

Area West Committee – 21st May 2008

6. Application for a ‘SpeedMinder’, a Deployable Speed Indication Display (SID) Sign (Executive Decision)

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Purpose of the Report

To recommend funding for a deployable Radar Speed Indication Display for use in Area West.

Recommendations

- (1) members grant £2,010 to South Somerset Community Speed Watch Co-ordinator’s group to fund the purchase of a deployable Radar Speed Indication Display for use in Area West;
- (2) that the increase in funding opportunities for Community Speed Watch schemes be noted;
- (3) that the unallocated budget of £5,490 be returned to the uncommitted Area Reserve.

Previous SID Application

At the Area West Committee on Wednesday 16th January 2008, an application for a deployable Radar Speed Indication Display known as a “Smiley SID” was considered. At that time it was noted that Somerset County Council were giving Parish Councils the option to precept for the provision of temporary Speed Indication Display signs. A decision on the grant application was deferred to enable discussions to take place with the County Council and ensure a more strategic approach to using Speed Indication Display signs. These discussions have taken place and this report provides an update.

Since January 2008, South Somerset Community Speed Watch Co-ordinator’s group have revisited the options available for Speed Indication Display signs and have discovered the SpeedMinder, which is used widely in the USA and is now available in the UK. The SpeedMinder is cheaper than the Smiley SID originally applied for.

Request for funding a SpeedMinder SID

South Somerset Community Speedwatch Co-ordinators group have submitted an application via Ilminster Community Speed Watch to purchase a Radar Speed Indicator Display sign known as a SpeedMinder. The brightly illuminated LED speed indicator has been designed to display the speed in bright steady green LED numbers when the driver is at or below the speed limit. The display changes to a flashing red as soon as the speed limit is exceeded. The SpeedMinder is easily portable as it can fit in the boot of an ordinary saloon car (see photos overleaf).

As well as displaying the speed of passing motorists, the SpeedMinder incorporates a data system, which records and stores the following information: traffic count, average speed, highest speed and the number of speed violations.



South Somerset Community Speedwatch Co-ordinators group is requesting £2,010 to fund the full cost of purchase and delivery.

Running Costs

Costs associated with running the scheme are minimal. They will be met by the applicant.

Eligibility

This application has scored 23 using the Community Grants scoring system. This exceeds the minimum score of 20 required for funding to be considered.

Effectiveness of Community Speed Watch

Community Speed Watch teams throughout South Somerset keep a record of the number of speeders detected against the number of transiting vehicles each time they operate. Over a period of time this permits each Community Speed Watch team to measure the change in the percentage of speeders. An analysis shows that from June 2007 to early April 2008 the overall reduction in all Community Speed Watch detected speeders in South Somerset during that period was a remarkable 35.4%. This indicates that Community Speed Watch schemes are contributing to a significant reduction in speeding.

Somerset County Councils Policy on Temporary Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs)

As part of the Somerset Road Safety Partnership, SCC have purchased 20 SIDs which will be used to target the 10 identified 'worst' accident routes in the county, but with the option to use the signs at others locations as necessary. These accident routes are known as Red Routes and within South Somerset those roads are A30, A358 and A37. Parishes that are not located on one of the identified Red Routes but believe they have a speeding problem can apply to SCC to be considered for a Speeding Indication Display Sign. In those circumstances SCC will place data recording equipment in the location to ascertain whether there is a speed problem or not. A speed problem is identified where recorded 85%ile speeds are over 10% plus 2mph higher than the posted speed limit i.e. from 36mph in a 30mph limit and 47 mph in a 40mph limit. If the equipment shows that speeds are high and exceed the 85%ile a temporary SID sign can be installed.

In accordance with the Local Transport Plan, priority will be given to those sites where there is an accident history. Somerset County Council acknowledge that there will be other sites with a speed problem but these locations will receive the SIDs less often or in some cases possibly not at all.

In communities where the recorded speeds fall below the 85%ile, SCC will encourage parishes to work with their local Community Speed Watch group.

Terry Beale, Accident Investigation and Partnership Development Manager for Somerset Road Safety Partnership, believes that Community Speed Watch complements the work of the Road Safety Partnership and recognises their contribution to addressing the problem of inappropriate speeds in Somerset's towns and villages.

The Somerset Road Safety Partnership support this application for a portable SpeedMinder sign as long as Community Speed Watch groups use the device in a controlled and managed way as they would other Speed Radar Devices. Therefore a Community Speed Watch group would need to be with the equipment at all times and be visible to the public. The SpeedMinder sign should be used to record the number of vehicles speeding through the area and Community Speed Watch volunteers will need to record the registration numbers of those vehicles travelling at excess speed and pass those to the Community Speed Watch Administrator to send out letters.

Financial Implications

The recommended grant can be met from existing budgets.

In 2003 Area West Committee 'ring-fenced' £20,000 to meet anticipated requests for grants towards the purchase of Community Speed Watch equipment. If this latest grant is approved a balance of £5,490 will remain. The provision has proved more than necessary to meet the need, especially as new sources of potential funding, including Area Community Safety Panels and District and County Councillors Frontline Grants have been made available.

Whilst further applications for Community Speed Watch grants would be welcomed, these are becoming far less frequent and it is recommended that the 'ring-fence' be removed from the remaining balance, to enable consideration of funding for other schemes that will benefit the local community.

Implications for Corporate Priorities

The project meets the following corporate aims:

Ensure safe, sustainable and cohesive communities.

The project also meets the following corporate objectives

- Fourteen: maintain above 90 per cent the people who generally feel safe in their communities.
- Sixteen: maintain above 80 per cent the people satisfied with their neighbourhoods as a place to live.

Background Papers: *Report to Area West Committee – 16th January 2008*
Grant Application
Case Study for the Cabinet Office on South Somerset Community Speedwatch – Paper by John Wolff – April 2008.
