

Justification for the “common statements” about 20mph limits being untrue

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Note that all para references are to the DfT Guidance 01/2013.

“You can’t have a 20mph limit on an A or B road” – UNTRUE

See para 84 :-

84. Based on this positive effect on road safety, and a generally favourable reception from local residents, traffic authorities are able to use their power to introduce 20mph speed limits or zones on:

- o Major streets where there are – or could be - significant numbers of journeys on foot, and/or where pedal cycle movements are an important consideration, and this outweighs the disadvantage of longer journey times for motorised traffic.*

This is in addition to

- o Residential streets in cities, towns and villages, particularly where the streets are being used by people on foot and on bicycles, there is community support and the characteristics of the street are suitable.*

20mph limits have been set on many A roads and “major” roads. These include London, Edinburgh, Thirsk, Belfast, Portsmouth, etc.

“You can’t have a 20mph limit if the current average speed is above 24mph” – UNTRUE

Whilst guidance in para 95 does refer to “*If the mean speed is already at or below 24 mph on a road, introducing a 20 mph speed limit through signing alone is likely to lead to general compliance with the new speed limit.*”, this does not preclude the setting of a 20mph road if average before speeds are above 24mph. In fact para 96 makes specific reference to 20mph roads in Portsmouth where the previous speed was above 24mph. Para 97 also refers to roads with pre-speeds above 24mph and states “*Traffic authorities are already free to use additional measures in 20 mph limits to achieve compliance, such as some traffic calming measures and vehicle activated signs, or safety cameras.*”

“You can’t have a 20mph limit if the local police don’t support it” – UNTRUE

There is no requirement for the police to agree any locally set speed limit. We have a long held tradition in this country that :-

- o Elected representatives of the people set laws.*
- o A professional police force enforces those laws.*
- o An independent judiciary sentences offender.*

Any attempt by the police to undermine this or for elected representatives to veto their setting of limits based on police funding or preferences would be counter to this important principle.

Note that Para 85 makes specific reference to the enforcement of 20mph limits stating *“To achieve compliance there should be no expectation on the police to provide additional enforcement beyond their routine activity, unless this has been explicitly agreed.”*

Many police forces including Lancashire, Merseyside, Thames Valley, Avon & Somerset, Cheshire, Cambridge, Metropolitan and City of London are conducting enforcement of 20mph limits. There are also NDORS20 training courses available for some offenders which enables 20mph limits to be enforced in the same way as 30mph limits.

“We can’t reduce the speed limit because there haven’t been enough casualties on this road” – UNTRUE

Para 30 states the factors to be considered when setting speed limits:-

30. *The following will be important factors when considering what is an appropriate speed limit:*

- o *history of collisions, including frequency, severity, types and causes;*
- o *road geometry and engineering (width, sightlines, bends, junctions, accesses and safety barriers etc.);*
- o *road function (strategic, through traffic, local access etc.);*
- o *Composition of road users (including existing and potential levels of vulnerable road users);*
- o *existing traffic speeds; and*
- o *road environment, including level of road-side development and possible impacts on residents (e.g. severance, noise, or air quality).*

While these factors need to be considered for all road types, they may be weighted differently in urban or rural areas. The impact on community and environmental outcomes should also be considered.

Hence a history of collisions is only one of the factors to be taken into account. Also note para 31 and 32 and in particular the sentences I have highlighted:-

31. *Before introducing or changing a local speed limit, traffic authorities will wish to satisfy themselves that the expected benefits exceed the costs. Many of the costs and benefits do not have monetary values associated with them, but traffic authorities should include an assessment of the following factors:*

- o *collision and casualty savings;*
- o *conditions and facilities for vulnerable road users;*
- o *impacts on walking and cycling and other mode shift;*
- o *congestion and journey time reliability;*
- o *environmental, community and quality of life impact, such as emissions, severance of local communities, visual impact, noise and vibration; and • costs, including of engineering and other physical measures including signing, maintenance and cost of enforcement.*

The speed limit appraisal toolkit, found at section 5, will help assess the full costs and benefits of any proposed schemes.

*32. Different road users perceive risks and appropriate speeds differently, and drivers and riders of motor vehicles often do not have the same perception of the hazards of speed as do people on foot, on bicycles or on horseback. **Fear of traffic can affect peoples' quality of life and the needs of vulnerable road users must be fully taken into account in order to further encourage these modes of travel and improve their safety. Speed management strategies should seek to protect local community life.***

“20mph limits are not enforceable” – UNTRUE

See “local police support above”. 20mph limits as long as the correct Traffic Regulation Order has been made, and the correct signage installed are as enforceable as any other speed limit. Note that when a TRO is made then the road is “de-restricted” which means that the national 30mph limit no longer applies by nature of its lighting. Hence the only limit that is enforceable is the 20mph limit as per the TRO.