

Report

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Report to:	Roads Safety Forum
Date of Meeting:	5 November 2015
Report by:	Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)

Subject:	20MPH Speed Limits
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1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ Advise the Forum on actions previously taken to promote driving at 20mph in residential areas and to advise the Forum of the proposed methodology to ensure that the various types of 20mph speed limits are introduced in a consistent manner across the Council area.

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Forum is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the methodology for determining the most appropriate type of 20mph speed limit for various circumstances is supported.

3. Background

- 3.1. Lowering vehicle speeds in residential areas to approximately 20 mph has a proven record of reducing casualty numbers and severity. Lower speeds also encourage more people to walk or cycle, including on the journey to and from school. 20mph speed limits can, therefore, be an effective road safety measure if they are applied in a logical and consistent manner.
- 3.2. As with all speed limits, it is essential that drivers understand why the limit is in place, otherwise low levels of compliance can be anticipated. It is, therefore, important that 20mph speed limits are introduced only at appropriate locations and the use of these guidelines will help to achieve this.
- 3.3. The Road Safety Forum of 16 June 2010 supported guidelines that were appropriate to the type of 20 mph speed limits that were available to Councils at that time.
- 3.4. The Scottish Government's Road Safety Framework to 2020 includes a commitment to "Encourage local authorities to consider 20mph zones in all residential areas". The Local Transport Strategy 2013 to 2023, produced in 2013, contains a number of policies (LTPs) and actions (LTAs) across a variety of themes. Within the road safety theme LTP19 states "The Council will support and encourage driving at 20mph or below in residential areas and outside schools."

- 3.5. Given the road safety and environmental benefits outlined above then these are commendable aims; however, the realisation of physical features on street can be costly. The legislative requirement for a zone is that it must have traffic calming features which are costly to retro-fit to the existing road network. Mandatory limits require a Traffic Regulation Order and associated signing.
- 3.6. In January 2015 and as part of the Government's work to meet the Framework commitment, Transport Scotland issued a document titled "Good Practice Guide on 20 mph Speed Restrictions". This document replaces all previous guidance relating to 20mph limits. While the fundamental principles behind the use of 20mph speed limits are the same as in previous guidance there have been changes to the options available that make it appropriate for the Council's 2010 guidelines to be revised. Further, there is a greater drive to encourage local authorities to implement 20mph speed limits within residential areas.

4. Previous Criteria, Action and Performance

- 4.1. Prior to the new guidance there were basically four types of limit that could be used.
- Advisory 20mph limits, i.e. "Twenty's Plenty"
 - Mandatory 20mph limits which are appropriate where the nature of the road environment restricts speeds to less than 25mph
 - Mandatory 20mph zones which can be used where traffic calming is in place
 - Part-time mandatory 20mph speed limits outside schools
- 4.2. In 1997, the Council participated in a national trial of Advisory 20mph speed limits. As a result of subsequent research, local authorities were given approval to implement these extensively from 2001. Over the next 10 years to 2011, the Council created approximately 150 residential areas that are signed as "Twenty's Plenty" Advisory 20mph speed limit areas.
- 4.3. Over and above that, in 2003 the Council committed to providing "Twenty's Plenty" Advisory 20mph speed limits around schools within 30mph speed limits. Some were already within existing "Twenty's Plenty" areas and did not receive school specific treatment while others required supplementary treatment such as flashing amber signs. Schools on roads with speed limits greater than 30mph were provided with Vehicle Activated Signs.
- 4.4. The 2010 guidance gave criteria for providing Part Time Mandatory 20mph speed limits at school. These are considered appropriate on distributor roads where measured speeds are at least 30mph and, in addition, have been provided during the School Modernisation programme. As a result, these are now operational at 30 schools, including those with speed limits greater than 30mph. This equates to approximately 20% of the total school stock.
- 4.5. The 2010 guidance gave criteria for providing Mandatory 20mph speed limits and Mandatory Zones and these have been implemented across the residential network in line with criteria. As a result, approximately 350 streets within South Lanarkshire are, either part of a 20mph zone or are, subject to a mandatory 20mph speed limit.
- 4.6. Casualties on the roads of South Lanarkshire have been falling for a number of years and trending towards the targets set in the Scottish Government's Road Safety Framework to 2020 for the different casualty classes. This has been achieved through a combination of factors including road safety initiatives across the Council.

- 4.7. Casualties from road accidents on residential roads have been reviewed. For the purpose of this review residential roads do not include link roads within residential areas – defined as minor roads coloured yellow on OS 1:25000 scale maps.
- During the 3 years 2007 to 2009, there were 171 injury accidents that resulted in 190 casualties (33 serious, 157 slight) on residential roads. During the same period there were a total of 1,963 casualties on all roads in South Lanarkshire. Therefore casualties on residential roads equated to 9.7% of all reported casualties during the three year period.
 - During the 3 years 2012 to 2014 there were 141 injury accidents that resulted in 154 casualties (1 fatal, 23 serious, 130 slight) on residential roads. During the same period there were a total of 1,903 casualties on all roads in South Lanarkshire. Therefore casualties on residential roads equated to 8% of all reported casualties during the three year period.
- 4.8. The distribution of casualties throughout the residential road network is, by and large, random. There were no clusters associated with those areas that have been subject to a reduction in speed limit. No weight can therefore be applied to any statement which implies that casualty reduction has been influenced by the implemented Mandatory limits. Similarly, while there has been a slight reduction in the percentage of accidents on residential roads compared to the whole network it may not be significant enough to draw the conclusion that the new speed limits are responsible for it.
- 4.9. The 2014 assessment of accidents in residential areas identified eight that contained three or more injury accidents. These were: Hillhouse area, Hamilton (9 no.); Strutherhill, Larkhall (5 no.); Eddlewood area, Hamilton (5 no.); Westwood (north) area, EK (4 no.); Burnbrae St/Victoria St/Calder St area, Blantyre (3 no.); Fernhill area, Rutherglen (3 no.); Springhall area, Rutherglen (3 no.); Low Watters Rd/Bent Rd/Mill Rd area, Hamilton (3 no.). A desk top study of the accidents within these areas could not identify any common factors amongst accidents in five of these areas that could be addressed by engineering measures.

5. Action by Others

- 5.1. To date, one local authority has embraced the 20mph speed limit philosophy. This is City of Edinburgh Council (CEC). After completing an evaluation of a 20mph limit pilot scheme in South Central Edinburgh, CEC decided, in January 2015, to roll out the implementation of 20mph speed limits across the city. The key features of the 20mph network are residential roads, shopping streets as well as the city centre.
- 5.2. The commitment of CEC to 20mph speed limits should be viewed in the context that it is essentially an urban local authority and the overwhelming majority of its road network is urban too. The C Class and Unclassified road network in South Lanarkshire is more varied with a split between urban (40mph and below) and rural (above 40 mph) being 60% to 40%. This places competing demands on the Council's resources when considering the most appropriate area to target road safety interventions.
- 5.3. As outlined above, CEC has extended mandatory 20mph speed limit provision to shopping streets. Such locations are clearly different from most residential streets. In the latter it will be predominantly a mixture of cars, cyclists and pedestrians while in the former these groups are added to by HGVs and buses. This mix will generally, through most of the day, act as natural traffic calming and it is common for the

stop/start nature of the traffic to influence casualty numbers.

6. Proposals

- 6.1. While it is not possible to confirm the influence of current mandatory 20mph speed limits within South Lanarkshire on casualty reduction it is clear from research that these lower limits will reduce severity and, therefore, numbers of casualties. With the Council's commitment to assist in achieving government targets as defined in LTP16 of the Local Transport Strategy 2012 to 2023, any accident savings that may be associated from extending the provision of mandatory 20mph speed limits should be welcomed.
- 6.2. The two parts of the road network where 20mph limits are appropriate are still outside schools and in residential areas. It is not proposed that 20mph speed limits should be extended to shopping streets at this time.
- 6.3. The new guidance has removed authorisation to create new Advisory 20mph limits. Existing Advisory 20mph limit schemes can, however, remain in place with the existing signing but not existing road markings.
- 6.4. It is proposed that the following guidance is used in determining the appropriate type of 20 mph speed limit initiative to be introduced for a specific location. The guidance takes into account the mean speeds surveyed on the road prior to a 20 mph limit being introduced. The use of mean speeds is recommended by national guidelines.
- 6.5. Outside schools: The new Good Practice Guide advises that 20 mph should be the standard speed limit in the vicinity of schools. At schools where a mandatory 20mph speed limit or zone is not already in place then a part-time 20mph limit can be used. We should continue to maintain "Twenty's Plenty" Advisory 20mph limits at schools until such time as a suitable alternative mandatory limit is in place. Further:
 - Where mean speeds are greater than 33 mph then introduce part-time mandatory 20 mph.
 - Where mean speeds are in the range 25 to 33 mph and existing Advisory 20mph speed limits are in place use Vehicle Activated Signs to encourage drivers to reduce their speed to adhere to the 20mph limit during school times. Monitor speeds during the first year after implementation and should speeds reduce during school times then give further consideration to 20mph mandatory limits.
 - Where mean speeds are less than 25 mph use 20mph mandatory speed limits.
- 6.6. For residential areas. In line with the new guidance we should continue to review our existing locations of Advisory 20mph speed limits. Further:
 - If traffic calming is in place then create a 20 mph zone.
 - Where mean speeds are restricted, by the nature of the road environment, to less than 25 mph use 20 mph speed limit.
 - Existing Advisory 20mph limits will be assessed to determine their suitability for mandatory 20mph limits. If suitable then a programme to promote mandatory 20mph speed limits will be developed to allow implementation as funds become available. Where existing advisory 20 mph limits are not

suitable for mandatory limits then markings will not be refreshed but will be allowed to fade naturally. Signing will; however, remain in place.

- 6.7. Where there are speeding related issues identified through investigations, such matters will be forwarded to Police Scotland for consideration of enforcement action.

7. Employee Implications

- 7.1. The use of the guidelines will be implemented utilising existing staff resources.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1. These guidelines will not, by themselves, have any financial implications for the Council; however, we will have to prioritise the implementation of any initiatives in line with available funding.

9. Other implications

- 9.1. There are no significant risks associated with this report, nor any environmental implications.
- 9.2. There are no implications for sustainability in terms of the information contained within this report.

10. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements

- 10.1. Although this report proposes a change to an existing methodology this area has been screened for equalities issues and is not relevant to the Council's equalities duties and therefore no impact assessment is required.
- 10.2. Statutory consultation will be required as part of the promotion of the mandatory 20mph limits.

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Executive Director (Community and Enterprise Resources)

20 October 2015

Link(s) to Council Objectives/Values

- Improve community safety
- Improve road network and influence improvements in public transport

Previous References

- Report to Road Safety Forum 16 June 2010

List of Background Papers

- Report to Road Safety Forum 16 June 2010
(<http://ecas.southlanarkshire.gov.uk/viewDoc.asp?c=e%97%9Dd%8Fn%7C%8D>)
- Good Practice Guide on 20mph Speed Restrictions (Transport Scotland)
(<http://www.transportscotland.gov.uk/system/files/documents/guides/20%20mph%20Good%20Practice%20Guide%20-%2019%20December%202014%20-%20Version%20to%20be%20published.pdf>)
- Road Safety Framework to 2020
<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/286643/0087268.pdf>

Contact for Further Information

If you would like inspect any of the background papers or want any further information, please contact: - Neil Chisholm, Roads and Transportation Services

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