

Question from a member of the public

Sue Nicholls

Speeding is an issue of increasing concern in so many towns and villages across Hertfordshire. Having seen a recent social media campaign by the Police and Crime Commissioner calling for communities to start their own DriveSafe groups where there are concerns about speeding on existing 20mph roads, can I ask what the current police policy is on enforcing speed limits in Hertfordshire (and particularly those on 20mph roads). Can I also ask why Hertfordshire Constabulary does not subscribe to the national Community Speed Watch scheme with its unified national framework which collates and shares offence data from across the UK and prefers to use its own county-based DriveSafe scheme instead?

Answer

20mph roads are policed in the same way as any road that has a speed limit set and will be subject to enforcement and prosecution.

All 20mph areas must be properly placed within road traffic regulation and with appropriate signage. Often 20mph locations will already have additional control measures and traffic design such as filter points and tapers which would naturally slow motorists down.

Across Hertfordshire we use a phased approach with educational and behavioural measures implemented first through Community DriveSafe groups and the deployment of the Road Safety Camera Vans. This can progress to the deployment of the Safer Neighborhood Team using a speed gun and issuing warning letters and fixed penalty tickets. Should vehicles be observed travelling excessive speed, exceeding the limit by more than 50%, the police can, under Section 59 (3) of the Police and Reform Act 2002, seize and remove a vehicle which the police believe is being driven inconsiderately or carelessly and causing, or is likely to cause, alarm, distress or annoyance to members of the public.

For some locations that have a history of people being killed or seriously injured, the tri-force Cameras, Tickets and Collisions (CTC) vans will be deployed. This phased approach underpins a Prevention First model, one that seeks to encourage behaviour change in the first instance.

Following the PCC elections in 2012, residents told me their concerns around speeding motorists across the county. In response to this, I set up Community Drivesafe in 2013 to provide greater visibility and targeted activity. Community Drivesafe takes many of the key elements of the national Speedwatch Scheme. Registered keepers of vehicles exceeding the speed limit are contacted initially with a letter explaining the potential risks and consequences of their speeding. On issuing of a third letter, repeat offenders receive a visit from a Safer Neighbourhood Team officer.

In line with our tri-force roads policing unit, Community Drivesafe, also known as Speedwatch in Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire operates on a tri-force basis. Advisory letters are coordinated with first, second and third letters being issued regardless of which of the three counties the offence took place. Data is collected and any trends identified feeds into the county and East of England SpeedWatch Board.