



ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 5 December 2023

REPORT TITLE:	20MPH ZONES PHASE 2 - CONSIDERATION OF OBJECTIONS AND OFFICERS RESPONSES
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

REPORT SUMMARY

This report considers objections and comments of support submitted during the statutory traffic regulation order consultation period for Phase 2 of the 20mph speed limit programme which consists of 15 proposed areas. In view of the number of objections received to Phase 2 following the implementation of Phase 1 the Committee may wish to consider alternatives to proceeding directly with Phase 2, so two possible options are recommended for consideration.

One of the key themes contained within the Wirral 2021-26 Plan is to provide safe and pleasant communities. By generally aspiring to make 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; Birkenhead & Tranmere, Prenton, Seacombe, Bidston & St James, New Brighton, Liscard, Rock Ferry, Clatterbridge, Bebington, Heswall, Claughton, Leasowe & Moreton East, Hoylake & Meols, Pensby & Thingwall, Greasby, Frankby & Irby, Upton, Moreton West & Saughall Massie.

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee is recommended to approve one of the following two options:

- 1) Option 1 - Instruct the Director of Neighbourhood Services to introduce all of Phase 2 of the 20mph speed limit programme on those roads or parts of roads shown on the list attached within Appendix A to this report, or
- 2) Option 2 - Instruct the Director of Neighbourhood Services to review and re-evaluate the proposed roads within Phase 2 in light of the consultation response. Considering a more targeted approach, for example, restricted to

locations near schools and where collision records are highest only and to bring back a further report to the Environment Climate Emergency and Transport Committee detailing these proposals.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 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 Phase 2 can be found within Appendix B and D of this report.
- 1.2 Whilst the number of formal responses to the phase 2 consultation were low, representing 2.6% of the resident population of the 15 scheme areas, and predominantly related to 20mph speed limits in general – the responses are overwhelmingly in opposition. Members will of course wish to consider what, if any, consequence this should have for the planned scheme.
- 1.3 The 20mph speed limit programme is intended to deliver significant benefits including a reduction in average vehicular speeds, a reduction in road traffic collisions and to 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, Wirral Council Road Safety Plan 2023-27, Wirral 2021-26 Plan, and the resolutions of the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Two options are recommended for consideration by the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee:

Option 1 – Proceed to introduce all of Phase 2 of the 20mph speed limit programme on those roads or parts of roads shown on the list attached within Appendix A to this report.

Option 2 - Review and re-evaluate the proposed roads within Phase 2 in light of the consultation response. Considering a more targeted approach, for example, restricted to locations near schools and where collision records are highest only.

- 2.2 Not acting or pausing any Phase 2 20mph implementation pending a full and substantive review of Phase 1 would be contrary to typical practice: that 20mph schemes should be evaluated over a six-year period with 3 years before and after to have sufficient relevant data. The 20mph speed limit programme supports the priorities of the Liverpool City Region Road Safety Strategy, Wirral Council Road Safety Plan 2023-27, Wirral 2021-26 Plan, and the resolutions of the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee.

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). The circular sets out the framework that highway authorities should follow when reviewing and setting local speed limits. The circular also asks highway authorities to keep their speed limits under review with changing circumstances, and to consider the introduction of more 20mph limits and zones in urban areas and built-up village streets that are primarily residential, to ensure greater safety for cyclists and pedestrians. The circular advises that speed limits should be set with support from the local community, the

police and other local services. The circular states that 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. The circular indicates that if a speed limit is unrealistically low for a particular road it may be ineffective, but that drivers are likely to expect and respect lower limits where they can see potential hazards, for example outside schools, in residential areas or villages and in shopping streets.

- 3.2 On 16 March 2021 the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport (ECET) Committee approved the recommendation of the Road Safety Working Group to “request that 20mph zones are introduced in all areas that are predominantly residential, retail, or educational” and resolved a motion that “the Committee recognises that a lower speed limit will help reduce the actual and perceived danger on the streets and take a step towards reclaiming the streets as a social place where neighbours interact with each other and encourage more children to walk or cycle to school. Slower traffic speeds can enable the elderly to travel independently and safely. Accordingly, officers are requested to prepare a scheme to make Wirral a 20mph Borough. Residential roads should be designated as 20mph limit areas, with signage and road markings alone, except in isolated cases where traffic calming measures might be necessary.”
- 3.3 On 1 March 2022 the ECET Committee approved the proposed City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (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.
- 3.4 On 30 January 2023, the ECET Committee approved Phase 1 of the 20mph speed limit programme. Phase 1 of the programme comprised of 15 areas which were publicly consulted on during October and November of 2022 with all comments and feedback received being reported to that Committee in January 2023. Subsequently, works instructions were issued to contractors for the necessary signs and road markings to be introduced. This work commenced during April 2023 and was completed in November 2023.
- 3.5 On 14 March 2023, ECET Committee approved the recommended CRSTS Combined Authority Transport Plan programme for 2023/24, which included Phase 2 of the 20mph speed limit programme.
- 3.6 As part of the feasibility study for this programme, traffic surveys were carried out at 200 locations across the borough covering each zone. The traffic surveys gathered information such as vehicle speeds, volumes, and classification. As part of the evaluation of the programme, once each phase has 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.
- 3.7 Within this feasibility study it was concluded that certain arterial routes (main roads) would be included within the four-year 20mph programme where they pass through township areas. However, officers have listened to feedback from both ward Members and local communities, and will be undertaking a review of the arterial routes included in Phase 1, as well as some of the short cul-de-sacs where 20mph

schemes have been implemented in Phase 1. The review undertaken 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, reverting back to 30mph for example, will be consulted upon and processed in line with the legal requirements for implementing the necessary Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO). Where the appropriate guidance advises the 20mph signage is not required in certain short cul-de-sacs, these will be removed.

- 3.8 Officers have also received feedback from Members and residents with regards to Phase 1 where 20mph road markings (roundels) have been painted on the road surface and then, in a small number of cases, resurfaced over, resulting in the 20mph roundel markings having to be replaced. Where possible, the programming of road surface maintenance schemes and the 20mph speed limits should be done at the same time so avoid disruption to road users, residents and businesses' and ultimately reduce impact on budgets. Officers will endeavour to ensure that in the Phase 2 any highway maintenance or improvement schemes are better co-ordinated with the 20mph programme schemes.
- 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 2 separate scheme areas.
- 3.10 The list of road and parts of roads proposed within Phase 2 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/WM9/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 (15 areas) on-site, as part of the Phase 2 works, is approximately £350,000 which will be funded entirely from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) Combined Authority Transport Plan (CATP) and is included in the CATP programme for 2023/24 approved by the ECET Committee on 14 March 2023. The cost to deliver these schemes includes the advertising of the appropriate Traffic Regulation Order (TRO), consultation, 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 1988 and the Traffic Management Act 1984.
- 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: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 Existing staff resources along with assistance from specialist advisors, will be used to deliver this project. There were some delays encountered in the procurement of the required signage for Phase 1 schemes and this may also occur during the construction period for Phase 2, should it be approved for introduction. These potential delays will need to be programmed into future timescales.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 Any decision of Committee other than Option 1 will result in a delay to the implementation of Phase 2 beyond an intended start for making the necessary orders and erecting the necessary signs and road markings in 2023/24, and will require approval of the LCRCA and Finance officers to slip the available capital programme funding. Any delay cannot be quantified at this stage but may require re-consultation and could take up to a further 6 to 12 months before Phase 2 proceeds to implementation.
- 7.2 There are key risks associated with the implementation of Phase 2 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.
- 7.3 Failure to undertake the proposed Phase 2 scheme at all would result in a failure to support the Council's existing corporate goals and objectives as well as the approved CRSTS Combined Authority Transport Plan programme and ECET Committee resolutions. 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.
- 7.4 There is a potential reputational risk to the Council if it fails to follow new National Guidance (when published) that is intended to help local authorities introduce 20mph speed limits within their areas. However, the Government's plans to publish this new guidance has not been determined yet and as and when this is released, Council officers will then consider the implications the guidance may have on Wirral's 20mph speed limit proposals.
- 7.5 It is important to highlight that the Council's 20mph speed limit programme proposals are being introduced to reduce average vehicle speeds, a reduction in road traffic

collisions and to 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 within the borough, it was agreed with the Council's Legal Services team that the most effective consultation for the proposed 20mph schemes would be via publication of press releases, social media alerts, public notices, and Wirral Council's engagement tool 'Have your say' website. This satisfies the consultation requirements listed under Section 7 of the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.
- 8.2 To support the 20mph programme and get local people interested in the 20mph speed limits consultation, a variety of channels were used to reach Wirral residents. These included press releases, organic and targeted paid social media, Wirral View articles and inclusion in the Wirral residents e-newsletter sent to approximately 20,000 residents. In addition to this, digital website ads and content were featured on Merseyside Metro and Wirral Globe websites, and adverts included in the print versions of Wirral Globe, Merseyside Metro and Liverpool Echo. The communications helped to direct the public to the Council's dedicated 'Have your say' webpage for this scheme, which gives 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 send further details or comments should they wish to make on the 20mph scheme proposals.
- 8.3 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.
- 8.4 In addition, consultation was undertaken with Party Spokespersons, Ward Members, Active Travel Forum, Emergency Services, Freight Transport Association, Road Haulage Association and Merseytravel.
- 8.5 The statutory consultation phase of the 20mph speed limits is not a referendum or public vote but allows the public to inform the Council of any issues that officers might not be aware of that may influence changes to the scheme. There have been several examples, where residents have asked officers to extend the 20mph speed limit based on their local knowledge and in consultation with the Police, where the Council have been able to accommodate this. Examples of this includes Caldry Road, West Kirby and Dibbinsdale Road in Bromborough, with other requests being investigated.

- 8.6 Officers have also considered and agreed to requests for removing roads from the 20mph speed limit scheme proposals, such as Rivacre Road, Eastham, which borders with our neighbour authority, Cheshire West and Chester Council as this will provide continuity for the most appropriate speed limit along a route length. The Council have also received localised requests for additional signs and road markings as well as the relocation of signs and markings, which the Council have or will accommodate where possible.
- 8.7 As part of the feedback from Phase 1 consultation that was reported to the ECET Committee on 30 January 2023, Members asked if officers could contact more community groups or use local hubs to publicise any subsequent phases of the scheme. Considering this, the consultation for Phase 2 did include more active travel and community groups and extended to Birkenhead Park Visitor Centre and in BirkenEds place in the town centre. In addition, the development of an interactive map, on the dedicated hub on Have Your Say, to make it more customer friendly enabled a road to be searched upon and identify which proposal area it is to be included in. At the same time as the consultation was running, educational messages were published through the council's and partners digital channels, to inform people on why we are introducing 20mph speed limits and the progression of the roll-out of phase 1 of the scheme. This included the start of a shared voices campaign where key figures such as Chair of the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee, Police Crime Commissioner and Cycling and Walking Commissioner featured in videos talking about 20mph speed limits.

Phase 2 Consultation

- 8.8 During the consultation exercise for Phase 2 schemes, individual objections were received as well as comments of support. In addition, a total of 3 petitions were also received: two in objection to the overall general scheme and one requesting for an extension to the 20mph speed limit on China Farm Lane in Newton.
- 8.9 A total of 15,700 people viewed the consultation page on Have Your Say and 2,226 responses were received for the Phase 2 consultation covering 15 scheme areas. A total of 919 responses had been received for the Phase 1 consultation in 2022, covering 15 different scheme areas. However, the number of responses remain low, representing 2.6% of the resident population of the 15 scheme areas. The objections received for the areas included within Phase 2 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.
- 8.10 The detailed responses and associated graphical layout for each scheme area and the key findings and detailed responses to objections received for Phase 2 can be found within Appendix B and D of this report.
- 8.11 The statutory advertising process for Phase 2 schemes included publication of notices throughout the relevant areas and in the press on a rolling basis of 3 areas per week, over a 5-week period from 28 June 2023, with a 4-week feedback period for each area. The deadline for feedback for the remaining 3 years to be advertised was on 23 August 2023. The advertising dates and the number of public notices placed throughout each area can be found within Appendix C. In addition to the

'Have you say' webpage, information leaflets were also displayed in Birkenhead Park Visitor Centre and in BirkenEds Place in Grange Precinct.

- 8.12 The 'Have your say' webpage also contained information on how members of the public can become Community Champions for the 20mph schemes and to date the Council have received positive feedback with a total of 146 requests to be volunteers. This will involve displaying posters and stickers in vehicles and on wheelie bins, or volunteering for the Safer Road Watch scheme that involves carrying out hand-held speed surveys and the subsequent education of motorists.

Enforcement and compliance

- 8.13 Speed enforcement is a matter for the Police and their resources are limited with their activities being prioritised across different 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 generally have an overall effect of reducing speeds which is a positive, although there will always be drivers who exceed limits.
- 8.14 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://haveyoursay.wirral.gov.uk/20mph-champion>
- 8.15 Council officers have engaged with Merseyside Police representatives to discuss the implementation of Phase 1 20mph limits in Wirral and the Police have indicated that initially a proportionate approach will be taken to enforcement with educational warnings issued where appropriate. Whilst it is hoped that the majority of drivers will self-regulate, regular enforcement is 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 areas and which would be used in a 20mph area.
- 8.16 As with all speed limits, 20mph speed limits are accompanied by legal Orders and infringement of the prescribed speed limit would be subject to the associated penalty (as issued by the Police). Merseyside Police have made a commitment to reduce speeds on the roads, through the adoption of the Liverpool City Region Vision Road Safety Strategy and Council Officers met with the Merseyside Roads Policing team and a working group was established to discuss and plan joint enforcement and education activities. Subsequently, a joint community engagement programme has taken place with Merseyside Police during national Road Safety week, from 19 November 2023, concerning the implementation and enforcement 20mph speed limits in the Phase 1 areas.

Future guidance on 20mph limits

- 8.17 Council officers have ensured they have kept abreast of current developments and national policy. On 2 October 2023, the current government published a new policy paper: “A plan for drivers”. This sees that most of us use a car, and, for many, life would not be liveable without their car, in particular those who live in rural areas. The government believes a car hugely expands the independence of a younger person as well as keeping older people connected to key services and families. Walking, cycling, and public transport are considered necessary in a multi-modal transport system and is very much supported by the government, but they are not the right choice for everyone’s journey.
- 8.18 The government’s long-term plan is to address key elements of those concerns that includes making it clearer for English local authorities to implement 20mph speed limits and where appropriate introduce them where people want them as opposed to unwarranted blanket measures. The introduction of 20mph speed limits in all residential areas in Wales has shone a spotlight on the issues drivers are facing. To ensure that future interventions on local roads carry the support of the local people, the Government will update National Guidance (in England) on 20mph speed limits. However, at the time of compiling this report there is no indication of when any new guidance may be published.

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 This scheme is subject to an equality impact assessment. 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.
- 9.3 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been compiled under the heading of Equality Impact Assessments since January 2021/Neighbourhood Services. 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 all 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 centres 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, that 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. Evidence shows 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 in Phase 2 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 – 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
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