

BROADCLYST PARISH COUNCIL

Report to Full Council

Meeting:	Full Council – 6 July 2026
Agenda item:	Request for a Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) / radar speed sign, Station Road
Report author:	Angie Hurren, Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
Status:	For decision
Appendices:	Appendix A – Correspondence received (redacted)

1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To advise Council on correspondence received from a resident requesting the installation of a Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS) and/or radar speed sign on Station Road, Broadclyst, between Cottrell Road and Shercroft Close, and to recommend a course of action for resolution by Council.

2. Background

2.1 Council has received correspondence from a resident of Station Road (correspondence attached at Appendix A, with personal identifying details minimised in accordance with section 40(2) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000) raising concern about the safety of pedestrians along Station Road, citing a substantial increase in traffic volume over a 15-year period of residence.

2.2 The correspondent has requested that Council consider installing a VAS and/or radar speed sign and has suggested a siting between Cottrell Road and Shercroft Close, on the verge, with a what3words reference of eclipses.piglests.luck. The correspondent states that they have been advised that the Parish Council is the appropriate first point of contact.

2.3 Members will be aware that concerns regarding traffic volume, speed and pedestrian safety along Station Road are not new. The Made Broadclyst Neighbourhood Plan (July 2023) records a long-documented history of traffic issues on this route, including the absence of formal pavement and cycle provision, congestion at the Lodge Trading Estate, and the constrained geometry at the railway bridge, and anticipates that traffic will increase further as the Cranbrook Bluehayes expansion comes forward (Neighbourhood Plan, Chapter 5, Policies T1 and T2 and supporting justification).

3. Legal and Policy Context

3.1 Station Road is a public highway maintainable at public expense. Devon County Council (DCC), as the Local Highway Authority under the Highways Act 1980, holds statutory responsibility for traffic management measures on the highway network, including the assessment, approval, siting and ongoing safety oversight of signage such as VAS. The Neighbourhood Plan itself draws this distinction expressly, confirming that “changes to traffic lights, restrictions, speed limits, signage, traffic circulation, crossing points and other traffic management devices usually fall outside the scope of planning” and are a matter for the highway authority. Council therefore has no power to determine or unilaterally install a VAS on the highway; its role is limited to requesting, supporting, and (if it so resolves) funding such a measure, subject in every case to DCC’s approval.

3.2 DCC's published Traffic Management Fact Sheet TMFS-02.1 (Vehicle Activated Signs) sets out the relevant process. Permanent VAS, whether DCC-funded or community-funded, are considered through DCC's Speed Compliance Action Review Forum (SCARF) process, a joint forum between DCC Traffic and Road Safety Officers and Devon and Cornwall Constabulary Casualty Reduction Officers, which assesses speed-complaint sites and agrees appropriate actions. DCC must approve the site, specification, message displayed and any street-furniture mounting (including any lamp-column fixing, which separately requires DCC Street Lighting Team approval) before any installation, and approval should be obtained before any equipment is purchased.

3.3 DCC's fact sheet confirms that it welcomes community-funded VAS schemes and has worked with a number of Devon parish councils on this basis (e.g. Shaugh Prior, Lifton, Milton Abbot and High Bickington Parish Councils). Where a Council funds its own permanent VAS, it is responsible for all purchase, installation and removal costs (DCC meets only the electricity cost of a mains-powered unit), for insuring the unit against injury, accident or damage claims (DCC recommends Public Liability cover of at least £10 million), and for all maintenance not covered by the manufacturer's warranty, including vandalism. A mobile VAS or Speed Indicator Device relocated by the Council or a community group additionally requires a site-specific risk assessment and personnel trained and assessed to the NRSWA Signing, Lighting and Guarding (Chapter 8) standard.

3.4 Indicative 2017 purchase costs quoted by DCC (excluding VAT, and likely to have increased materially since) are: a basic mains-powered fixed sign from approximately £2,800 (more if a new post and power connection are required); a solar-powered fixed sign from approximately £5,000; and a mobile VAS or Speed Indicator Device from approximately £1,200–£2,000 per unit. These figures should be treated as indicative only and re-quoted before any budgetary commitment is made.

3.5 Members are reminded that the distinction between a parish council acting as a statutory consultee on planning matters and a parish council seeking to fund highway infrastructure under its own powers is material: the former is governed by the Town and Country Planning regime and the Neighbourhood Plan, while the latter depends on identification of an appropriate enabling power (such as the General Power of Competence under section 1 of the Localism Act 2011, where Council has confirmed its eligibility, or another specific power) and compliance with Council's Financial Regulations. The Clerk/RFO will confirm and minute the specific legal power relied upon, in accordance with Financial Regulation 5.2, before any expenditure is authorised.

4. Options for Council

4.1 Option A – Refer to DCC without committing Council funds. Council writes to DCC's Traffic and Road Safety team requesting that the Station Road site identified by the correspondent (Cottrell Road to Shercroft Close, what3words: eclipses.piglets.luck) be considered through the SCARF process, citing the safety concerns documented in the Neighbourhood Plan, and copies the ward County Councillor in accordance with Standing Order 24. This option carries no direct cost to Council and keeps the decision on appropriateness, siting and DCC funding with the Highway Authority.

4.2 Option B – Refer to DCC and indicate in principle willingness to consider co-funding. As Option A, but Council additionally asks DCC to advise whether, if the site is not selected for DCC funding, a community-funded VAS would be supported at this location, and to provide indicative specification and costings. Any decision to commit Council funds would be the subject of a further report and resolution, following receipt of DCC's assessment, with procurement conducted in accordance with Financial Regulations 5.6–5.10 depending on value.

4.3 Option C – Decline to take the matter forward. Council could resolve that, as the matter is properly one for the Highway Authority, it will signpost the correspondent to DCC's own reporting

channels and take no further action. This is not recommended, given Council's established interest in Station Road safety as evidenced in the Neighbourhood Plan, and the likely benefit to the correspondent and other residents of the Council acting as the conduit DCC expects for community-led requests of this kind.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 Options A and C carry no budgetary implication for the current financial year. Option B carries no immediate cost, but Members should note that any subsequent decision to fund a permanent VAS could represent an item of capital expenditure in the order of £2,800–£5,000 or more (subject to re-quotation), plus ongoing insurance and maintenance liability, and would require budgetary provision and compliance with the procurement thresholds in Financial Regulations 5.6–5.15.

5.2 Any resolution to commit expenditure of £1,000 or more would, in accordance with Financial Regulation 5.15, require authorisation beyond the Clerk's individual delegated authority and, for sums of £5,000 or more, would require a resolution of full Council.

6. Risk and Governance Considerations

6.1 Site approval, specification and ongoing safety oversight rest entirely with DCC; Council cannot resolve to install a sign on the highway without DCC's prior written approval, and approval must be obtained before any equipment is purchased.

6.2 Should Council ultimately fund and own a VAS, it would assume ongoing liability for insurance, maintenance and (for any mobile unit) trained personnel and a site-specific risk assessment; these are continuing revenue and governance commitments that would need to be reflected in Council's risk register and insurance arrangements with Arthur J. Gallagher / Hiscox.

6.3 The correspondent should be informed, regardless of the option chosen, that the decision on whether a VAS is installed rests with DCC, and that the Council's role is to make the representation on the resident's behalf.

7. Recommendations

Council is recommended to resolve that:

- (i) the correspondence be noted;
- (ii) the Clerk write to Devon County Council's Traffic and Road Safety team requesting that the Station Road site between Cottrell Road and Shercroft Close (what3words: eclipses.piglests.luck) be assessed through the SCARF process for a Vehicle Activated Sign or other speed management measure, citing the safety concerns recorded in the Made Broadclyst Neighbourhood Plan (Policies T1 and T2);
- (iii) the letter additionally request DCC's advice on whether a community-funded VAS would be supported at this location in the event the site is not selected for DCC funding, together with indicative specification and costings;
- (iv) a copy of the letter be sent to the ward County Councillor in accordance with Standing Order 24;
- (v) the correspondent be informed of the action taken and advised that the decision on installation rests with DCC as Highway Authority;
- (vi) no Council funding be committed at this stage, and that a further report be brought to Council on receipt of DCC's response, including the specific legal power to be relied upon and a fully costed options appraisal, should Council wish to consider co-funding a scheme.

8. Conclusion

8.1 The request raises a legitimate and longstanding road safety concern that aligns with Council's own evidenced position in the Neighbourhood Plan. However, the decision and statutory responsibility for traffic management measures on Station Road rest with Devon County Council. The recommended course of action allows Council to support the resident's request promptly and on the correct procedural footing, while reserving any decision on Council funding until DCC's assessment and costed options are available.