

**LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
HIGHWAYS FORUM FOR HARBOROUGH**

10TH MARCH 2010

MOBILE VEHICLE ACTIVATED SIGN (VAS) TRIAL OUTCOME

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT

Purpose of Report

1. To report to Members the outcomes of mobile VAS trials within the County.

Background

2. Speeding traffic is a major concern across Leicestershire, placing significant demand on the County's resources. Funding is prioritised towards communities experiencing the worst problems and as a result, many sites either fall below the criteria for further investigation or have to wait several years before monies become available for a scheme.
3. Keen to build on partnerships formed through the Community Speed Watch (CSW) initiative, and following requests from several parish councils to purchase their own VAS, the county council has undertaken trials of smaller portable VAS systems that could be funded and used by parishes to address sites of local concern.
4. There are many examples of County funded schemes across Leicestershire, where the VAS is mains powered and is therefore fixed. It remains possible for parishes to continue to fund this type of scheme, but comparably their cost is higher and the impact limited to one location. Like the fixed VAS, the signs provide a reminder to motorists to drive at an appropriate speed, but as they are mobile they offer parishes an affordable more flexible alternative, allowing a wide area to be covered with one, or at least relatively few signs.

The Trials

5. Trials were arranged between 3rd August 2009 and 13th September 2009; the mobile VAS were placed in the parishes shown below and data readings taken before, during and after their installation:
 - Woodhouse - Woodhouse and Woodhouse Eaves
 - Scraftoft - Scraftoft and Thurnby
 - Snarestone - Snarestone
 - Somerby - Burrough on the Hill and Pickwell.

6. Four suppliers were chosen from six companies that demonstrated their equipment; images of the VAS can be found in **Appendix A**. The typical cost of the VAS is between £2,500 and £3,000 per sign.

Maximum Speed Reductions

SITE (MANUFACTURER)	85%ILE mph	95%ILE mph
Thurnby (TWM)	1.7	1.8
Scraptoft (TWM)	0.2	+1.3
Burrough on the Hill (Radarlux)	3.8	2.8
Pickwell (Radarlux)	2.2	3.6
Woodhouse (Westcotec)	2.4	2.1
Woodhouse Eaves (40mph) (Westcotec)	1.4	1.8
Snarestone Westbound (3M)	3.0	2.9
Snarestone Eastbound (3M)	2.3	1.5

The %ile speed is the speed at which 85% or 95% of the vehicles were travelling at or below.

7. The general trend was a reduction in speed after the introduction of the signs, rising when they were removed and then falling again when the signs were re-introduced. It is also worth noting that for 6 of the sites, the final reading, without a sign in place, was lower than the first reading taken without a sign in place. The best performing signs were **Radarlux** and 3M.

Management

8. The VAS were graded for ease of movement, security, battery life, appearance, fixings to posts and ease of changing the parameters of the unit. The two best performing units were **Radarlux** and **Westcotec** with very little separating them. Both of these units are suitable for fixing to existing lamp posts, which means they are easier to site and which would help to reduce costs. The TWM and 3M signs require siting on new posts.

Public Feedback

9. There was overall support for the VAS in each parish. The TWM and **Westcotec** VAS received the best feedback.

Conclusion

10. On the basis of the above, the **Radarlux** and **Westcotec** VAS have been approved and parishes can purchase these signs for use within the County, subject to entering into an agreement with the county council; the schemes being overseen by the CSW team. Although the term parish has been used throughout this report, communities can participate by entering into agreements through the Community Forums or the District Councils.

Officer to Contact

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Background Papers

Report to Harborough Highways Forum – 1st July 2009 – Parish funded Mobile Vehicle Activated Sign Trial

Report to Melton Highways Forum – 23rd July 2009 – Parish funded Mobile Vehicle Activated Sign Trial

Detailed information relating to the trial's outcome is held on file

Appendix A



Radarlux at Burrough



Radarlux



TWM at Thurnby



TWM



Westcotec at
Woodhouse Eaves



Westcotec



3M at Snarestone



3M