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Road safety focus

is shifting from cameras to speed alerts

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MORE electronic signs that tell speeding drivers to slow down are to be introduced in the Capital after helping to reduce accidents by 60 per cent.

The signs are activated by cars breaking the speed limit, which causes them to flash a message urging drivers to put on the brakes.

Six of the £5000 signs are already in place at accident blackspots, and the city council is now set to double this

number over the coming year. Another 13 signs are also already in use at the police's mobile speed camera sites.

A study of 50 new sites will be carried out by the council to create a priority list, and the scheme could be rolled out again in later years.

The warnings are likely to appear on roads with a 30mph limit, particularly where speed bumps are impractical.

Research shows that a driver is twice as likely to kill someone when driving at 35mph than at 30mph.

A sign was activated at Muirhouse Parkway in March last year, and the number of speeding drivers has dropped by more than ten per cent since then, while a warning on Lanark Road West led to a 5.8 per cent fall.

The six existing signs on Lang Loan Road, Craigmillar Castle Road, Riccarton Mains Road, Comiston Road, Lanark Road and Addiston Mains were erected between 2005 and last February, alongside other road safety measures, and the accident rate subsequently fell by an average of 60 per cent.

Councillors will be asked to approve the increase in speed alert signs at a committee meeting next week.

City transport leader Phil Wheeler said: "Installing further signs at key hotspots should help to reinforce the message that speeding contributes to accidents and will not be tolerated."

The initiative has been championed by Tory councillor Allan Jackson, whose motion calling for an investigation into the wider use of the signs was passed at a council meeting last year.

"It's been my experience that, when these signs are in place, if a driver is exceeding the speed limit they automatically slow down," he said.

"That is something to be encouraged, as it also avoids going through the criminal procedure involved with speed cameras.

"I think this is something that will be welcomed by drivers, pedestrians and parents with young children."


Bruce Young, Lothian and Borders co-ordinator of the Association of British Drivers, welcomed the move, and said the signs should replace cameras.

"This is better for drivers, rather than speedometer-watching," he said. "Speed cameras tend to pick up drivers who have inadvertently strayed over the limit, whereas reckless drivers are careful to avoid areas with cameras." A national study into vehicle- activated signs in 2002 discovered that they led to speeds being reduced by up to 14mph.

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