

Speed Indicator Devices

Process and guidance v1.0

Staffordshire County Council

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Introduction

Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) are electronic roadside signs that display the speed of approaching vehicles in real time, with the aim to improve driver awareness and encourage safer driving.

The County Council does not operate a county-wide SID programme but supports applications from Parish/Town Councils and eligible community groups who wish to install and operate SIDs in their local community.

This guidance supports the County Council's highway asset management framework by providing a consistent approach to the approval, installation, and management of SIDs. It also establishes a record of approved sites and ensures their effective management throughout the lifecycle of the device.

Installation Requirements

SIDs are not prescribed signs under the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD) 2016 and may only be deployed within the highway as a temporary measure. The TSRGD 2016 requires temporary signs to only remain in place for as long as the relevant condition, activity or circumstance exists and for a maximum period of six months.

This guidance requires all SIDs (including posts or additional equipment associated with the units) to be treated as a temporary sign which must be relocated from its position within the highway at least every six months, with a six month period before it may return.

Devices may be rotated to an alternative approved site or removed where no suitable alternative approved location is available. Regular rotation between approved sites will help limit sign proliferation and preserve the effectiveness of the devices by reducing the likelihood of driver familiarity over time.

All associated posts should be installed by means of a re-useable retention socket to facilitate the relocation of the devices, prevent the proliferation of redundant or unused posts within the highway, and minimise street clutter.

All SIDs should be solar powered.

Relocation of the device between approved sites, is the responsibility of the initiating organisation and not the County Council.

The organisation that initiated the siting of a SID, its post, or any other equipment associated with the units must arrange removal, repair, or replacement within a reasonable timeframe, if it becomes damaged or meets its expected end of operational life.

Existing SIDs

SIDs implemented in permanent positions before October 2026 may remain until the end of their operational life. At such time the units, their posts and all other equipment associated with the SIDs shall be removed from the highway.

Staffordshire County Council is not responsible for the repair and maintenance of historic SIDs or their posts.

Application

Site Assessment

The County Council will normally support the deployment of a SID and post where there is clear evidence to justify its use. In assessing an application, consideration will be given to the following factors:

- evidence of community support, including the presence of a Community Speed Watch group and/or engagement with the Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership, together with support from the Local Member; and
- recent speed data indicating excessive speeds.

Where sufficient evidence supports the deployment of a SID and post, the Community Highways Team will work with the applicant to identify potential installation locations.

Consultation

The applicant must provide written evidence that property owners who may be affected by the proposed SID have been consulted. This should include any property where the SID, post, solar panel, or associated equipment could affect access, parking, visibility, outlook or maintenance.

The consultation should confirm the proposed location, design and height of the SID and supporting equipment and provide an opportunity for any concerns regarding its proximity or potential light nuisance to be raised.

Where a SID is adjacent to private property, owners should also be reminded to maintain boundary vegetation to prevent obstruction of the device.

An example consultation letter is provided in Appendix A.

Application Form

A copy of the application form is provided at Appendix B. Applicants will be required to provide details of the organisation that will retain responsibility for the installed equipment, together with the proposed device locations. Details of each proposed device, including its make, model, dimensions and weight, must also be provided to inform the design and specification of the required retention socket.

Implementation

Cost Estimate

On receipt of the application form, the County Council will provide a cost estimate for the work. The estimate will include all necessary design checks, processing any required permissions and Licences, and the installation of the required posts and associated retention sockets. An outline of costs, where available, are provided in Appendix C.

Applicants may appoint their own contractor to undertake the works on site but will remain responsible for the County Council's costs associated with the required design checks and permissions. All contractors must be appropriately qualified under the New Roads and Street Works Act, hold the relevant Highway Authorities and Utilities Committee accreditation, be registered to work on Staffordshire County Council's highway network, and hold a minimum of £5 million public liability insurance.

Licence Agreement

Once the cost estimate has been accepted, the applicant will be required to enter into a Licence Agreement with the County Council, under Section 115E of the Highways Act 1980, authorising the placement of the equipment within the highway.

Under the terms of the licence, the applicant will assume responsibility for the ongoing operation, inspection, maintenance, and insurance of the equipment. Applicants must ensure that appropriate public liability insurance is maintained and should notify their insurer of any SID equipment installed and maintained within the highway.

Design Check

All proposed SID locations are subject to a technical check by the Staffordshire Design Hub in accordance with the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 to ensure installation, operation and maintenance can be undertaken safely.

Careful consideration must be given to the proposed installation location. Trees, hedges, buildings, walls, and other structures may reduce sunlight levels and adversely affect the performance of solar-powered equipment. SIDs must not be positioned close to highway structures or assets where installation, maintenance or operation could be compromised and careful consideration must be given to the presence of underground utility apparatus, which may restrict or prevent the installation of posts, foundations, or other supporting infrastructure.

SIDs must not be installed on street lighting columns and must be mounted on their own freestanding post which is secured in a re-useable retention socket.

SIDs are normally installed on the nearside of the carriageway, as this is where drivers are most likely to focus their attention. Where site constraints make this unsuitable, an offside location may be considered, however applicants are strongly advised to consult their SID supplier to confirm that the device is suitable for this arrangement.

The Design Check will include a necessary Departure Request from the County Council's Highway Base Specification. The Departure Request provides formal approval and an auditable record of the SID location and installation details for future asset management.

The County Council reserves the right to refuse approval for any proposed site that does not comply with relevant legislative, design, or safety requirements, or with the provisions of this guidance.

Post Installation

The Staffordshire Design Hub will make all necessary arrangements for the installation of the required posts and retention sockets including a Permit to Dig and required Traffic Management.

Timeframes

The County Council supports communities in taking action to improve road safety and will progress SID applications as efficiently as resources allow. However, applications must be prioritised alongside wider programmes of work and installation may therefore take between six and twelve months from the date of application.

SID Rotation Programme

Deployment of the SIDs may only commence once the Licence Agreement has been signed and all applicable fees and charges paid.

Applicants must provide an annual deployment programme for each SID and notify the County Council of any changes. Failure to follow the agreed programme without reasonable justification may result in a review of the approval and removal of the SID from the highway.

The applicant is responsible for the health and safety of all SID rotation activities, including appropriate risk assessments, training, PPE, and safe systems of work. Particular consideration must be given to working adjacent to live traffic, manual handling, and the use of access equipment.

The County Council accepts no responsibility for the health and safety management of personnel undertaking these activities.

Use of SID Data

SIDs are recognised as an effective tool for raising driver awareness and encouraging changes in behaviour. However, the data they collect has limitations and must be interpreted with caution.

SIDs are not calibrated or certified for enforcement purposes, and the recorded data may be affected by equipment reliability, installation and environmental conditions, device settings, vandalism, and by drivers deliberately accelerating to trigger the device.

SID data cannot be independently verified to the standard required for formal speed assessment and should, therefore, only be used as an initial indicator of locations that may warrant further investigation. Decisions on highway funding and resources will be based on recognised and robust evidence, including formal speed and traffic surveys and patterns of speed-related personal injury collisions.

Appendix A: Example Consultation Letter

Appendix B: Application Form

Appendix C: Indicative Costs