

# Central Bedfordshire Council Speed Management Strategy

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## **Glossary of Terms**

### **85th percentile speed**

The speeds at or below which 85% of all vehicles are observed to travel under free flowing conditions. This is a nationally recognised method of assessing traffic speeds.

### **Hazardous Site**

A site that meets one of a number of injury collision criteria.

### **Local Transport Plan**

Statutory document which sets out a long-term framework for investment in transport across Central Bedfordshire. It establishes a strategic approach through which to deal with key transport issues. It sets out a series of objectives and broad areas of intervention through which schemes that improve the transport network are identified.

### **Local Transport Plan Goal**

The Local Transport Plan has ten objectives, including a reduction in the risk of people being killed or seriously injured on Central Bedfordshire roads.

### **Mean speed**

The average speed at which all vehicles travel.

### **Police and Crime Commissioner**

Newly elected (November 2012) commissioner replacing Police authorities. Works closely with Chief Constable to reduce crime, keep communities safe and ensure the criminal justice system works well.

### **Section 106 Funding**

Funding obtained from developers when building new housing and other buildings to mitigate the impact the development has on the transport network.

### **STATS 19 form**

The Department for Transport compiles data on personal injury collisions, resulting casualties, and the vehicles involved. The Police fill in this form for each collision occurring on the public highway, and which become known to them within 30 days.

### **Traffic Regulation Order**

A Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) is a legal order which allows the regulation of speed, movement, and parking of vehicles. They are sometimes enforced by the Police, however various powers can now be delegated through legislation to Local Authorities if applied for to allow civil prosecution, such as parking, bus lanes and yellow box markings.

### **Village**

An area with frontage development of 20 or more houses over a minimum length of 600 metres with a minimum density of 3 houses per 100 metre section (*Traffic Advisory Leaflet 1/04 Village Speed Limits*).

## Abbreviations and Acronyms

<b>AONB</b>	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
<b>CIL</b>	Community Infrastructure Levy
<b>DfT</b>	Department for Transport
<b>HADECS</b>	Highways Agency Digital Enforcement Camera System (operated by Highways England)
<b>HGV</b>	Heavy Goods Vehicle
<b>HLB</b>	Highways Locality Budget
<b>HQTM</b>	Head-Quarters Traffic Management
<b>KSI</b>	Killed or Seriously Injured
<b>LTP</b>	Local Transport Plan
<b>NMU</b>	Non-motorised user
<b>NPCC</b>	National Police Chief's Council (replaced the Association of Chief Police Officers ACPO in 2015)
<b>PCC</b>	Police and Crime Commissioner
<b>RTC</b>	Road Traffic Collision
<b>S106</b>	Funding negotiated from developers to mitigate the impact of the development
<b>SID</b>	Speed Indication Device
<b>SMG</b>	Speed Management Group
<b>SNT</b>	Safer Neighbourhood Team
<b>TAL</b>	Traffic Advisory Leaflet (produced by the Department for Transport)
<b>TAS</b>	Transport Access and Safety Unit
<b>TM</b>	Traffic Management
<b>TMO</b>	Traffic Management Officer
<b>TRO</b>	Traffic Regulation Order

## Guidance Documents

- DfT Circular 1/13 Setting Local Speed Limits
- DfT Speed Limit Appraisal Tool:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/speed-limit-appraisal-tool>
- The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 (TSRGD)
- The Traffic Signs Manual Chapter 3 (TSM 3)

## Introduction

Central Bedfordshire Council receives many requests in relation to speed management. This document outlines how the Council intends to prioritise these requests, following national guidance prescribed by the DfT (Circular 1/13 Setting Local Speed Limits) and fitting within the Council's own policies and priorities, such as the Local Area Transport Plans.

The requests received for speed management generally require the following possible outcomes:

- Note the concern
- Monitor the situation
- Speed enforcement
- Engineering measures
- Education

The strategy provides the framework for determining whether action is required; which is the most suitable approach to speed management in each particular instance. It also sets out how requests are prioritised for the funding allocated for road safety interventions within the Highways Annual Plan.

## Speed Management Strategy

### Objectives of the Speed Management Strategy

The objectives of the speed management strategy is to:

- Achieve consistency in setting speed limits, based on the function and nature of the route within Central Bedfordshire and taking into consideration national standards and guidance (*e.g. DfT Circular 1/13 Setting Local Speed Limits*).
- Set out how speed management requests are prioritised.

### Who is responsible for speed management in Central Bedfordshire?

- Central Bedfordshire Council as Highways Authority is responsible for the design and management of all public roads in Central Bedfordshire (except for trunk roads and motorways which are maintained by Highways England). Part of the management responsibility is to set an appropriate speed limit for each road under its control.
- Bedfordshire Police are responsible for the enforcement of speed limits.

## Setting Speed Limits

Central Bedfordshire Council's approach to setting speed limits must be consistent if it is to be understood and complied with by the drivers. Speed limits should be evidence-led, self-explaining and seek to reinforce people's assessment of what is a safe speed to travel. They should encourage self-compliance and not be seen by drivers as being a target speed at which to drive in all circumstances.

Important considerations when (re)setting a speed limit for a road or road segment:

- History of collisions, including frequency, severity, types and causes
- Road geometry and engineering (width, sightlines, bends, junctions, accesses and safety barriers, etc.)
- Road function (strategic, through traffic, local access, etc.)
- Composition of road users (including existing and potential levels of vulnerable road users)
- Existing traffic speeds
- Road environment, including level of road-side development and possible impacts on residents (e.g. severance, noise, or air quality). Qualitative assessment of whether the environment is conducive to specified mean and 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds.

### **Police Support**

Proposed speed limits should have the support of the Police and be considered where such support is withheld or qualified.

### **Traffic Regulation Orders**

Any change in speed limit will require a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) under Section 84 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, to make it legally enforceable. All orders have to be advertised allowing the public and other interested parties including the Police the opportunity to comment or object.

### **Scheme Selection and Prioritisation**

Requests for a review of a speed limit will be assessed using the following criteria:

1. Incidence of speed related collisions, using the most recent 3-year period for which validated data is available.
2. Data on vehicle speeds, recorded through automated counters. Note: this will normally be achieved through the installation of Automatic Traffic Counters (ATCs) and the commissioning of average speed surveys (at times when the road is free-flowing). Note - guidance on measuring speeds is provided at Appendix A.
3. Level of usage of adjacent footways by pedestrians / other vulnerable road users and number of crossing movements.
4. Categorisation of the road as part of a safer route to school.
5. Categorisation of the road as part of CBCs designated cycle route network.
6. Existence of specific hazards, such a pedestrians or animals using the carriageway.

Speed limits may be amended in response to a prioritised scheme requests, as a result of a road safety assessment (triggered for example by recent speed-related collisions) or in response to approved changes to the network, such as the addition of a development access.

All amendments to speed limits should accord with the DfT criteria outlined in *Circular 01/13 Setting Local Speed Limits*, to ensure that any change is appropriate to the road environment.

It should be noted that a request to review a speed limit in response to concerns about speeds may result in a recommendation to increase the limit, where this is deemed appropriate to the road environment.

## Speed Limit Change Request Process

1. An assessment of the environment must be made to confirm that a proposed speed limit is appropriate for the road in question. This will be completed using the *Speed Limit Framework* (see pages 8-10) which is based on the *DfT Circular 01/13 Setting Local Speed Limits* and the *DfT Speed Limit Appraisal Tool*.
2. The Lead Engineer will visit all roads proposed to have an amended speed limit.
3. The Lead Engineer will decide on the location(s) for speed count data to be collected, and agree this with the allocated Central Bedfordshire Client Officer prior to the data being collected. For a proposed 20 zone, data should be collected on every through route within the proposed zone. Additional data may be collected if the Lead Engineer considers that speeds could be higher than 20mph for any other given section of road.
4. Mean and 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed data will be collected on a free flowing section of the road, on a neutral week of the year. Data will be collected for a minimum of 7 days.
5. The Lead Engineer will use the data collected, their observations from the site visit, the guidance given in *Circular 01/13* and the *DfT Speed Limit Appraisal Tool* to decide whether the road or roads specified are suitable to have the speed limit amended to the proposed speed.
6. The Lead Engineer will complete a *Speed Limit Change Form* (see Appendix A) to document their assessment.

### Other considerations

- No point within a 20mph zone shall be more than 50 metres from a prescribed traffic calming feature. In practise this means that features can be up to 100 metres apart. The exception to this is in a cul-de-sac less than 80 metres long within which no such feature is required. 20mph zones should be self-enforcing, therefore the combination of features selected should ensure that mean speeds are 24mph or less.

- 20mph limits without physical measures should only be considered where the existing mean speeds are 24mph or below, and should be self-enforcing.
- Variable 20mph limits need to be self-enforcing and have a maximum mean speed of 24mph during their times of operation.
- For 30mph to National Speed Limit, the mean speed should not exceed the proposed limit once implemented.
- Mean and 85th percentile speeds will be collected before a limit is implemented. Mean speeds will be used as the basis for setting speed limits. If there is not a consistent relationship between the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile and mean speeds, the appropriateness of the existing limit will be reconsidered.

## Speed Monitoring and Enforcement

Speeds will be re-measured within one year of a speed limit change being implemented, at the same locations where data was initially collected so that a direct comparison can be made. It should then be considered whether the measures implemented have had the desired effect, or whether further action is required.

## Speed Limit Framework

Definition of speed limit	Description of where it could be implemented - Urban	Description of where it could be implemented - Rural
<b>20 mph zones</b> require traffic calming measures (e.g. speed humps, chicanes) 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.	Major streets where there are – or could be - significant numbers of journeys on foot, and/or where pedal cycle movements are an important consideration, and this outweighs the disadvantage of longer journey times for motorised traffic. This is in addition to residential streets in cities, towns and villages, particularly where the streets are being used by people on foot and on bicycles, there is community support and the characteristics of the street are	It may also be appropriate to consider 20 mph limits or zones in built-up village streets which are primarily residential in nature, or where pedestrian and cyclist movements are high. Such limits should not, however, be considered on roads with a strategic function or where the movement of motor vehicles is the primary function.

<p><b>20 mph limits</b> are signed with terminal and at least one repeater sign, and do not require traffic calming. 20 mph 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.</p>	<p>suitable. Successful 20 mph zones and 20 mph speed limits are generally self-enforcing, i.e. the existing conditions of the road together with measures such as traffic calming or signing, publicity and information as part of the scheme, lead to a mean traffic speed compliant with the speed limit. To achieve compliance there should be no expectation on the police to provide additional enforcement beyond their routine activity, unless this has been explicitly agreed. Evidence from successful 20 mph schemes shows that the introduction of 20 mph zones generally reduces mean traffic speed by more than is the case when a signed-only 20 mph limit is introduced. It may also be appropriate to consider 20 mph limits or zones in built-up village streets which are primarily residential in nature, or where pedestrian and cyclist movements are high. Such limits should not, however, be considered on roads with a strategic function or where the movement of motor vehicles is the primary function.</p>	
<p><b>Variable 20 mph limits.</b> Traffic authorities have powers to introduce 20 mph speed limits that apply only at certain times of day. To indicate these limits, variable message signs are available (TSRGD, Regulation 58).</p>	<p>These variable limits may be particularly relevant where for example a school is located on a road that is not suitable for a full-time 20 mph zone or limit, such as a major through road.</p>	
<p><b>Definition of speed limit</b></p>	<p><b>Description of where it could be implemented - Urban</b></p>	<p><b>Description of where it could be implemented - Rural</b></p>
<p><b>30 mph</b></p>	<p>In other built-up areas (where motor vehicle movement is deemed more important), with development on both sides of the road.</p>	<p>It is government policy that a 30 mph speed limit should be the norm through villages.</p>

<p><b>40 mph buffer zone.</b> In some circumstances it might be appropriate to consider an intermediate speed limit of 40 mph prior to the 30 mph terminal speed limit signs at the entrance to a village</p>		<p>Where there are outlying houses beyond the village boundary or roads with high approach speeds. For the latter, traffic authorities might also need to consider other speed management measures to support the message of the speed limit and help encourage compliance so that no enforcement difficulties are created for the local police force. Where appropriate, such measures might include a vehicle-activated sign, centre hatching or other measures that would have the effect of narrowing or changing the nature and appearance of the road.</p>
<p><b>40 mph</b></p>	<p>On higher quality suburban roads or those on the outskirts of urban areas where there is little development, with few cyclists, pedestrians or equestrians. On roads with good width and layout, parking and waiting restrictions in operation, and buildings set back from the road. On roads that, wherever possible, cater for the needs of non-motorised users through segregation of road space, and have adequate footways and crossing places. Alternatively, traffic authorities should consider whether there are convenient alternative routes available.</p>	<p>Should be considered where there are many bends, junctions or accesses, substantial development, a strong environmental or landscape reason, or where there are considerable numbers of vulnerable road users. A speed limit of 40 mph may be considered for roads with a predominantly local, access or recreational function, for example in national parks or areas of outstanding natural beauty (AONB), or across, or adjacent to, unenclosed common land; or if they form part of a recommended route for vulnerable road users. It may also be appropriate if there is a particular collision problem. In situations where the criteria for a lower speed limit in a village are not met and there is a lesser degree of development, or where engineering measures are not practicable or cost-effective to achieve a 30 mph limit, but a reduction from the national 60 mph speed limit is considered appropriate, traffic authorities should consider alternative lower limits of 40 or 50 mph.</p>
<p><b>Definition of speed limit</b></p>	<p><b>Description of where it could be implemented - Urban</b></p>	<p><b>Description of where it could be implemented - Rural</b></p>

<p><b>50 mph</b></p>	<p>In exceptional circumstances a 50 mph limit may also be used on higher-quality roads where there is little or no roadside development and such speeds can be achieved safely. The roads most suited to these higher urban limits are special roads or those with segregated junctions and pedestrian facilities, such as primary distributors. They are usually dual carriageway ring or radial routes or bypasses that have become partially built up. Traffic authorities should, however, always assess the potential impact upon the local community and non-motorised road users before considering such a limit.</p>	<p>On dual carriageway ring or radial routes or bypasses that have become partially built up, with little or no roadside development. Should be considered for lower quality A and B roads that may have a relatively high number of bends, junctions or accesses. Can also be considered where mean speeds are below 50 mph, so lower limit does not interfere with traffic flow. For lower quality C and Unclassified roads with a mixed function and high numbers of bends, junctions or accesses 50 mph may be appropriate. In situations where the criteria for a lower speed limit in a village are not met and there is a lesser degree of development, or where engineering measures are not practicable or cost-effective to achieve a 30 mph limit, but a reduction from the national 60 mph speed limit is considered appropriate, traffic authorities should consider alternative lower limits of 40 or 50 mph.</p>
<p><b>60 mph.</b> The national speed limit on the rural road network is 60 mph on single carriageway roads</p>		<p>Recommended for most high quality strategic A and B roads with few bends, junctions or accesses. The national speed limit of 60 mph is only appropriate for the best quality C and Unclassified roads with a mixed (i.e. partial traffic flow) function with few bends, junctions or accesses. In the longer term, these roads should be assessed against through-traffic criteria.</p>
<p><b>70mph.</b> The national speed limit on the rural road network is 70 mph on dual carriageways</p>		<p>Rural dual carriageways with segregated junctions and facilities for vulnerable road users would generally be suitable for 70 mph limits. However, a lower limit may be appropriate if, for example, a collision history indicates that this cannot be achieved safely.</p>

Information taken from DfT Circular 01/13 Setting Local Speed Limits. It is important to note that the above does not imply that speed limits should automatically be reduced. Indeed, in some cases the assessment may suggest that the existing speed limit may be too low, and a higher speed limit should be considered, as it is likely to be achievable safely.

### Frequently Asked Questions

### **What are 85th percentile and mean speeds?**

**85th percentile speeds** are the speeds at or below 85% of all vehicles are observed to travel under free-flowing conditions. This is a nationally recognised method of assessing traffic speeds.

**Mean speeds** are the average speeds that all vehicles travel at.

### **What is the difference between a 20mph limit and zone?**

**20 mph zones** require at least one traffic calming feature (for example speed humps, chicanes, speed limit roundels or repeater signs) so that no point within a zone is more than 50 metres from such a feature (features are located at a maximum distance of 100 metres apart). In addition, the beginning and end of a zone is indicated by terminal signs. Zones usually cover a number of roads.

**20 mph limits** are signed with terminal signs and at least one set of repeater signs, and do not require traffic calming. 20 mph 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. 20mph limits are generally applied to areas where the speeds are already below 24mph.

### **Can we have a 20mph limit or zone outside a school?**

Possibly. As with considering any type of traffic calming measure, consideration first of all has to be given to whether the environment is appropriate for a 20mph limit or zone. See above table for 20mph limit and zone criteria, as set out in DfT Circular *01/13 Setting Local Speed Limits*. A 20mph limit, zone, advisory limit or variable limit may be considered along with other measures. Secondly, an appropriate funding source needs to be identified.