

## **BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET COUNCIL**

### **PLANNING, TRANSPORT & ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

**Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> January 2012**

#### **Highways Agency – Council involvement on speed limits**

The Highways Agency is an executive agency of the Department for Transport (DfT). Their role is to help support the sustainability of the UK's economy by operating, maintaining and improving the strategic road network in England on behalf of the Secretary of State for Transport.

The strategic road network in England is some 4,300 miles long and is made up of motorways and trunk roads. While only two per cent of all roads in England by length, it carries a third of all traffic by mileage and two thirds of all heavy goods vehicle mileage, making it the economic backbone of the country.

In recognition of its important role in the transport network, the West of England partner authorities have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Highways Agency for the purpose of promoting effective co-ordination and co-operations between the two organisations, with meetings held on a regular basis. For more details click on the link below:

<http://www.westofengland.org/media/206984/signed%20mou%20ha%20and%20wep.pdf>

The Highway Agency is the Highway Authority with responsibility for setting speed limits on the strategic road network including the A46 and the A36 to east and south of Bath (Fig 1)

The Highways Agency consults the Council on new speed limits proposed on the A46 and A36 Trunk Roads in Bath and North East Somerset as part of the Speed Limit Order statutory order making process under the 1984 Road Traffic Regulation Act.

Approximately 5% of road casualties in B&NES occur on the Trunk Road network. A route safety study on the A36 Trunk Road was completed in December 2008 by the Highway Agency and a 50mph speed limit recommended on the Bath – Claverton section, but the speed limit has not been implemented to date due to lack of available funding.

An A46 Route Safety Study was undertaken by the Highway Agency in 2011 and recommended signing and road marking improvements and high friction surface on the route. No changes to the speed limit on the A46 are proposed. The Council has recently met the Highways Agency to support the early introduction of road safety measures on the A46 at which the Highways Agency agreed to erect Vehicle Activated Signs displaying the double bend sign with the text 'SLOW Down' or 'SLOW' and widened hatched centre lines at Hartley Bends to help reduce traffic speeds on the route subject to funds being available.