



Cyngor Castell-nedd Port Talbot
Neath Port Talbot Council

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cabinet

November 13th 2024

Report of the Head of Engineering and Transport David W. Griffiths

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected: All Wards

Report Title: 20mph Guidance Review

Purpose of the Report:

To advise members of the WG revised 20mph Guidance, and the risk assessment approach to be taken forward to determine any changes to the speed limits following the WG summer listening programme, including specific requests identified by members within their wards for review, to ensure a cohesive, safe highway network.

Executive Summary:

The WG 20mph default speed limit came into force across Wales on 17th September 2023, whereby 92% of the previous 30mph default limit has now become 20mph across NPT, with a further 36, 30mph exceptions in place across the County Borough.

Since April 2024 a 'Listening Programme' announced by the Cabinet Secretary for Transport and North Wales, Ken Skates MS has been underway, with WG encouraging the public to share their views on

20mph, with every council in Wales asked to collect residents' feedback.

On the 16th July 2024 new guidance was published by WG [revised Welsh Government guidance on setting speed limits](#) alongside an assessment sheet (Appendix A) produced by the WLGA for Officers to complete for routes that the Council is requested to review.

That guidance has now been considered by officers, and this report seeks authority from Cabinet to embark on a risk assessment process for a number of routes to enable Cabinet Members to then make a determination as to whether or not it is appropriate in light of the assessment recommendation to increase or reduce speeds.

Background:

The WG 20mph default speed limit came into force across Wales on 17th September 2023, whereby 92% of the previous 30mph default limit has now become 20mph across NPT, with a further 36, 30mph exceptions in place across the County Borough.

To date Officers working alongside Transport for Wales (TfW) and WG, have delivered the following:

- Made a County wide inventory of all TROs and signs
- Agreed and finalised exception maps provided by TfW
- Been part of the extensive communications and behaviour change campaign
- Designed and erected/removed all signage, gateways and any other requirements
- Produced necessary TROs for the exceptions of 20mph: (All 30mph unclassified roads are assumed to default automatically to 20mph)

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On the 16th July 2024 new guidance was published by WG [revised Welsh Government guidance on setting speed limits](#) alongside an assessment sheet (Appendix 1) produced by the WLGA for Officers to complete for routes that the Council is requested to review.

On application of the Guidance officers must initially assess the route against the following criteria:

- **Educational settings** (within 100m): Schools, Pre-school groups, Further education, Higher education.
- **Community Facilities** (within 100m): community halls, playing fields, sports facilities and children's playgrounds.
- **Medical facility** (within 100m): Hospitals, GP/doctors surgeries, day care centres.
- **Residential and/or retail premises** immediately (consider distance from the road, visibility, road geometry, other accesses) fronting the road exceeds 20 per km on both sides of the road.

Within the assessment criteria it states 'If **YES** to any of the previous criteria then a 30mph speed limit would not be appropriate.

If able to move on, Officers must then consider, additional trip attractors to help understand pedestrian and cycle flow and risk:

- Notes of places that **attract frequent pedestrian and cyclist trips**: shops, cafes, public houses, restaurants and filling stations, banks and post offices, bus stops, tourist attractions.

- Important walking, cycling or wheeling route: Are there any rights of way or routes on the Active Travel meets or go along the route?

With further assessments of:

- **Movement** – important bus corridor. Significant increased journey times since 20mph was introduced (evidence based and supported by Compass IOT software)
- **Road characteristics** – assessing the risk of collisions involving pedestrians and cyclists travelling along the road.
- **Stakeholder feedback** – views of the public received through feedback encouraged by WG’s call to contact Highway Authorities.
- **Assessing the benefits and disbenefits of higher speeds** – impact on walking, wheeling and cycling safely. Stats 19 collision data, assessment of collision risk, perceived safety and community cohesion.
- **Air Quality/Noise** – higher speeds have the potential to discourage walking and cycling, leading to increased reliance on private motor vehicles.
- **Weighing up benefits and disbenefits:** Decision is to be balanced ensuring that speed limits are set in a way that promotes safety, efficiency, and community well-being and consider the duties:
 - Equality Act 2010
 - The Active Travel Act 2013
 - The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015
 - And the more transport specific duties in the Traffic Management Act 2004 (expediate movement of traffic)

- The Road Traffic Act 1988 (to prevent accidents)
- The Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984 (relevant when local highway authorities exercise functions under the Act such as the setting of speed limits)
- **Buffer speed limit assessment:** is there a significant stepped change in speed limits when approaching the Community?
- **Officers Summary**
- **Officers Recommendation**

Whilst, there is flexibility for change within the assessment, it should be noted that when determining whether a street or road should have a higher speed limit, we must be certain that the increase will not have a negative impact on road safety, with some early draft reviews showing this to be difficult to substantiate.

This becomes key when reviewed against the backdrop of the WG underlying principle of **'20mph is right where pedestrians and cyclists frequently mix with vehicles unless strong evidence supports that higher speeds are safe'**.

During the last six months of the 'Listening programme' the Council has received 93 emails from members of the public with differing views; some wanting the whole default programme abolished, others wanting reductions to 20mph where 30mph remain whilst a few had specific streets named. Officers have also received four member requests to review sections of the highway within their ward area, with a further three members requesting that limits be reduced from 30mph to 20mph on specific roads within their wards. It is noted that the majority of members in attendance were concerned around enforcement of the 20mph with requests for speed interventions eg: speed cameras to be introduced.

It should be noted that to date Officers carrying out draft reviews have been unable, when carrying out assessments, to recommend a speed increase from 20mph to 30mph when all the above factors are considered.

Since 31st July WG have published provisional figures for personal injury road collisions reported in Wales from January to March 2024. These figures have shown that casualties on 20mph and 30mph roads have reduced since the introduction of 20mph, the lowest on record outside the Covid pandemic period; the number of collisions is 18% lower than in the previous quarter and 17% lower than in the same quarter in 2023.

Furthermore, TfW who are undertaking speed monitoring data for 20mph, released data on 12th June for the period between September 2023 – February 2024, showing that lower speeds are being maintained on 20mph roads, with 57.8% of vehicles travelling at or below 24mph compared to only 20.2% below 24mph prior to the introduction of 20mph.

Financial Impacts:

There are no financial implications on the Council, any identified additional costs will be met through WG 20mph grant funding.

Integrated Impact Assessment:

This is a WG led initiative and applies to the whole of Wales.

A first stage impact assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties (under the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016).

The first stage assessment has indicated that a more in-depth assessment is not required.

Valleys Communities Impacts:

The legislative change and review applies to all parts of the County Borough.

Workforce Impacts:

No implications.

Legal Impacts:

In Wales, local authorities are empowered to vary 20 mph speed limits through the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, specifically under Section 84 (as in the rest of the UK), but recent changes have added additional legislation and guidance specific to Wales.

The key piece of legislation that has impacted 20 mph speed limits in Wales is the Restricted Roads (20 mph Speed Limit) (Wales) Order 2022. This Order, which took effect in September 2023, introduced a default 20 mph speed limit on restricted roads (typically roads in built-up areas with street lighting at intervals of 200 yards or less). Local authorities in Wales can now set 20 mph as the default speed limit for such roads, but they also have the flexibility to vary this limit where deemed appropriate, such as increasing the limit in areas where a higher speed is considered safe.

In practice, local authorities in Wales can use Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) to vary speed limits under the 1984 Act, with the 2022 Order setting a new baseline for 20 mph on restricted roads. However, there is also the requirement to follow the guidance provided by the Welsh Government on implementing and enforcing these changes.

Risk Management Impacts:

This is an all-Wales initiative that aims to reduce road casualties whilst supporting the Active Travel aims; tackling obesity, whilst raising walking and cycling, improvements to air quality and health and wellbeing for all.

Consultation:

There is no requirement for external consultation on this item. Any changes to traffic regulations affected by the review would be consulted upon as part of the Traffic Regulatory Statutory process.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that having due regard to the integrated impact screening assessment that:

Officers undertake specific risk assessments of areas in accordance with the revised WG guidelines as requested by Members alongside the resident feedback following WG 'Listening programme' consultation.

That the findings of assessment reports with Officer recommendations be brought back to Cabinet for determination prior to any further public consultation and implementation of any changes.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

The proposed recommendations be carried out in the interest of road safety.

Implementation of Decision:

The decision is proposed for implementation after the three day call in period.

Appendices:



Assessment sheet -
Applying new 30mph

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