

# Speed Limit Policy

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## Speed limits in settlements

### Council policy

This policy has been developed with reference to national policy issued by central government "Setting Local Speed Limits, Department for Transport Circular 01/2013"

The County Council will ensure that speed limits are introduced in a manner consistent with the current government guidance. Exceptions to usual practice will be subject to Committee approval.

The purpose of this policy is to explain the roles, responsibilities and the procedure that will be followed by Cambridgeshire County Council when deciding whether to change a speed limit.

The three national speed limits are:

- 30 mph speed limit on roads with street lighting (sometimes referred to as Restricted Roads)
- National speed limit of 60 mph on single carriageway roads
- National speed limit of 70 mph on dual carriageways and motorways.

These national speed limits are not, however, appropriate for all roads. The speed limit regime enables authorities like Cambridgeshire County Council to set local speed limits in situations where local needs and conditions suggest a need for a speed limit which is different from the national speed limit. For example while higher speed limits are appropriate for strategic roads between main towns, lower speed limits will usually apply within towns and villages. A limit of 20 mph may be appropriate in residential areas, busy shopping streets and near schools where the needs and safety of pedestrians and cyclists should have greater priority.

The speed limit regime enables traffic authorities to set local speed limits in situations where local needs and conditions suggest a speed limit which is different from the respective national speed limit.

### 30 mph Limits

The county council will work towards the introduction of a 30mph speed limit in the developed parts of all settlements in the County together with, where appropriate and affordable, complementary features to encourage drivers to travel at an appropriate speed.

Where mean speeds are in excess of 30mph, to initiate a lower speed restriction with simply a sign is unlikely to ensure conformity by the general motorist if the road and highway environment is not conducive and is likely to lead to unacceptable levels of requests for enforcement action on the part of Police officers. Current resourcing and ongoing operational commitments may not allow for specific, routine or targeted

enforcement action to be undertaken. Consideration should therefore be given to the introduction of complementary speed reduction features. Depending on the site, "soft" features such as gateways, red surfacing and roundels may be appropriate where mean speeds are 35mph or below and traditional traffic calming measures may be required to achieve compliance where speeds exceed 35mph.

## **20 mph Limits**

Should not be implemented on roads with a strategic or main road function, with exceptions. Eg. Where numbers of vulnerable road users are high.

*(Dft circular 1/13 Setting Local Speed Limits – table 1)*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/...data/.../circular-01-2013.pdf>

20mph speed limits will only be permitted at sites:

- where the mean speed of traffic is 24mph or lower
- in combination with self-enforcing speed reduction features necessary to achieve a mean speed no greater than 24mph

20 mph zones must be introduced in clearly defined zones (e.g. between radial routes or a spine road with culs-de-sac) and not in isolated roads or culs-de-sac

School time 20mph speed limits supported by interactive signs and "soft" traffic calming may be provided outside school sites where the existing mean speed does not exceed 30 mph. Where the existing mean speed exceeds 30 mph to initiate a lower speed restriction with simply a sign is unlikely to ensure conformity by the general motorist if the road and highway environment is not conducive and is likely to lead to unacceptable levels of requests for enforcement action on the part of Police officers. Current resourcing and ongoing operational commitments may not allow for specific, routine or targeted enforcement action to be undertaken. Consideration should therefore be given to the introduction of complementary speed reduction features. Depending on the site, traditional traffic calming measures may be required to achieve compliance.

The use of 20 mph limits or zones within settlements should be restricted to roads below A and B class.

Buffer speed limits of up to 400 metres in length, set at a minimum of 10 mph above the settlement speed limit will be permitted.

For speed limit purposes the following definitions will apply:

- I. A settlement will be 'At least 20 properties fronting onto a length of public highway over a distance of at least 600m'
- II. The extent of a settlement will be 'The point at which full frontage development begins', or 'at the first property fronting a road entering a settlement, on which there is at least 3 properties/100 metre length of road, prior to the point at which full frontage development begins'.

## Decision Making

Implementing speed limits requires the making of a legal order, which involves a statutory consultation process that requires the Highway Authority to advertise, in the local press and on-street, a public notice stating the proposal and the reasons for it. The advert invites the public to formally support or object to the proposals in writing within a 21 day notice period. The County Council will also consult with the emergency services, (the Chief Officer of Police is a statutory consultee) the local County, District and Parish Councillors and any other persons most likely to be directly affected by the proposal.

Should any objections be received then the Council has a duty to consider the objection and a report would go before Members for a decision whether to uphold or overrule.

## Police Support

Proposed speed limits should be supported by the Police. If the Police are not supportive of a proposal it should be reconsidered.

## Speed limits outside settlements

Typical characteristics for speed limits in rural areas outside settlements are shown in the table below:

<b>Speed limit (Mph)</b>	<b>Upper tier</b> (Roads with predominant traffic flow function)	<b>Lower tier</b> (Roads with important access and recreational function)
<b>60</b>	Recommended for most high quality strategic A and B roads with few bends, junctions or accesses	Recommended only for the best quality C and Unclassified roads with a mixed (i.e. partial traffic flow) function with few bends, junctions or accesses. In the longer term, these roads should be assessed against upper tier criteria.
<b>50</b>	Should be considered for lower quality A and B roads, which may have a relatively high number of bends, junctions or accesses. Can also be considered where mean speeds are below 50 mph, so lower limit does not interfere with traffic flow.	Should be considered for lower quality C and Unclassified roads with a mixed function where there are a relatively high number of bends, junctions or accesses
<b>40</b>	Should be considered where there is a high number of bends, junctions or accesses, substantial development, where there is a strong environmental or landscape reason, or where there are considerable numbers of vulnerable road users.	Should be considered for roads with a predominantly local, access or recreational function, or if it forms part of a recommended route for vulnerable road users.

## Guidance in urban speed limit characteristics

A summary of typical urban characteristics and appropriate speed limits is shown in the table below.

Speed Limit (mph)	Characteristics
20	In town centres, residential areas and in the vicinity of schools and other premises where there is a high presence of vulnerable road users.
30	The standard limit in settlements that are fully developed.
40	Higher quality suburban roads or those on the outskirts of urban areas where there is little development and few vulnerable road users. Should have good width and layout, parking and waiting restrictions in operation and buildings set back from the road. Should wherever possible cater for the needs of non-motorised users through segregation of road space and have adequate footways and crossing places.
50	Usually most suited to special roads, dual carriageway ring or radial routes or bypasses which have become partially built up. Should be little or no roadside development.

To achieve average speeds appropriate to the typical speed limits given in the table above it may be necessary to introduce speed reduction measures.

### **Speed limits in new developments**

All roads in areas of new development should be designed to physically restrict vehicle speeds to the appropriate maximum levels shown in the table above.

Manual for streets (the guide for the design, construction, adoption and maintenance of new residential streets) recommends 20 mph or less as the design speed for residential roads in new developments.

[manforstreets.pdf](#)