

## **20MPH SPEED LIMIT POLICY CRITERIA**

### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 Torbay Council supports in principle the introduction of 20mph speed limits and zones where appropriate to do so.
- 1.2 This policy sets out the background to such limits that the Council will use to consider whether to introduce such limits and how potential schemes would be prioritised across the bay area.
- 1.3 The number of schemes which will be introduced will depend upon available funding.

### **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 The Department for Transport has asked local Highway Authorities to consider introducing more 20mph limits and zones over time in urban areas and built up village streets that are primarily residential.
- 2.2 20mph zones and limits are now relatively wide-spread with more than 2,000 schemes in operation in England. The majority of these are 20mph zones. 20mph zones require traffic calming measures (which can be a range of road features, including but not restricted to, road narrowing or humps) or repeater speed limit signing and / or roundel road markings at regular intervals, so that no point within a zone is more than 50m from such a feature.

In addition, the beginning and end of a zone is indicated by a terminal sign. Zones usually cover a number of roads. 20mph limits are signed with terminal and repeater signs (minimum of one repeater but dependent on the length of the limit), and do not require traffic calming. 20mph limits are similar to other local speed limits and normally apply to individual or small numbers of roads but are increasingly being applied to larger areas.

- 2.3 There is clear evidence of the effect of reducing traffic speeds on the reduction of collisions and casualties, as collision frequency is lower at lower speeds; and where collisions do occur, there is a lower risk of fatal injury at lower speeds. Research shows that on urban roads with low average traffic speeds any 1 mph reduction in average speed can reduce the collision frequency by around 6%. There is also clear evidence confirming the greater chance of survival of pedestrians in collisions at lower speeds.
- 2.4 Important benefits of 20 mph schemes include quality of life and community benefits, and encouragement of healthier and more sustainable transport modes such as walking and cycling. There may also be environmental benefits as, generally, driving more slowly at a steady pace will save fuel and reduce pollution, unless an unnecessarily low gear is used. Walking and cycling can make a very positive contribution to improving health and tackling obesity, improving accessibility and tackling congestion, and reducing carbon emissions and improving local environment.

### **3.0 Threshold Criteria for Initial Consideration of Potential Schemes.**

- 3.1 The Council will evaluate schemes against this methodology on a location by location basis.
- 3.2 Unless in exceptional circumstances, locations will not be considered for 20mph schemes where any of the following apply:
1. They are on A or B class roads.
  2. Have existing mean speeds above 30 mph.
  3. There is none or insufficient community support for such a scheme, as assessed by the local ward Councillor.

In assessing community support, officers should review the views of local ward members, town councils and give weight to petitions and local residents' views.

- 3.3 Locations will then only be considered for 20 mph limits or zones if two out of three of the following criteria are met:
1. Current mean speeds are at or below 24 mph
  2. There is a depth of residential development and evidence of pedestrian and cyclist movements within the area.
  3. There is a record of injury accidents (based on police collision data) within the area, over a period of the last five years.
- 3.4 Locations where the road lay-out is restricted by highway width (e.g. historic areas) and other areas of high visual amenity, will not normally be considered suitable for sign only 20mph limits unless there will be minimal adverse visual impact. In these areas any 20mph restrictions will normally be through 20mph zones.

### **4.0 Criteria for Prioritisation of Schemes**

- 4.1 Assuming a potential scheme meets the requirements at Section 3.3 there is a need for a mechanism to prioritise these for consideration to be funded from budgets that may be available from the Council.
- 4.2 If opportunities exist to fully fund 20mph schemes from external sources (e.g. capital or Section 106 funding), or as part of a wider project that has already been funded, then any 20 mph scheme need only to meet the requirements of Section 3.3. If such funding is available only to part fund a 20mph scheme, then this will not affect the prioritisation for any other available Council funding for 20mph schemes.
- 4.3 The Council aims to ensure that any 20mph schemes have the maximum benefit for the affected communities. The promotion of healthier lifestyles, sustainability benefits, improvements to the social interaction and economic

wellbeing of an area are important considerations alongside reduction of collisions or traffic speeds. With these factors in mind, a Priority Criteria Matrix incorporating these factors will be used to prioritise schemes using a scoring and weighting mechanism. A copy of the matrix is at Annex A.

- 4.4 It is recognised that the matrix scoring relies on both objective and subjective judgements. In order to introduce fairness and importantly consistency in judgement, evaluations will be undertaken by a highways officers, in consultation with the Executive Lead Member for Highways.
- 4.5 The scoring matrix is attached to this document and outlines the criteria and the score weighting which will be used to compare areas proposed for 20mph zones or speed limits to assist with prioritisation and ensure appropriateness of the proposal. It should be noted that any scheme that results in an overall score of zero or below would not be considered further.

### **Clarification for scoring matrix**

1. When considering the criteria for locations where the road lay-out is restricted by highway width (e.g. historic areas) and other areas of high visual amenity widths of footways should be a consideration in the scoring within the relevant band.
2. Officers will provide available factual evidence of the levels of pedestrian and cyclist use where available. This will include data on local school travel plans and implementation (where available) and local cycling strategies.
3. The Deprived Areas criterion is based on 2015 Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) which are used for the collection and publication of small area statistics and are more uniform in size and nature than electoral wards or divisions.