STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Agenda Item: Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS)

Meeting Date: Monday, 16 November 2026

Contact Officer: Deputy Town Clerk

The purpose of this report is to consider potential Town Council investment in speed awareness signs for Witney.

Background

The Committee previously considered requests for additional Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) and Speed Indicator Devices (SID) within the town on 17 November 2025 (minute no. SC661 refers).

Members considered that an audit of existing signs should be undertaken by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), alongside an assessment of traffic impacts arising from the opening of the Shores Green junction and the associated rerouting of the A4095. It was agreed that the findings of this work should be shared with the Witney Traffic Advisory Committee and that consideration of any further VAS or SID provision should be deferred and re-considered in December 2026.

Current Situation

The above review has been brought forward to align with the Council's budget-setting process for 2027/28 and to consider a potential funding contribution towards the installation of a VAS in East Witney.

The matter was also considered by the Witney Traffic Advisory Committee on 20 January 2026 (Minute No. T11 refers). Members should note that Oxfordshire County Council has advised that the purchase and installation of speed-related signs must be funded by the relevant town or parish council. In addition, Thames Valley Police has confirmed that, in line with its current policies, it does not routinely enforce 20mph speed limits and Witney Town Community Speedwatch only has limited resources to facilitate sessions.

Collision data can be seen via the following link requested at Full Council on 12 October 2026 (minute no. 522) in relation to a review of 20mph speed limits. Collision Data Witney can be seen by zooming in on the map. Speed data was also requested for: Woodstock Road, Hailey Road, Newland/Oxford Hill, Bridge Street, Burford Road, Deer Park Road, and Curbridge Road as there appears to be clusters on each. This can be found in **Appendix A.**

Members are invited to consider the Council's position and whether it wishes to support the installation of speed-related signs within the town. Indicative costs provided by County Council officers suggest that a standard fixed sign costs approximately £4,000.

Cllr J. Robertshaw has indicated he is willing to contribute up to £4,000 from his County Councillor Priority Fund towards the installation of a sign on Oxford Hill, Witney, following feedback received at an OCC Localities meeting that a sign would be beneficial in this location. This installation will be subject to a site meeting and agreement with an OCC officer.

Members should note that any grant funding would apply to the initial capital cost only and would not cover future inspection, maintenance, repair, or replacement costs, which would remain the responsibility of the Town Council.

To ensure funding opportunities were not missed, officers have provisionally included this project within the developing Infrastructure Funding Statement and have submitted an application to the Councillor Priority Fund. Should the Committee decide not to proceed, the application will be withdrawn.

Corporate Strategy

The Council's Strategic Plan 2025–29 sets out the Council's long-term priorities and direction, supporting its mission to 'make Witney a great place to live, work and visit.' This report contributes to the delivery of the following strategic pillar of the plan:

2. An Engaged and Supported Community

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) **Biodiversity** –
c) **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.
d) **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 in 2026-27.
- An offer of grant assistance for one camera in East Witney for up to £4,000 has been made.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and,

1. Consider whether the Town Council should invest in VAS equipment.
2. If approved, note the offer of funding from Cllr J Robertshaw and approve the application for use of his fund towards a VAS in Oxford Hill Witney.
3. Consider allocating a budget for the 2027-28 fiscal year towards further speed monitoring equipment, if appropriate.