

Scrutiny

Final Report

Forest of Dean Area Speed Limit Task Group

Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee

27th January 2009



Gloucestershire
COUNTY COUNCIL

Forest of Dean Area Speed Limit Task Group Final Report

Contents	Page
Chairperson's Foreword	3
Section 1 - Introduction	
Why was the task group set up?	4
Membership of the task group	4
Methodology	5
Section 2 - Findings	
Examples of area based speed limits in other parts of the Country	7
Views of local people and organisations	8
Accident statistics and traffic volumes in the central Forest area	11
Do we need to do something?	17
Options considered	18
Education Campaign	19
Proposed boundaries, location of gateways and signage	20
Projected costs involved with implementing the Forest 40 Zone	21
Section 3 – Summary of Recommendations	23
Annex A – Results of the Parish and Town Council consultation exercise	25

Report compiled by Joanne Bolton, Scrutiny Advisor, Gloucestershire County Council (Tel: 01452 425075 Email: joanne.bolton@gloucestershire.gov.uk)

Forest of Dean Area Speed Limit Task Group Final Report

Chairpersons Foreword

It gives me great pleasure to present the findings of the Forest of Dean Area Speed Limit Task Group.

The review has been an excellent example of multi-agency scrutiny with the task group taking evidence from a number of local organisations. These ranged from the Forestry Commission and the Verderers' Court to Gloucestershire Constabulary and the Time & Place Charity. I would like to place on record my thanks to the representatives of these organisations for giving their time so freely to attend meetings. With the unhappy record of accidents involving young people in the Forest of Dean I was particularly pleased that a Member of the Youth Parliament was able to attend one of our meetings.

There is little doubt that the dangers to the motorist are significantly heightened by the enclosed nature of the roads in the central forest area and the presence of wild animals, particularly fallow deer, and free roaming sheep. There have been a number of serious accidents during the last five years and deer casualty rates are amongst the highest in the country.

Our recommendation to introduce a 40mph advisory speed limit in the central wooded area forms the focal point for a wider education campaign to raise awareness of the dangers posed by deer and free roaming sheep and to persuade motorists to drive more slowly. This type of approach appears to have worked well in other areas such as Cannock Chase in Staffordshire.

I commend the task group's findings and recommendations to you and hope that they can be taken forward.

Finally, I would like to thank the members of the task group and the officers at the County Council for contributing to such a worthwhile piece of work.

Shaun Parsons
Chairperson of the Forest of Dean Area Speed Limit Task Group

Section 1 - Introduction

1 Why was the task group set up?

The Overview and Scrutiny Management resolved on the 12th May 2008 to set up a task group to consider the feasibility of an area wide speed limit for the wooded area in the centre of the Forest of Dean. The Committee set up the task group in response to the following motion referred from Council on the 20th February 2008:

‘Gloucestershire County Council is aware of some anomalies in the application of speed-limits on the county’s highways network.

These anomalies are particularly apparent in the Forest of Dean, where the national speed limit applies outside built up areas throughout the woodlands.

Council calls upon Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee to set up a working group to look into the issue of speed limits in the Forest of Dean and other areas of concern’

1.1 Specifically the task group was set up to make recommendations to the Committee on:

- The appropriateness or otherwise of an area speed limit
- The boundary of the area to be covered if an area speed limit is introduced
- The level at which any speed limit should be set
- The evidence required to support an application to the Department for Transport
- Any wider issues that have been identified during the review that could be of relevance in other parts of the county

2. Membership of the task group

2.1 The task group was made up of the following elected members:

- Cllr Phil Awford
- Cllr Bruce Hogan
- Cllr Ceri Jones
- Cllr Shaun Parsons
- Cllr Alan Preest

2.2 The task group co-opted the following members:

- Councillor Graham Morgan - Chairman of the Forest of Dean Road Safety Liaison Group
- Tom Hotchkiss and Tom Payne, Youth Parliament members for Gloucester and the Forest of Dean

2.3 The following officers supported the task group:

- David Radford – Road Safety Manager
- Clive Fluck – Gloucestershire Constabulary
- Jenny Wilks - Gloucestershire Highways Area Stakeholder Manager
- Simon Harper – Scrutiny Team Leader
- Joanne Bolton – Scrutiny Adviser

2.4 Further support was provided by Janice Mouldsdales, Information Officer, and Clare Davis Deputy Manager, of the Research and Intelligence Team, in assisting with the parish and town council consultation exercise.

3. Methodology

3.1 The task group's work covered a six month period from the date of the first meeting in July 2008 to reporting to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee in January 2009.

3.2 To begin the investigation the task group learned about the 40mph area speed limits in operation in Dartmoor and the New Forest National Parks, including the signage and gateways being used.

3.3 The task group then examined accident statistics, traffic volumes and speed survey results for the central Forest area. The task group also looked into the numbers and locations of deer casualties that have occurred across the Forest of Dean from 2003 to 2007.

3.4 The task group undertook a site visit to the Forest of Dean and visited potential gateways to the area speed limit zone on the B4234 at Mirey Stock and the B4226 at Cinderford Bridge. Members also travelled through the central forest area to the Wenchford picnic area near Blakeney.

3.5 The task group heard from the following local people and organisations inviting them to comment on whether an area speed limit would be a good idea, the extent to which it would make roads safer and the level of speed limit they felt would be appropriate.

- Kieron Griffin, Steward to the Verderers' Court
- Rob Guest, Deputy Surveyor, Forestry Commission
- Jimmy Martin, Time and Place
- Cllr Terry Hale, Forest of Dean District Council
- Inspector David Collicott, Gloucestershire Constabulary
- Sandy Lang, Royal Forest of Dean College
- Gemma Doyle, Gloucestershire Safety Camera Partnership
- Mark Harper MP, Forest of Dean

3.6 The task group also consulted with Parish and Town Councils through an on-line survey. The results of the consultation are provided in Annex A of the report.

4. Findings

The task group's findings can be divided into the following nine key sections:

- 1 Examples of area based speed limits in other parts of the country.
- 2 Views of local people and organisations.
- 3 Accident statistics, traffic volumes and speed surveys in the central Forest area.
- 4 Do we need to do something?
- 5 Options considered.
- 6 Education Campaign.
- 7 Proposed boundaries, location of gateways and signage.
- 8 Projected costs of implementing the Forest 40 Zone.

5. Recommendations

As a result of its findings the task group has made 12 recommendations. A summary of the recommendations can be found in section 3 of the report.

Section 2 - Findings

1. Examples of area based speed limits in other parts of the Country

1.2 Dartmoor and New Forest National Parks

1.2.1 Mandatory 40mph area speed limits have been introduced in the New Forest and Dartmoor National Parks. The 40mph speed limit only covers lower class rural roads and not A roads. It is reported that the introduction of area speed limits in both areas resulted in reduced speeds and a lower number of accidents. However, no statistics are available to support this.

1.2.2 The issues around enforcement of the speed limits in both areas have been recognised, and good use had been made of 'hearts and minds' campaigns to persuade people not to exceed the speed limit. Special permission was obtained from the Department for Transport (DfT) to mark the speed limit on the road surface rather than on signposts every 500 metres, as would ordinarily be required by the Traffic Signs Regulations and general directions. In both areas the gateways to the zones covered by the speed limit are clearly marked.



Dartmoor scheme gateway treatment



New Forest scheme major road gateway

1.3 Cannock Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

1.3.1 Cannock Chase is the smallest mainland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) at 68km (26 square miles). It is made up of lowland heathland, woodland, designated parkland, sand and gravel quarries and mixed agriculture. The area is well known for its fallow deer, and in an effort to reduce the number of deer collisions, the Highways Authority has introduced an advisory 40mph limit on selected roads, using the gateway treatments but no repeater signs. It is reported that the introduction of the scheme has resulted in reduced speeds and a lower number of accidents. However, as with Dartmoor and the New Forest National Parks there are no specific statistics to support this.



2. Views of local people and organisations

2.1 The task group consulted with relevant local people and organisations, to hear their views on whether an area speed limit would be a good idea, the extent to which it would make roads safer, and the level of speed limit they felt would be appropriate. A summary of their views is outlined in the sections below.

2.2 Kieron Griffin, Steward to the Verderers' Court

2.2.1 The Verderers sworn duty is to protect the 'vert and venison' in the Forest. The court sits four times per year at Speech House.

2.2.2 Sheep were temporarily removed from the Forest of Dean after the foot and mouth outbreak in 2001. Shortly afterwards the Verderers became aware of a problem caused by the spread of deer into areas of the Forest where they had previously not been common due to the presence of sheep. There was a marked increase in road collisions involving deer as a result of the way they had spread.



2.2.3 The Verderers have campaigned for a reduction in speed limits in the Forest, as well as safety measures to reduce deer collisions. They are particularly concerned that the B4226 and the A4136 are amongst the worst roads for deer collisions in the country.

2.2.4 The Verderers are in support of a 40mph area speed limit but they had been advised that the Police would not support this due to enforcement issues. They also support the use of more vehicle activated signs, particularly along the A4136 as they feel that they could help in reducing the number of deer collisions.

2.3 Rob Guest, Deputy Surveyor, Forestry Commission

2.3.1 The Forestry Commission, as the body responsible for managing the wooded areas, record all known deer collisions on the Forest roads and report them on a yearly basis.

2.3.2 There has been a significant rise in deer collisions over the past 5 years with approximately 70 deer killed each year. Over half of all deer kills occurred on the A4136. Two stretches were particularly bad: Northern United to Mirey Stock, and the Robin Hood stretch to Staunton. A large number of collisions also occurred on The Speech House to Dilke stretch of the B4226.

2.3.3 The Forestry Commission carries out a census of the deer every 3 years. The results of the census determine the level of the yearly cull, which is usually in excess of 100.

2.3.4 It was felt that lower vehicle speeds would reduce the number of deer collisions and lessen the injuries and damage resulting from collisions. In association with Gloucestershire Highways, warning signs have been placed in some hotspots, and roadside vegetation was also being cut back to improve visibility along the roadside. Other initiatives have been undertaken but had proved unsuccessful.

2.3.5 Sheep are much more predictable than deer, it was unusual for them to just suddenly cross the road. 25 sheep had been killed in road accidents in the Forest of Dean in the past year.

2.3.6 It was felt that a 40mph area speed limit would improve the safety of the area.

2.4 Jimmy Martin, Driving Instructor, Time and Place

2.4.1 Time and Place in partnership with the Gloucestershire Road Safety Team, has been working with both primary and secondary school children to raise awareness of the potential impact of dangerous driving. This is in response to the increase in numbers of young people killed and injured on Forest roads during 2005. Time and Place help in educating young people to prepare them to be better drivers of the future and to reduce the number of serious road traffic accidents.

2.4.2 Time and Place recommend a 40 mph speed limit for the entire Forest area not just the central roads. A car driving at 40 mph or lower will have more chance of breaking in time to avoid collisions. An area speed limit would raise enforcement issues for the Police, however there was a strong feeling that something has to be done.

2.5 Cllr Terry Hale, Chairman of the Forest of Dean District Council Transport Task Group.

2.5.1 Cllr Hale supports the introduction of a 40mph area speed limit in the central Forest area.

2.5.2 Although outside of the central wooded area, Cllr Hale, reported that there were on-going speeding problems on the B4228, Coleford to St Briavels Road, in the Sling area. A petition for a reduced speed limit included over 400 signatures. Local people believed that it was essential that action was taken to reduce speed on this road.

2.6 Inspector David Collicott, Gloucestershire Constabulary

2.6.1 Educating young people is critical in ensuring that accident levels in the area since 2005 continue to fall. An area speed limit is not the panacea to all of the problems in the Forest of Dean. Speed limits of the roads should be appropriate to the locations.

2.6.2 The majority of people drive at speeds within speed limits, however there are others who will continue to drive at excess speed irrespective of the speed limit imposed. There are also drivers who drive at their own self imposed lower speed, which then raises the question of whether they would feel the need to increase their speed if an area speed limit was introduced.

2.6.3 As a result of the topography of the central Forest area, and health and safety guidelines, it was difficult to find suitable locations for enforcing a mandatory 40mph limit. Consequently it was not possible to provide the same level of enforcement throughout the whole of the area.

2.6.4 Vehicle activated signs are very expensive but it was recognised that they could be helpful in the right locations.

2.7 Sandy Lang, Royal Forest of Dean College

- 2.7.1** Some of the young people killed on the Forest roads had been students at the college, understandably this had had a massive impact on the rest of the students.
- 2.7.2** The college recognises that driver behaviour and attitudes have to change to improve safety. The Performing Arts students have developed a presentation demonstrating the impact of dangerous driving. Those caught by the Police for speeding or using a mobile phone whilst driving are given the option of watching the presentation instead of receiving penalty points. The Police have confirmed that the presentation is having a successful impact on drivers.
- 2.7.3** Different speed limits on roads over a relatively short distance can be confusing. A 40mph area speed limit would be appropriate for the area and would hopefully reduce fatalities, however some drivers will still drive at excessive speeds. Deer warning signs could be clearer, and there should be more of them.

2.8 Gemma Doyle, Gloucestershire Safety Camera Partnership

- 2.8.1** The Safety Camera Partnership consults with the local community. In particular the partnership consults with colleges across the county, providing education on the type of behaviour which could influence accidents.
- 2.8.2** A speed enforcement route was introduced along the A417 involving mobile cameras at 12 locations. The Safety Camera Partnership carries out public consultation through the local community including parish councils, and this consultation helps to achieve buy-in and support from local people.
- 2.8.3** The key issue is driving at the appropriate speed for the road. An area speed limit may not be able to be enforced effectively

2.9 Mark Harper MP – Forest of Dean

- 2.9.1** Mark Harper was not able to attend the witness session on 30 September due to other commitments but he kindly sent in his views by email. The text of his email is repeated in sections 2.9.2 to 2.9.6 below.
- 2.9.2** I know that road safety remains a real concern among Forest residents, notwithstanding the improvements we have seen in casualty figures. The recent fatalities on the A48 have brought this issue to the fore once again. However, one thing that has become clear to me having studied all the evidence and talked to many local residents, road safety professionals and the police is that there is no simple solution.
- 2.9.3** A number of the fatal accidents over the last few years involved speeds in excess of the legal limit. Therefore, a reduction in the speed limit would have made no difference. In the case of the recent fatalities on the A48, the investigations into the causes are still ongoing so I would not like to comment on those specific events. However, it is worth noting that this road already has a 50mph speed limit along much of its length. Despite this, accidents including very serious ones, still occur. I myself witness some extremely dangerous driving on the A48 on a fairly regular basis.

2.9.4 I have studied the New Forest example and discussed the matter with the local MPs in order to see if this held any lessons for us. Given the differences in the geography and road layout of our respective areas I don't believe that it does.

2.9.5 Speed limits are a maximum, not a target. Different roads and different conditions require different speeds. We need to ensure that we give our drivers the tools, when they are taught, to be able to identify the most appropriate speed and way of driving for given conditions. I therefore continue to believe that improved education is the best way forward. We need to teach children and young adults before they even get behind the wheel that while excessive speed can be lethal, driving at inappropriate speeds – even if it is under the limit – can be as dangerous. Focusing on the speed limit can obscure the fact that the most important thing is to fit your driving speed and approach to the prevailing weather and road conditions. Especially in the wooded area of the Forest of Dean, weather and road conditions can vary significantly even across relatively short distances. Ensuring that drivers take that into account is very important in improving road safety.

2.9.6 Therefore, superficially appealing though an area speed limit sounds, I do not think it would make our Forest roads any safer. Ensuring that organisations like Time and Place are properly supported to continue their excellent work together with the police and the road safety unit at the County Council is I think more likely to make our roads safer than an area speed limit.

3. Accident statistics and traffic volumes in the central Forest area

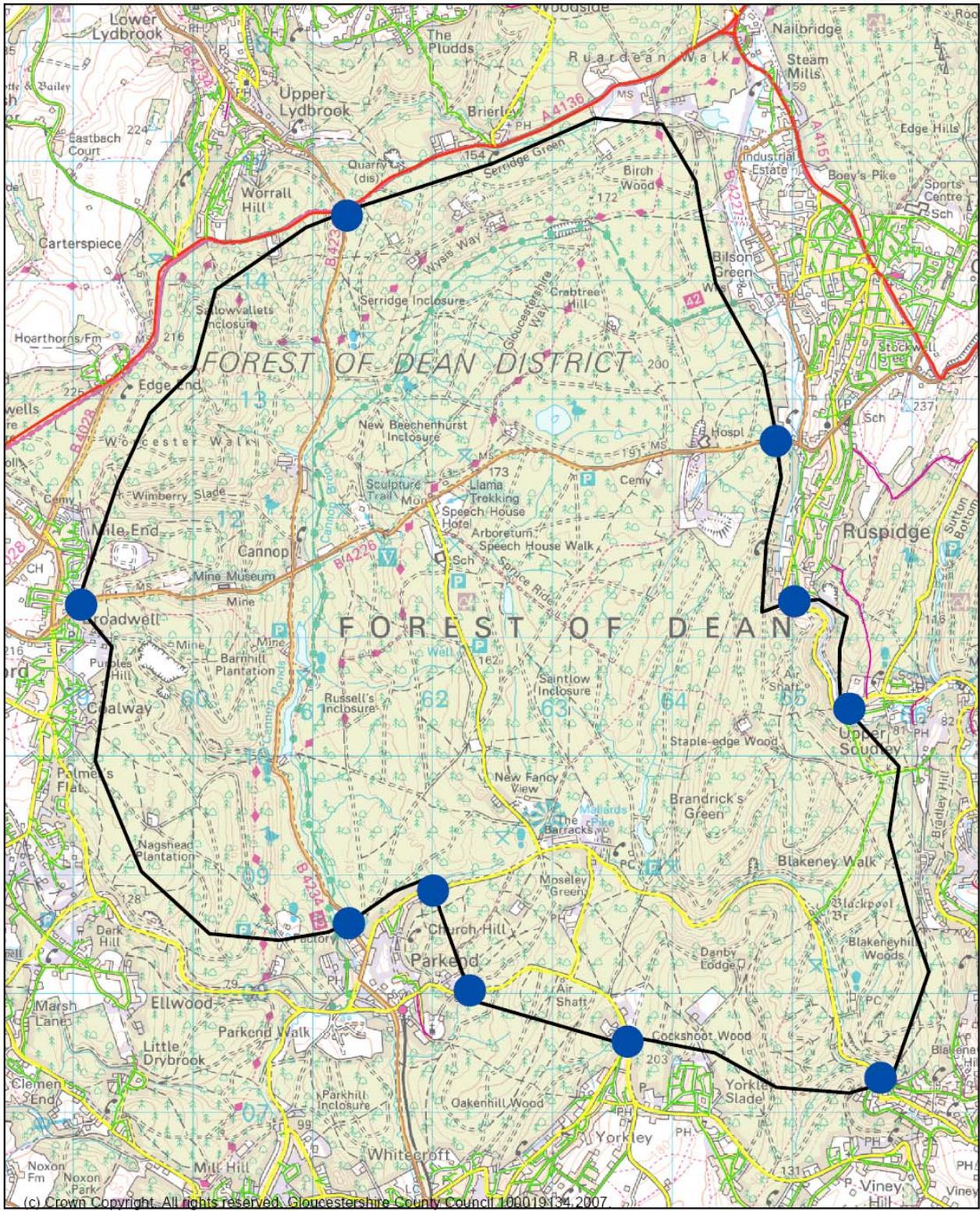
3.1 Map 1 on the next page outlines the location and the severity of the accidents which have occurred on class 2, 3 and 4 roads over the period 2003 to June 2008.

3.2 The tables below outline the accident and casualty statistics over the same period. In total 58 accidents have occurred, with 93 casualties, 4 of which were fatalities.

Year	Accident Statistics				
	Fatal	Serious	Slight	Total	Damage
2003	0	3	9	12	10
2004	0	2	7	9	11
2005	2	1	14	17	12
2006	1	1	10	12	4
2007	1	1	4	6	6
2008 (6 months)	0	0	2	2	5
Total	4	8	46	58	48

Year	Casualty Statistics			
	Fatal	Serious	Slight	Total
2003	0	4	16	20
2004	0	2	12	14
2005	2	5	17	24
2006	1	4	20	25
2007	1	1	6	8
2008 (6 months)	0	0	2	2
Total	4	16	73	93

Map 1



<p>Gloucestershire County Council Environment Directorate Shire Hall, Westgate Street Gloucester GL1 2TG Tel: 01452 425600 www.gloucestershire.gov.uk</p>	<p>DRAWN BY: D Radford SCALE: 1:43,362 DATE: Nov 2008 DRAWING NO:</p>	<p>Forest of Dean Proposed Gateway Locations</p>	<p> Proposed Gateways</p>
<p><small>This map is reproduced from (or based upon) Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office (c) Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Gloucestershire County Council 100019134, 2007.</small></p>			

Road length and accident rates on central Forest roads

Combining accidents road length and traffic flow to produce an accident rate per 100 million vehicle kilometres. Only possible to calculate a rate for the two B class roads for which we have traffic flow details "off the shelf".

Road Class & Number	From	To	Total Km
B4226	Broadwell	Cannop X Roads	1.88
B4226	Cannop X Roads	Speech House Junction	1.35
B4226	Speech House Junction	Ruspidge Halt (Disused)	3.08
B4234	Parkend	Cannop X Roads	3.17
B4234	Cannop X Roads	A4136 Junction	3.14
Class 3/ 018	The Barracks	Speech House Junction	3.23
Class 3/ 355	Parkend	Blakeney	5.42
Class 3/ 017	Moseley Green	Mallards Pike	1.11
Class 3/ 016	Parkend	Yorkley	1.70
Class 3/ 354	Upper Soudley	Ruspidge	1.30
Class 4/ 3008	Blackpool Bridge	Upper Soudley	2.04
Total			27.42

Road Class & Number	From	To	Total Km	Approx Traffic Flow (24 hr) Total Km workday)	Accidents (5 years 2003 -07)per year	Accidents per year	Accident Rate (per 100 million veh km)
B4226	Broadwell	Cannop X Roads	1.878	4500	8	1.6	55.2
B4226	Cannop X Roads	Ruspidge Halt (Disused)	4.430	8000	31	6.2	51.0
B4234	Parkend	Cannop X Roads	3.168	2500	2	0.4	14.7
B4234	Cannop X Roads	A4136 Junction	3.141	4500	1	0.2	4.1

Speed Survey Results

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
DATE	LOCATION	TYPE	DURATION	DIRECTION1	DIRECTION2	DIR1_MEAN	DIR2_MEAN	DIR1_85%ile	DIR2_85%ile
15/09/2008	(Class 3) YORKLEY ROAD, PARKEND	RADAR	PEAK	EASTBOUND	WESTBOUND	39.9	40.0	43.5	44
17/09/2008	(Class 3) MOSLEY GREEN, PARKEND	RADAR	PEAK	NORTHBOUND	SOUTHBOUND	40.0	38.8	46	44
17/09/2008	(Class 3) BLACKPOOL BRIDGE TO PIGEON GREEN RD	RADAR	PEAK	NORTHBOUND	SOUTHBOUND	44.2	43.2	50	49
17/09/2008	(Class 4) UPPER SOUDLEY TO BLACKPOOL BRIDGE RD	RADAR	PEAK	NORTHBOUND	SOUTHBOUND	39.8	39.8	47	45
15/09/2008	(Class 3) SPEECH HOUSE TO THE BARRACKS	RADAR	PEAK	NOTHBOUND	SOUTHBOUND	44.2	44.5	50	50
15/09/2008	(B4234) CANNOP PONDS	RADAR	OFF PK	NORTHBOUND	SOUTHBOUND	42.4	44.6	48	51
15/09/2008	(B4234) NORTH OF CANNOP XRDS	RADAR	OFF PK	NORTHBOUND	SOUTHBOUND	44.8	46.8	53	52
06/01/2008	(B4234) JUST SOUTH OF A4136	RADAR	OFF PK	NORTHBOUND	SOUTHBOUND	40.6	34.6	46	41
15/09/2008	(B4226) MINING MUSEUM	RADAR	OFF PK	EASTBOUND	WESTBOUND	43.2	41.4	49	48
-/12/2007	B4226) EAST OF CANNOP XRDS	TUBES	ONE WEEK	EASTBOUND	WESTBOUND	49.5	46.8	58	54
15/09/2008	(B4226) EAST OF YEW TREE BRAKE CEMETARY	RADAR	OFF PK	EASTBOUND	WESTBOUND	41.4	42.4	46	48

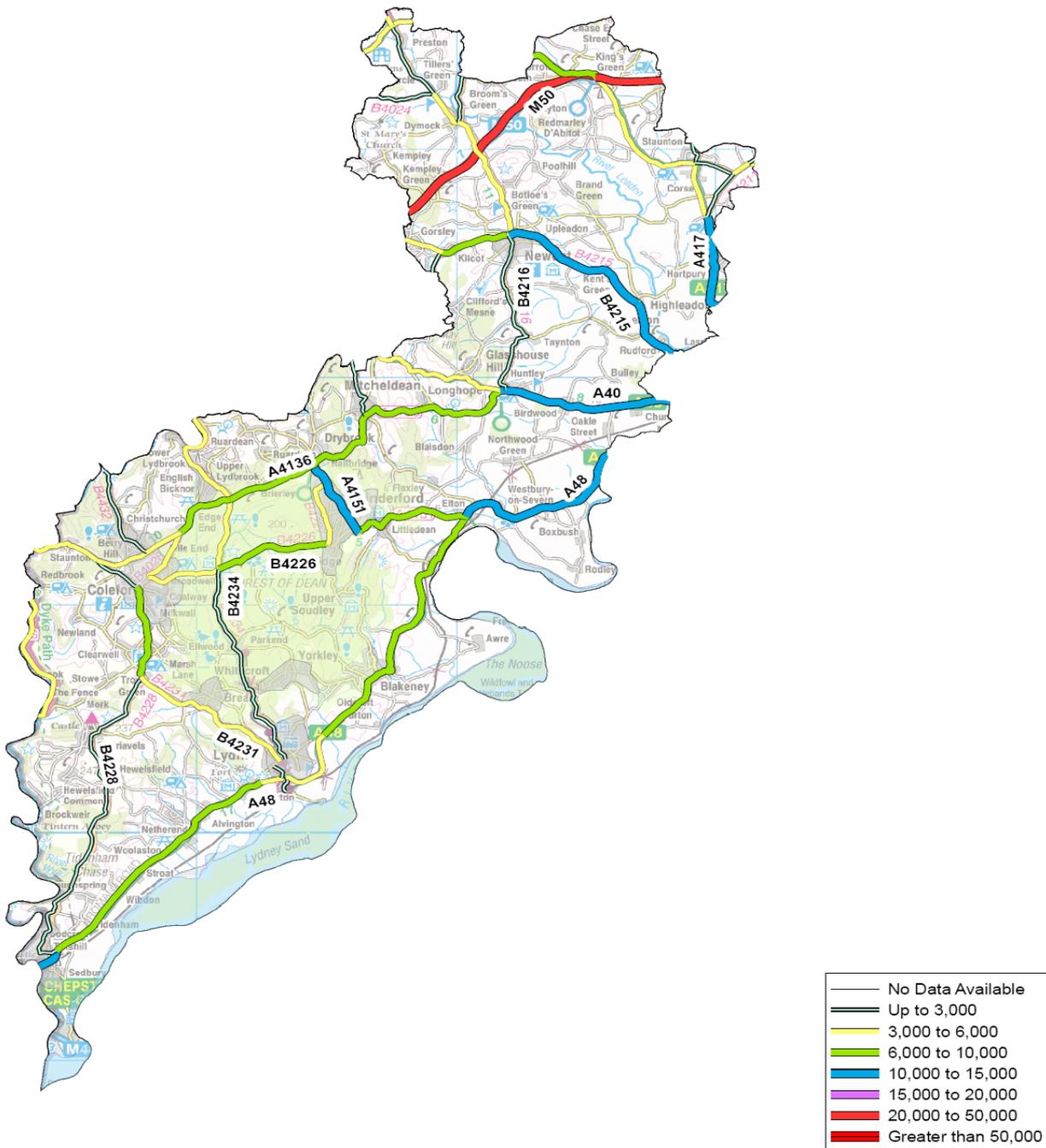
3.5 All the results in the table were obtained from one hour or 100 vehicle radar surveys, with the exception of the site on the B4226 East of Cannop Crossroads, which was obtained from a week long survey using carriageway pressure tubes. The results for mean speeds and 85%ile* speeds are shown by direction of travel, in columns 7-10.

* The speed at or below which 85% of drivers are travelling.

Map 3

Traffic Flow - West of Severn Area 2006

Traffic Flow - 24 hour work day flows



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3.6 This map outlines the traffic flow for the West of Severn Area. The B4226 Cinderford to Cannop Crossroads stretch, in terms of traffic volume is in the same range as the A4136-A48 towards Lydney.

4. Do we need to do something?

4.1 The central area of the Forest of Dean has a very unique character, winding roads running through dense unfenced woodland. Over the period 2003 to June 2008, 58 accidents have occurred in the central Forest area with 93 casualties, 4 of which were fatalities.



4.2 The spread of deer in the area has increased significantly since the foot and mouth outbreak in 2001, when sheep were removed from the Forest, and the deer moved to areas where they had previously not been common. Local people also enjoy commoners' rights to graze sheep and therefore a large number of sheep roam the area, often lying hazardously at the side of the roads.

4.3 Roads restricted only by the national speed limit, such as the one from Speech House to the Barracks, appear open and can encourage people to drive at high speed without regard to the hidden danger of collision with animals. In fact two of the worst roads in the country for road traffic accidents involving deer are located in the Forest of Dean. Approximately 90 deer collisions are recorded in this area every year, and many go unreported. Deer collisions have the potential to do serious damage not only to the deer but also to vehicles and their passengers.

4.4. The results of the parish and town consultation exercise indicate that whilst 31% of respondents feel that deer are a serious safety hazard on roads in the central wooded area, 37% disagree. Perhaps surprisingly more than half of the respondents (52.7%) feel that sheep are a serious hazard. The task group recognise that whilst some of the most serious accidents in the Forest of Dean may appear unexplained, there is always the possibility that the drivers were swerving to avoid animals.

4.5 The task group recognise that whilst animals are a serious safety hazard on the Forest roads, excessive speed, is equally as dangerous. The results of the parish and town council consultation demonstrate that a significant percentage of the respondents (83.3%) feel that drivers regularly exceed the speed limit on the roads in the central wooded area. Also 72% of respondents felt that drivers travel too fast for the conditions.

4.6 Just under half of the respondents to the survey (47.4%) feel that an area speed limit would improve safety on the roads in the central wooded area, and of those who responded to the next question regarding the level of the speed limit, just over half (54.5%) feel that 40mph would be the most appropriate. In addition, the majority of local people and organisations the task group consulted felt that 40mph was the most appropriate speed limit.

4.7 A recent speed survey indicated that the highest average speed recorded was on the B4226 just east of Cannop crossroads close to the family cycle route crossing.

4.8 The task group believe that in the light of the evidence presented, to make the roads safer and to reduce the potential for injury accidents, some form of lower speed limit does need to be implemented in the central Forest area. The task group agree that 40mph is the speed most appropriate for the driving conditions in that area.

5. Options Considered

Having listened to the views of local people and organisations, and considered the statistical evidence, the task group then looked into the three options available for reducing the speed limit in the central Forest area, which are outlined below.

The A4136 is not included in the area speed limit options at 5.3 and 5.4 because it is different in character to the roads running through the central Forest area, and is subject to the national review of speed limits on all A and B roads.

A Linear Limit on the B4226

Two sections of the B4226, which run through the central Forest area, have a reasonably high accident rate of 55.2 and 51.0 per 100-million veh km. This road is amongst the worst in the country for deer collisions. Taking these factors into account the task group considered whether it would be more appropriate and effective to introduce a 40mph linear speed limit just on the B4226, rather than implement an area wide speed limit.

The task group learned however that a series of improvement works were planned for the B4226, in an effort to make the road safer.

A lower limit on the B4226 would have a disadvantage that side roads would then have to be signed as the national speed limit, even though they are of a lower standard.

In view of the improvement works being undertaken, and the problems with additional signing, the task group decided against recommending a linear limit for the B4226.

A mandatory 40mph speed limit in the central Forest area

The task group acknowledge that implementing a mandatory 40mph limit would have the most impact on driver behaviour. However, the task group decided against pursuing this option due to the following reasons:

- It was unlikely to receive the support of the Police, due to the issues involved with speed enforcement.
- The authority would be required to submit a complex application to the DfT for its approval of the scheme, providing details of vehicle speeds, accident rates, and traffic volumes, together with a statement indicating Police support.
- The authority would need to undertake a lengthy and costly traffic regulation order implementation process.
- The DfT requires mandatory limits to have repeater signs and roundels on the roads, every [500] metres, which the task group felt would not be in keeping with the rural woodland setting.

An advisory speed limit in the central Forest area

The task group agree that due to the issues involved with implementing a mandatory speed limit, introducing a 40mph advisory speed limit in the central Forest area is the most appropriate way forward. The task group recognise that whilst this would not be enforceable, it should modify enough drivers behaviour, and lead to a reduction in accidents, for it to be of benefit

5.5.2 Recommendation 1

That a 40mph advisory speed limit is implemented in the central Forest area, and this could be promoted as the Forest 40 Zone.

The A4136

In view of the proposal to introduce the Forest 40 Zone, the task group feel that the appropriateness of the speed limit on the A4136, (just outside of the proposed boundary to the Zone), should be reviewed as a priority, as part of the national review.

The task group also agree that due to the significant number of deer collisions which occur on this road, the review should give consideration to whether there is a need for additional vehicle activated signs, warning of deer to be installed.

5.6.3 Recommendation 2

That the appropriateness of the speed limit on the A4136 be reviewed as a priority.

5.6.4 Recommendation 3

That due to the significant number of deer collisions on the A4136, the review give consideration to whether there is a need for additional vehicle activated warnings signs to be installed.

6. Education Campaign

6.1 The task group recognise that by implementing the Forest 40 Zone, the approach would be one of encouragement rather than enforcement. This would raise awareness of the reasons behind the scheme, and the impact of dangerous driving, particularly excessive speed.

6.2 A road safety programme funded by the County Council Road Safety Group and the Post-16 Education Transport Partnership has already been received by students- in Years 11, 12 and 13, in 34 schools and colleges across the County. The students received a memorable road safety theatre performance from a professional theatre company CragRats. The programme's aim was to raise awareness of the so-called 'fatal four':

- Drink/drug driving.
- Seatbelts,
- Distraction, and

➤ Speed.

6.3 The performance is designed to contribute towards cutting the number of young people killed or seriously injured on the county's roads every year, by seeking to change behaviour and attitude towards safety on the roads.

6.4 The programme has attracted positive feedback from staff and students alike. Further funding is currently being sought to repeat this initiative in 2009/10.

6.5 The task group recognise that there is already good work being undertaken in schools and colleges across the county to promote road safety. The task group agree therefore that an education campaign, highlighting the aims and objectives of the Forest 40 Zone, should be built into the existing road safety education framework in the Forest of Dean.

6.6 The task group recognise that in order to publicise and raise awareness of the Forest 40 Zone, the local media would need to be included in the launch of the scheme and on-going promotion.

6.7 Recommendation 4

That an education campaign, highlighting the aims and objectives of the Forest 40 Zone, be built into the existing road safety education framework in the Forest of Dean.

6.8 Recommendation 5

In order to publicise and raise awareness of the Forest 40 Zone, local media to be involved in the launch of the scheme and on-going promotion.

7. Proposed boundaries, location of gateways and signage

7.1 During the site visits the task group considered potential boundaries and gateways to the Forest 40 Zone.

7.2 After undertaking a site visit to the area the task group determined that the boundary to the Zone should follow the one outlined on Map 3 overleaf, and that 10 gateways, with the Forest 40 Zone signage, should be installed close to the locations of the blue circles.

7.3 The task group recognise however that as the Forest 40 Zone would be located within an area subject to the national speed limit, further work would need to be undertaken to ensure that the location of the gateways and the signage did not result in confusion for motorists.

7.4 Recommendation 6

That the boundary of the Forest 40 Zone follow the one outlined on map 3.

7.5 Recommendation 7

That 10 gateways to the Forest 40 Zone be installed close to the locations outlined in map 3.

7.6 Recommendation 8

That further work be undertaken to ensure the location of the gateways and the signage did not result in confusion for motorists.



This photo shows the proposed location of the Cinderford gateway on the B4226.



This photo shows the proposed location of the Broadwell gateway.

7.7 The task group is aware that the majority of accidents in the Forest of Dean involve local people who know the area well. Whilst visitors are perhaps more likely to take notice of the Forest 40 Zone in an unfamiliar area, there is concern that local people used to driving through the Forest, may after a while fail to acknowledge the 40mph Zone, despite being aware of the hidden dangers.

7.8 To avoid this and keeping the Forest 40 Zone fresh in people's minds, the task group agree that seasonal warning signs such as 'lambing season', 'rutting season', 'leaves on the road' should be put up at appropriate times, highlighting the 40mph advisory limit.

7.9 Recommendation 9

That seasonal warning signs should be used at appropriate times highlighting the 40mph advisory limit.

8. Projected costs involved with implementing the Forest 40 Zone

8.1 Each gateway will cost approximately £5,000, and a campaign to launch the Forest 40 Zone will cost approximately £20,000.

8.2 Therefore the projected total cost of the scheme is £70,000.

8.3 The task group recognise that there may be opportunities for partnership working with other organisations in the Forest of Dean. Particularly the Forestry Commission, Forest of Dean District Council, parish and town councils, schools and colleges. Those organisations might be able to help with funding; the education campaign; the launch; and work on the ground. The task group agree that further work needs to be done to explore this in detail.

8.4 Recommendation 10

That opportunities for partnership working with local councils and organisations in the Forest of Dean are explored.

9. On-going Review

9.1 To monitor the effectiveness of the scheme, it is suggested that vehicle speeds are monitored at 3 and 12 months after implementation.

9.2 Recommendation 11

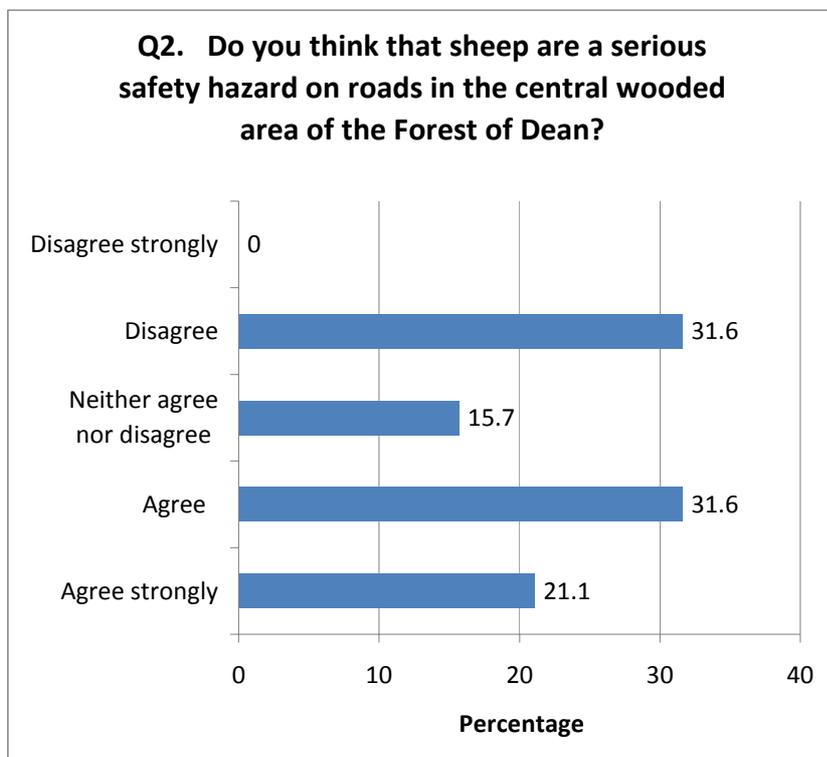
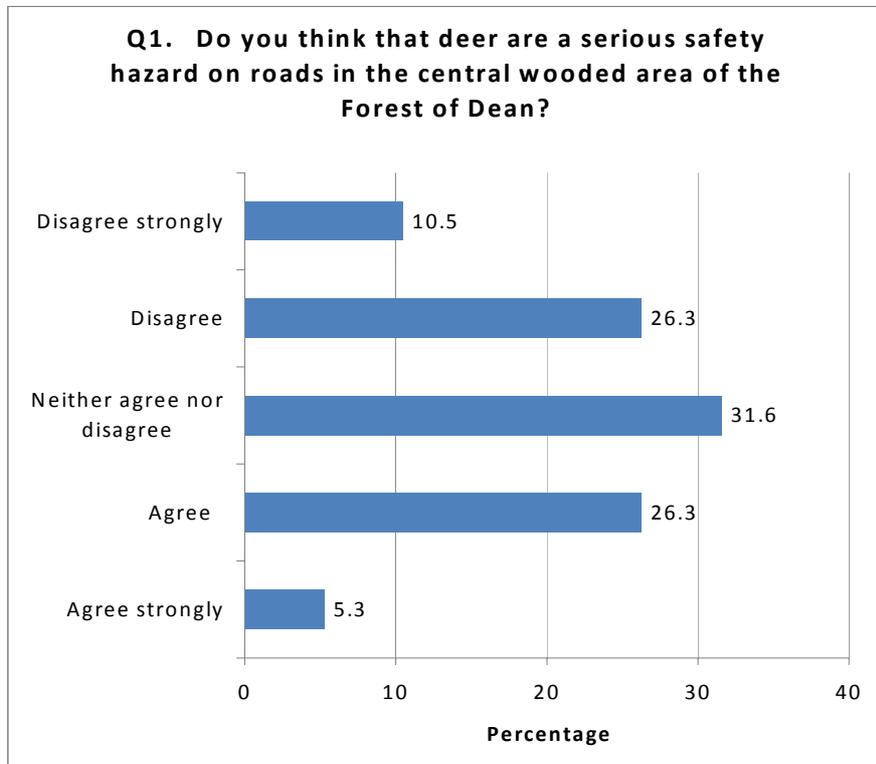
That to monitor the effectiveness of the scheme, it is suggested that vehicle speeds are monitored at 3 and 12 months after implementation.

Section 3 – Summary of Recommendations

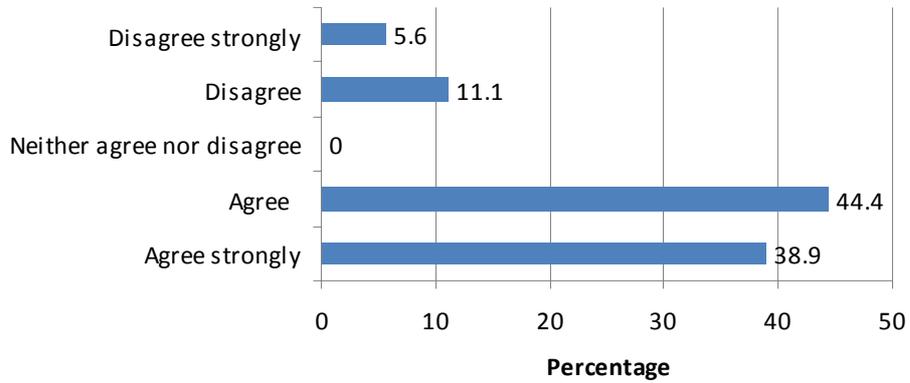
Recommendation	Responsible person/organisation
<p>Recommendation 1</p> <p>That a 40mph advisory speed limit is implemented in the central Forest area, and this could be promoted as the Forest 40 Zone.</p>	<p>Lead Cabinet Member: Environment and Community</p>
<p>Recommendation 2</p> <p>That the appropriateness of the speed limit on the A4136 be reviewed as a priority.</p>	<p>Lead Cabinet Member: Environment and Community</p>
<p>Recommendation 3</p> <p>That due to the significant number of deer collisions on the A4136, the review give consideration to whether there is a need for additional vehicle activated warnings signs to be installed.</p>	<p>Lead Cabinet Member: Environment and Community</p>
<p>Recommendation 4</p> <p>That an education campaign, highlighting the aims and objectives of the Forest 40 Zone, be built into the existing road safety education framework in the Forest of Dean.</p>	<p>Lead Cabinet Member: Environment and Community</p>
<p>Recommendation 5</p> <p>In order to publicise and raise awareness of the Forest 40 Zone, local media to be involved in the launch of the scheme and on-going promotion.</p>	<p>Lead Cabinet Member: Environment and Community</p>
<p>Recommendation 6</p> <p>That the boundary of the Forest 40 Zone follow the one outlined on map 3.</p>	<p>Lead Cabinet Member: Environment and Community</p>
<p>Recommendation 7</p> <p>That 10 gateways to the Forest 40 Zone be installed close to the locations outlined in map 3.</p>	<p>Lead Cabinet Member: Environment and Community</p>

<p>Recommendation 8</p> <p>That further work be undertaken to ensure the location of the gateways and the signage did not result in confusion for motorists.</p>	<p>Lead Cabinet Member: Environment and Community</p>
<p>Recommendation 9</p> <p>That seasonal warning signs should be used at appropriate times highlighting the 40mph advisory limit.</p>	<p>Lead Cabinet Member: Environment and Community</p>
<p>Recommendation 10</p> <p>That opportunities for partnership working with local councils and organisations in the Forest of Dean are explored</p>	<p>Lead Cabinet Member: Environment and Community</p>
<p>Recommendation 11</p> <p>That to monitor the effectiveness of the scheme, it is suggested that vehicle speeds are monitored at 3 and 12 months after implementation.</p>	<p>Lead Cabinet Member: Environment and Community</p>
<p>Recommendation 12</p> <p>That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee request an initial response to its recommendations at its meeting on 31st March 2009 and reviews the progress against the recommendations in 6 months time.</p>	<p>Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee</p>

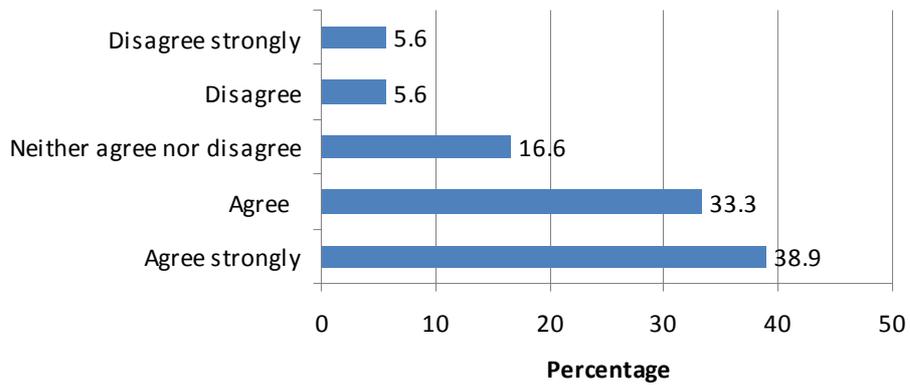
Annex 1 – Results of the Parish and Town Council Consultation Exercise



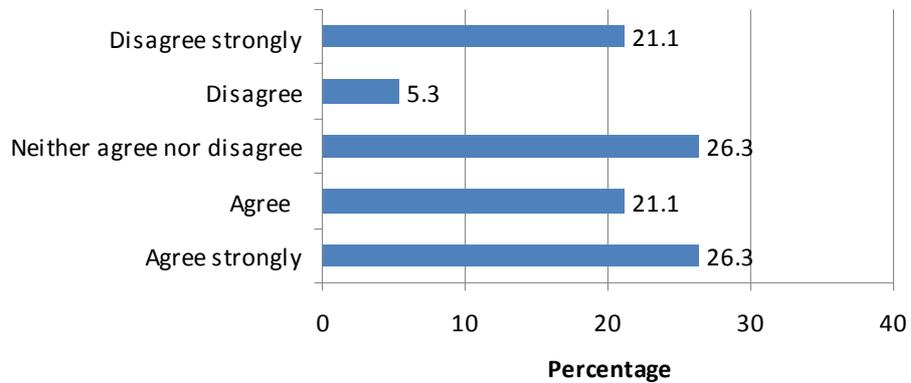
Q3. Do you think that drivers regularly exceed the speed limit on roads in the central wooded area of the Forest of Dean?



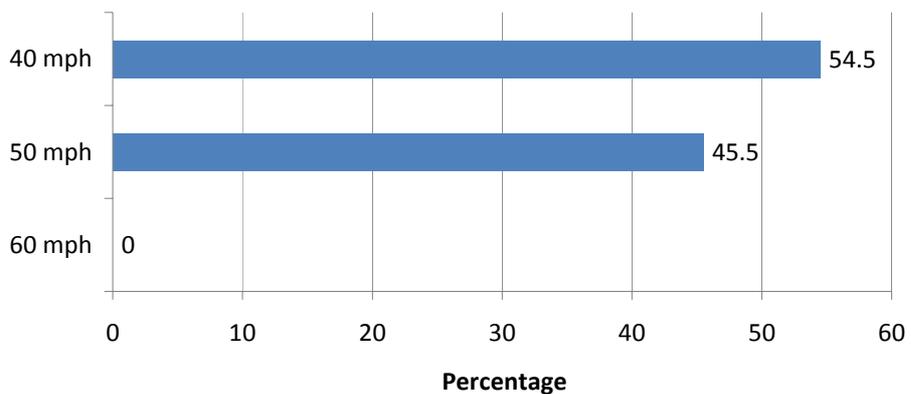
Q4. Do you think that drivers travel too fast for the conditions in the central wooded area of the Forest of Dean?



Q5. Do you think that an area wide speed limit would improve safety on roads in the central wooded area of the Forest of Dean?



Q6. If you responded positively to Question 5. What do you think would be an appropriate speed limit?



Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8
Do you think that Deer are a serious safety hazard on roads in the central wooded area of the Forest of Dean?	Do you think that Sheep are a serious safety hazard on roads in the central wooded area of the Forest of Dean?	Do you think that drivers regularly exceed the speed limit on roads in the central wooded area of the Forest of Dean?	Do you think that drivers travel too fast for the conditions in the central wooded area of the Forest of Dean?	Do you think that an area wide speed limit would improve safety on the roads in the central wooded area of the Forest of Dean?	If you responded positively to Question 5. What do you think would be an appropriate speed limit?	Have you any further comments or observations that you would like to make?	Please indicate the name of the parish or town council you represent
Neither agree nor disagree Disagree strongly	Agree Agree strongly	Agree Disagree strongly	Agree strongly Disagree strongly	Agree strongly Disagree strongly			
Agree	Agree	Agree strongly	Agree strongly	Neither agree nor disagree		Any speed limit at any level would not control the hooligans who are the cause of the problems, most of which is happening in the night. Speed in itself is not the problem. And we notice that there are STILL accidents on the A48 long after the clamour for a 50 limit was agreed to! This was supposed to be the cure for the A48 and it has failed in the same way the a limit across the forest will fail. I have long believed that the best solution to the problem of speeding is to remove the present limits in their entirety. In that way, drivers would be uncertain as to the correct speed for the conditions and would, I am certain, slow down to compensate for their doubt. I would also like to see the complete removal of traffic lights (except pedestrian) since these are often a major source of delay and congestion, especially in the smaller towns and villages.	
Disagree	Disagree	Agree strongly	Agree strongly	Disagree strongly		it is a total waste of time having a speed limit as it is ignored by most drivers and not enforced by the police. anyone who drives at any speed that is not correct or the road conditions is breaking the law this does not need a lot of speed signs it needs police who stop and fine people who drive recklessly and this could be 30 mph if it is raining or foggy	
Disagree	Disagree	Agree strongly		Agree strongly	40 mph	Most problems are caused by drivers not accepting they are in a forest area where wild life are present and drive far too quickly. Changing the speed limits will mean that some will drive more slowly but alas the great majority will still drive way beyond any limit imposed to suit the narrow roads.	
Agree	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Neither agree nor disagree		Vast areas of the area are covered by 30/40/50 limits, those that are not (i.e. 60 limit) would not benefit by a lower limit. Probably no resources to enforce a lower blanket limit.	STAUNTON COLEFORD PC
Agree	Agree	Agree strongly	Agree strongly	Agree strongly	40 mph	Wild boar are also a problem - although my parish is really outside of the main wooded area as Clerk I live in Bream and regularly travel through Parkend to Cannop and Lydbrook (and surrounding areas) so know the area well and the problems.	Tidenham Parish Council
Agree Agree	Agree Disagree	Agree Agree strongly	Agree Agree strongly	Neither agree nor disagree Neither agree nor disagree	40 mph		NEWLAND PARISH COUNCIL
Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Agree	Agree	50 mph	I believe that there should be an area wide 40mph limit however the current limits are regularly exceeded, and are not policed and enforced adequately. Unless you can enforce a speed limit I doubt whether measures will have any effect. (The police can't even enforce the 30mph on a half mile stretch of the A40 through Huntley).	
Disagree strongly	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree strongly		Imposing a speed limit in the Forest will not stop the people who will always drive irresponsibly.	
Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Agree	Agree	40 mph	The installation of speed warning signs at approaches to Forest/wooded areas. Would make drivers aware of their actual speed approaching a hazard.	

Disagree	Disagree	Agree strongly	Agree strongly	Neither agree nor disagree	50 mph
Neither agree nor disagree	Agree		Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	
Neither agree nor disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Agree	Agree	50 mph
Agree strongly	Agree strongly	Agree	Agree	Agree strongly	40 mph
Neither agree nor disagree	Agree strongly	Agree strongly	Agree strongly	Agree strongly	40 mph
Neither agree nor disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree strongly	
Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Agree	Agree	Agree	50 mph

Motorists are the biggest problem. Churcham Parish Council
 It is not the speed limit on the roads. It is the fault of the stupid motorists not observing the roads conditions and signs already in place. It will not make a blind bit of difference to these people how they drive.

An area speed limit would not be effective in reducing the West Dean PC speed of traffic within the central Forest area, that it would be difficult to enforce and would require a proliferation of signs which would be detrimental to the appearance of the area.
 The central Forest area should be the same as the New Forest which is 40mph and widely accepted and applied by the local community.
 Lower speed limits will only add to the excessive street furniture already in place. Those that wish to 'speed' on roads will do so regardless of speed limits. Lowering speed limits is the wrong approach.