



COMMUNITY ROAD SAFETY & COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH

**Back to first principles in Renfrewshire to try to
address the underlying cause of many road accidents
in our residential areas.**

Elaine Barrie BSc(hons) MSc MRTPI
Renfrewshire Council

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ABSTRACT

In order to try to reduce the casualty numbers and speeds in residential areas, Renfrewshire Council developed two initiatives to go back to first principles try to address the underlying cause of many road accidents- driver behaviour!

The Community Road Safety and Community Speedwatch Initiatives put the onus back to the local community to take action to address issues in their community being caused by their residents. Through collective community actions, driving speeds are highlighted and the 'slow down' message is promoted to every household through provision of leaflets and community campaigns. Actions have raised awareness and early indications show casualty reduction in residential areas.

RENFREWSHIRE COUNCIL - COMMUNITY ROAD SAFETY INITIATIVE

Back to first principles to try to address the underlying cause of many road accidents in our residential areas.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Renfrewshire Council, like other local authorities, made a commitment to try to reduce the number of casualties, in line with or better than the government's targets by 2010. Traditional measures, that increasingly reduced the number of decisions taken by drivers, were introduced to reduce traffic speeds i.e. traditional traffic calming measures such as speed tables or humps, lining and signing were implemented as packages to physically alter the road network for drivers. Guard rail, zebra and pelican crossings and education were used to target pedestrians, particularly children, in an attempt to alter their attitudes and make them more aware and responsible for their behaviour.

This approach was the norm adopted across the UK as a whole. However successful this approach in reducing the number of accidents, particularly at cluster type sites, a fundamental flaw was that it did not consider the underlying cause of many accidents – the responsibility the driver has, to drive at an appropriate speed for the conditions. In tandem with this, was the fact that the majority of roads within residential areas had a 30 mph (kph) speed limit (bearing in mind that all roads with street lighting and no speed limit signs are 30 mph limits).

This report discusses how the Council identified and introduced an alternative approach to try to tackle the fundamental problem in residential areas of driving too fast for the conditions. This report sets out two initiatives being promoted to target driver behaviour and achieve a reduction in driving speeds throughout our residential areas.

2. BACKGROUND

Renfrewshire has responsibility 784km of roads (non-trunk roads) and comprises a mainly urban area with remote settlements. The population in 2004 was 171,000 with 70,000 households.

Accident analysis annually highlighted the types of area where accidents were occurring and the predominant reasons for these accidents. Cluster sites on main distributor roads and a spread of accidents distributed throughout residential areas were highlighted. Where appropriate, physical traffic calming measures were introduced through the capital programme to try to reduce accidents and improve safety at the cluster sites. Accidents in residential areas proved more difficult to tackle as accidents tended not to be clustered but sporadic and were occurring in areas with traditional streets with on-road

parking and a mixture of housing types, (thus there would be a mix of families, singles and elderly people). As well as accident analysis, the Council were receiving calls from residents from every housing estate in Renfrewshire, requesting traffic calming. A considerable number of the requests were based on perceived road safety risk rather than accidents that had already occurred.

Increasingly, the trend across most council areas including Renfrewshire had been to introduce traffic calming measures to reduce decision making for pedestrians and drivers. Increasingly, sites were being *overloaded* with guard rail, lining and physical measures, all designed to reduce traffic speeds, separate pedestrians from vehicles and achieve the objective of reducing the number and severity of accidents. This was not a unique approach in Renfrewshire. This type of approach was popular across the country as a main approach to tackle road safety issues on roads through relying on the physical measures to influence or determine driving style and behaviour.

In conjunction with the on-road measures, the Council's Road Safety team continued to tackle the traditional 'E's (Engineering, Enforcement and Education) with the majority of the road safety resource being allocated to Education, particularly for children. As with most other councils, the emphasis has been on teaching children to cross safely, heightening awareness of dangers and advising on playing safely.

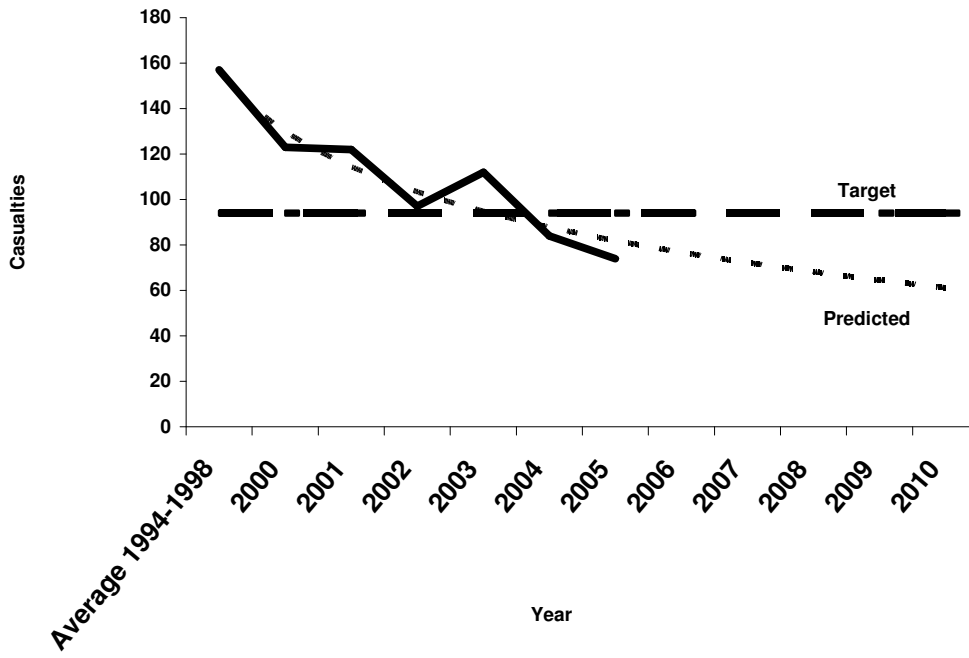
Road Safety Overview

Like most Councils, Renfrewshire has been very successful in being on target to achieve or better the national targets for accident reduction. Even performance within the category "slight casualties" has been strong, indicating an overall reduction in crashes throughout Renfrewshire. The Council is predominantly urban with respect to the majority of the population and road accidents occur roughly in the ratio 4:1 urban to rural.

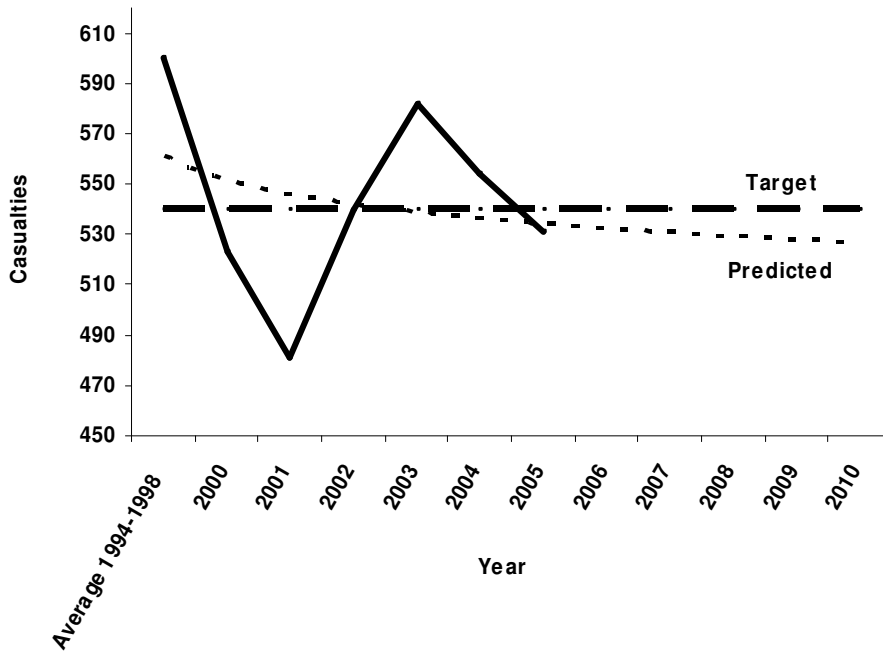
Casualty reduction targets in Renfrewshire are as follows:

- killed and seriously injured casualties (40% reduction by 2010 from 1994-98 average) This translates to a target drop from 157 to 94.
- child killed or seriously injured casualties (50% reduction by 2010 from 1994-98 average) which translates to a target drop from 35 to 17.
- slight casualties (10% reduction by 2010 from 1994-98 average) which relates to a target drop from 600 to 540.

All Roads (Fatal & Serious)



All Roads (Slight Injuries)



Detailed investigation of accident patterns identifies urban distributor roads to represent the highest risk. Typically where urban traffic flows are high and there are many conflicting vehicle and pedestrian movements, the accident rate rises. In terms of the crash reduction strategy therefore, urban distributor roads receive priority.

Throughout Renfrewshire every community has raised speeding traffic as a concern. Most residential areas seek traffic calming and survey information identifies fear of traffic as a primary concern which impacts on the quality of life in most communities. Of significance however is the fact that communities generally perceive the highest risk from speeding traffic within residential housing areas. Survey information indicates that residents are more concerned at what happens directly outside their door than on the urban distributor roads where accident rates are significantly higher.

Since 2002, the Council has carried out speed measurements at all of the 19 long term traffic monitoring sites used to measure traffic growth. A significant number of these sites lie within 30mph speed limits and by comparing the off-peak vehicle speeds at the exact same point year on year, a reasonable assessment can be made of changes in typical average speeds on Renfrewshire's urban roads. (Off-peak periods were chosen to compare average speeds to ensure that peak hour congestion does not influence the figures). Typically, the average speed on a 30mph road will be of the order of 35mph. The range of speeds will typically go from the high 20's to the mid 40's. There are however some instances of traffic travelling much faster, typically into the 50's and 60's.

Detailed evaluation of accident statistics is carried out annually and have identified that accident causes associated with the desire to speed such as driving too close, driving into the car in front, overtaking etc. are a factor in approximately 40% of accidents. Therefore, whilst our road safety strategy tackles a range of issues, it is obvious that reducing average urban speeds has to be a primary objective in order to reduce accident levels and severity and improve quality of life.

Measures for traffic calming, including location of speed cameras, has an immediate impact upon the numbers and severity of accidents at that particular location. Thus, traffic calming was generally successful where implemented. However, it must be noted that cost, acceptance and popularity have a bearing on the number of sites where traffic calming is placed and the quantity and type of traffic calming that can be implemented. In addition, a way had to be found to tackle the sporadically distributed accidents that were occurring through residential areas and to address the perceived road safety problems being brought to the attention of the Council by residents.

Driver behaviour around the locus of traffic calming measures was found to have altered – this was easily proven as the number of accidents at these locations reduced. However, away from traffic calmed areas such a change

was not apparent. This was supported by evidence of accidents still occurring on these roads and speed counts indicated that average speed on some roads in Renfrewshire were still above the 30 mph limit. Within residential areas, sporadic accidents rather than clusters were occurring therefore the traditional approach was not suitable as at present funding levels it would have taken £50 million and up to 100 years to implement traffic calming in all residential areas at accident locations.

In addition, the Council had to take into account that some Renfrewshire residents considered physical traffic calming measures to be insufficient, inappropriate, too noisy and a cause of vibration outside their homes. Therefore, there was debate between residents who supported implementation of physical traffic calming measures and those opposed to this approach as a solution.

Pivotal to the changes in the way the council was to deal with tackling accidents in residential areas was the changes to legislation relating to 20mph speed limits introduced in 1999. The revised legislation removed the requirement for local authorities to obtain the consent of the Scottish Minister before making an order in respect of a 20 mph speed limit (with or without traffic calming). Thus it became much easier and less time consuming for the local authorities to introduce a 20mph limit in residential areas. In addition, the SCOTS group (Society of Chief Officers for Transportation in Scotland) suggested that local authorities implement up to 3 pilot advisory 20mph speed limit projects. Renfrewshire's pilots were considered successful and importantly, were accepted by the local communities.

Results, Scotland wide, were favourable. Average speeds were reduced at 60% of the pilot sites across Scotland and this was accompanied by a drop in the number and severity of recorded accidents. Importantly, the schemes received support from the local communities as a way forward to tackle speeding. Thus, it was considered that the voluntary 20mph schemes could be rolled out across Scotland by individual local authorities to replace the existing 30 mph limits.

Public Services Panel Survey (winter 2006)

Surveys are undertaken annually to find out residents' views on service provision by the Council. 2000 people are questioned and views are gathered on various aspects of service delivery. The section on Road Safety indicates the following views from Renfrewshire residents:

When considering the issues of road safety, the three biggest problems that people think their area suffers from are:

- traffic travelling too fast (60%),
- parking (19%) and
- reckless driving (19%).

The main improvements which respondents thought would make the roads safer included better /lower speed limits (38%), better road maintenance (38%) and traffic calming measures (35%).

The vast majority (97%) of respondents think that driver behaviour is a significant factor in road crashes. With regard to the types of driver behaviour which people think form the biggest contributory factors in the majority of road crashes, speeding comes top with 72% of respondents indicating this. The next most commonly cited type of behaviour is using a mobile phone whilst driving (51%), followed by aggression (50%) and drink driving (36%).

82% of respondents believe that driver behaviour can be influenced by some form of intervention.

What was the basis for change?

- Renfrewshire was experiencing a reduction in the overall number of accidents in the local authority area however not necessarily in residential areas.
- Specific treatments for residential areas had been required in order to reduce accidents.
- Traditional traffic calming addresses speeding in the vicinity of the physical measures however it does not tackle driver responsibility to reduce speeds in other areas.
- At present funding rates, it would take up to 100 years and £50 million for traffic calming to be introduced across all residential areas.
- Although the Council introduced advisory 20mph speed limits into most residential areas, a significant proportion of motorists did not respond to the signing by curtailing their speed.
- The traditional approach to road safety education was to have children always take responsibility for their behaviour. It was considered that issues surrounding driver behaviour and driver responsibility should be addressed.

3. RENFREWSHIRE'S ACTIONS

The fundamental basis for the Community Road Safety Initiative in Renfrewshire was to tackle driver behaviour and in particular, to encourage drivers to reduce their speed to under 20mph in all residential areas. In residential areas, studies had shown that it was predominantly local drivers who were using the local roads. The average traffic speed on these roads was between 25 and 30 mph and distances travelled along each section of road was usually less than 600m. i.e. off distributor roads and along a short distance on the local road to their destination.

It was considered that a simple solution (but not necessarily an easy solution to implement to all drivers) was to help communities to recognise that it was

within their own powers to address the issues in their own areas and indeed to consider the speed they drive at when in other residential areas.

The Community Road Safety Initiative in Renfrewshire attempted to motivate local communities to take action to address local road safety concerns. The initiative was formulated in response to the above issues and the high demand for traffic calming throughout Renfrewshire that could not be achieved through existing capital resources and was not supported by all in the community.

By 2000 a request had been made for traffic calming in almost every residential area in Renfrewshire. In many residential areas the requests were based on perceived danger as opposed to historically proven accidents. This was a difficult area to address as in most locations the residents had a valid concern and while there were few casualties the potential risk was significant, especially to children playing in areas where inappropriate speeds by vehicle drivers were commonplace.

The way forward – Tackle driver attitudes and behaviour

Community Road Safety Initiative

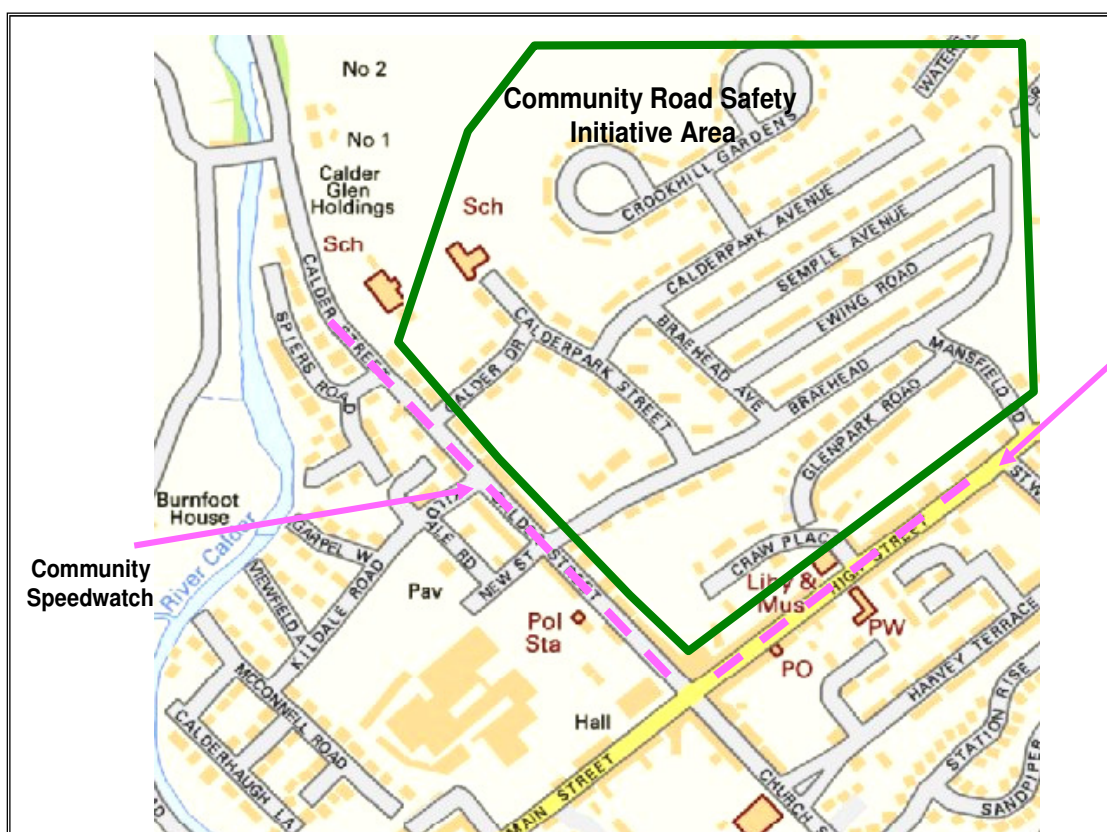
In March 2001, Renfrewshire Council attempted a pilot project that would stimulate the community to take collective action on road safety without the council being required to allocate substantial sums of money. The new approach focussed on housing areas within Johnstone following an emotive reaction after a young child was knocked down.

The housing areas involved were high density housing with little or no through-traffic. The areas had a number of social problems relating to unemployment and variable standards of housing. These areas typically represent locations where high child casualty rates could be expected due to a combination of inappropriate driving by residents combined with many children playing in the street.

The areas chosen were well served by their community council and a number of Tenants' Associations and good communication links existed through the forums dealing with initiatives on crime reduction and environmental improvement associated with the Council's Community Plan. There was an opportunity to extend these initiatives to incorporate road safety issues.

At the outset, it was considered essential that road safety initiatives should involve all of the community and be locally based.

TYPE OF AREA TARGETED WITH COMMUNITY ROAD SAFETY INITIATIVE



Renfrewshire Council, in partnership with Strathclyde Police Community Branch, the Community Council and the Tenants Associations agreed to produce a local poster campaign and a community leaflet which could be distributed to all residents. School children designed the poster and message as part of a competition. The poster was displayed in community facilities, libraries and local shops and clubs throughout the target area.

A leaflet was produced using local photographs and highlighting very local issues encouraging drivers to keep their speed to 20 mph or less. The leaflet highlighted appropriate driving standards for residential areas and indicated ways that parents could consider the safety of their children. The leaflet included quotes from local residents and local councillors on the reasons why they thought drivers should slow down and had a strong emphasis on how the community were driving the initiative forward for the benefits of all who lived in the area. (see Appendix 1)

COMMUNITY LEAFLET

Examples of the streets involved:-
Killearn Drive, Duchray Drive,
Allanton Avenue, Bathgo Avenue, Corrie Drive,
Drummond Drive, Strathmore Avenue.

Please Take Care area:-
Tyney Road, Roffey Park Road, Dunchurch
Road, Balfron Road, Kinpurnie Road.

Safer Routes to Ralston Primary School:-
Auchmannoch Avenue, Dalfoil Court,
Buchlyvie Road, School Road, Southwold
Road.

**"I never realised the difference
that a small reduction in speed
could make to a child's chances
of survival".**
Linda Chapman, Local Resident

**"Twenty's Plenty saves lives. We
welcome careful drivers to our
community".**
Nan Macgregor, Councillor

**TWENTY'S
PLENTY**

40
HIT BY A VEHICLE AT SPEEDS UP TO 40MPH
FEW SURVIVE

30
HIT BY A VEHICLE AT SPEEDS UP TO 30MPH
ABOUT HALF SURVIVE

20
HIT BY A VEHICLE AT SPEEDS UP TO 20MPH
MOST SURVIVE

**RALSTON AND OLDHALL
COMMUNITY**

**RALSTON AND OLDHALL
ROAD SAFETY
INITIATIVE**

Renfrewshire
Council
SAFER FOR ALL

The distribution of leaflets was once again based on community involvement. In some areas the Tenants association undertook to distribute leaflets, in other areas it was the community council with additional volunteers. In some areas, the community council knocked on doors in local streets to hand over the leaflet to individual householders in order that they could discuss what the leaflet was about and gauge a reaction from the resident. Feedback from the community council reported that the leaflets were well received and that almost all residents stated that they always drive below the 30mph speed limit in the area. Most residents had noticed the new 20mph signs and the 20's Plenty roundels that were placed on the carriageway. Importantly, the initiative was received very positively and raised the profile of the need to drive not at 30mph but at 20mph or under in the residential areas.

The key to the success of the leaflet pointed to the fact that it had been produced very much in conjunction with the local community and that it was an individualised leaflet for each neighbourhood. Photographs were of the local area, with local children and with quotes from local residents. Community ownership and roll out of the initiative meant that it was likely that everyone would know who was driving at high speeds. The key to the initiative was to embarrass or shame those high-speed drivers into reducing their speed or face the embarrassment of their neighbours asking them to slow down as their behaviour is considered socially unacceptable i.e. peer pressure.

Community Road Safety Initiative Pilot Projects



17 residential areas across Renfrewshire were chosen in 2002 for the roll out of the Community Road Safety Initiative. The criteria for choosing residential areas was based on the area being self contained with mainly local traffic, fully residential with the likelihood of children playing in the streets. The Community Road Safety Initiative covers short sections of roads within residential areas where it would be unlikely that there would be any through-traffic.



In each area, meetings were arranged with the local groups as described above and where support was forthcoming, the Community Road Safety Initiative was taken forward. The physical measures introduced to each area were as follows:

- 20 mph localised signs were designed and implemented specifying the community name with signs placed at key entry points to the community. This typically resulted in 4 to 8 signs for each community.
- 20 mph roundells were painted on the carriageway at selected locations throughout the residential area to remind drivers of the speed limit.

The average cost of implementing the Community Road Safety Initiative is in the region of £1800 - £2000 for signs, roundels and leaflets for one residential area. The initiative is aimed at all residents in the local area and is considered to have an impact of driver behaviour within the area as well as outwith that particular locality. In comparison, a typical physical traffic calming scheme for a location can typically cost from £5000 to £15,000 and has an immediate impact on driver behaviour usually only at the particular site. Thus, it follows that a much greater impact can be gained through trying to have an effect on individual driver behaviour for all residential areas and to raise awareness of the need for reduced speeds in certain conditions.

The local community council, residents and tenants associations met with council officers to agree the photographs and quotes that would be included in the local community leaflet. A typical leaflet carried the message that reducing speeds even by a small amount could have a significant impact on severity of any accidents. The cost for production of the leaflets was met



by the local authority, funded through the Scottish Executive's "Walking, Cycling, Safer Streets" allocation. Leaflets for each community averaged at around £300 (This included photography and printing).

Between 1000 and 1500 leaflets were produced for each area. The leaflets were distributed by the community council, councillor or tenant association to each individual household. This raised the profile that it was the community wishing to take it into their own hands to address the issues surrounding speeding traffic and the need to reduce speed. In total, 25,000 leaflets were printed for the pilot project areas.

In addition, the council carried out an advertising campaign with local press articles and coverage in the council magazine which is distributed to every household across Renfrewshire (70,000 households) on a quarterly basis.



Once the campaign was up and running, regular meetings took place with the Community Council and community police to determine how best to support the initiative as an on-going project. It is clearly important that the road safety issue is adopted at the heart of community council activities and is not considered as a one-off exercise. The campaign benefited strongly from being bottom-up in approach and not a direct consequence of a central government initiative which the local community can sometimes have difficulty relating to. The main message being put across related directly to the Foolsspeed campaign and it

was anticipated that this Initiative would support and re-inforce the understanding and meaning of the national campaign.

4. RESULTS

Raising awareness and reducing traffic speeds in the residential areas had the effect of reducing the number of casualties within the residential areas across Renfrewshire. Speed surveys were undertaken in 6 communities to establish base speeds. This indicated that the areas did not have a significant speeding problem in that drivers typically drove at 26 – 30 mph on streets where a 30mph limit was in place. However, due to the nature of the residential areas, often with on-road parking there was a perception from residents that speeding was a problem.

The 20mph roundels and signs had the effect of reminding drivers of the need to drive not at the 30mph limit but at the advisory 20 mph limit.

Monitoring is ongoing to establish actual speed reduction in all of the Initiative areas however it is considered that by raising awareness, drivers are reducing their speeds and this has had the result of reducing the number and severity of casualties in the residential areas.

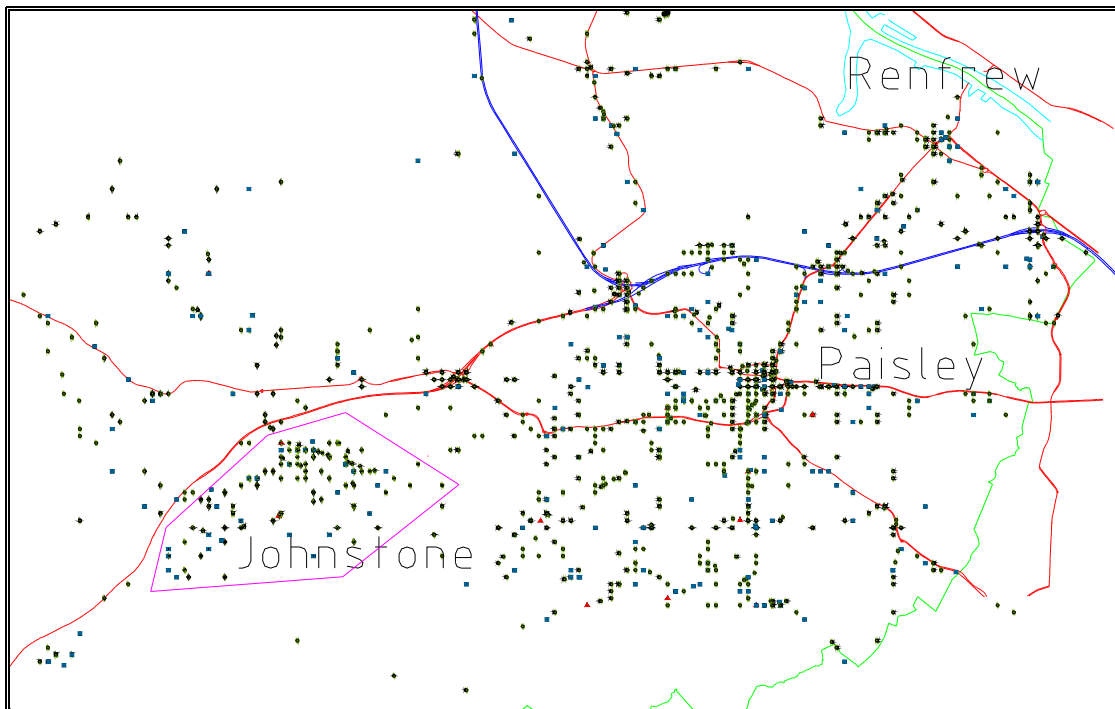
This Initiative was considered as a simple solution to help communities recognise that it was within their own powers to address the issues – particularly as most traffic was actually localised and not through-traffic or rat-runners as previously expected. It has resulted in the Council receiving fewer requests from residents requesting physical traffic calming.

Most households in the areas were families with children thus raised awareness that not only were they doing it for their children but doing it for other people's children---most drivers said they always drove at appropriate speed – i.e. the 30mph limit set on the road. The campaign emphasised the message that at 20 mph most survive however at 30 mph about half are killed. Thus, raising awareness locally, through press advertising and the community leaflets, also re-inforced the national speed reduction campaigns being carried out by Road Safety Scotland and other agencies.

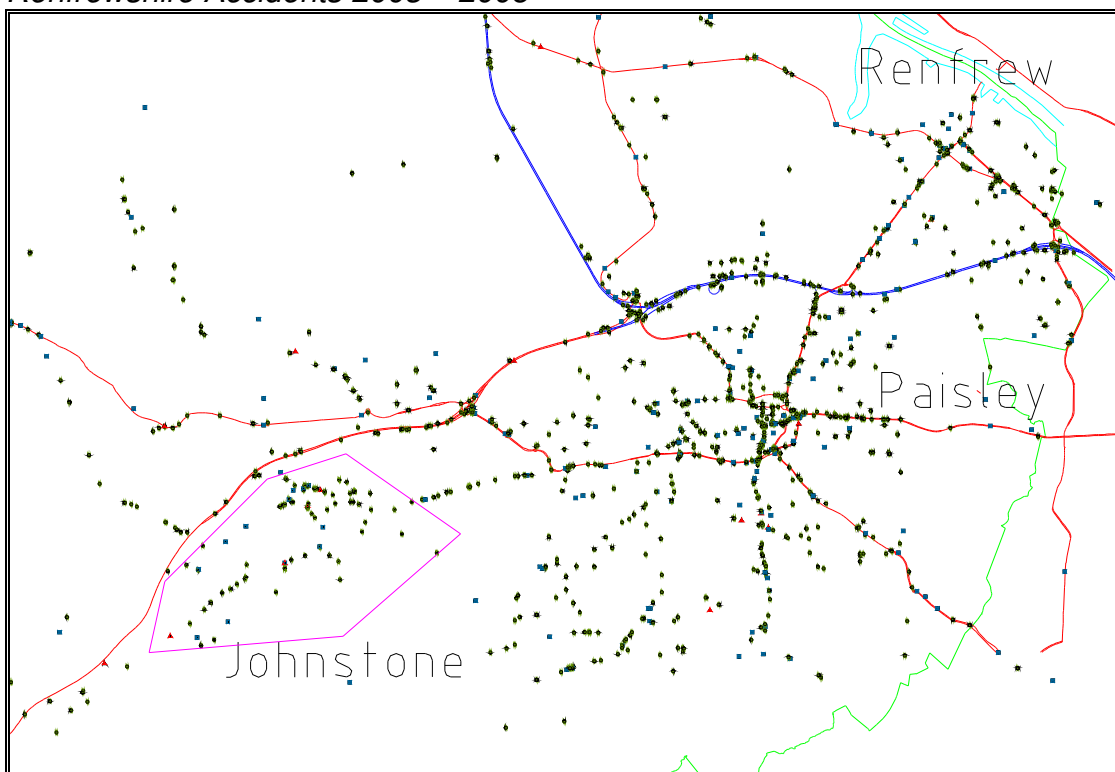
Casualties

Casualty numbers and severity in one of the first pilot areas indicated a marked reduction in total casualties when comparing the 3 year period 1997-99 with 2003-05 (see diagrams below). As a basket of road safety measures have been implemented across Renfrewshire we cannot say definitively that the community road safety initiative has been the sole driver. It is likely that the combination of measures have resulted in the reduction in casualty numbers and severity. Further surveys and analysis will be required in order to establish which parts of the road safety strategy are having greatest impact on reducing casualty levels across Renfrewshire and in particular in residential areas.

Renfrewshire Accidents 1997 - 1999



Renfrewshire Accidents 2003 - 2005



Attitudinal Surveys

A questionnaire was forwarded to each locally elected councillor for feedback on how their community had received and embraced the initiative. All areas reported that the campaign had been received favourably and most felt that the campaign had impacted upon the behaviour of local drivers. Over half of the councillors also stated that they felt there was a need for an ongoing campaign to maintain momentum and ensure that drivers did not lapse back into speeds above 20mph in the residential areas. The questionnaire also requested any ideas or changes that should be introduced. The only change requested was in the design of the leaflet. Several councillors felt that a map instead of list of streets be included on the leaflet.

The ongoing campaigning and publicity requested by the councillors is being taken forward in the form of introducing a Community Charter. This will involve the community council and / or councillor engaging with locals to get them to sign up that they will always drive at less than 20mph in their residential and other residential areas. This again is a form of publicity and reminder to the local community of the need for reduced speeds.

The Community Road Safety Initiative has now been rolled out to cover 95% of all residential areas across Renfrewshire. To date, leaflets have been produced covering 40 residential communities. Getting the message across was made easier in the subsequent phases/roll-out of the initiative as the campaign was already underway to highlight to all drivers the need to slow down to less than 20mph in all residential areas. The key to the success of this further roll out will be to keep up the momentum and regularly remind drivers to slow down.

Summary

The Community Road Safety Initiative has now been rolled out to 40 different residential communities across Renfrewshire. From a successful pilot in one area in 2001 followed by the 17 areas chosen for the extension of the pilot, the Community Road Safety Initiative has been embraced by the local communities across Renfrewshire as a way forward for them to have a positive impact on reducing the number of accidents in their residential areas. The success of the pilot schemes speaks for itself as there was demand from other communities for the Initiative.

To date, the 40 residential areas have been covered by around 40,000 leaflets, approximately 200 signs and 450 roundells painted on the roads. The cost for implementation of this Initiative amounted to approx £60,000 in total for coverage of 40 areas. This compares very favourably as £60,000 would only provide typical physical traffic calming in 2 to 4 areas. In addition, the initiatives could prove to have an even greater impact due to its effect on driver behaviour on a wider geographical area.

What have we learned from the Community Road Safety Initiative?

- Drivers are reasonable and do not wish to cause road accidents.
- Most adults, especially those with children, support the scheme and are convinced that its always someone else doing the speeding...when asked, they always indicate that they drive within the speed limit of 30mph. In a recent survey of Renfrewshire households, 83% state they always drive at 20 mph or less in any residential area.
- Most householders relate to the need for reduced speeds as they have safety concerns for their own children or local children.
- A large proportion of householders are of the opinion that it is strangers to the area, particularly white van drivers, who are speeding. However, surveys have indicated that its local drivers in the local area.
- Partnership working is essential and should include the council, police, community council, residents, tenants and local associations/groups – the more people promoting the message, the better.
- The individual components of the initiative were not unique in themselves however bringing about change in attitudes and behaviour required the package of measures and essentially required local residents to take ownership of the initiative.
- In order to keep up momentum and maintain the speed reduction in residential areas it is essential to continually market / highlight / campaign and remind individuals to consider their speed, particularly in residential areas.

COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH INITIATIVE

In order to address the issues of speeding drivers or perception of speeding drivers on the distributor roads within residential areas the council piloted a Community Speedwatch initiative to complement the Community Safety Initiative.

The Community Speedwatch Initiative is currently being taken forward by Renfrewshire Council in partnership with Strathclyde Police. The initiative involves community volunteers operating a portable road side speed activated display where speeding is a problem. Road signage identifies what is happening at the site and drivers see their speed indicated on the display. Registration numbers are taken and the Police have the option of writing to drivers who speed explaining that residents are concerned at speeding in this area and seeking compliance with the speed limit. The process is non-confrontational but engages the community in taking direct action.

As described earlier, there are a number of engineering measures which can be deployed to reduce vehicle speeds. These include traffic islands, speed cushions, variable message signs etc. The costs associated with such measures are high however and the Council is only able to tackle a fraction of the locations where action is desirable through road risk analysis or demand from communities. Significantly, in recent years views on the use of speed cushions have become mixed. Typically, communities become polarised for

and against speed cushions and the council are now reluctant to use these except over limited lengths of road and in special circumstances.

Against this background, the Council was keen to offer a positive alternative to communities concerned over speeding and provide the opportunity for them to become directly engaged. Other schemes being trialled in the UK involved local volunteers being trained in the use of a speed gun. The volunteers, with the aid of road traffic signs and Council support, measured vehicle speeds at a known speeding location and noted the numbers of vehicles who exceed the speed limit. Thereafter the Police were in a position to issue warning letters having traced vehicle owners. No penalty is issued in this process and the exercise can rightly be called education rather than enforcement. A problem with these schemes is the potential confrontation associated with locals pointing a speed gun at a driver. Without the backing of uniformed Police, this action could be perceived as provocative and therefore generate a negative reaction from the motorist or even worse, road side confrontation.

In Renfrewshire we explored other options of delivering this kind of initiative and determined that the best way forward was to use a portable speed activated display instead of a speed gun. The display indicates to drivers, in large numerals, their speed. Road signage on approach to the Community Speedwatch initiative identifies the purpose of the exercise. From the motorists perspective therefore it is clear what the people at the side of the road are doing and the display indicates the degree to which they are exceeding the speed limit. It is therefore very much a passive operation and not confrontational. If a driver significantly exceeds the speed limit (i.e. more than 10mph above it), a registration number can be taken and the Police can trace the driver and issue a letter. Working in partnership with the Police we seek to ensure that the letter is sympathetic and simply seeks modification of behaviour to reflect a community's concerns. We perceive it to be counter productive to issue warnings threatening future enforcement action.

The Council recognises that on most urban roads on most days it is the same people who travel at roughly the same time. So erratic community involvement which applies gentle pressure to modify behaviour we believe to show more potential than conventional sporadic Police enforcement. Significantly, we find that the typical speeder is not the stereotypical boy racer but simply an average driver. The positive aspect of this is that average people generally respond positively to community pressure to behave reasonably.

Setting up Community Speedwatch

One of the great values of Community Speedwatch is that there is no necessity to have historical accident problems or even identified road risk for this project to be supported. It is sufficient simply that a local community perceives speeding as a concern and recognises that by tackling this they can improve the quality of life. Given an active community council or residents association, who are prepared to volunteer the Council can engage with these groups and provide a framework for taking the initiative forward.

The first issues to be tackled include provision of road signage and equipment combined with basic training. It is clearly important that volunteer groups understand how to deploy road traffic signs, combined with the speed activated equipment at a location agreed with the Roads Authority and the Police. The Police offer the volunteers guidance on safe practices as well as confrontation avoidance. Appendix 2 and 3 detail information given to groups and the record sheets used. To date, the Council has arranged insurance to cover personal liability and this is around £350 per equipment set.

Local volunteers are encouraged to target specific sites for periods of roughly one hour on different days and at different times of the day. Local newsletters through the community can raise the profile of the exercise as can coverage in local newspapers.

The pilot exercise in Renfrewshire has focussed on Glasgow Road in the Ralston area. It is very significant that when the Community Speedwatch is in action, there is an immediate marked speed reduction with speeds reducing to below 30mph to around 27mph as drivers are embarrassed by a sign displaying their speed.

A reduction in speed is also noticeable in the opposite direction, due to roadside presence, high visibility clothing and drivers recognising the Community Speedwatch volunteers. It is anticipated that this in turn will lead to educating drivers to recognise when they are driving in excess of the speed limit.

The Glasgow Road site is an urban dual carriageway with average vehicle speeds in the mid 30's which is typical across the Council area but has a significant proportion of vehicles doing very much higher speeds. Local residents are concerned to cross this road and indeed the accident rate is higher than would be considered normal.

Sections of Glasgow Road have had sufficient accidents to justify deployment of the Police mobile speed camera enforcement team.

Prior to commencing the pilot, extensive speed measurement was carried out on Glasgow Road and at other locations within Ralston where we intended piloting this scheme. Evaluation will take place for the next 24 months (January 2007 – January 2009) to determine the effect of the scheme.

Unlike previous speed gun schemes this exercise has attracted positive newspaper coverage. Consequently there has been very strong demand from communities throughout Renfrewshire to engage. Our intention therefore is to purchase around 6-12 sets of equipment which can be loaned to communities.



Resources

Council input to a Community Speedwatch initiative is estimated at approximately £1400 with respect to the provision of signs and speed activated displays. Staff time may be around 8 hours per initiative when meetings and training is considered. Thereafter the exercise operates at no cost to the Council and is undertaken entirely by volunteers. Early indications are therefore that this approach is likely to be highly cost effective in comparison with the alternatives available to the Council to tackle speeding problems.

A significant value of this approach is that the whole debate on speeding within communities is elevated within community councils and residents associations. Rather than being negative and being critical of a Council unable to deliver engineering solutions, the debate becomes positive and targeted towards self help. This exercise also helps to persuade communities that it is most of us who speed and need to modify our behaviour and not the preconceived concept of "boy racers" or "people who do not live here".



4. CONCLUSION

The Community Road Safety Initiative and Community Speedwatch Initiative being taken forward in Renfrewshire are designed to tackle the underlying cause of many of our road safety issues – speeding drivers. The initiatives highlight that it is ordinary people who are travelling above speed limits and that they can address issues in their community by altering their behaviour. The initiatives give a positive, direct way in which the local community can work with the council and address some of the issues without the frustration of having a time delay by having their community put into a programme list awaiting funding. Feedback on both initiatives is very positive and encouragingly there has been a reduction in accident numbers across Renfrewshire.

The initiatives are having an impact by delivering the message :

- that driving in residential areas should be carried out in a different way to driving on other types of roads.
- that it is local drivers who know their local area. They should consider that there may be children playing in the street who do not always stop and think before crossing the road.
- that drivers may be well aware of the road layout, where parking usually takes place etc but drivers cannot predict where and when children may be playing—drivers familiar with the environment usually pay less attention to the signs etc than when driving in an unfamiliar area. Thus, introducing some change such as roundels on the road or a new sign will usually, initially catch the driver's attention and be a reminder about the speed limit.
- that 20mph should be a maximum speed in all residential areas in order that casualty severity can be limited.
- Usually, the culprit who speeds in the residential area is not the "boy racer" but normal, average people who usually respond to reasonable requests such as slow down.

It is essential that monitoring and evaluation of speeds, accident locations/causes and residents opinions is undertaken. This will allow longer term view to be taken regarding whether there is a need for further measures or show where the initiatives could be altered to provide additional benefits to the local communities. In addition, it is intended that Renfrewshire Council will :-

- Continue to market/advertise the need for reduced speed in residential areas.
- Ensure that initiatives are implemented in conjunction and in support of other road safety campaigns.
- Set up a Community Charter - by the community, for the community. The campaign to address the issues should not be implemented and then left with no follow-up if speeds are not reduced sufficiently. The message of 20's Plenty has to be repeated in order to remind drivers to slow down.
(Accident analysis indicated that there are certain age groups more likely to be involved in accidents – under 30 yrs old. This group can be young adults living at home, young and single/couples with or without children or with children too young to be out playing in street. Therefore, this group may not consider that speeding in the community is a significant issue that involves them. Therefore the Community Charter will have to cover two areas – families (a reminder that there is a need to reduce speed in all residential areas) and younger people, more likely to be involved in accidents. It is considered that the groups will likely have to be approached via different types of advertising to get the message across).
- Monitoring, evaluation and review of scheme
 - undertake surveys to measure changes in driver speeds,

- subjective evaluation through door to door interviews/attitude surveys through the citizens panel,
 - ongoing accident analysis,
 - education in schools, colleges to target young drivers/pupils – attitudes etc. Use of Scottish Household surveys etc to find out if any relevant info.
- Evaluation of Community Speedwatch and roll out to other communities.
 - Bench mark with other councils to establish if our broad blended Road Safety strategy is resulting in a better performance than the performance levels in those councils not pursuing a blended strategy.

We have recognised the need to reinforce National road safety campaigns at a local level in an attempt to reduce average speeds on our urban roads. We have the benefit as a Council of direct access to the entire population through the Council's wide range of services. Through utilising this network and reinforcing driver education with initiatives like Community Speedwatch and Community Road Safety Initiative, we hope to achieve far more ambitious targets for casualty reduction and significantly improve the quality of life within our communities.

Results to date are encouraging however further analysis and on going review is necessary to ensure that the Initiatives continue to be promoted and speed reduction becomes the norm when drivers enter residential areas.

Until there are intelligent vehicles in place that automatically adjust speed in relation to the driving conditions and environment, it is necessary to rely on intelligent and considerate drivers who have regard for others in their society. These drivers exist.....they just sometimes need reminders that they have the power and it is within their control whether Peter plays safely in the street and grows into adulthood unharmed by the trauma of becoming a road casualty statistic.

Appendix 1

Community Road Safety Initiative

Typical Leaflet



20 **TWENTY's PLENTY** **20**
Help our community become a safer place

20 Our local community is concerned about the speed of traffic in the area.

20 Drivers need to **SLOW DOWN** as children cannot judge the speed at a distance of moving vehicles.

20 Driving at an inappropriate speed, particularly in a built-up area, can have lethal consequences for pedestrians.

20 This will also encourage our community to enjoy walking in the neighbourhood.

20 We all agree that drivers should **SLOW DOWN**. Just a few miles per hour can make the difference between life and death.

20 Let's act together and make this a safer and more pleasant to live in.

20's PLENTY

Appendix 2

RENFREWSHIRE COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH

Community Speedwatch is a Partnership involving Renfrewshire Council, Strathclyde Police and volunteers from local community groups, who are concerned about inappropriate vehicle speeds where they stay.

Participants are of driving age (17 and over) and are trained how to collate information on vehicle speeds in their streets. The information is passed to the Police and the Council for their attention so they can take appropriate action.

A radar equipped instant messaging sign is set up at the side of the road which displays the speed, in large numbers, to passing vehicles. Registration numbers are logged against those vehicles driving in excess of the speed limit. Time, date and weather conditions are also recorded.

Drivers are aware from the display that they have exceeded the speed limit. The police have the option of sending a letter of warning to the vehicle owner.

Any community group who wishes to be involved in the initiative will have to meet certain requirements:

- There should be a minimum of 6 volunteers in a local area group including a Co-ordinator and Deputy and 2 on the roadside at any one time.
- All volunteers must be of driving age (at least 17 years old) and must "check-in/ phone their local Police office before going out to monitor speeds. (Community Policing Sergeant 0141 532 6012/ 6023)
- Speed monitoring sites should be pre-agreed with the Police and the council, must have a 30 mph or less, speed limit and must not be on a trunk road.
- Advanced warning signage must be set up 45m before the Radar Sign. The council will loan out the Radar Sign and the Warning Sign.
- High visibility jackets, mobile telephone and public liability insurance must be obtained and used by the group (initially the Council has agreed to provide these in the first year)

Anyone who would like further information about the Community Speedwatch initiative should contact:-

Inspector M. Oates of Strathclyde Police 0141 532 6023

The Head of Roads, Renfrewshire Council, Cotton Street, Paisley

www.renfrewshire.gov.uk

