

SUBJECT: PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE SEVERNSIDE 20MPH PILOT AREA
MEETING: PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE: 10 November 2022
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: Severnside Wards

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to facilitate pre-decision scrutiny on proposed changes to the Severnside 20mph pilot area prior to individual Cabinet Member decision on 30th November.
- 1.2 The proposed changes are:
- to revert to 30mph the section of the B4245 between Woodstock Way and the Castlegate roundabout, with a part-time 20mph limit alongside Durand Primary School at school start and finish times; and
 - to revert to 30mph the section of Caldicot Road between the Castlegate roundabout and the bridge over the former railway line bounding Portskewett.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 To scrutinise the proposed changes to the Severnside 20mph pilot area prior to the changes being reported to the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment for approval on 30th November 2022.

3. KEY ISSUES:

Background

- 3.1 In 2021, MCC secured Welsh Government (WG) funding to implement two settlement-wide 20mph pilot areas: one in Abergavenny and one in Severnside. The pilots are to test implementation of the legislative change that will see the 30mph speed limit on all 'restricted roads' in Wales become 20mph. The legislation to make this change was laid on 21st June 2022, debated in the Senedd on 12th July 2022 and is expected to come into force on 17th September 2023. A total of eight pilot areas have been implemented around Wales.
- 3.2 The overriding reason for the change is to make our roads safer, make places feel more pleasant and less car-dominated, and to encourage walking and cycling. On 21st June 2022, the WG Economic Infrastructure Directorate issued an explanatory memorandum to explain the proposed legislation to Members of the Senedd. It states:

“4.3 The legislation seeks to address the issues of road safety and the effects from vehicles and roads on the environment and communities. It seeks to improve road safety, encourage a shift to more active forms of travel and improve the local economy and environment in Welsh communities.

4.4 The legislation will also support the objectives of many Welsh Government strategies including Llwybr Newydd: the Wales Transport Strategy 2021 and the

goals set out in other legislation such as the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.”

- 3.3 According to the World Health Organisation, the most effective way to improve pedestrian safety is to reduce the speed of vehicles. In 2018, 50% of casualties on our roads happened on 30mph roads. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents states that 45% of pedestrians are killed when struck by a car going at 30mph or less, but 5% when going at 20mph or less.
- 3.4 In the distance it takes for a car travelling 20mph to stop, a 30mph car is still moving at 24mph. This makes a substantial difference to the ability to avoid collisions. There is evidence from across the world that vehicle speeds are the main reason why people do not walk or cycle or do not allow their children to walk or cycle to school.
- 3.5 Lower traffic speeds will create more liveable communities and encourage walking and cycling. People will feel more comfortable when walking and cycling, it is safer for children to walk from the moment they are outside their homes, play outside and to walk to school, while older people also feel more able to travel independently and safely.
- 3.6 Public Health Wales believes that lowering the default speed limit to 20mph could have substantial health benefits. 20mph will reduce the risk and severity of collisions, help people feel safer and benefit people’s physical and mental wellbeing. Driving slower produces less noise, reduces fuel consumption, and exhaust and non-exhaust emissions are likely to be reduced at lower speeds, tyres and roads will not breakdown so much, thereby reducing non-exhaust emissions. There is limited evidence on emissions to date and some of these issues such as tyre wear will be impossible to measure.

Severnside

- 3.7 The Traffic Order to introduce the 20mph zone in Severnside was approved by the then Cabinet Member for Infrastructure on 9th February 2022, following public consultation in December 2021 and January 2022. The report, including a summary of consultation responses, can be viewed [here](#) (agenda item 2). Implementation started in late March 2022 but took several weeks for signing and lining to be completed and signage corrected. It was completed on 18th May 2022.
- 3.8 The sketch plan below shows the speed limits currently in place on the B4245.



Key: 20mph – green
30mph buffer – orange
40mph buffer – red
60mph – pink

Implementation and feedback

3.9 Implementation was undertaken during April and May 2022. The timing meant that elected members (both new and returning) received considerable feedback on the changes while canvassing for the May elections. The Highways Department has also received feedback, although as is expected, those who comment are often those objecting to changes. The main issues raised are summarised below:

- Drivers focusing on their speedometers and not on the road ahead;
- Road rage and aggressive overtaking;
- Cars are not efficient at 20mph/sits uncomfortably between 2nd and 3rd gear;
- Traffic bunches up making it harder to leave side streets leading to increased congestion;
- Delays to school and public buses (with data suggesting a 6 minute delay to the eastbound X74 Newport to Chepstow bus and a 10 minute delay to the westbound X74 Chepstow to Newport bus);
- Bus passenger comfort, driver fatigue and fuel efficiency with vehicles not sitting comfortably in one gear (NB it has since been confirmed that all buses have automatic gearboxes: roll-out of electric buses will take a few years);
- Difficulty overtaking cyclists going at 18mph/19mph;
- Support for the 20mph speed limit on residential side roads and near schools but not on the B4245;

3.10 A smaller number of positive responses have been received:

- It feels safer for pedestrians and cyclists;
- MCC has responded at last to longstanding concerns about traffic speeds on the B4245;
- Issues of congestion are not new and are not caused by the new speed limit;
- People will get used to the change with time;
- The Magor Residents Against Speed group supports the change.

3.11 The Deputy Minister for Climate Change, Lee Waters MS, met with pupils, parents and teachers from Durand Primary School recently to understand what impact the 20mph has had in their community: <https://media.service.gov.wales/news/we-now-feel-safer-to-walk-to-school-caldicot-school-pupils-tell-deputy-minister>

3.12 A recent social media post gave the following comment:



"...a little lad fell off his bike into the road right in front of my car. I've never been more grateful of going below 20mph. He was fine, but... I dread to think what could have happened had I been driving faster... I'm not sure I could have stopped in time."

Written by a driver in Caldicot

I'M HELPING KEEP CYCLISTS SAFER@20

 monmouthshire
sir fynwy

 @MonmouthshireCC monmouthshire.gov.uk

Reviewing the changes

- 3.13 Officers and the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment met with the elected members for Severnside on 18th May 2022 to discuss the project and feedback received, and again on 4th July 2022 to discuss concerns further and to examine the evidence to date and to review the B4245 and Caldicot Road in the light of the clarified WG guidance on where exceptions to the 20mph limit might be appropriate for A and B roads.

Criteria for A and B roads

- 3.14 As part of the Welsh Government Economic Infrastructure Directorate's June 2022 explanatory memorandum, reference is made to exceptions. At page 15 it states:

“Exceptions: It would not be appropriate to place a speed limit of 20mph on all existing 30mph roads. On well-engineered routes that are principal corridors for movement, where there is little frontage development or community activity and where pedestrians and cyclists do not need to mix with motor vehicles it will often be appropriate to retain a 30mph speed limit. An exceptions process forms part of the 20mph policy, through which local authorities (as the highways authority in their area) can determine the routes that need to be made exceptions to the default limit of 20mph. In such cases a speed limit order will be required. As with all speed limits, 30mph exceptions could be part time if the local authority considers this to be appropriate. The exceptions process will be conducted before the proposed introduction of the 20mph policy in 2023...”

- 3.15 In preparation for the Wales-wide legislative change, and as part of the pilots, WG and Transport for Wales (TfW) developed criteria setting out how existing 30mph A and B roads such as the B4245 should be dealt with. A series of 'place criteria' was provided to identify when A and B roads can be excluded from 20mph zones and when those exceptions should not be applied. The aim is to have a consistent approach across Wales to provide certainty to drivers as part of the Wales-wide legislative change in September 2023.

Place Criteria

Remember – all 30mph unclassified roads are currently assumed to default automatically to 20mph. **Place criteria only applied to A/B 30mph roads.**

Exceptions not allowed for A/B 30mph roads:

1. Within **100 metres** walk of any educational setting (e.g. primary, secondary, FE & HE)
2. Within **100 metres** walk of any community centre
3. Within **100 metres** walk of any **hospital**
4. Where number of residential and/or retail premises fronting a road exceeds a defined density (**20 properties per km equivalent**)

Automatic adjustments applied:

- Fill 20mph gaps < 300 metres between sections meeting the above 'place criteria'
- Fill 20mph gaps < 100 metres between roads automatically becoming 20mph and sections meeting 'place criteria'
- **Over-riding exception to 30mph A/B roads defined as 'dual-carriageways'**

Key:
New criteria
Can be adjusted

E.g. 250-metre link with > 5 residential properties

- 3.16 These criteria were applied to the B4245 and discussed at the 4th July 2022 meeting, including the following clarification from WG officers:

- Criteria 1 refers to 100m walk from the school gate or any used school site access point (formal or informal);
- Criteria 4 does not apply where homes back onto the road with no access or only a rear gate access.

What does the data say?

- 3.17 Data is being collected on vehicle speed, traffic volumes and (once installed by WG) air quality. Casualty data continues to be recorded.

Casualty data

- 3.18 One of the overriding reasons for the Welsh Government seeking to change the urban speed limit throughout Wales to 20mph is the evidence that both accident numbers and the severity of injuries arising from an accident are significantly reduced at 20mph compared to 30mph.
- 3.19 Casualty data is summarised in the table below and plotted on the map in Appendix 1. There have been 35 recorded road traffic incidents on the B4245 up to and including the J23A roundabout since the start of 2017 to mid 2021 involving 51 people. There was one fatality and ten seriously injured casualties. It is important to consider causation before drawing significant conclusions from this data.

	Fatal Incidents	Serious Incidents	Slight Incidents	Total	Fatalities	Serious Casualties	Slight/No Injuries	Total Casualties
2017	0	0	7	7	0	0	13	13
2018	0	3	2	5	0	3	2	5
2019	0	1	9	10	0	1	11	12
2020	1	5	6	12	1	6	13	20
2021	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1
2022								
	1	9	25	35	1	10	40	51

Speed

- 3.20 The data from April to August 2022 is summarised in Appendix 2. Implementation began at the end of March and was completed on 18th May 2022. It is worth bearing in mind that the emerging data may be affected by other factors:
- Easter school holidays 8th April to 25th April;
 - Road closure at Church Road/Sandy Lane/Chepstow Road junction 11th April to 11th May;
 - Summer half term holiday 30th May to 3rd June and Summer holidays;
 - Queen's Jubilee bank holidays 2nd and 3rd June with road closures for street parties;
 - Wales and West Utility gas works from 20th June for six months with traffic lights on Newport Road.
- 3.21 The data shows a significant and sustained reduction in mean, median and 85% percentile speeds at each of the monitoring locations. A significant increase in traffic volumes between April 2022 and May 2022 in most locations is most likely due to the start of the school term, which combined with completion of the 20mph zone could account for reports of initial congestion while the scheme was new.

Air quality

- 3.22 No air quality data is available at this time.

The proposed changes

- 3.23 The plans at Appendix 3 show the place criteria mapped onto each part of the B4245. At the meeting on 4th July 2022, officers and elected members agreed that the above clarification on place criteria does change the position for the very eastern end of the B4245 from Woodstock Way to the Castlegate roundabout. Having considered the guidance and the casualty and speed data (see below), it was concluded that this section should revert to 30mph but with a part time 20mph alongside Durand Primary School at school start and finish times. In addition, the section of Caldicot Road from the Castlegate roundabout to the bridge over the former railway line passes through a business park without any residential properties fronting the road and with very little interaction between pedestrians and motorists. It is therefore proposed that this section reverts to 30mph. These changes are shown in the plan below (Figure 1).
- 3.24 These proposed changes were consulted on in August 2022. The responses are provided in Appendix 4. It is now proposed to seek the Cabinet Member's approval of these changes on 30th November 2022.
- 3.25 The assessment of the B4245 against the Place Criteria showed that the section from Arlington Close to Pankhurst Drive in Undy could be argued either way. Although along this section, homes back or side onto the B4245, the Severnside members agreed with the officer recommendation that the location of bus stops used by school buses, the long-standing desire to improve walking and cycling opportunities between Magor Undy and Rogiet, the urban feel of the street and the undesirability of frequent speed limit changes means this stretch should remain at 20mph and be monitored. The remainder of the B4245 continues to fall within the 'place criteria' for becoming 20mph and no changes are proposed.
- 3.26 Elected members also expressed concerns about the short length of national speed limit on the section of the B4245 between Magor with Undy and the Llanvihangel bends and suggested that be reduced to 40mph to match the surrounding sections. This will be progressed via Amendment Order 7 which will be consulted upon later this month and, subject to the responses received, reported to Cabinet Member for approval on 11th January 2023.

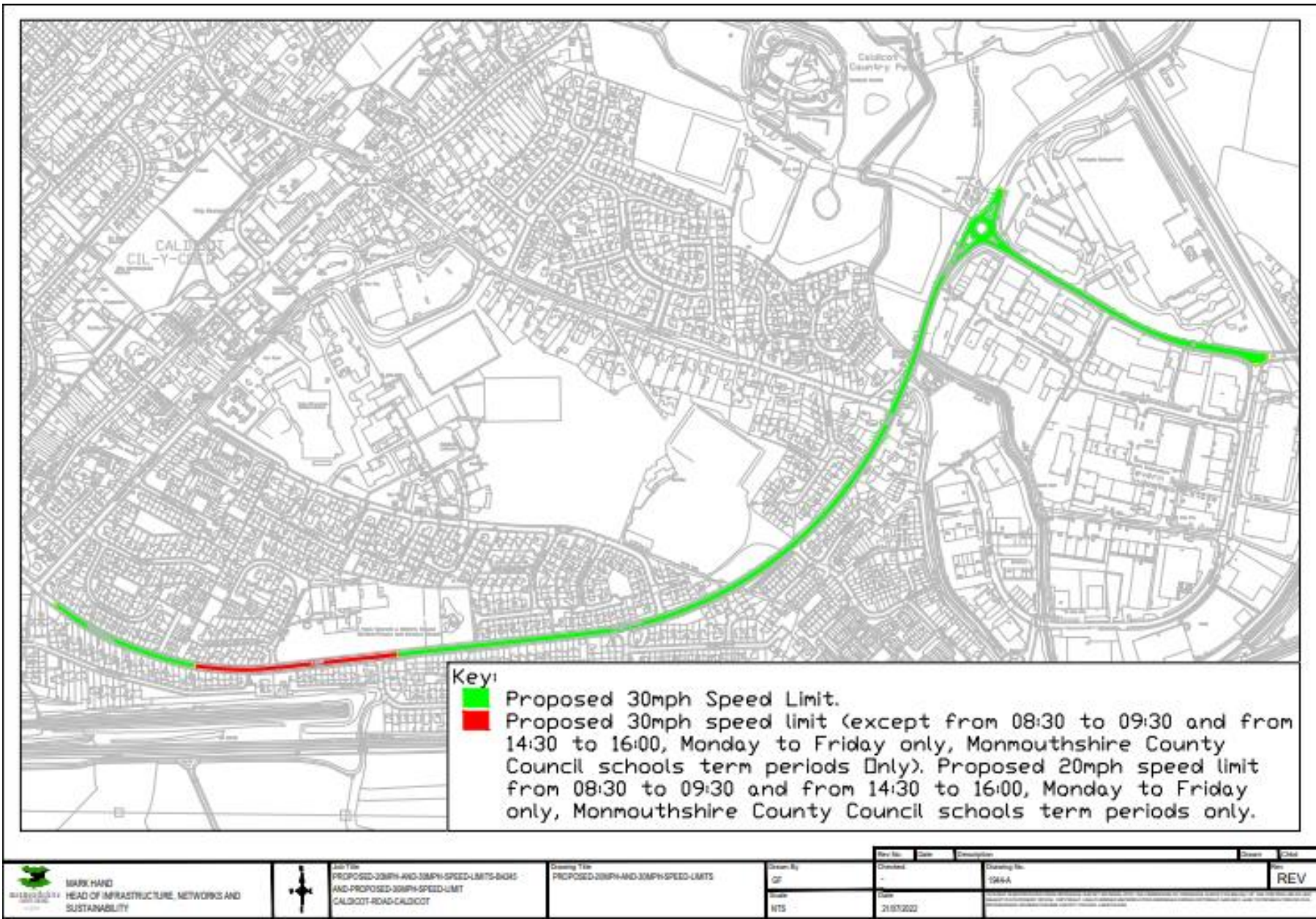


Figure 1: the proposed speed limit changes

4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

- 4.1 An Equality and Future Generations Evaluation (including equalities and sustainability impact assessment) was attached to the 9th February 2022 Cabinet Member report and can be viewed via the link above. It is not considered that the proposed change of two sections of the B4245 to revert to 30mph, one with a part-time 20mph during school start and finish times, and in accordance with the WG place criteria, materially affects the conclusions reached at that time.

Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting

- 4.2 There are no safeguarding or corporate parenting implications arising directly from this report.

Socio-economic Duty

- 4.3 The Welsh Government undertook a regulatory impact assessment of the proposed Wales-wide default speed limit change to 20mph which identified a theoretical economic cost arising from journeys taking slightly longer. Conversely, the reduced speeds result in safety benefits result in savings to the NHS due to fewer road traffic collisions and, where collisions do occur, reduced risk of death or serious injury; improved health and wellbeing by making streets more conducive to people walking and cycling; and improved quality of life in terms of the environment people live in.
- 4.4 This proposal would see two short sections of the B4245 reverting to 30mph, with the rest of the 20mph limit remaining unchanged. It is not considered that this small change would have a detrimental effect on road safety or quality of life given the specifics of the sections of road in question, which have been reviewed against the clarified WG criteria. A part-time 20mph limit is proposed alongside Durand Primary School to operate during school start and finish times.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 5.1 This report seeks pre-decision scrutiny, so the options available are simply that the Scrutiny Committee provides pre-decision Scrutiny or chooses not to.

6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Severnside pilot cost £243,790 to date which was fully funded by Welsh Government grant explicitly for this purpose. MCC contributed officer time. There will be an additional costs arising from the proposed changes that are expected to be in the region of £10,000 and would be funded from the existing Highways budget.

7. CONSULTEES

- Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change
- Severnside Ward Members
- Welsh Government 20mph project officers

- Public consultation on the original Traffic Order (December 2021 and January 2022) and on Amendment Order 5 (3rd August to 31st August 2022)
- Communities and Place DMT

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Welsh Government and Welsh Local Government Association joint Task Force on speed limit change <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2020-07/20mph-task-force-group-report.pdf>
- Welsh Government Exceptions Guidance October 2022

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APPENDICES:

APPENDIX 1: B4245 casualty data 2017-2021

APPENDIX 2: B4245 speed data

APPENDIX 3: WG Place criteria mapped onto the B4245

APPENDIX 4: Consultation responses to the proposed changes under Amendment Order 5