
20MPH ROAD TO PERMANENCE

Report by Director – Infrastructure & Environment

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

16 DECEMBER 2021

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report reviews the Spaces for People 20mph trial and proposes which roads within Scottish Borders settlements should remain at 20mph; which should revert back to 30mph; and which should be set at 40mph.**
- 1.2 The Sustrans funded Spaces for People 20mph trial has been in place since October 2020, where all roads with a 30mph speed limit were reduced to 20mph.
- 1.3 Edinburgh Napier University's Transport Research Institute carried out an independent evaluation of the trial from 125 survey sites over 97 settlements.
- 1.4 Vehicle speeds have reduced in almost all settlements, in some instances by 6mph, with an average reduction closer to 3mph.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **I recommend that Scottish Borders Council :-**
 - a) approves the suggestions to move to a position where 20 mph is the default speed limit within settlements in the Scottish Borders.**
 - (b) approves limited 30mph exceptions as detailed in Appendix 1; and**
 - (c) approves the changes for 40mph speed limits as detailed in Appendix 1.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In August 2020, Scottish Borders Council agreed to trial changing all 30mph speed limits across 97 settlements to 20mph as part of the externally funded £1.2M Sustrans Spaces for People programme. This funding was ring fenced to be spent solely on initiatives to encourage active travel as part of the national recovery from Covid 19.
- 3.2 An external data collection firm (Coeval) was appointed to carry out traffic surveys and data collection at 125 sites across the 97 settlements. Each location was surveyed at least twice and a Power BI dashboard with the results of the average speeds from the surveys can be accessed here: <http://scottishborders.tracsis-tads.com/conduit/borders>
- 3.3 As part of the 20mph trial, Council Officers convened an evaluation group consisting of representatives from Police Scotland, Transport Scotland, SUSTRANS, Edinburgh Napier University, Road Safety Auditors as well as officers from East Lothian, West Lothian, Dumfries and Galloway, Highland, Shetland and Argyll and Bute Councils who have shown keen interest in the ongoing trial.
- 3.4 Edinburgh Napier University's Transport Research Institute were appointed to carry out an independent evaluation of the trial and have concluded that:
- There has been significant speed reductions after the introduction of the 20mph speed limit
 - There has been a shift from mean speeds from 25mph to 22mph
 - Speed reductions seem to be maintained over time (8 month period)
 - Where speeds were higher pre-trial, these sites have seen the biggest reductions
- 3.5 Originally the aim of the trial was to make active travel, ie walking and cycling more attractive to residents as the restrictions resulting from the Covid 19 pandemic eased. This was extremely challenging to measure and as the trial has progressed Transport Scotland has now published its delivery plan for their road safety frame work and it states that *'....we will ensure all appropriate roads in built up areas have a safer speed limit of 20 mph by 2025: <https://www.transport.gov.scot/news/scotland-s-road-safety-framework-to-2030/>*
- 3.6 Officers met with Local Members recently to update them and there appears to be a general consensus, with some site specific reservations to retain all settlements at 20mph with some limited 30mph and 40mph speed limit buffers as detailed in appendix 1. These 30mph buffers are recommended where it is particularly 'painful' to drive at 20mph taking into account the surrounding environs, for instance where there are not an abundance of houses on both sides of the road and it is not immediately apparent to drivers why 20mph is the appropriate speed. In these scenarios compliance tends to be poor and can be to the detriment of the overall ethos of lower limits. Full details of maps/plans can be found via the online library here: X:\Road Safety\MEMBER UPLOAD OCT 2021

- 3.7 Community Councils have been updated on progress during the trial and have been consulted on their views of the effectiveness of the 20mph trial and these have been taken into account when making recommendations.
- 3.8 Police Scotland have the powers to carry out enforcement and their official line is that, similar to 30mph speed limits they will carry out enforcement of the 20mph speed limits where there is an historic casualty profile and outside schools.
- 3.9 Officers are in dialogue with Transport Scotland on which sections of trunk road should remain at 20mph and the correct legal process to follow.
- 3.10 The public were asked to share their views by means of a Citizen Space survey and the responses received were mixed. Some respondents were keen to retain the 20mph speed limits and others were less so. It would be fair to say there were some polarised views. Generally, there was an acceptance that outside schools and residential areas should have a form of 20mph speed limit in place and these have been taken into account when making recommendations. All responses can be viewed on Xdrive:
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4 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Revert all roads back to 30mph: this is in conflict with the principles of the road users hierarchy, ie *The 'hierarchy of road users' should help to ensure greater safety on the roads for vulnerable users. Road users near the top of the hierarchy will be pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. Towards the bottom will be cars, vans and heavy goods vehicles.* Additionally it is very likely that all Local Authorities will need to review their 30mph speed limits before 2025 and there is no guarantee of future funding to do so. This approach is not recommended.
- 4.2 Have all roads at 20mph: this approach was taken at the start of the trial due to grant terms and conditions and the time constraints. Having had the opportunity to interact with Local Members, Community Councils and feedback from Police Scotland and the public this approach is not recommended as it does not take into account particular streets and their particular needs. This approach is not recommended.
- 4.3 Blended 20mph and 30mph: recognising that one size does not fit all and the unique needs of each settlement this is the recommended approach. Taking into account historic crash information, road layout, housing density/presence and the likelihood of compliance as well as previous complaints, Local Member, Community Council, Police Scotland, Transport Scotland and resident feedback, this nuanced approach to speed limits is the recommended approach.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

In theory there are no costs to Council attached to any of the recommendations contained in this report as an external ring fenced grant of £1.2M from Transport Scotland via Sustrans has been secured and an

allowance has been set aside for either decommissioning or permanence. If the decision is taken to revert all roads back to 30mph then it is likely that in the future when the Council has to adhere to the new Transport Scotland guidance there is no guarantee of funding to roll out widespread 20mph. Based on recent labour costs to erect 20mph signing-only it will likely be in the region of £420,000 for all 97 settlements. Officers have also taken the opportunity to upgrade and replace some electronic message signs that were coming to an end with improved legacy signing with fewer future maintenance needs.

5.2 Risk and Mitigations

(a) Since the introduction of the trial Transport Scotland has issued their latest road safety policy document which states '*...we will ensure all appropriate roads in built up areas have a safer speed limit of 20 mph by 2025*': <https://www.transport.gov.scot/news/scotland-s-road-safety-framework-to-2030/>

If the Council decides to remove all of the 20mph speed limits it is very likely that when the new guidance is formally issued then the Council will need to reinstate what has already been removed and there is no guarantee of future funding for introducing widespread 20mph across the region at a likely cost of approximately £420,000.

(b) If the 20mph speed limits are removed then there is the risk of a pedestrian, cyclist or other vulnerable road user being injured by a vehicle at a higher speed that may lead to more severe injury than 20mph and possible reputational damage.

5.3 Integrated Impact Assessment

An Integrated Impact Assessment checklist has been completed and a full assessment is not required as the Council is confident that there is not any form of detrimental effect to any group of people regardless of any characteristics. Reducing roads to a 20mph speed limit will assist less mobile groups by creating more time for crossing roads etc. as well as likely being positive for the elderly and youth who can suffer from more serious injuries in road crashes.

5.4 Sustainable Development Goals

It is not envisaged that 20mph schemes will impact on any of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

5.5 Climate Change

There are no significant impacts on the Council's carbon emissions or climate change contribution that are additional to current operation. The proposals are likely to be positive in terms of encouraging walking and cycling and generally promoting healthier lifestyles and wellbeing for all at all ages.

5.6 Rural Proofing

There are no rural proofing impacts resulting from this report.

5.7 Data Protection Impact Statement

There are no personal data implications arising from the proposals contained in this report.

5.8 **Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

There are no changes which are required to either the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation as a result of the proposals in this report.

6 CONSULTATION

6.1 The Executive Director (Finance & Regulatory), the Monitoring Officer/Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Service Director HR & Communications, the Clerk to the Council and Corporate Communications have been consulted and any comments received have been incorporated into the final report.

Approved by

Name

John Curry

Title

Director Infrastructure and Environment

Author(s)

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Previous Minute Reference:

Note – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. Philippa Gilhooly can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

Contact us at Philippa Gilhooly, 01835 825089, pgilhooly@scotborders.gov.uk

Appendix 1 locations with 30mph and 40mph speed limits