

## **School 20mph trial kicks off in Staffordshire**

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Staffordshire County Council's top team have announced the start of an ambitious programme to get car speeds down to 20mph at schools across Staffordshire.

The new cabinet has committed to put child safety at the school gate at the top of their agenda, and this week sees the announcement of an action programme.

Eight schools, one per district, are to trial electronic speed activated signs from the start of the next school term.

The first on the list to be announced is St Peter's Primary in Hixon. The other seven will be confirmed next week.

The shortlist of eight schools has been selected by county councillors listening to the views and concerns of local people.

Road safety champion Councillor Mike Maryon said he hoped the initiative would set the pace for change.

"It's quite mad that people will drive fast past the school gate, especially when there are children milling around and crossing the road. Hit a kid at 20mph and they have a chance of surviving, but this drops dramatically by 30mph.

"We are committed to tackling this problem which is putting parents and children in fear of their lives during the school run.

"This trial of the flashing vehicle activated signs will focus on changing driver's attitudes and behaviours. They need to accept responsibility and slow down. Children and their parents have a right to feel safe walking to school.

"We will do speed surveys during throughout the trials and ask parents their views in the New Year. The results will guide future action programmes," he said.

Councillor Maryon stressed the good work that had already been done by the county's road safety team.

The number of children killed or seriously injured is down by a fifth, from 21 to 17, comparing 2008 with 2007.

"Staffordshire has been ranked as the third safest county road network for children in the UK, but every death or injury is a tragedy and we must keep up the pace of action to save more lives. We want to move up another gear," he said.

Local County Councillor for Hixon Len Bloomer said he was gratified that Hixon was top of the list.

"Hixon parents and children are sick of speeding motorists. They have appealed to me to get something done to tackle this irresponsible minority of drivers. Now the school is going to see some action.

"The trial will see if we can more effectively ram home the message that doing more than 20mph at school time is utterly unacceptable," he said.

