
Agenda Item: Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS)

Meeting Date: Monday, 17 November 2025

Contact Officer: Deputy Town Clerk

The purpose of this report is to seek Members' consideration of a potential investment in speed awareness signs for Witney.

Background

At the meeting of the Witney Traffic Advisory Committee held on 23 September 2025, a resident of Woodstock Road raised concerns regarding vehicle speeds along the road. The possibility of installing speed awareness signs and possible re-routing measures were discussed.

The Committee was advised that the Community Speedwatch team had undertaken two surveys in the area and that wider transport plans were in place, including the proposed reclassification of the A4095 and anticipated improvement measures associated with the Witney Transport Assessment and the opening of the Shores Green Slip Road. It was also agreed that a request should be made to Thames Valley Police for roadside speed monitoring. (Minute No. T103 refers.)

Current Situation

Correspondence has been received from Oxfordshire County Council officers outlining the installation and role of Parish/Town Council's for this community infrastructure below.

VAS & SID

"Regarding your request for information on vehicle activated signs there are 2 types. A VAS is a fixed sign which will typically display the speed limit and a message saying, "slow down". A speed indicator device – SID will display vehicle speeds.

We work with PC's in advising on and approving SID & VAS sign locations. SID's are supposed to be mobile signs, moved to varying locations to increase their effectiveness. Solar power or battery options are pretty good with battery ones being easiest to relocate.

They are funded and maintained by the PC – being PC assets but OCC approve locations. They can be mounted on lamp columns or other suitable traffic signposts subject to OCC approval. Bespoke posts at agreed locations can be provided if no suitable alternative is available subject to funding.

If the PC wish to commission an external contractor to provide suitable posts at OCC agreed locations, please see the following,

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/business/licences-and-permits/road-opening-licence>

If the PC contractor has the appropriate licenses and permissions etc then shouldn't be a problem. However, depending on our signing budget, we have in the past provided and erected posts on behalf of the PC."



Examples of SID/VAS signs

The installation of fixed and mobile speed awareness signs has been discussed several times by the Traffic Advisory Committee and Council Members in recent years. The Committee is invited to decide whether this infrastructure should be earmarked for purchase by the Town Council now or in the future and, if so, to explore potential funding options.

The County Council have provided details of recommended suppliers who they regularly work with.

Impact Assessments

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality – Improved road safety benefits all residents, particularly vulnerable groups such as children, older people, and those with disabilities who may be more at risk from speeding traffic. To maximise inclusivity, sign placement should consider areas with schools, care homes, and pedestrian routes to ensure all groups benefit equally.
- b) Crime & Disorder – The purchase of fixed and mobile speed awareness signs is likely to have a positive impact on crime and disorder by deterring speeding and promoting safer driving behaviour.
- c) Environment & Climate Emergency – Fixed and mobile speed awareness signs may encourage slower, smoother driving which could reduce emissions and noise pollution.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

- The purchase of fixed and mobile speed awareness signs carries risks relating to cost, maintenance, and public expectations.
- Financial and operational risks include installation, upkeep, compliance with highways regulations, and potential vandalism or equipment failure.
- Reputational risk may occur if the signs are perceived as ineffective or if the Town Council is seen as responsible for speed enforcement, potentially leading to liability concerns in the event of accidents.
- These risks could be managed through coordination with Oxfordshire County Council & Thames Valley Police, clear communication with residents, and budgeting for ongoing maintenance to ensure the equipment remains effective.

Social Value

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates.

Purchasing fixed and mobile speed awareness signs delivers social value by improving road safety, reducing speeding, and increasing residents' sense of security. The signs encourage responsible driving, support walking and cycling, and show the Council's commitment to community wellbeing and responsiveness to local concerns.

Financial implications

- The town council has no current budget for this infrastructure.
- Basic fixed SIDs are priced from approximately £2,250 (net) and increase in price depending on the type of sign and electric connection (solar panels etc.) with optional extras.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and:

1. Consider whether the Town Council should invest in the equipment and recommend allocating a budget for the 2026-27 fiscal year, if appropriate [Further detailed quotes can be provided to the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee on 24 November].