

**ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE****Tuesday, 3 December 2024**

<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	<b>20 MPH SPEED LIMIT PROGRAMME PHASES 3 &amp; 4 – CONSIDERATION OF OBJECTIONS AND OFFICERS RESPONSES</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES</b>

**REPORT SUMMARY**

This report considers objections and comments submitted during the statutory consultation period for Phases 3 and 4 of the 20mph speed limit programme which consists of 22 proposed areas and 11 school locations. The proposed 20mph speed limits apply to areas that are predominantly residential, retail, or educational.

The principle of introducing 20mph speed limits across the borough aligns with the Council Plan 'Wirral Working Together' for 2023-2027: working for safe, resilient, and engaged communities, working together to create a more efficient, effective, and accessible council, and play our part in addressing the climate emergency by working together to protect our environment. By 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 proposal affects the following Council Wards; Greasby, Frankby & Irby, Heswall, Birkenhead & Tranmere, Seacombe, Pensby & Thingwall, Rock Ferry, Bidston & St James, Bromborough, Upton, Clatterbridge, Moreton West & Saughall Massie, Liscard, Bebington, West Kirby & Thurstaston, Hoylake & Meols, Claughton and Oxtan.

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

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee is recommended to authorise the Director of Neighbourhood Services to introduce Phases 3 and 4 of the 20mph speed limit programme on those roads or parts of roads shown on the list attached within Appendix A to this report.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 Objections have been received against the proposals for Phases 3 & 4 of the scheme and members will of course wish to consider what, if any, consequence this should have for the planned scheme.
- 1.2 The concerns raised by those who responded to the formal consultation have been noted and considered, and the key findings and detailed responses to objections received for Phases 3 and 4 can be found within Appendix B and D of this report. 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.
- 1.3 The way people travel, and how they travel is one of the biggest environmental impacts of the day. Travelling by car not only adds to carbon emissions but also adds to local air pollution which can have health impacts. It is important to have a choice of travel mode to workplaces and schools that is both safe for its road users and environmentally sustainable. 20mph speed limits are likely to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to the Council's strategy for net zero as part of its climate emergency declaration and can help make residential streets more pleasant and attractive places to live. In addition, achieving modal shift and encouraging more active travel will further improve air quality and support the reduction in road transport emissions.
- 1.4 The 20mph speed limits are intended to deliver significant benefits including a reduction in average vehicular speeds, a reduction in road traffic collisions and encourage more children to walk and cycle to school. The 20mph speed limit programme supports the priorities of the Liverpool City Region Road Safety Strategy, the Council's Road Safety Plan 2023-27, and the Wirral 2023-27 Plan.
- 1.5 The objective of the scheme is not just about introducing 20mph speed limits, it is also about providing improved access to cycling and walking. Councils have previously planned transport schemes with vehicle use as the dominant consideration, this may have encouraged more people to use cars. However, the priority should be to make the road network safer and more attractive for all road users including pedestrians and cyclists.
- 1.6 Whilst the number of formal responses to the phase 3 & 4 proposals was low at 6.5% of households responding and most responses relating to the general premise behind 20mph speed limits, the responses received were predominantly in opposition.

### **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 2.1 This report sets out proposals to introduce Phases 3 and 4 of the Council's 20mph speed limit programme. The options of not acting or delaying the proposals have been considered at this stage but are not recommended because the 20mph speed limit programme addresses the priorities of the Liverpool City Region Road Safety Strategy, Wirral 2023-27 Plan, and the significant benefits it can bring. The

objections have been considered but the balance of considerations favour implementing the schemes as recommended within the report.

- 2.2 Allocation of the funding to a different scheme from within the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) Combined Authority Transport Plan Programme is not considered appropriate as the 20mph speed limit programme is identified as a key priority by the Council's Road Safety Working Group.
- 2.3 Two thirds of the Council's residential roads are now 20mph through the delivery of Phases 1 and 2. To not progress with Phases 3 and 4 would allow for inconsistency within the road speeds across the borough and this would likely cause confusion and a dilution of the impact of the existing 20mph speed limits.

### **3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 In January 2013, the Department for Transport (DfT) published its revised guidance on Setting Local Speed Limits (Circular 01/2013). This guidance should be used as the basis for assessments of setting local speed limits; however, local authorities are asked to keep their speed limits under review with changing circumstances. It is suggested that 20mph speed limits should be introduced on roads that are primarily residential and in town or city streets where pedestrian and cyclists' movements are high such as around schools, shops, markets, playgrounds, and other areas, where vehicle movement is not the primary function. It is also important that local authorities and police forces work closely together in setting local speed limits to ensure the correct speed limit is introduced.
- 3.2 On 1 March 2022 this Committee approved the proposed CRSTS Combined Authority Transport Plan programme for 2022/23 and it was agreed to allocate funding as part of this programme towards schemes that met the priorities identified by the Road Safety Working Group including the implementation of borough-wide 20mph speed limits.
- 3.3 Phase 1 of the programme comprised of 15 areas which were publicly consulted on during October and November 2022 with all comments and feedback received being reported this Committee in January 2023. This Committee approved Phase 1 of the 20mph speed limit programme. Phase 1 was completed and fully operational by November 2023.
- 3.4 On 14 March 2023, this Committee approved the proposed CRSTS Combined Authority Transport Plan programme for 2023/24 that included Phase 2 of the 20mph speed limit programme (15 areas). Following consultation and engagement with all those affected by Phase 2 proposals, this Committee considered all objections and comments received and subsequently approved Phase 2 areas. This work commenced during January 2024 and was completed in April 2024.
- 3.5 On 12 March 2024 this Committee approved the proposed CRSTS Combined Authority Transport Plan programme for 2024/25 that included Phases 3 and 4 of the 20mph speed limit programme.
- 3.6 As part of the feasibility study for this scheme, traffic surveys were conducted at 200 locations across the borough. The traffic surveys gathered information such as vehicle speeds, volumes, and classification. As part of the evaluation, once the scheme has had time to bed in and become established, traffic surveys will be repeated at those same locations to determine whether average vehicle speeds

have changed. Road traffic collision data for each proposed area has also been recorded and will be reviewed as part of the evaluation assessment.

- 3.7 An early evaluation can give a basic indication of what the initial impact of the 20mph speed limit has had. The minimum time for a scheme to be in place before any rational conclusions can be drawn would be at least 12 months. However, more time needs to elapse before definitive conclusions can be drawn. The option to develop an evaluation report approximately 12 months after the completion of Phase 1 schemes is considered an appropriate option. Phase 1 was fully completed and operational from November 2023. Therefore, a review of the first-year schemes is currently underway and the evaluation of the impact of the first 12 months of operation should be completed by early 2025. An evaluation report highlighting the impacts and any recommendations that require changes will be compiled by officers and presented to this Committee for approval. The initial review of the areas introduced in Phase 2 will start in early summer of 2025. Should Phases 3 and 4 be approved for implementation, the initial review of their impact will be started in the summer of 2026, around 12 months after introduction.
- 3.8 Within this feasibility study it was concluded by officers that certain arterial routes (main roads) should be included within the four-year 20mph programme. However, considering feedback from ward Members, local communities, and Merseyside Police, officers are currently reviewing the borough's arterial routes where 20mph schemes have been implemented. The review undertaken (as part of the evaluation) will consider average vehicle speeds, road traffic collision data, Traffic Signs Regulations and National Guidance. Any conclusions drawn from this review that requires a change in speed limit (eg reverting to 30mph) will be consulted upon and processed in line with the legal requirements for implementing a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO).
- 3.9 The feasibility study included a total of 52 proposed 20mph speed limit areas across the borough that were designated, covering all residential areas, roads and parts of roads where vulnerable road users might be prevalent, such as school areas, and in district centres etc. A location plan showing all the proposed 20mph speed limits within Phases 1 to 4 can be found within Appendix E of this report. Please note and for ease of reference for Members, areas 29 and 29a are two separate scheme areas.
- 3.10 The list of roads and parts of roads affected by the proposals set out within this report are included within Appendix A of this report and the relevant areas can be viewed on an interactive map, available on the Council's internet page at the following location:  
<https://mapping.wirral.gov.uk/WebMap9/Map.aspx?MapName=SpeedLimitConsultation>. Consultation summary results and key themes are illustrated within Appendix D.

#### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The projected cost of implementing the 20mph schemes (22 areas and 11 school locations) on-site, as part of the Phase 3 and 4 works, is approximately £300,000 which would be funded entirely from the CRSTS Combined Authority Transport Plan that was approved by this Committee on 12 March 2024. The cost to deliver these schemes includes the advertising of the appropriate Traffic Regulations Order(s), consultation (including a direct letter drop), scheme design, contractual costs, and staff time to deliver the schemes. There are no expected additional

anticipated costs associated with the capital scheme implementation, however, any additional costs would be absorbed within the overall CRSTS programme allocation.

- 4.2 Future maintenance costs for any associated road signing and lining will need to be met from the Council's existing limited highway maintenance revenue budget.

## **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 Highways Act 1980, Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, and the Traffic Management Act 2004.
- 5.2 The Council has a statutory duty to communicate and consult with specific customers and stakeholders 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 at this Committee.

## **6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS**

- 6.1 Existing staff resources along with assistance from specialist advisors, will be used to deliver this project.

## **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 7.1 The key risks associated with the implementation of Phases 3 and 4 of the 20mph speed limit proposals that are outlined below. These risks will be managed and monitored by Council officers throughout the delivery of the 20mph schemes and if necessary, will be reported to the Council's Senior Leadership Team and Members.
- 7.2 Failure to undertake Phases 3 and 4 of the 20mph speed limit programme would result in a failure to support the Council's existing corporate goals and objectives as well as the CRSTS Combined Authority Transport Plan programme. Furthermore, there is a risk that the Council would need to agree a re-allocation of the CRSTS grant with the City Region or be subjected to claw-back of the allocated grant if this scheme is not progressed.
- 7.3 It is important to highlight that the Council's 20mph speed limit programme proposals have to date been introduced (and are proposed as set out within this report) to reduce average vehicle speeds, reduce road traffic collisions, and encourage more people to cycle and walk. Therefore, this programme seeks to mitigate any highway safety risks.

## **8.0 ENGAGEMENT / CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 Due to the size, complexity, and the resource required to deliver the widespread 20mph speed limit programme across residential and business locations the most effective consultation for the proposed 20mph scheme was utilised being

publication of press releases, social media, public notices, and Wirral Council's engagement tool 'Have you say' website.

- 8.2 No resident letter drops were carried out as part of the Phase 1 and 2 consultations. As per the statutory TRO consultation regulations, the scheme proposals were advertised in the Wirral Globe and on public notices posted throughout the related areas, as well as there being various press releases relating to them, giving details of how the public might object and provide feedback via various channels.
- 8.3 Following the consultation exercise for Phase 2 of the 20mph scheme proposals, the previous Government made a change to their guidance for the consultation of such schemes. Therefore, it was decided that a direct letter drop would be carried out to those residents and businesses affected by Phases 3 and 4 of the proposals, providing information on the scheme and directing them to the on-line information and surveys. A letter drop to those affected is not a statutory requirement and this has been done on a voluntary basis, to reach out to affected residents and to maximise feedback from the scheme proposals. This also goes well beyond the level of direct contact made with residents during the consultation element for previous phases of this scheme.
- 8.4 Approximately 26,000 letters were hand delivered to residents and businesses directly affected by Phases 3 and 4 of the 20mph programme. The Council's dedicated 'Have your say' webpage for this scheme, gave background details, maps, and other information along with the opportunity to take a survey and leave feedback. Furthermore, the website also provides a direct email address for a dedicated mailbox specifically for this scheme, so that the public may object and provide further details or comments should they wish to make on the proposals.
- 8.5 The letters delivered were dated the 24 July 2024 as that was the start date of the consultation for the first areas proposed for these latest phases, however, in hindsight, the letter should have probably been left undated, as this appeared to cause confusion with some residents believing that they had received the consultation very late when in fact, the consultation was carried out on a rolling basis over 8 weeks with different start and end dates, depending on which area the resident lived in. Some residents also commented that the consultation for their area had closed without checking the online map and information which they were directed to via the letter, to see which area their residence was located in. The letter was issued as a prompt to residents to provide feedback in case they had not seen the public notices or heard about the scheme through social media or in the local news. Therefore, this was issued in addition to what is the statutory part of the process.
- 8.6 The Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 direct a minimum of 21 days statutory consultation period for TRO schemes such as this. However, this period was extended to 28 days for the 20mph speed limits, to allow extra time for comments and feedback. Public notices containing details of the proposals and information on how to provide feedback were placed in the Wirral Globe and at prominent locations throughout the 20mph scheme areas. The advertisement of public notices in the local newspaper publications and on-site conform to the statutory legal part of the process.

- 8.7 In addition, consultation was undertaken with Party Spokespersons, Ward Members, Active Travel Forum, Emergency Services, Merseyside Police, Freight Transport Association, Road Haulage Association and Merseytravel.
- 8.8 The statutory consultation phase of the 20mph speed limits is not a referendum or public vote, but allows members of the public to object to the scheme proposals. There have been several examples, where residents and ward Members have asked officers to extend a 20mph speed limit based on their local knowledge, such as West Kirby Road near to the Saughall Pub and the B5136 in Bebington, near to the Rose and Crown Pub. Officers have also been asked to review the extents of the current 20mph speed limits on certain roads, for example Leasowe Road and Pensby Road and officers are currently reviewing those requests.

### **Phases 3 and 4 consultations**

- 8.9 During the consultation exercise for Phases 3 and 4 schemes, individual objections were received as well as comments of support. The report notes that no petitions were received during the consultation period. The online survey data shows that almost 77% of those that responded for each area proposal stated to be residents in that area. Approximately 38% declared to be commuters to the areas, 13% to be visitors, and 4% business owners. However, there is no way of knowing where the direct emails received were generated from and what their interests were in terms of the individual proposal areas.
- 8.10 Respondents were able to comment on multiple areas or locations, so the total number of responses is more than the number of respondents. A total of 1,982 representations were received from 1,278 people for Phases 3 and 4 consultations. Of those, 1,782 were received via the online survey and the rest were received directly to the scheme email inbox, via letter or received through the Council Contact Centre. In addition, 21 emails were received in objection to the bypasses becoming subject to 20mph. However, those that had objected about this had been misinformed, as there is no proposal to reduce the speed limit on the bypasses to 20mph, so their objections are considered not valid. The scheme inbox also received 10 suggestions for possible extensions to the 20mph scheme in the following areas: Manor Road and Neston Road in Thornton Hough, Church Road, Bebington, Gills Lane, Pensby, Frankby Village, Spital Road (between Croft Avenue and Bromborough Village Road), Little Storeton Lane and part of Landican Lane and Barnston Road (Barnston Church to Gills Lane).
- 8.11 It should be noted that there was a considerable number of people objecting to the same area multiple times and in those cases, only their first response was accepted. There may also have been people who have filled out the online survey and sent a direct email, so their feedback may have been counted twice. However, given the size of the areas in these phases, compared to those areas in Phases 1 and 2, this is a substantial increase in feedback even though the feedback rate overall is considered low.
- 8.12 The objections received for the areas included within Phases 3 and 4 were predominantly related to the premise behind the 20mph speed limit scheme as a whole and any 20mph speed limit scheme, regardless of geographical location. In fact, the online survey results showed that almost 78% of objectors have stated that there are no possible changes to the scheme that would make them support it. Whilst the number of responses received was extremely low when comparing to

that of the resident population of the 22 scheme areas and 11 school locations (approximately 5% response from 26,000 residents / businesses), it is considered that most residents are content with the 20mph speed limits.

- 8.13 The detailed responses and associated graphical layout for each scheme area and the key findings and detailed responses to objections received for Phases 3 and 4 can be found within Appendix B and D of this report.
- 8.14 The statutory advertising process for Phases 3 and 4 schemes included publication of notices throughout the relevant areas and in the press on a rolling basis of 5 areas per week for the first three weeks, then 4 areas in the fourth week and then the remaining 3 areas and 11 x school locations in the fifth week. Each area / location had an associated 28-day period for feedback. During the consultation, it was discovered that there was a typing error on the notice relating to proposal area 51. Therefore, it was decided to correct the notice and readvertise that area, with an extended feedback deadline of 25 September 2024. Therefore, the consultation period spanned between 24 July 2024 and 25 September 2024. The advertising dates and the number of public notices placed throughout each area can be found within Appendix C.
- 8.15 The 'Have your say' webpage also contained information on how members of the public can become Community Champions for the 20mph schemes. This will involve displaying posters and stickers in vehicles and on wheelie bins, or volunteering for the Safer Roads Watch (SRW) scheme that involves carrying out hand-held speed surveys and the subsequent education of motorists. Up to now almost 1,000 resources such as posters and wheelie bin stickers have been requested from the Council and Wirral continues to have the largest SRW scheme in operation across the Liverpool City Region.

### **Enforcement and compliance**

- 8.16 Speed enforcement is a matter for the Police and their resources are limited with their activities being prioritised across various locations within the borough with all speed limits and not just 20mph roads. It is important to highlight that 20mph speed limits are enforceable as like any other change in speed limit and are signed in the same way as other speed limits and responsible drivers are expected to observe them as any limit or traffic sign should be. This will have an overall effect of reducing speeds which is a positive, although there will always be drivers who exceed limits.
- 8.17 Options to address areas where a problem is shown can include the Safer Roads Watch Scheme, which is administered by Wirral Council with the support of Merseyside Police Safer Roads Unit, and once trained volunteers will be issued with Speed Detection Devices, documentation, and a high visibility jacket. Further information about this scheme can be found on the partnership's website at the following address: <https://merseysideroadsafety.org/safer-roads-watch/>.
- 8.18 Whilst it is hoped that most drivers will self-regulate to 20mph speed limits, regular enforcement is considered the final option, and the circumstance and suitability of the location will determine which options will be suitable. The Police safety camera van can be deployed, though they are normally more suitable to the high-volume faster roads. The handheld speed device is the device most normally deployed in lower speed areas and which would be used in a 20mph area.



8.19 As with all speed limits, 20mph speed limits are accompanied by legal Orders and an infringement of the prescribed speed limit would be subject to a Fixed Penalty Notice (as issued by the Police). Merseyside Police have made a commitment to enforce the new 20mph schemes and Council officers have engaged with the Merseyside Roads Policing team and a working group was established to discuss and plan joint enforcement and education activities.

## **9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 This scheme is subject to an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA). 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 EIA 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 EIA has been compiled under the heading of Equality Impact Assessments since May 2023/Neighbourhoods. 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, to assist road safety for pedestrians and promote active travel modes. The link between poor air quality, climate emergency and emissions from vehicles is widely accepted. Introducing a 20mph speed limit on residential areas and within defined suburban district centers across the borough is intended to make areas feel safer and 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 to help promote more active travel and less use of the private car will help provide equality of accessibility for residents and businesses, help reduce local congestion and improve safety for vulnerable roads users as well health and air quality.

## **11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 This scheme is expected to have a positive impact on supporting active travel and encouraging modal shift away from the private motor car.

11.2 Evidence shows that making changes that are good for walking and cycling are also good for local businesses. It is considered 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 – List of roads and parts of roads proposed to become 20mph speed limits.

Appendix B – Graphics showing consultations feedback per area.

Appendix C – Advert dates for each area and School location in Phases 3 and 4 of the 20mph speed limit programme.

Appendix D – Key findings and officer responses to objections received.

Appendix E – Location plan of all proposed 20mph schemes Phases 1 to 4

## 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>

Policy Paper 2 October 2023 – Plan for drivers

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/plan-for-drivers>

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

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 – Combined Authority Transport Plan Programme 2022/23	1 March 2022
Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee – Proposed 20mph Speed Limit Scheme, Phase 1	30 January 2023
Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee – Combined Authority Transport Plan Programme 2023/24	14 March 2023
Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Plan – Wirral Road Safety Plan	20 September 2023

Council – Motions of Notice	2 October 2023
Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee – Proposed 20mph Speed Limit Scheme, Phase 2	5 December 2023
Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee – Combined Authority Transport Plan Programme 2024/25	12 March 2024