

**REPORT TO:** Members' Library Service

**DATE:**

**BY:** Executive Director for Place

**SUBJECT:** Trial of Centre Line Removal at Selected Low Speed Sites

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## **1 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To inform members of work being undertaken by the University of the West of England (UWE) to trial Centre Line Removal (CLR) on a small number of low-speed roads across East Lothian. The project will add to the evidence base for engineering interventions aimed at reducing speed of motorised traffic and improving the safety of the road network for pedestrians and cyclists, as well as other road users. The full proposal is available in Appendix 1.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That members note that this project will see activity at 6 sites in East Lothian where centre lines will be removed from the roads. Other sites will be monitored for benchmarking. The proposed sites are listed in Appendix 2. Members in wards where interventions are planned have already been notified by email.

## **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Following trials during the COVID pandemic, ELC permanently lowered speed limits in towns and villages across the county in 2022. However, ELC currently continues to use centre lines to delineate bilateral traffic flow on roads with speed limits of 30mph and lower, despite international evidence that removing these may also have a significant effect on lowering traffic speeds.
- 3.4 Priorities for ELC are improving the built environment for active travel and reducing carbon emissions from transport.
- 3.5 The proposal was evaluated against these strategic priorities.
- 3.6 Professor Adrian Davis and his team at UWE are leading the project and will work with Roads Services to gather evidence on the effect of CLR on

traffic speeds, with a view to publishing guidance for Roads Officers, policy makers and academics. Professor Davis's endorsement of the project is Available in Appendix 3.

3.7 ELC have recently secured £8,000 in external grant funding from the Paths for All Smarter Choices Smarter Places Local Authority Fund to pay for speed measurements to support this project to be carried out by external contractors.

3.8 A Risk Register is available in Appendix 4.

3.9 A legal position with regards to liability is available in Appendix 5

#### **4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None

#### **5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

5.1 The subject of this report does not negatively affect the wellbeing of the community nor have a negative impact on equality, the environment or economy.

#### **6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 Financial – The project is externally funded by the Road Safety Trust and Paths for All, except for costs associated with the physical removal of the road markings. These costs can be accommodated within existing budgets.

6.2 Personnel – some Council Officers will play a minor role in facilitating fully externally funded work of contractors to remove lines and measure speeds at selected sites. Lines will be reinstated if/when appropriate. ELC officers will also liaise with academic staff at the University of the West of England to enable analysis, reporting and publishing of relevant data and findings.

6.3 Other – None

<b>AUTHOR'S NAME</b>	Ian Lennox
<b>DESIGNATION</b>	Roads Asset and Regulatory Manager
<b>CONTACT INFO</b>	<a href="mailto:ilennox@eastlothian.gov.uk">ilennox@eastlothian.gov.uk</a> ; <a href="mailto:rkerr@eastlothian.gov.uk">rkerr@eastlothian.gov.uk</a>
<b>DATE</b>	11th January 2024

## **APPENDIX 1: Full proposal for Centre Line Removal Trial for Safer Roads**

Proposed is a small-scale trial to test the effectiveness of implementing Centre Line Removal (CLR) in addition to existing 30mph and 20mph speed limits roads in small town and semi-rural settlement areas within ELC's local highway network. We propose conducting fieldwork through identification of two locations at each of 9 sites which will either have CLR added to an existing 20mph or 30mph speed limit, or else receive no intervention i.e., acting as controls.

The proposal builds on work conducted on CLR in 2018-2020, funded by the Road Safety Trust. In that work an Evidence Review was undertaken, followed by a survey of road safety practitioners across GB, and interviews with a sample of those completing the survey. This provided some evidence as to the effectiveness of CLR and attitudes towards its use. The limited evidence did suggest a significant speed reduction. More work could, therefore, be undertaken to assess the effects of implementing CLR.

Consequently, we are taking a next logical step in proposing a small field trial of CLR. If the findings of this are positive then there is a strong case for a much larger trial across a more diverse range of settlement types to give greater statistical support to the findings. One aspect of the work proposed is the potential for CLR to help as a low-cost intervention in support of the burgeoning application across the UK of 20mph speed limits. A frequent refrain from residents is that they support 20mph speed limits but they are doubtful as to its effectiveness without routine traffic policing. In the absence of a significant increase in traffic policing, CLR might be an important tool, especially in supporting wider efforts to increase active travel.

The project will have a number of outputs. There will be an Interim and Final Report. In addition, our partners at University of the West of England propose drafting a Briefing Document, as they have done for a previous project on CLR. The Briefing Document will seek to maximise awareness of the findings among practitioners in local government, including elected Councillors, especially if the findings and conclusions are positive in terms of reductions in speeds driven.

A potential output following a successful trial would be to approach national transport departments across the four nations of the UK in support of funding for a larger at-scale trial.

Our partners at UWE would also seek to draft at least one peer-reviewed paper reporting on the study and its findings so that the results are retained in perpetuity by peer-reviewed journals acting as repositories of global knowledge. In addition, Abstracts will be submitted for various national and international conferences, in order to further disseminate knowledge of the project and findings.

## **APPENDIX 2: List of Sites**

- Avenue Road, Cockenzie (intervention)

- Clayknowes Road, Musselburgh (intervention)
- Dirleton Avenue, North Berwick (intervention)
- Queens Road, Dunbar (intervention)
- Ravensheugh Road, Musselburgh (control)
- Stoneybank Terrace, Musselburgh (intervention)
- Tantallon Road, North Berwick (intervention)
- West Loan, Prestonpans (control)
- West Road, Haddington (control)

### **APPENDIX 3: Project Lead Supporting Statement, Prof. Adrian Davis, UWE**

*“The international evidence suggests that low speed limit areas of 20 and 30 mph where Centre Line Removal has occurred may well reduce average speeds driven by approximately 2 mph. Local authority evidence has reported significantly higher mean speed reductions.*

*Research by the Transport Research Laboratory has shown that for roads with low average speeds (20-30 mph) there is an average 6% reduction in collisions with each 1mph reduction in average speed.<sup>1</sup>*

*In an international Evidence Review of centreline removal<sup>2</sup> UWE Bristol researchers found no reports of casualties or crashes as a result of centre line removal on 20mph and 30mph roads.”*

## APPENDIX 4: Risk Register

The trial involves the removal or non-reinstatement of centre lines on fewer than ten local distributor roads within the East Lothian Council road network. It is a road safety intervention supported by an international evidence base including an Evidence Review previously undertaken for the funder, the Road Safety Trust, by the University of the West of England (UWE), the research partner. That research found speed reductions of around 2 miles per hour. Research reports that a 1mph reduction in average vehicle speed results in a 4% reduction in crashes for medium speed urban roads and lower speed rural main roads.

The trial will monitor vehicles speeds before, shortly after, and then a year after the removal of the centre line. This will enable an assessment of any change in vehicle speeds post intervention.

### Key Issues Identified:

Description	Resolution / mitigation action	Action owner	By when	Risk level
Risk of intervention site crash	Respond to crash report	ELC	Within a month	Low
Political objection(s)	Further information for Members	ELC	Within a month	Low/ Medium
Programme delay	Discuss with funder, as necessary	UWE	Within a month	Low
Delays to line removal	Engage early with ELC's contractor, and adjust programme if necessary	ELC	Within a month	High
Adverse weather or other confounding factors on survey days	Surveys will take average speeds over a week to mitigate against spurious events. If prolonged events prevent 'typical' surveys being measured, a re-survey will be commissioned	ELC	Within a month	Medium

## **APPENDIX 5: Legal position with regards to liability**

The Council does not have a default responsibility to put in place centre line markings on a road, and so removing road markings in certain circumstances is not a breach of the Council's duties. Guidance from the Department of Transport states that the "use of centre lines is not an absolute requirement".

In terms of risks and liabilities, as the roads authority, when removing any centre line markings, we need to be mindful of how this corresponds with duties under various legislation such as the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984.

Some instances where the risk of removing the centre line markings may be higher (and thus likely to lead towards the Council facing a potential liability) are outlined below.

1. *Signs under road traffic regulation orders:* Before removing the centre line markings from each site we have checked there is if not a road traffic regulation order over the road that contains provisions for the centre line markings to be on the road.
2. *Road safety:* Under the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984, the Council has a duty to "manage and maintain roads". There is also an obligation on local authorities to promote road safety under the Road Traffic Act 1988. So, if removing the centre line road markings leads to higher risk of an unsafe situation, this may increase the chances of the Council being liable for an accident on such a road. However, we have selected sites where we do not believe there to be an elevated risk and have retained some lining where necessary. The purpose of the study is to further demonstrate that removing centre lines at appropriate sites will in fact lower the speeds and associated risk of collision.

## Members' Library Service Request Form

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Originator	Ian Lennox
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