Wales Default 20mph Urban Speed Limit

What have we learned so far?

Phil Jones
Introduction

- What did Wales do?
- What are the early outcomes?
- What happens next?
- What have we learnt so far?
Mark Drakeford AM, First Minister:

The Welsh Government believe that 20 mph should be the default speed limit for residential areas.
Wales 20mph Task Force

- Joint WG/WLGA Task Force Group set up July 2019
- Stakeholders from local government, emergency services, transport operators, businesses, user groups etc
- Report published 15 July 2020
- Recommendations accepted with cross-party support

https://gov.wales/20mph-task-force-group-report
The Case for Change

- Evidence for benefits of 20mph limits
  - Reduced casualties
  - Reduced health inequalities
  - Increased active travel
- Public support for 20mph
- 2020 Casualty reduction targets not yet met
- Default 20mph will enable rapid change
Legislation, Guidance

- Secondary legislation passed by Welsh Parliament
- Changed default speed limit of roads with street lighting to 20mph
- 20mph Zones removed
- Amendments made to various DfT and WG documents
- Changes to Traffic Sign regulations – No 20mph Repeaters
Faversham, Kent

- Whole-town 20mph introduced 2021
- 316 repeater signs required (1.6% per head)
- Would be avoided with Default 20
- Omitting radial routes would *increase* costs
- And miss the worst collision sites
Biggest speed reductions occur on the fastest roads
Exceptions Process

- 20mph is not appropriate on all restricted roads
- Needed nationally-consistent approach to Exceptions by TRO - with local flexibility
- Transport for Wales produced draft speed limit maps
- Based on ‘Movement and Place’ criteria
Setting exceptions to the 20mph default speed limit

- Published November 2022
- Reflected criteria developed in Task Force stage
- Pre-cursor to updated version of ‘Setting Local Speed Limits in Wales’
- Based on the aims of Article 11 of the UN Stockholm Declaration:
  - mandate a maximum road travel speed of 30km/h in areas where vulnerable road users and vehicles mix in a frequent and planned manner, except where strong evidence exists that higher speeds are safe
Principles

Question A: Are there significant numbers/potential numbers of pedestrians and cyclists travelling along or across the road?

If the answer to A is ‘no’ then an exception for a 30mph speed limit may be appropriate.

Question B: If the answer to A is ‘yes’, are the pedestrians and cyclists mixing with motor traffic?

If the answer to B is ‘no’ then a 30mph speed limit exception may be appropriate.

If the answer to B is ‘yes’ then a 20mph speed limit will be appropriate unless the robust and evidenced application of local factors indicates otherwise.

Decisions on exceptions should not be influenced by existing traffic speeds or bus routes.
‘Place’ Criteria

Significant demands for walking and cycling if:

- Within a 100m walk of any educational setting
- Within 100m walk of any community centre
- Within 100m walk of any hospital
- More than 20 residential and/or retail premises per km fronting the road

*Question A then answered ‘yes’*
For Comparison – Edinburgh Criteria

Keep at 30mph if:

A. Little reason to cross the road
B. 3+ traffic lanes, low density housing
C. 2+ traffic lanes, low density housing and
   • 6+ buses per hour or
   • Alternative route to City bypass
   • Wide enough for cars to pass at 30mph

Change from 30mph to 20mph if:

Factor
1. Retail: Group of shops > 100m frontage
2. Resi: Med/high density housing > 200m
3. Schools: Part-time limits exceeds remaining 30mph in length
4. Ped/Cycling Activity:
   Important cycling route, not a significant bus route, or
   Buildings generating significant ped/cycle numbers like a shopping street

30mph criteria?
Over-rules all
Over-rules A/B
Consider balance
Over-rules A if cycling related and on-carriageway
Over-rules B
National Roll Out

- Huge achievement to plan, consult and implement changes in time
- Welsh Government funded sign inventories
- And making of TROs for Exceptions
- New signs erected in advance with peel off 30mph stickers
- Legislative savings for repeater road markings
92% of former 30mph roads are now 20mph
Post 20mph Legislation Speed Limits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Speed Limit</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20mph</td>
<td>36.9%</td>
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<tr>
<td>30mph</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>40mph</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>50mph</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>60mph</td>
<td>54.7%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Initial Post-Implementation Monitoring

- Independent analysis by Agilysis
- Speed data for ~500km of roads in 10 towns and cities
- Journey times on two routes (Cardiff and Wrexham)
- **Average speed reduction 2.9mph**
What next?

- Education and Enforcement starting soon
- Gathering views from Local Authorities
- Unlikely to see early changes
- WG committed to reviewing speed limit guidance
- Anticipate publishing Autumn 2024
What have we learnt? - Implementation

- Changing the default speed limit enables rapid roll out of 20mph
- Most urban roads 20mph – quicker/cheaper to make orders for 30mph
- And many fewer signs required
- But still a very onerous task to make the change
What have we learnt? - Outcomes

- 20mph limits are effective – and highly cost-effective
- Speeds reduce, and by the greatest amount where needed
- Even in the absence of enforcement
- Early signs – driver courtesy improves
- No impact on air quality or journey times
- Potentially some impact on rural bus routes
What have we learnt? – Going forward

- Introducing a 20mph default does not mean every urban road is 20mph
- Local authorities retain the power to change speed limits
- Welsh Government is reviewing guidance
- Criteria for setting 30mph limits may change
Thanks