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(By E-Mail)

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Your ref:  
Our ref: CCKI/LMH  
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Dear Chorley Liaison Committee Member,

The original idea behind 20mph speed limits/zones was that they would be self-enforcing and hence in the early days of implementing them there was a requirement that traffic calming measures were installed to ensure compliance.

Whilst there has been general encouragement from the Department of Transport for Transport for Local Authorities to introduce 20mph speed limits, particularly in areas where there may be a number of vulnerable road users, it does state within its circular 01/2013 that signed only 20mph speed limits are only likely to achieve average speed reductions of 1mph, which is borne out to a large degree by a recent study undertaken by Atkins [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/757307/20mph-headline-report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/757307/20mph-headline-report.pdf). This looked at 12 case studies of 20mph speed limit schemes implemented between 2012 and 2015. Whilst there are positives within the report, regarding speed reductions, it does conclude that average and 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed reductions are only likely to be between 1 and 2mph.

Where speeds are already high, this type of reduction is unlikely to achieve the recommended mean speed, for 20mph speed limits of, at or below 24mph, and therefore compliance with the limit will be low. This then requires a reliance on the police to enforce, which from my discussions is not likely to happen and which the Department for Transport state there should be no reliance.

With regard to casualty reduction, lower speed limits can lead to a reduced severity in injuries, in collisions involving pedestrians. It often quoted that:

- at 40 mph there is a 90 percent chance they will be killed.
- at 35 mph there is a 50 percent chance they will be killed.
- at 30 mph there is a 20 percent chance they will be killed.
- at 20 mph there is a 2.5 percent chance they will be killed

continued.....

With regard to casualty rates however, the study concludes that evidence available to date shows no significant change in the short term in collisions and casualties, in the majority of the case studies.

This type of information combined with the enforcement issues in relation to 20mph limits has led me to the conclusion that as a County Council we need to review how and where we implement this type of limit.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keith Iddon', written over a circular scribble.

County Councillor Keith Iddon  
Deputy Leader of Lancashire County Council  
Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

Enclosure

## **20mph Speed Limits**

Speed limits should be evidence-led and self-explaining and seek to reinforce people's assessment of what is a safe speed to travel. They should encourage self-compliance and should be seen by drivers as the maximum rather than a target speed.

Traffic authorities set local speed limits in situations where local needs and conditions suggest a speed limit which is lower than the national speed limit.

There has been general encouragement from the Department of Transport for local highway authorities to introduce either 20mph zones, which usually cover a number of roads and require traffic calming, or 20mph speed limits which are signed only and can often apply to one road. In more recent times however Local Authorities have used signed only 20mph limits which have been applied to a number of roads within a particular area.

Department for Transport Circular 01/2013 states:

'Research into signed-only 20 mph speed limits shows that they generally lead to only small reductions in traffic speeds. Signed-only 20 mph speed limits are therefore most appropriate for areas where vehicle speeds are already low. This may, for example, be on roads that are very narrow, through engineering or on-road car parking. 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.' It also advises that '20mph limits are most appropriate where the mean speed is already at or below 24mph; and states that speed limits should encourage self-compliance with no expectation of additional police enforcement.

This is borne out in a recently completed study undertaken by Atkins, which assessed 12 case studies where 20mph speed limits have been implemented between 2012 and 2015.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/757307/20mph-headline-report.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/757307/20mph-headline-report.pdf)

The journey speed analysis shows that the median speed has fallen by 0.7mph in residential areas and 0.9mph in city centre areas. Faster drivers have reduced their speed more, with the 85th percentile speed<sup>2</sup> falling by -1.1mph in residential areas and by -1.6mph in city centre areas, based on journey speed data. This is a key finding, as other research shows that higher speeds are associated with increased safety risk (more collisions, increased severity, perceptions that the environment is not safe for vulnerable users).

The overall change in speeds is greater where speeds were faster before. In this case the median speed fell by -1.3mph on residential roads with a before speed of more than 24mph; and by -1.1mph on 'important local roads'<sup>3</sup> which typically had higher before speeds. On 'minor local roads' the median speed was already below 20mph and dropped by just 0.1mph.

The results suggest that road characteristics have a much larger impact on the speeds that drivers choose to adopt than whether the road has a 30mph or 20mph limit. The differences in speed between the different road categories are far larger than the changes brought about by lowering the speed limit.

With regard to road casualties there is no doubt that the lower the speed then the severity of injuries sustained by pedestrians in a road traffic collision are likely to be reduced. It is often quoted that:

- at 40 mph there is a 90 percent chance they will be killed.
- at 35 mph there is a 50 percent chance they will be killed.
- at 30 mph there is a 20 percent chance they will be killed.
- at 20 mph there is a 2.5 percent chance they will be killed

With regard to the study however its overall findings are that the evidence available to date shows no significant change in the short term in collisions and casualties, in the majority of the case studies (including the aggregated set of residential case studies).

Based on the findings of this study, the guidance set out in DfT Circular 01/2013 remains broadly valid. However, consideration should be given to encouraging traffic authorities to work with relevant partners from the police, health, environment, urban planning, education, and the local community to deliver 20mph limits as part of an integrated approach to addressing transport, community, environment and health objectives.