



ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 19TH JULY 2023

**SUBJECT: CAERPHILLY COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL SPEED LIMITS TRAFFIC
REGULATION ORDER 2023**

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT

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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek the views of Members on the implementation of the proposed Caerphilly County Borough Council Speed Limits Traffic Regulation Order 2023 as amended.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 In July 2022 the Welsh Government (WG) passed new legislation that will change the default speed limit on restricted roads in Wales from 30mph to 20mph. The Council has proposed to retain 30mph speed limits on a number of roads.
- 2.2 In addition to the above, it was also proposed to amend the existing speed limits to 40mph at four locations to improve road safety.
- 2.3 The report details recommendations for members to consider.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee Members note the intention to make the Caerphilly County Borough Council Speed Limits Traffic Regulation Order 2023 as amended.
- 3.2 That the committee note the additional signage and road markings proposed as detailed within the report.
- 3.3 That the committee consider the report and give their views on the proposals to be presented to Cabinet for approval.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The proposed speed limit changes have been developed in accordance with Welsh

Government's (WG's) guidance and support WG's proposed 20mph default speed limit initiative. Details of the Council's rationale for each location are provided in Appendix 1.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 In July 2022 the Welsh Government (WG) passed new legislation that will change the default speed limit on restricted roads in Wales from 30mph to 20mph. A restricted road is defined by Section 82 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act (RTRA) 1984 as '*a road with a system of street lighting furnished by means of lamps placed not more than 200 yards apart.*'
- 5.2 The new national 20mph speed limit for restricted roads will come into effect on 17th September 2023 and all 22 Welsh local authorities are committed to delivering the transition of their speed limits on or as close to the prescribed date as practicable.
- 5.3 WG have developed an 'Exceptions Criteria' to ensure that local authorities adopt a consistent approach when introducing 30mph Exceptions across Wales. This approach has been applied when considering 30mph speed limits on roads within Caerphilly County Borough where the lower 20mph speed limit is not deemed appropriate.
- 5.4 Welsh Government's 'Setting Exceptions to the 20mph Default Speed Limit for Restricted Roads' is provided in Appendix 2. This guidance is intended for local interpretation by highway authorities to make evidence-based decisions on setting exceptions to the default speed limit of 20mph on restricted roads in Wales. It provides a methodology to ensure a consistent approach to Exceptions across Wales is taken; yet allowing for local factors and circumstances to be taken into account. It was used as a basis to demonstrate reasoning for making any Exception to enable the speed limit to remain at 30mph.
- 5.5 The guidance states that decisions on Exceptions should not be influenced by existing traffic speeds and that highway authorities continue to have the flexibility to set local speed limits that are right for individual roads, reflecting local needs and considerations. However, where their decision deviates from this guidance highway authorities should have a clear and reasoned case.
- 5.6 Exceptions have been applied across the Borough in accordance with this guidance. Particular regard has been given to those roads that serve part of the strategic highway network ('A' and 'B' class roads) that meet the Exceptions Criteria and, where deemed appropriate, it is recommended that these routes remain at 30mph. A table detailing the location of the proposed 30mph speed limit Exceptions and the Council's rationale is provided in Appendix 1. It should be noted that any road currently subject to a 30mph speed limit not highlighted as an 'Exception', will become 20mph by default on 17th September 2023.
- 5.7 In light of the concerns raised during the consultation exercise, it is recommended that additional speed management measures in the form of gateway treatments (coloured surfacing, road markings and signs on yellow backing boards) and speed limit repeater road marking roundels be provided at various locations. It is considered that these additional measures will help to raise drivers' awareness of the speed limit and have a positive impact on vehicle speeds.

- 5.8 WG acknowledge that it may take some time for the new default speed limit to 'bed in' and for drivers to become accustomed to the changes throughout Wales. WG are in the process of establishing a working group/task and finish group to develop a common approach to address speeding concerns when the legislation comes into force.

These are some of the issues that they intend to consider:

- How to manage the public's expectation about speeding concerns.
- What will GoSafe/Police/FRS do in terms of engagement, education and enforcement.
- How can Highway Authorities request engagement/education/enforcement by GoSafe.
- How can 'softer' engineering measures, like removing the centre line, reducing carriageway width, using planters and parking lots be used as compared to more traditional traffic calming.
- How can this be linked to funding for bus priority measures and active travel.

- 5.9 In view of this, it is recommended that the Council does not undertake any speed surveys on roads that will be subject to the new default speed limit for a period of at least six months following implementation. During this period, any concerns relating to non-compliance should be directed to GoSafe/Gwent Police.

- 5.10 In addition to the Exceptions identified above, it is also recommended that the speed limits be amended to improve road safety at the following locations:

- A469 Bargoed to Brithdir – New 40mph speed limit between the existing 40mph speed limits at Factory Road, Bargoed and Brithdir.
- A4048 North of Hollybush – Reduction in length of existing 30mph speed limit and introduction of a new 40mph speed limit buffer.
- B4254 Gelligaer Road (between Gelligaer and Nelson) – New 40mph speed limit between the existing 30mph speed limit at Gelligaer and the national speed limit to the east of the Reed Beds.
- A472 Nelson to Tredomen – New 40mph speed limit between Nelson roundabout (B4255 Caerphilly Road junction) and the existing 30mph speed limit at Tredomen.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 The assumption is that setting realistic speed limits will encourage a greater level of compliance in all areas and have a positive impact on road safety.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 A full Integrated Impact Assessment has not been undertaken on this report however, the implementation of all traffic regulation orders is undertaken following the publication of the proper notices, allowing for objections to be made by local residents. Any impacts identified on individuals or groups will be considered in the final decision.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no financial implications for the authority as all costs associated with the default 20mph speed limit changes and Exceptions are being funded by Welsh Government. The total cost is circa £1.1 Million.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The legal and consultation processes and associated signage design works have been managed by existing traffic management staff, but the amount of work involved within the WG imposed timescale has been very challenging.

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 The proposals were consulted upon in accordance with the Councils approved procedure.
- A Member seminar was held on 15th December 2022 during which details of the proposed Exceptions were discussed. Details of the provisional Exceptions Map were sent to all Councillors via email on 9th December 2022 for their initial comment. No objections were received.
 - All Councillors including Councillor Julian Simmonds (former Cabinet Member for Infrastructure) were contacted by email on 19th April 2023. Details of the comments/objections that have been received from Members and Officers' responses are provided in Appendix 3.
 - Statutory Consultees including Town and Community Councils, the Chief Constable of Gwent Police, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust, the Road Haulage Association, Freight Transport Association and Green Lane Association were contacted by email on 19th April 2023. All Councillors including the Cabinet Member were sent a copy of the email. Details of the comments/objections received, and Officers' responses are provided in Appendix 3.
 - A Statutory Consultation email was sent to all Public Transport companies that operate in the Caerphilly County Borough area on 27th April 2023. No comments were received.
- 10.2 A Notice detailing the above proposals was advertised for public consultation on 25th May 2023. A copy of the proposals, a statement of the Council's reasons for making the Order and Maps showing the affected lengths of road were placed on deposit with CCBC Legal section for public scrutiny following advertising of the Notice in the press. The Notice was advertised at the following locations for public scrutiny.
- Notice advertised in the Western Mail newspaper.
 - Approximately 350 Notices erected on lighting columns along the affected lengths of road.
 - Statutory Consultees, local ward members and Cabinet Member were sent copy of the Notice via email.

- A copy of the Notice, Order, Plans and Statements of Reasons and General Effect were placed on the Council's website and links were posted on social media.
 - Plans showing the extent of the proposed 30mph Exceptions were published on DataMapWales.
- 10.3 Following the public notice exercise, 23 objections were received relating to the proposed Exceptions, and 3 objections were received relating to the proposed 40mph speed limits. Details of the objections received, and Officers' responses are detailed in Appendix 4. In addition, 16 letters/emails of concern were received in relation to the 20mph default speed limit changes for restricted roads. As these relate to WG's legislative changes and not the Council's traffic regulation order, the comments have not been included within this report.
- 10.4 As a result of the objections received, following further investigation, it is recommended that the Order be made with the following amendments:
- 10.4.1 **A468 Newport Road, Trethomas from the western side of Clos Pantglas to the existing 30mph signs to the west of the village.** In light of the concerns raised, it is recommended that the proposed 30mph Exception be reduced in length by approximately 60m at its Eastern end. This minor amendment to the extent of the Exception will help to improve safety on the approach to the village.
- 10.4.2 **B4254 Highfields Way from the roundabout to the west of the junction with Montclair Avenue.** In order to improve safety, it is recommended that the proposed 30mph Exception be amended to exclude the roundabout and the approach roads. The default 20mph will therefore apply to the roundabout and the following sections of road:
- Bryn Road – from the roundabout to a point approximately 25m north.
 - Oak Terrace Bypass – from the roundabout to a point approximately 25m south.
 - Highfields Way - from the roundabout to a point approximately 140m east (to cover the access road to Tesco Express and Parc Plas).
- 10.4.3 **A472 Caerphilly Road from west of its junction with Maes-y-coed Terrace to west of its junction with Station Road (including Tredomen roundabout).** In light of concerns raised, further investigation has concluded that, due to significant traffic flows, lack of continuous footways on both sides and concerns about difficulty for drivers turning in and out of Brynmynach Avenue, Tredomen Villas and Maes-y-Coed Terrace, it is recommended that the 30mph Exception be removed from the Order. This section of road will therefore default to 20mph.
- 10.4.4 **A472 from east of Shappelles access to Ystrad Mynach Roundabout (including the roundabout).** In light of concerns raised, further investigation has concluded that, due to significant traffic flows and concerns regarding visibility for pedestrians and cyclists crossing the A469, it is recommended that the 30mph Exception be removed from the Order. This short section of road will therefore default to 20mph.
- 10.5 The tables shown in Appendices 3 and 4 were sent to Cllr Nigel George, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure, Property and Corporate Services, as well as each of the ward members for which comments/objections had been received on 29th June

2023 and they were asked to consider the recommendations made by officers.

10.6 Details of the response received along with officers' responses are provided below.

- *Councillor Nigel Dix (Blackwood Ward), 29/6/2023 - Are the proposed 20mph residential, as 20mph on A and B roads would be unenforceable and negatively affect business?*

Officer response - As outlined above, details of the proposed 30mph Exceptions have previously been sent to councillors for their comment. All restricted roads have been assessed in accordance with the Welsh Government's guidance. The majority of the 20mph speed limits will apply to residential roads, however some sections of the 'A' and 'B' class roads within the borough will be reduced to 20mph where Welsh Government's Exception criteria is not met.

- *Councillor Tudor Davies (Aberbargoed and Bargoed Ward), 29/6/2023 - Considering the concerns we have raised about the potential safety of the Angel Way/Gilfach Street junction, please clarify if the 20 miles limit would apply to this section of the highway?*

Officer response - The junction of Angel Way and Gilfach Street will be subject to the new default 20mph speed limit.

- *Councillor Walter Williams (Argoed Ward), 30/6/2023 - Thank you for the email on 30 mph exceptions. Would it be ok to forward this email to the two residents email address I have who emailed me regarding their objections?*

Officer response – The information is for councillors' review and comment at this stage. Residents who formally responded to the public notice will receive a copy of the final report after it has been approved by the Council's Cabinet.

- *Councillor Colin Mann (Llanbradach Ward), 7/7/2023 - I am happy with the Coedybrain Road, Llanbradach proposal.*

Officer response – The comments are welcomed.

- *Councillor Chris Morgan (Machen and Rudry), 5/7/2023 – I am happy with the recommendations of the Highways Department.*

Officer response – The comments are welcomed.

- *Councillor Amanda McConnell (Machen and Rudry), 5/7/2023 – I'm in agreement with the recommendations of the Highways Department.*

Officer response – The comments are welcomed.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

Author: Dean Smith, Principal Engineer

Consultees: Councillor Tudor Davies Chair Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny

Committee

Councillor Adrian Hussey Vice Chair Environment and Sustainability
Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Nigel George, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services,
Property and Highways

All Councillors

Christina Harrhy, Chief Executive Officer

Mark S. Williams, Corporate Director Economy and Environment

Marcus Lloyd, Head of Infrastructure

Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services

Clive Campbell, Transportation Engineering Manager

Rob Tranter, Head of Legal and Monitoring Officer

Steve Harris, Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer

Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer – Equalities and Welsh
Language

Background Papers:

None

Appendices:

Appendix 1 Rationale for 30mph Exceptions

Appendix 2 Welsh Government's 'Setting Exceptions to the 20mph Default Speed Limit
for Restricted Roads'

Appendix 3 Councillor and Statutory Consultation Responses

Appendix 4 Objections and Comments for 30mph Exceptions