Implementing a Default 20mph Speed Limit: Practical Delivery Issues

Martin Heath, Technical Director: December 2023
The normalising of 20mph speed limits as a default limit on restricted roads throws up a host of practical issues that Scotland’s roads authorities will need to address urgently, for any speed management benefits to achieved and enforcement to be viable.

At the core is the need for a detailed understanding of the broader, legal and operational implications of such a change, especially in ensuring that speed limit orders are mutually supportive across the authority’s urban and rural road network.

In this presentation PCL will set out why establishing the 20mph limit within the authority’s Safe System road safety policy is also vital and sets out the consequences this may have for other policies such as pedestrian crossing provision, traffic sign design and consistency and traffic signal operations, as well as development standards, such as stopping sight distances.

PCL will discuss these considerations and ways to overcome them, as well as the priorities that road authorities will need to face in accommodating change.
Key Issues

1. Speed Limits – considerations, implications, expectations
2. Safe Systems – cover the basics to optimise the benefits
3. Roads
4. Enforcement
5. Monitoring
The strategy seeks to introduce consistency for 20mph speed limits across Scotland;

- simplifying speed limits for drivers
- reducing perceptions of road danger
- encouraging people to walk and ride
- creating more pleasant streets and neighbourhoods
- providing a more equitable balance between different road users.

Transport Scotland’s funding of Active Travel initiatives to become £320m OR 10% of the total transport budget by 2024/25

Encouraging local authorities to deliver more Safe Routes to School initiatives

Transport policy alignment with Government climate targets, reducing greenhouse emissions, improve air quality, community wellbeing

Contribute to the implementation of the Safe System.
Speed Limits

- Retention of an integrated speed management network
- Are our Orders up to date?
- Will there be challenges – yes there will!
- Driver understanding – more changes to the Highway Code
Safe Systems

- Safe Speed lies at the heart of every Safe System
- Speed management therefore integral to any road safety strategy/policy/plan
- Changes in modal share?
- Increased exposure to risks
- Technology presenting challenges – CAV?
Implications for existing roads - function
Existing signing regimes - reduced clutter?
Changes to Network Asset Management Plans
Planning applications/RCCs and new roads adoption standards, visibility, SSD
Pedestrian crossing requests – a change in approach?
- Can we expect it?
- Will public expectations change?
- How to self-enforce: the tools we have
- Integration as part of the Safe System
- Change to hearts and minds

Speed Limit Enforcement
Clear objectives:

“A more equitable balance between different road users…”

“...more pleasant streets and neighbourhoods”

- Implies an understanding of any imbalances – where are the problems?
- What is our baseline?
- Is monitoring planned on a national basis?
- How do local authorities establish priorities for measures/actions?
- … time to make preparations now.
Summary

1. **Speed Limits** – review Orders, consolidate and revise to meet network needs
2. **Safe Systems** – ensure our road safety strategies/policies integrate speed control
3. **Roads** – gather asset data to enable savings and better deployment
4. **Enforcement** – utilise existing tools to support speed compliance
5. **Monitoring** – establish a baseline and measurement indices
Thank you!

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