



# Midlothian Council Speed Policy

March 2022

## Table of Contents

1.	Purpose of the Speed Policy .....	3
1.1	Introduction .....	3
1.2	Background .....	3
2.	Policy Objectives & Legislation .....	4
2.1	Legislation and Regulations .....	4
2.2	Policy Objectives .....	4
2.3	Underlying Principles .....	5
3.	Enforcement and Deterrence .....	6
3.1	Introduction .....	6
3.2	Police Scotland Enforcement .....	6
4.	Speed Limits on our Roads .....	7
4.1	Introduction .....	7
4.2	20mph limits in towns .....	7
4.3	30mph limits in towns .....	7
4.4	40mph in towns .....	7
4.5	20mph in villages or smaller settlements .....	7
4.6	30mph in villages or smaller settlements .....	7
4.7	40mph in villages or smaller settlements .....	7
4.8	Rural Roads .....	8
4.9	Quiet Roads .....	8
5.	Midlothian Council Speed Management .....	9
5.1	Strategy .....	9
5.2	Signing .....	9
5.3	Requests for speed limit changes .....	9
6.	Traffic Calming .....	10
6.1	Introduction .....	10
6.2	Traffic Calming Options .....	11

# 1. Purpose of the Speed Policy

## 1.1 Introduction

Scotland's National Transport Strategy (NTS2) published in February 2020 sets out a vision of the country's transport system for the next 20 years to address the key challenges we face. There are a number of overarching strategies and delivery plans being produced to support this at a national level, including the Road Safety Framework (2021),

To support the aims of these documents, Midlothian Council have undertaken a road safety and hierarchy review which has subsequently led to the production of this speed policy document. This will set out the Council's objectives, guidance which has been used to inform the policies, and how these will be implemented.

## 1.2 Background

The setting of national speed limits for different road types, and the identification of which exceptions to the general limits can be applied, is the responsibility of the UK Government. The three national speed limits for cars, motorcycles and light vans are:

- The 30mph speed limit on restricted roads (in Scotland Class A, B or C or unclassified roads with street lighting).
- The speed limit of 60mph on single carriageway roads.
- The 70mph limit on dual carriageways and motorways.

These national limits are not, however, appropriate to all roads. The responsibility for determining local speed limits lies with the Roads Authorities having regard to guidance issued by the Scottish Government together with relevant advice from the Department for Transport (DfT).

Transport Scotland is currently reviewing their approach as the most recent specific directive dates from August 2006, when the Scottish Executive published ETLLD Circular No.1/2006: Setting Local Speed Limits. This laid out recommendations on the setting of local speed limits, other than 20mph speed limits, on single or dual carriageway roads in both urban and rural areas. For 20mph speed limits, the Good Practice Guide on 20mph Speed Restrictions (June 2016 Version2) is applicable.

The setting of speed limits can be a sensitive issue for communities as residents and businesses can have conflicting views dependent upon their own experiences and how they primarily use the road space, i.e. a safe speed for drivers may differ from pedestrians or cyclists.

This document will therefore seek to provide some clarity as to what comprises an appropriate speed for various types of road and the environment in which the traverse through.



## 2. Policy Objectives & Legislation

### 2.1 Legislation and Regulations

Speed limits are covered by legislation set out in Part VI of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. Local speed limits are made by Roads Authorities, by order, under section 84 of this Act. Local authorities must ensure speed limits meet the legislative process and the requirements.

In order to ensure compliance with a new limit, it is important that it is signed correctly and consistently in accordance with section 85 of the Act and must comply with The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 (TSRGD).

The current guidance, to which this policy makes reference, is as follows:

- Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2030
- The Scottish Government Designing Streets: A Policy Statement for Scotland
- DfT 1/2013 - Setting Local Speed Limits
- ETLLD Circular No 1/2006 – Setting Local Speed Limits
- DfT Traffic Advisory Leaflet 1/04 – Village Speed Limits
- LTN 1/07 Traffic Calming
- Transport Scotland – Good Practice Guide on 20mph Speed Restrictions 2016
- The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 (TSRGD)
- DfT – Traffic Signs Manual
- LTN 1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design
- Cycling by Design 2021

The Scottish Government is responsible for determining speed limits on the trunk road and motorway network. Midlothian Council, as Roads Authority for Midlothian, is responsible for determining local speed limits on the local road network.

### 2.2 Policy Objectives

The Midlothian road network needs to support a local transport system that is safe for all road users and improves the quality of life in our communities with the potential to encourage social and economic activity.

Effective vehicle speed management involves many components designed to encourage, help and require drivers to adopt appropriate and safe speeds. Speed limits are a key source of information and play a fundamental role in indicating the nature of, and risks posed by, a road to both motorised and non-motorised road users.

The Scottish Government's Designing Streets policy emphasises that building in active travel options can enhance the character of a place, improve public health and social interaction and help to tackle climate change from reduced carbon emissions. It stresses that roads are often part of a community, as well as being thoroughfares, and considerations of both 'place' and 'movement' are important in determining appropriate speed limits.

Cycling by Design indicates that where Streets have a mix use of traffic modes, limiting the speed differential between motor traffic and cycle users is key to safety and comfort of users and appreciation of cycle users space. Cycle users will normally travel between 10 and 15 mph and therefore maintaining traffic speeds at or below 20mph through design is an important aspect for mixed corridors.

Various guidelines all reach a consensus that speed limits should be self-enforcing to encourage compliance and not be seen by drivers as being a target speed at which to drive in all circumstances. This will be an aim of Midlothian Council taking cognisance of the limitations of the existing network and the level of retrofitting required to reach modern standards.

Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2030 states that Speed limits in a Safe System are based on aiding crash-avoidance and reducing the speed at which impacts occur. This ensures the body's limit for physical trauma is not reached or exceeded. The Safe System aims to establish appropriate speed limits according to the feature of the road, the function it serves, and the physical tolerance of those who use it.

The key factors that should be taken into account in any decisions on local speed limits are:

- history of collisions
- road geometry and engineering
- road function
- composition of road users (including existing and potential levels of vulnerable road users)
- existing traffic speeds
- road environment

## 2.3 Underlying Principles

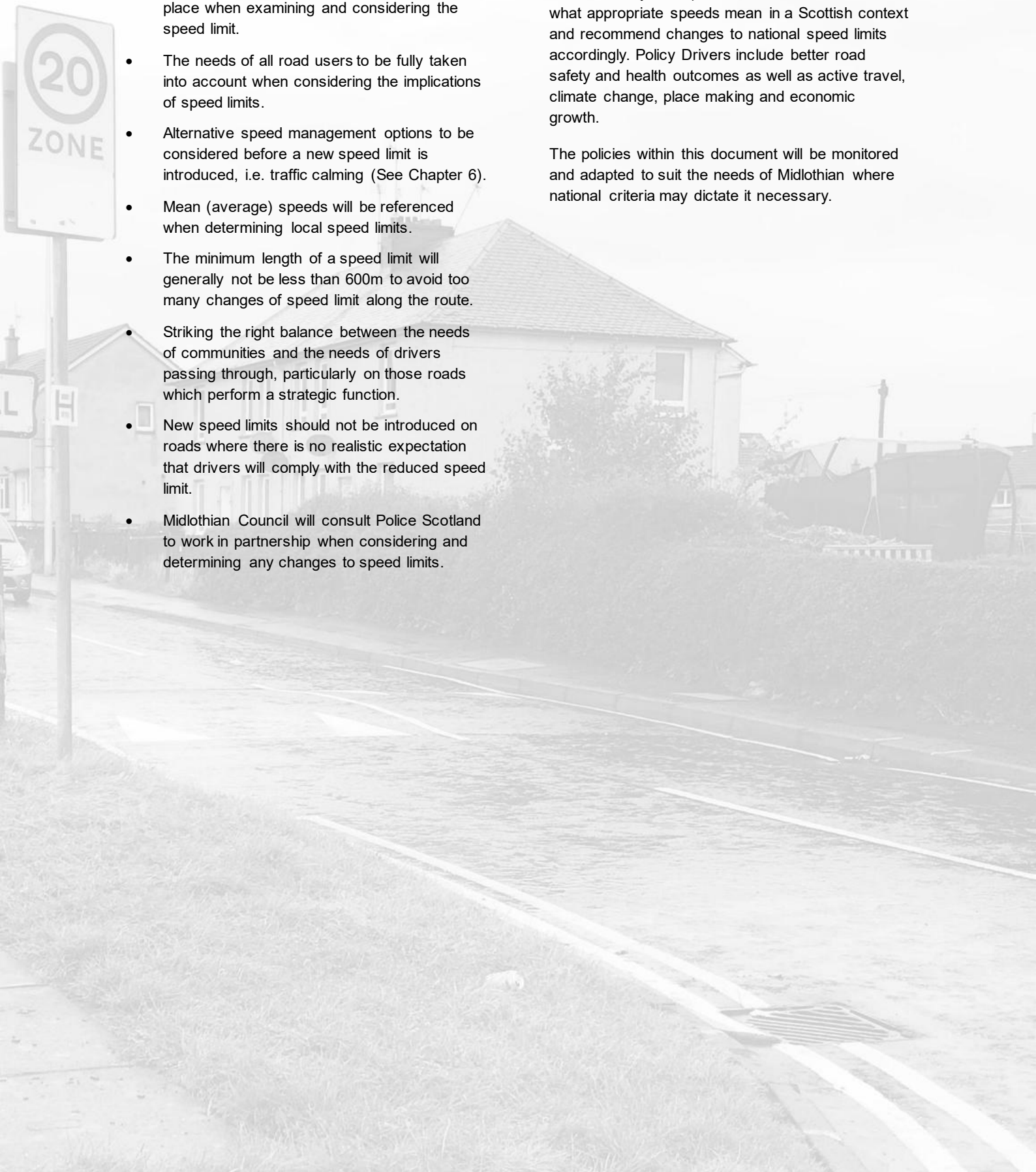
The underlying principles of Midlothian Council's speed limit policy are as follows:

- Determining the function of the road and its characteristics in terms of movement and place when examining and considering the speed limit.
- The needs of all road users to be fully taken into account when considering the implications of speed limits.
- Alternative speed management options to be considered before a new speed limit is introduced, i.e. traffic calming (See Chapter 6).
- Mean (average) speeds will be referenced when determining local speed limits.
- The minimum length of a speed limit will generally not be less than 600m to avoid too many changes of speed limit along the route.
- Striking the right balance between the needs of communities and the needs of drivers passing through, particularly on those roads which perform a strategic function.
- New speed limits should not be introduced on roads where there is no realistic expectation that drivers will comply with the reduced speed limit.
- Midlothian Council will consult Police Scotland to work in partnership when considering and determining any changes to speed limits.

Circular 1/2006 states quite clearly that "Speed limits should not be used to attempt to solve the problem of isolated hazards, such as a single road junction or reduced visibility such as a bend".

A National Speed Management Review is being undertaken by Transport Scotland. It will look at what appropriate speeds mean in a Scottish context and recommend changes to national speed limits accordingly. Policy Drivers include better road safety and health outcomes as well as active travel, climate change, place making and economic growth.

The policies within this document will be monitored and adapted to suit the needs of Midlothian where national criteria may dictate it necessary.





### 3. Enforcement and Deterrence

#### 3.1 Introduction

Police Scotland is responsible for the enforcement of speed limits on roads in the Council area.

Enforcement can be carried out at specific locations by Police officers using hand-held equipment, or along routes using in-vehicle detection equipment.

Enforcement and Deterrence is an essential part of providing a safe road network. Drivers are more willing to comply with speed limits where they feel they are otherwise likely to be caught and punished.

To be effective, police controls will require a combination of visible and less visible activities. They will need to be unpredictable and difficult to avoid so that drivers continue to feel that all roads and areas can be monitored.

#### 3.2 Police Scotland Enforcement

Prior to any new or altered speed limits being introduced, Police Scotland will be formally consulted to gather their views on the appropriateness of the measures, and adapt the proposals where necessary.

It is recognised that Police Scotland's resources are limited, and therefore dialogue will be undertaken at suitable intervals to discuss problem areas. This could be reports from members of the public or Midlothian Council officers ongoing monitoring of the local road network.

Despite the various measures that can be put in place, it is expected that there will remain a type of driver that will continue to disregard speed limits suggested by the surrounding environment or imposed through regulation. It is expected that Police Scotland will target this group of drivers as part of their enforcement effort.

Any changes to limits will be monitored, and where compliance levels are not at an acceptable level, consideration will be given to the addition of further measures.



## 4. Speed Limits on our Roads

### 4.1 Introduction

Unless otherwise signed, the national speed limit in areas with street-lighting is 30mph, and on single carriageways is 60mph for all cars, motorcycles and light vans.

### 4.2 20mph limits in towns

20mph streets within towns are mostly residential, or see high pedestrian and cyclist movements. They tend to be areas where motor vehicle movement is not deemed the primary function.

20mph areas should have the following characteristics:

- a clearly defined core, such as a central shopping area or community facility;
- several facilities generating active travel movements;
- notable development depth;
- almost continuous frontage;
- numerous junctions; and,
- significant pedestrian activity throughout the day.

### 4.3 30mph limits in towns

Typically, 30mph roads in towns demonstrate similar characteristics to 20mph roads and can be considered where motor vehicle movement is given a higher priority than the place function of the street.

### 4.4 40mph in towns

Roads within towns that are suitable for a speed limit of 40mph are generally on the outskirts of urban areas where there is little frontage development.

Where such roads pass through predominantly residential areas and there is significant vulnerable road user activity, then a lower speed limit should be considered.

The 40mph limits may be used as intermediate speed limits ('buffers') to prepare drivers on approach to a built-up area where a lower speed limit will apply.

### 4.5 20mph in villages or smaller settlements

A road will be considered for a 20mph speed limit if, in addition to the criteria for a 30mph limit above:

- there are more than 20 houses directly fronting the road (on one or both sides); and
- there is street lighting no more than 38m apart; and
- there is a continuous footway along at least one side.

### 4.6 30mph in villages or smaller settlements

A road will be considered for a 30mph speed limit if, in addition to the criteria for a 40mph limit above:

- there are more than 15 houses directly fronting the road (on one or both sides).

### 4.7 40mph in villages or smaller settlements

A road will be considered for a 40mph speed limit if:

- there are more than 10 houses directly fronting the road (on one or both sides); and
- there is a minimum density of 3 houses every 100m; and
- there is a community facility such as a school, shop or village hall within the settlement.

Roads with high approach speeds must have a 40mph 'buffer' or other visual marker to alert drivers to the upcoming settlement.

A minimum length of 600m is recommended so as to avoid too many changes of speed limit along a given road and because many drivers are unlikely to reduce their speed if it is over a very short distance, particularly if the end of the limit can be seen from the entry point. However, shorter lengths will be considered if they are 'buffered' by higher limits on all approaches, giving a total restricted length of 600m.



## 4.8 Rural Roads

The national speed limit on the rural road network is 60mph on single carriageway roads and 70mph on dual carriageways.

Where the primary function of a road is for motor vehicle travel between settlements, any accident history will be taken into account when setting speed limits.

In accordance with the guidelines, remedial measures and alternative speed management options will always be considered in detail before the introduction of a lower speed limit.

## 4.9 Quiet Roads

Quiet Roads are increasingly being implemented on rural roads across Scotland where there are high levels of use by pedestrians, cyclists or equestrians, and certain criteria are met. The presence of vulnerable road users in the carriageway is then highlighted to drivers through the use of signage to promote a shared environment. Where appropriate, Midlothian Council will consider the introduction of Quiet Roads across its network to develop safer movements for vulnerable road users.

Based on good practice from around the country, Midlothian Council have adopted the following characteristics for suitable Quiet Roads:

- Daily traffic volumes of less than 800 vehicles per day (two-way);
- Carriageway is no greater than 5.5 metres wide;
- Routes already used by pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians;
- Provide a link to existing infrastructure; and
- Has the support of the community, emergency services and elected members.



## 5. Midlothian Council Speed Management

### 5.1 Strategy

It is necessary to set appropriate and effective speed limits, which support the underlying principles, and achieve a reasonable level of driver compliance within those limits.

Where there is strong community support to lower the speed limit, this request will be considered in line with the procedure outlined below.

If, at any time, measures are deemed necessary to improve the effectiveness of a speed limit, consideration will be given to using additional speed management measures appropriate to each individual location.

### 5.2 Signing

The design of speed limits signs in Midlothian will be in accordance with the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (2016) and the Traffic Signs Manual. Where possible, speed limit signs and town/village nameplates will be brought together at a single location, and accompanied by an appropriate carriageway roundel, forming a 'gateway' feature.

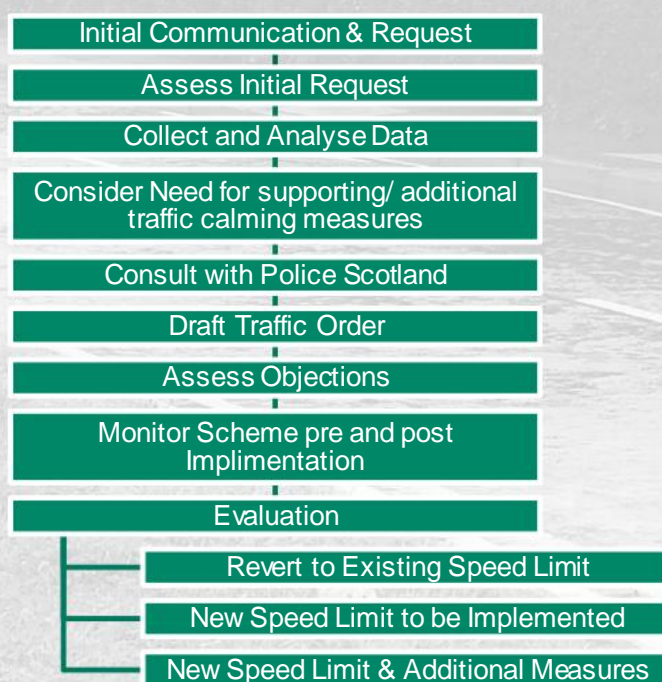
### 5.3 Requests for speed limit changes

Reviews of existing speed limits across the network shall generally be undertaken every few years, or where circumstances have changed.

It is essential that any changes to speed limits should have widespread community support and, as such, should there be any concerns between routine review periods, these should be highlighted through the Community Council, Area Partnership or Local Councillor/s of the area.

- To find your Community Council visit:  
[https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/200284/your\\_community/534/community\\_councils](https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/200284/your_community/534/community_councils)
- To find your Area Partnership visit:  
[https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/200284/your\\_community/214/community\\_planning\\_in\\_midlothian](https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/200284/your_community/214/community_planning_in_midlothian)
- To find your local Councillor visit:  
<https://midlothian.cmis.uk.com/live/Councillors.aspx>

Upon receipt of a request, the following process shall be followed and reviewed at each stage. Should Council officers determine at any stage that it is not feasible to progress to the subsequent stage, the request would revert back to the originator with the reasons for the process ending given.



## 6. Traffic Calming

### 6.1 Introduction

There will be locations where drivers' speeds are too high for the prevailing local environment and further intervention is required to achieve good compliance with the existing or a lower speed limit.

Other speed management measures include raising awareness (education), enforcement and engineering.

The table which follows, highlighting the performance of the various measures, has been produced utilising principles laid out in the Department for Transport (DfT) "Local Transport Note 1/07: Traffic Calming":

Definitions:




- Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) is a legal tool that allows permanent changes to restrict, regulate or prohibit use of a road. A TRO is also required to change speed limits.
- A Redetermination Order (RSO) legally alters or amends the way in which roads, footways and cycleways are used.

The measures shown in the table below would be considered by officers prior to processing a TRO speed limit change.









## 6.2 Traffic Calming Options

Intervention	Example	Cost	Impact on traffic speeds <sup>1</sup> +++ is largest reduction	Impact on traffic flows <sup>1</sup> +++ is largest reduction	Impact on injury accidents <sup>1</sup> +++ is largest reduction	Delays to emergency services <sup>1</sup> +++ is shortest delays	Requirements	Pros	Cons
Promotion	 <p>Poster Example</p>	varies	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence that existing speed limit is not being adhered to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Changes in driver behaviour may reach further than a single community-led</li> </ul>	
Enforcement	 <p>Source: leeds.gov.uk</p>	varies	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported	Not reported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Police will prioritise areas where there is a unique road safety issue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Changes in driver behaviour may reach further than a single community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reliant on Police resources</li> </ul>
Signage	 <p>Source: Google Maps</p>	£150-500 per sign depending on whether a new pole is required	+	+	+	+++	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Available mounting height</li> <li>Available forward visibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be retrofitted to existing street furniture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be visually unattractive in rural areas</li> <li>Their use alone can have minimal impact on reducing speeds</li> <li>Can contribute to sign clutter</li> </ul>




<sup>1</sup> Parameters based on scoring from Department for Transport "Local Transport Note 1/07: Traffic Calming"





Intervention	Example	Cost	Impact on traffic speeds <sup>1</sup> +++ is largest reduction	Impact on traffic flows <sup>1</sup> +++ is largest reduction	Impact on injury accidents <sup>1</sup> +++ is largest reduction	Delays to emergency services <sup>1</sup> +++ is shortest delays	Requirements	Pros	Cons
Lining/road markings	 Source: Google Maps	£100–2,000  Depending on type of marking and length of road	+	+	+	+++	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Road surface needs to be suitably adequate for road markings to be laid</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can create advanced warnings to approaching hazards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require regular maintenance</li> <li>Difficult to see in adverse weather</li> </ul>
Intermediate speed limits / 'buffers'	 Source: Google Maps	£300–600	+	+	+	+++	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TRO and subsequent consultation</li> <li>Adequate length to create intermediate limit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creates advanced warning of approach to lower speed limit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited situations where they can be used</li> </ul>
Rumble strips/ countdown markers	 Source: Google Maps,	£1,000– £3,000	+	+	++	+++	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Should be located away from dwellings to avoid noise disturbance</li> <li>Consultation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be used as a low-cost warning to alert drivers of changing environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creates noise/vibration</li> <li>Uncomfortable for cyclists and motorcyclists</li> <li>Can become slippery when wet</li> </ul>
Gateway: an entry treatment which highlights the change in speed limit to drivers	 Source: Google Maps	£4,000 – 10,000	++	+	++	+++	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Available width in verge/footway</li> <li>Suitable carriageway width to enable narrowing (where part of design)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Change in speed limit is made more obvious to drivers</li> <li>Can be combined with build-out to narrow carriageway</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May have limited impact where reduced impact when comprising solely signing and lining</li> </ul>

Intervention	Example	Cost	Impact on traffic speeds <sup>1</sup> +++ is largest reduction	Impact on traffic flows <sup>1</sup> +++ is largest reduction	Impact on injury accidents <sup>1</sup> +++ is largest reduction	Delays to emergency services <sup>1</sup> +++ is shortest delays	Requirements	Pros	Cons
Vehicle Activated Signs	 Source: Google Maps	£2,000 - £10,000	++	+	++	+++	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to power or in location where sign can be powered by solar energy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Non-illuminated until activated, creating less visual impact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>These signs become less effective with familiarity so should be moved around to maximise impact</li> </ul>
Road narrowing (build-outs)	 Source: Google Maps	£2,500 - £12,000	+ to +++	+ to ++	+ to ++	+++	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RSA</li> <li>Consultation</li> <li>Street lighting</li> <li>Carriageway space must be available to accommodate build out</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can incorporate active travel crossings</li> <li>Can span around junctions</li> <li>Opportunity for cycle bypass</li> <li>Emergency vehicles likely to be unaffected</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where a cycle bypass isn't used, cyclists may feel unsafe</li> </ul>
Footway widening / introduction of cycle infrastructure	 Source: Google Maps	Dependent on length	+ to +++	+ to +++	+ to ++	+++	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RSA required for some measures</li> <li>Consultation</li> <li>Street lighting</li> <li>Must be adequate room to widen footway/reduce carriageway width</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can incorporate active travel crossings</li> <li>Emergency vehicle speeds likely to remain unaffected</li> <li>If allowances made for cyclists, can negate need for cyclists on carriageway</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Could reduce resilience of street, where width is reduced over a longer distance</li> <li>May remove opportunities for informal parking</li> </ul>



Intervention	Example	Cost	Impact on traffic speeds <sup>1</sup> +++ is largest reduction	Impact on traffic flows <sup>1</sup> +++ is largest reduction	Impact on injury accidents <sup>1</sup> +++ is largest reduction	Delays to emergency services <sup>1</sup> +++ is shortest delays	Requirements	Pros	Cons
Speed cushions	 Source: Google Maps	£1,000 - £2,000 (per set)	++	+++	+++	++	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultation</li> <li>Street lighting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Buses likely to remain unaffected</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design dependent, vehicles may be able to straddle the cushion to lessen impact</li> </ul>
Road hump	 Source: Google Maps	£1,000 - £3,000 (per hump)	++	+++	+++	++	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultation</li> <li>Street lighting</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Less preferred for bus routes</li> <li>Cyclists are affected</li> <li>Can be obstructive to emergency service vehicles</li> <li>Creates noise/vibration</li> </ul>
Raised Table	 Source: Google Maps	£6,000 – £20,000 (will vary depending on size)	+++	+++	+++	++	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultation</li> <li>Street lighting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can incorporate active travel crossings</li> <li>Can span across junctions</li> <li>Makes road easier to cross for users with mobility impairments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Drainage interventions may be required</li> <li>Where used on bus routes or in shared spaces, they have to be designed accordingly</li> <li>Cyclists are affected</li> <li>Can be obstructive to emergency service vehicles</li> <li>Creates noise/vibration</li> </ul>



Intervention	Example	Cost	Impact on traffic speeds <sup>1</sup>  +++ is largest reduction	Impact on traffic flows <sup>1</sup>  +++ is largest reduction	Impact on injury accidents <sup>1</sup>  +++ is largest reduction	Delays to emergency services <sup>1</sup>  +++ is shortest delays	Requirements	Pros	Cons
'Give and go' chicane	 <p>Source: Google Maps</p>	£5,000 - £12,000	+++	++	++	++	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RSO and subsequent consultation</li> <li>Street lighting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunity for cycle bypass to allow cyclist continuity</li> <li>Emergency vehicle speeds likely to remain unaffected</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Speeds can remain the same if there is no oncoming traffic</li> <li>Vehicles may not slow down and may even increase speed to avoid having to give way</li> </ul>
Pedestrian Refuge	 <p>Source: Google Maps</p>	£5,000 - 10,000	+	+	+	+++	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RSO and subsequent consultation</li> <li>Street lighting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can make it easier for pedestrians to cross the road, as they can cross one side at a time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Priority to motor vehicles</li> <li>Can make cyclists more vulnerable</li> <li>Carriageway space must be available to accommodate island</li> </ul>

