

SPEED LIMIT POLICY DOCUMENT

This policy document has been prepared to reflect the DfT's guidance which seeks a common national approach to setting limits. Local Authorities have been tasked with reassessing all "A" and "B" roads by 2011 to ensure they meet the guidance.

Priority will be in areas where there are collisions and widespread disregard for artificially low speed limits. Speed limits should be evidence led, self explaining and encourage self-compliance. Indeed, if a speed limit is set in isolation, or is unrealistically low, it is likely to be ineffective and lead to disrespect for the speed limit. Alternative speed management options should always be considered before a new speed limit is introduced.

URBAN SPEED MANAGEMENT

30mph - Street lit areas in towns

- 30mph are considered the norm in street lit areas (where there are 3 or more lighting columns not more than 183m apart).
- These areas will demonstrate a high degree of frontage development with pedestrian activity, driveways, junctions, traffic signals and crossings. Generally residential areas and town centres.
- Terminal signs will be positioned as close as practicable to the start of visual development. Where forward visibility is restricted, signs may be extended outwards to meet standard forward visibility requirements.
- Apart from the terminal 30mph signs NO other repeater 30mph signs or road markings are permitted.

40mph

- Generally higher quality suburban roads away from town centres with less frontage development but with side roads, some bends and traffic signals/crossings.
- Repeater signs are required.

50mph

- In exceptional circumstances where the road environment permits such as ring or radial routes.
- Repeater signs are required.

20mph Speed Limits

- 20mph limits should not be implemented on roads with a strategic function or on a main road. The advice from the Police is that the limits must be self enforcing.
- The speed of traffic should be naturally at or around 20mph and have mean speeds no greater than 24mph. Where vehicle speeds are substantially higher than this then traffic calming will be required.
- Repeater signs are required.

20mph Zones

- 20mph Zones have similar criteria to 20mph limits but repeater signs are not required. The purpose of a 20mph Zones is to create conditions in which drivers naturally drive at 20mph, this usually means substantial traffic calming would be required.
- 20mph Zones usually have entrance or “gateway” features to mark the start of the zone.

RURAL SPEED MANAGEMENT

Village 30mph Speed Limit

Where appropriate 30mph is considered the norm in villages.

- The DfT defines a village relating to simple criteria based on the density of frontage development and distance:

The density of frontage development should 20 or more houses with extra allowance for key buildings such as schools and churches, with a minimum of 3 houses per 100m section within the proposed 30mph limit.

A preferred minimum length of 600m to avoid too many changes of speed limit along a route.

- 30mph limits are not permitted on country lanes or for covering potential hazards such as bends or “T” junctions outside villages and towns.
- Terminal signs will be positioned as close as practicable to the start of visual development. Where forward visibility is restricted, signs may be extended outwards to meet standard forward visibility requirements.
- Carriageway roundels (a painted “30” marking on the road) can be used in conjunction with “entrance” signs. Repeater roundels will only be considered in exceptional circumstances where signs are obscured and must be accompanied with a sign.

30mph village speed limits are appropriate where the mean speed of vehicles is not greater than 34mph. Where speeds are higher, or if the village criteria are not met, a reduction to

40mph may be more appropriate particularly on the approach to villages where properties may be situated beyond the main core of the village.

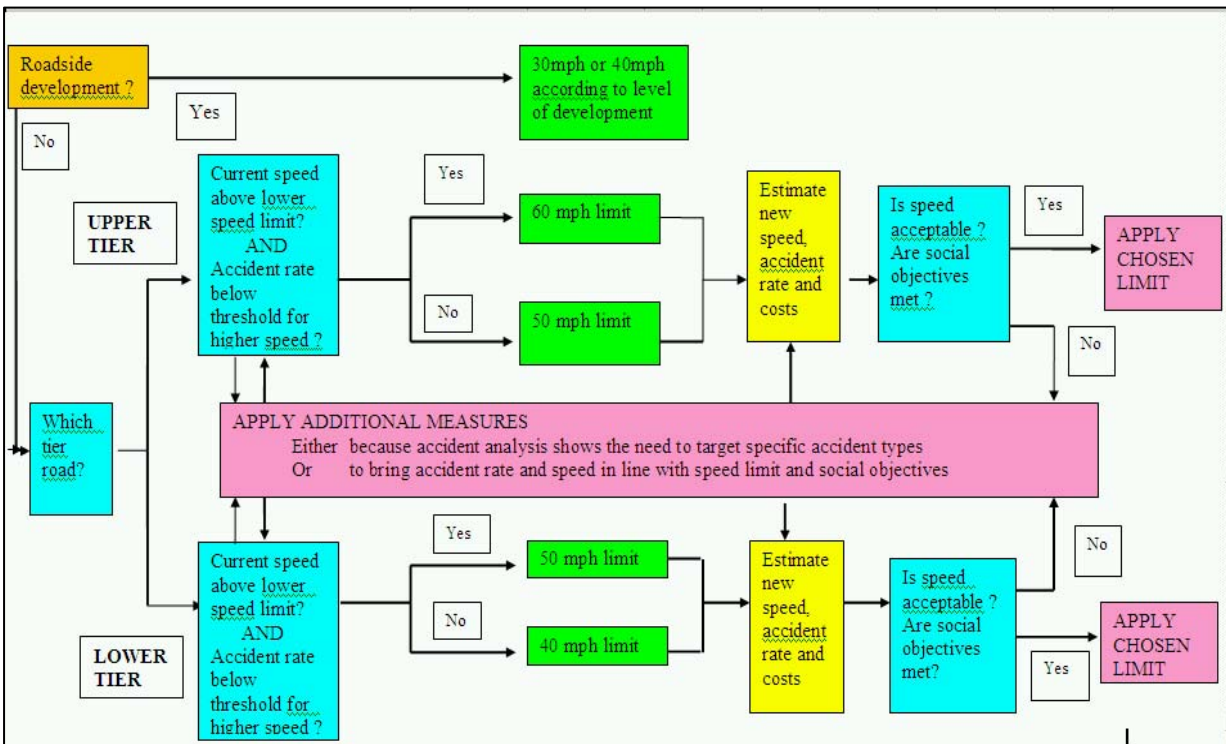
BUT these should be limited in use and consideration should first be given to speed reduction measures such as warning signs or carriageway narrowing with lines. Roads where 40mph from the national speed limit may be appropriate should have some frontage development with driveways or have other key building such as schools or churches. Sporadic development or isolated groups of houses should only be considered if the criteria are met.

40, 50 or 60mph?

The national speed limit on the rural road network is 60mph on single carriageway roads and 70mph on dual carriageways. Rural single carriageway roads are split into two categories in relation to their function:

- **Upper tier roads** – Roads catering for primary through traffic typically, but not necessarily, “A” and “B” class roads. Here the speed limit can be 60 or 50mph
- **Lower tier roads** – Roads with a local access function where quality of life issues are important typically C and Unclassified roads. Here the speed limit can be 50 or 40mph.

The DfT guidance on setting these limits now encourages the use of a flow chart, see Diagram 1, and computer based spreadsheet which was developed with the Transport Research Laboratory.



This method has been tested by officers and is felt to provide a common sense approach to setting speed limits in a transparent manner. Speed limits in themselves are only one element of speed management and the aim should be to achieve a “safe” distribution of

speeds which reflects the function of the road and the impacts on the local community. Speed limits should not be seen in isolation and should be considered with other measures such as engineering and low cost improvements.

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