can be used in conjunction with upright speed limit signs only. As with repeater signs, they are not permitted on 30mph roads with a system of street lighting. Details of where roundels should be used are recommended in **Appendix 1**, subject to the availability of funding.

- (d) **Speed Limit Informatory Sign** - This new sign comprises of the Speed Camera symbol placed above the 30mph roundel, set against a blue background. This sign can only be used to inform drivers of the presence of enforcement cameras on a road with a 30mph limit within a system of street lighting. This sign is not a Regulatory sign and cannot be used as a 30mph repeater sign.
- (e) **Vehicle Activated Signs** - As members will be aware, Wiltshire has been involved in the trialling of interactive signs on behalf of the Department for Transport. The success of the trials in reducing speeds and casualties has resulted in the inclusion of interactive signs in the new Regulations. The apparent effectiveness of the signs is likely to result in requests for more signs to be put up where there are local safety concerns. Sites should be carefully selected for their use, as a proliferation of these signs is likely to make them less effective. Funding is also an important issue as the cost of purchasing and installing such signs is in the region of between £7,500 and £10,000, which is considerably greater than the cost of conventional signing. There is also an ongoing maintenance cost. Criteria based on recorded injury accident numbers and current traffic speeds is recommended in **Appendix 1**. This is in accordance with the advice from the Department for Transport that vehicle activated signs should be considered only when there is an accident problem associated with inappropriate speed that has not been satisfactorily remedied by standard signing.
- (f) **Weight Limits** - The 17 tonne and 25 tonne weight restriction signs will be replaced by new 18 tonne and 26 tonne signs respectively to take into account the permitted increases of maximum permitted weights of HGVs. This will necessitate changing the associated Traffic Regulation Orders and replacing existing signing which should be undertaken by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2006.

### **Environmental Impact of the Recommendation**

- 5. The provision of road signs and carriageway markings can be considered an intrusion into the environment. Care is taken, however, to site signs and markings as sympathetically as possible with regard to the surroundings, within the requirements of the Regulations.

### **Financial Implications**

- 6. The cost of providing signs and road markings is met from the Traffic Management Revenue budget or funded as part of Capital Schemes provided under the Local Transport Plan settlement.

### **Options Considered**

- 7. Not to apply criteria for the use of speed limit roundels or interactive signs which it is considered would significantly devalue their contribution to road safety and be contrary to Department for Transport advice.

### **Reason for Recommendation**

8. To inform Members of changes brought about by the new signing Regulations and to agree criteria to ensure speed limit roundels and interactive signs are used in a controlled and effective manner throughout the County.

### **Recommendation**

9. That:-
  - (i) The changes introduced by the 2002 Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions be noted;
  - (ii) The criteria for the use of Speed Limit Roundels and Vehicle Activated Signs, set out in **Appendix 1**, be approved.
  - (iii) A report on the suggested criteria for Bus Stop Clearways be prepared for consideration at a future meeting of the Committee.

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**The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this Report:**

None

**WILTSHIRE CRITERIA**

**Carriageway Speed Limit Roundel Markings**

Speed limit roundels to be used as follows:

- (a) As part of the standard Wiltshire gateway treatment at the commencement of speed limits.
- (b) To supplement terminal signs at the commencement of speed limits where there is no gateway treatment.
- (c) As a possible feature, to supplement speed limit repeater signs or as part of a traffic calming scheme.

**Bus Stop Clearways**

The changes to the Regulations regarding Bus Stop Clearways require more detailed study and a Policy regarding this issue will be formulated by Passenger Transport Section for consideration by this Committee in due course.

**Vehicle Activated Signs**

To maintain the effectiveness of vehicle activated signs and due to the high cost involved in providing these signs, they should only be considered for installation as part of specific Local Safety Schemes or Traffic Calming Schemes, at sites where speed related injury accidents have been identified.