



ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Monday, 30 January 2023

REPORT TITLE:	PROPOSED 20MPH SPEED LIMIT SCHEME – PHASE 1
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

REPORT SUMMARY

This report considers objections and comments of support submitted during the statutory consultation period for Phase 1 of the 20mph speed limit implementation project, which consists of 15 zones. The proposed 20mph speed limits apply to areas that are predominantly residential, retail, or educational. The zone boundaries for the relevant areas included in Phase 1 are included within Appendix A to this report. The list of individual roads and parts of roads affected are included within Appendix B. Consultation summary results and key themes with officers' responses are illustrated within Appendix E of this report.

One of the key themes in the Wirral 2021-26 Plan is to provide safe and pleasant communities. By generally making roads safer for cyclists, pedestrians and other road users, this scheme will contribute to the key priorities set out within the current plan.

This matter affects the following wards within Phase 1: Birkenhead & Tranmere, Prenton, Seacombe, Bidston & St James, New Brighton, Wallasey, Liscard, Rock Ferry, Bromborough, Eastham, Clatterbridge, Bebington, Heswall, West Kirby & Thurstaston, Oxtan, Claughton, Leasowe & Moreton East.

This matter is a Key Decision as it affects most wards within the borough.

RECOMMENDATION

The Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee is recommended to approve the proposal to introduce 20mph speed limits on all of the roads listed in Appendix B to this report.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 Whilst the concerns raised by consultation respondents are noted and have been considered, the proposed 20mph speed limits will focus on creating safe and healthy street environments, which work well for all people and help them live active, healthy lives in areas of good air quality. It is anticipated that bringing in more 20mph speed limits on roads in the borough will help perception of improved road safety for all road users. 20 mph speed limits also reduce greenhouse gas emissions contributing to the Council's net zero objectives as part of its Climate Emergency declaration and can help make residential streets more pleasant and attractive places to live. The proposed scheme will also address the priorities of the Liverpool City Region Road Safety Strategy, the Council's Road Safety Working Group, Wirral 2021-26 Plan and climate emergency declaration.
- 1.2 The objective of the scheme is not just about introducing 20mph speed limits, it is also intended to provide better access to cycling and walking and creating quiet neighbourhoods with lower traffic levels. Local authorities may have historically planned transport schemes with vehicle use as a main consideration and this may have encouraged people to use cars. However, transport planning emphasis and government policy has now shifted towards making road networks more attractive for walking and cycling and safer for all road users.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Allocate the funding to a different scheme in the Borough. This is not considered appropriate as the introduction of widespread 20mph speed limits was identified as a key priority by the Council's Road Safety Working Group.
- 2.2 Do nothing. This is not considered an appropriate option given that the proposed scheme will address the priorities of the Liverpool City Region Road Safety Strategy, the Council's Road Safety Working Group, Wirral 2021-26 Plan and climate emergency declaration.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 On the 1 March 2022 the Environment, Climate Emergency & Transport Committee approved the proposed City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement Combined Authority Transport Plan programme for 2022/23. As part of this resolution, it was approved to allocate funding towards schemes that meet the priorities identified by the Road Safety Working Group, including the implementation of borough-wide 20mph speed limits.
- 3.2 Following this decision, a feasibility study was carried out to consider the methodology to be applied for introducing 20mph speed limits in residential areas and suburban district centres across Wirral. This included 200 Automatic Traffic Counts (ATC) being taken at various locations across the borough, in order to compile vehicle counts and speed data. A phasing strategy and programme for the implementation of the zones was also compiled to identify which areas were to be progressed first using certain prioritisation criteria. For example, consideration was

given to the feel of the area, what amenities it contains, assessing the impact on surrounding roads and potential collision reduction.

- 3.3 In conclusion, a total of 52 zone areas were designated, covering all residential areas and roads where vulnerable road users might be prevalent, such as near to schools and in district centres across the whole borough. It is intended to deliver these zones over four separate phases and four financial years, subject to available resources. As part of Phase 1 of the scheme, 15 of these zones have been prioritised for progression in the 2022/23 financial year, using the criteria set out in paragraph 3.2. As part of the statutory legal process for introducing enforceable speed limits, the proposals for these areas were published during October and November 2022 with feedback from the public sought.
- 3.4 It is proposed to consider some roads for physical traffic calming measures once the impact of introducing the 20mph speed limit via signs and lines only is concluded. Areas where physical traffic calming measures might be necessary have been highlighted and reviewed together with the ATC data returned and those that may have future physical measures implemented will be determined objectively and progressed at a later date when financial resources permit.
- 3.5 During the consultation exercise referenced in section 8.0 below, individual objections were received as well as comments of support. The number of replies per zone is detailed within Appendix C.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The projected estimated cost of implementing the 15 zone areas, as part of the Phase 1 scheme delivery, is approximately £350,000. This will be funded entirely from grant provided through the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) Combined Authority Transport Plan for 2022/23. There are no Council revenue budget or capital borrowing implications to deliver this scheme. All scheme development, consultation and preparation work has also been met from CRSTS grant-funding.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The maintenance of highways, promotion of road safety and the management of traffic are statutory duties for the Council under the Highway Act 1980 and Traffic Management Act 1984.
- 5.2 The Council has a statutory duty to communicate and consult specific customers for highway improvement schemes where the Council intends to implement Traffic Regulation Orders (restricting access, waiting or parking); or to alter the speed limit under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.
- 5.3 The Traffic Regulation Orders will be progressed or amended in accordance with the decision taken by this Committee.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 Existing staff resources with support from external specialist advisors, will be used to deliver this project and staffing resource will be financed from the grant funding referenced in paragraph 4.1.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 Failure to undertake the proposed scheme would result in a failure to support the Council's existing corporate goals and objectives as well as the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) Combined Authority Transport Plan (CATP). The Council would need to agree a re-allocation of CRSTS grant with the City Region and there is a risk of funding claw-back if this scheme is not progressed.
- 7.2 There are risks of negative public reaction to the proposals which will be mitigated by the development of an effective communications strategy, messaging and engagement campaign with Neighbourhoods officers working together with the Council's communications team.
- 7.3 Enforcement of speed limits, including 20mph zones, is by the Police and the Council has no powers to enforce. Risks about limited Police resources for deployment of enforcement were considered in previous reports and decisions to implement 20mph zones in the borough.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Due to the nature of the scheme and the zones encompassing large residential and business areas, it was agreed with Legal Services colleagues that the most effective consultation would be via publication of press releases, social media alerts, public notices and Wirral Council's engagement tool 'Have Your Say' website, which satisfied the consultation requirements listed under Section 7 of The Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.
- 8.2 The Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 also direct a minimum 21-day statutory consultation period for Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) schemes such as this. However, this period was extended to 28 days for this particular scheme, to allow extra time for feedback.
- 8.3 In addition, consultation was undertaken with Party Spokespersons, Ward Members, Active Travel Forum, Emergency Services, Freight Transport Association, Road Haulage Association and Merseytravel.
- 8.4 The statutory advertising process for the proposed Zone areas contained in Phase 1 included publication of notices on site throughout the relevant areas and in the Wirral Globe on a rolling basis of 3 zones per week over a 5-week period from 5 October 2022, with a 4 week feedback period for each zone. The deadline for feedback for the last 3 zones to be advertised was 30 November 2022. The advertising dates for each zone and the number of public notices placed throughout each zone are included within Appendix D to this report. There have also been numerous press releases directing the public to the "Have your say" webpage for this scheme, which provided background details, maps and other information along with the opportunity to take a survey and leave feedback. The public notices provided details of the

proposal and information on how to provide feedback. The public notices in the newspaper and on site are a statutory part of the process.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help Council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.
- 9.2 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been compiled. A copy can be found at: - <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments>

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 This scheme is proposed primarily to maintain safe access to, from and along the highway, so as to assist road safety for all pedestrians and promote active travel modes. The link between poor air quality, the climate emergency and emissions from vehicles is widely accepted. Introducing a 20mph speed limit on residential areas and within defined suburban district centres across the borough is intended to make areas feel safer and together with other interventions, such as walking and cycling schemes, encourage a modal shift away from the private motor car towards cleaner, more sustainable modes of transport, which will have a positive environmental and climate change impact.
- 10.2 The introduction of lower speed limits is recommended by NICE (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence) in their guidance 'Air Pollution: Outdoor Air Quality and Health' and its implementation will encourage a shift away from cars to more active travel. Less reliance on private motor vehicles can help provide equality of accessibility for local residents and businesses, help reduce local congestion, and improve safety for vulnerable roads users as well as improve health and air quality outcomes.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 This scheme will have a positive impact on supporting active travel and encouraging modal shift away from the private motor car. Evidence suggests that making changes that are good for walking and cycling are also good for local businesses and that local people who walk and cycle spend more in local shops than those who drive as they visit more often and cumulatively spend more.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A – Proposal Boundary Plans

Appendix B – List of roads and parts of roads proposed to become subject to 20mph speed limits

Appendix C – Graphics showing consultations feedback per zone

Appendix D – Advert dates for each Zone in Phase 1

Appendix E – Key findings and officer responses to objections

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Department for Transport Circular 01/2013 - Setting Local Speed Limits

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/setting-local-speed-limits/setting-local-speed-limits>

Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/traffic-signs-regulations-and-general-directions-2016-an-overview>

Research and analysis - 20 mph speed limits on roads

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/20-mph-speed-limits-on-roads>

This report is linked to the terms of reference for the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee, part 5.2 (b, c and d).

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee – Road Safety Working Group	16 March 2021
Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee – Road Safety Update	7 September 2021
Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee – Combined Authority Transport Plan Programme 2022/23	1 March 2022