

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR - COMMUNITIES

TOWN AND COMMUNITY COUNCIL FORUM

20 MPH LIMITS AND ZONES

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To outline the current status of 20mph limits and zones in Bridgend County Borough and to discuss the potential implementation of further schemes.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Plan/Other Corporate Priorities

- 2.1 This report is consistent with the corporate aims as detailed in the Bridgend County Borough Council Corporate Plan, in particular the improvement priority to develop the local economy.

3. Background

- 3.1 From the non-car user perspective, excessive speed or driving inappropriately for the prevailing conditions (even if within a signed limit) is one of their main safety concerns.

- 3.2 In managing speed local authorities can introduce speed limits of 30,40,50,60 and 70 mph and more recently 20mph.

- 3.3 There are multiple organisations that advocate blanket lower speed limits. Wider use of 20mph limits combined with rigorous police enforcement would certainly satisfy casualty reduction targets. Their use, however, needs to be balanced with other considerations including the Association of Chief Police Officers guidance on enforcement of 20 mph speed limits/ zones, which indicates that general compliance needs to be achieved without excessive reliance on enforcement.

- 3.4 Within the county borough there are some eleven 20mph zones and one 20mph speed limit which have been funded through Welsh Government and Bridgend County Borough grants. **See Appendix A for list of locations.**

4. Current Situation

- 4.1 Current guidance is that Highway Authorities may implement 20mph speed limits and zones where appropriate, particularly in residential areas, and this is encouraged and supported by the Welsh Government. Such limits may either be full time or restricted to specified hours of the day.
- 4.2 It is recognized that in order to be successful 20mph speed limits and zones should ideally be self-enforcing leading to compliant vehicle speeds. In introducing such schemes Highway Authorities should take account of the level of police enforcement required before installing either of these measures and must always formally consult the police when considering their use.
- 4.2 Research indicates that 20mph speed limits should only be used where mean vehicle speeds are 24mph or below or where traffic calming measures are planned as part of the speed management strategy.
- 4.3 The Department for Transport (DfT) has commissioned research into the effectiveness of 20mph speed limits (due to report back in 2017) in order to “support and inform future policy development on 20mph speed limits and zones”. Whilst there is evidence that 20mph zones that are introduced in conjunction with speed reducing features are effective in reducing collisions and speeds, there is an evidence gap on the effectiveness of 20mph speed limits.
- 4.4 The design and treatment of new housing estates seeks to design the roads layouts for naturally lower speeds by tighter road geometry and features that change the perception of the driver and naturally promote lower speeds.
- 4.5 In consideration of current guidance it is not normal practice to introduce signing only schemes within untreated residential areas as compliance with the limit may not be realised and may not garner the support of police enforcement.
- 4.6 To influence driver behavior on existing streets means that physical traffic calming measures such as chicanes, build outs or speed cushions are usually required . The cost of introducing such measures to ensure that a length of road is engineered to promote and maintain a lower average speed can run into tens of thousands of pounds.
- 4.7 The rate at which the Council is able to address requests for new 20MPH schemes is largely based upon available funding. Current road safety grants from Welsh Government are prioritised on the basis of individual roads road safety records. It is not always the case that requests for 20mph zones coincide with casualty locations, and as such bids to Welsh Government for funding of 20mph zones with a low

or nil casualty record are not successful when prioritised against areas with higher collision rates across Wales.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules

5.1 The content of this report does not propose any effect upon Policy or Procedure

6. Equality Impact Assessment

6.1 The content of this report does not propose any changes to current practice.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 None identified

8. Recommendation

8.1 It is recommended that the contents of this report are noted

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Background documents: None