

# Place and Resources Overview Committee – 21 April 2022

## Agenda item 5 - Public Participation

### Questions relating to agenda item 8 – 20mph Speed Limit Approach

#### 1. Questions from Barry Roberts

Appendix A to this item states, under item 23, 'Local residents may also express their concerns or desire for a lower speed limit and these comments should be considered.'

1. As a local resident for 12 years I have never heard of a consultation on 20mph limits by Dorset County, North Dorset, or Dorset councils, so would ask why this is, when so many of our villages have no footpaths alongside roads and consequently no safe space in which to walk, push a buggy or use a wheelchair?
2. Fontmell Magna in particular has several dangerous bends on the A350 which are avoided by residents using cars for journeys of a just few hundred yards which increases pollution and is contrary to the aims of a zero carbon policy. What valid reason is there for failing to create a safer environment by reducing the speed limit in the village to 20mph?

#### 2. Statement and question from Nick Ward (Purbeck Transport Action Group)

Statement:

The Dorset Council guidance on 20 mph limits does not seem to have changed substantially from the previous version and still does not align with the DfT guidance. It still makes it very difficult to get approval for any change and does not address the demand for 20 mph limits in villages at all.

Given the inconsistency and unhelpfulness of the document, it is suggested that it should be withdrawn and redrafted.

Question:

'Dorset Council speed limit setting overview states that it has been prepared to reflect the Department for Transport's guidance. Why does it contain statements that do not appear anywhere in the DfT guidance document, such as:

"20mph limits should not be implemented on roads with a strategic function or on a main road.'

'locations will not be considered for 20mph schemes where any of the following apply:

- A. they are on A or B class roads
- B. they have existing mean average speeds above 30 mph"?'

### **3. Question from Brenda Mustoe (Chair of Winfrith and East Knighton Parish Council)**

We welcome the clarification set out for consideration for the setting of a 20mph in certain areas.

Our question relates to cost to small parishes with a precept that would preclude them from incurring the potential costs associated with an application.

What leeway could be given to such Parish Councils as it would seem unfair if they were 'competing' with larger councils with a bigger budget?

### **4. Questions from Helen Sumblar**

#### **Question 1**

Quoting from the 20mph speed limit approach report from the Road Safety Manager:

“As a general rule, unless in exceptional circumstances, locations will **not** be considered for 20mph schemes where any of the following apply:

**A. they are on A or B class roads;** an exceptional circumstance could be a town centre where there will be high levels of pedestrian and cycle movement and the strategic movement of traffic is no longer the priority.”

The report then goes on to state “The threshold criteria have been selected as they best represent DfT’s guidance for setting 20mph schemes.”

Please could I ask whether this general rule is stated in the DfT’s guidance?

#### **Question 2**

Having reviewed the Priority Criteria Matrix, there appear to be flaws in the criteria used which would affect the priority of an proposed 20mph speed limit area, some examples being:

- While details of collisions are obviously important, the incidence of such collisions will be affected by the number of people walking and cycling, which in turn will be affected by people feeling unsafe due to a higher speed limit.
- The second criteria requests information about reports of damage or near miss collisions reported online. It is not possible to report road traffic collisions online, a visit to a police station is required, thus making reporting of collisions less accessible and thus less likely. The Dorset Police site does not refer to reporting near miss collisions. Both of these issues prevent accurate data being available for damage or near miss collisions.
- Despite information being requested about the local facilities including schools, shops / retail, churches, community centres, village halls, hospitality and health centres in the Town / Parish Council Application Request Form, only the presence of schools is considered in the matrix.
- Regarding actual and potential active travel, only cycling is considered via the Propensity to Cycle tool, and then only for commuting or for school travel. No consideration is given to active travel in terms of walking to work, or to school,

nor of active travel of any type for any other reason, e.g. cycling or walking to access local facilities.

- The needs of vulnerable users in the area covered by the proposed 20mph scheme, other than school children, are not considered.
- No consideration is given to the positive impact of the lower speed limit in terms of exhaust and non-exhaust emissions on people's health and the environment.

How were the criteria in the Priority Criteria Matrix selected, if they were not derived from DfT guidance in respect of priority setting?

## **5. Statement and question from Peter Mole**

1 In the last five years numerous 20mph speed limit schemes have been introduced across the UK, including many on A roads. A large majority of people support them. As a long-term Community Speed Watch participant, I have concluded that moderation of traffic speed is the most cost effective, and least inconvenient, method of containing unacceptable risks to cyclists, horse riders and pedestrians who must walk in the carriageway. In places the existing speed limit is clearly too high. On Dorset roads we need a policy which makes it easier to achieve safe and appropriate speed limits, not more difficult.

I live alongside the busy A350 a road acknowledged as patently not fit for purpose. To reach the post box, church, neighbours, shop, pub and village hall I must walk on the narrow road with speeding traffic, including HGVs, at a point where bends dangerously restrict sight lines and a wall or bank precludes safe refuge. Sometimes I, like many others, resort to single occupancy car use to make very short journeys because it is so dangerous.

I have been struck a glancing blow by a speeding van, we have had an upturned car across our gate, we frequently sweep up debris from road collisions and witness or hear of numerous alarming near misses involving vulnerable pedestrians including children and many elderly walkers. None of these real life warning serious incidents would register appreciably on the proposed risk assessment tool.

People, notably the most vulnerable or those needing special consideration, are frightened to walk or cycle on village roads and deterred from normal activities, including taking exercise, within our community.

We need a policy backed up by a proportionate and adequate budget which reflects UK best practice, the full spirit of the DfT 2013 guidance, the Highway Code, and the views of those most at risk or affected by dangerous traffic speeds and dangerous country roads.

This policy is a betrayal of Dorset pedestrians, cyclists and others including the vulnerable in our communities. It introduces unreasonable rules which are not part of the 2013 guidance or in place elsewhere in the UK. It fails to address unacceptable and worsening risks on our roads and the deterrent effect of this for the most vulnerable in our communities.

2 Why is Dorset proceeding in the opposite direction to the rest of the UK and Europe in proposing a process which introduces prohibitive rules and abandons the core principles and up to date interpretations of the DfT guidance? In making it more difficult rather than easier to moderate speed where needed you would be abandoning your obligations to protect the quality of life for those of us who live in Dorset, particularly the most vulnerable and in need of protection or support,

## **6. Question from Sandra Reeve**

On reading the recent report by the Road Safety Manager which is being considered by your committee today, I was surprised to note that the needs of those with protected characteristics appear to have been ignored by this report.

In stark contrast to the Equality Impact Assessment section in the preceding Air Quality Action Plan, the equivalent section in this report simply says “not applicable”.

The evidence shows that children and the elderly are particularly affected by high speeds.

“A vehicle travelling at 20mph would stop in time to avoid a child running out three car-lengths in front. The same vehicle travelling at 25mph would not be able to stop in time, and would hit the child at 18mph.”([www.brake.org](http://www.brake.org))

“The risk of injury increases exponentially with impact speed. A crash at 30mph has twice as much energy and destructive potential as a crash at 20mph.” ([www.brake.org](http://www.brake.org))

Many elderly people also cite speed of traffic as a reason for giving up walking to the shops and to see their friends.

Finally people with disabilities of imperfect sight, hearing or mobility are disproportionately impacted by the speed of vehicles.

### Question1

As a committee are you satisfied with the report’s verdict of ‘not applicable’ or do you feel that more research into this aspect of the 29 mph Speed Limit Approach report is both required and necessary?

Statements start on the next page...

## **Statements relating to agenda item 8 – 20mph Speed Limit Approach**

### **1. Statement from Alice Mole**

#### **WHY IS DORSET OUT OF STEP?**

The updated Highway Code prioritises pedestrians at junctions.

Lower speeds are essential to make this possible on Dorset's many roads with no pavements.

Over recent years the size of lorries travelling on Dorset's inappropriate roads has increased enormously and the danger to walkers, riders and cyclists has increased hugely.

28 MILLION people in the UK already live in areas where 20 mph speed limits are standard policy. Wales is set to establish a 20mph national speed limit on urban and residential roads in 2023 and by 2025 Scotland will limit speed on all appropriate roads to 20 mph.

The danger on Dorset's roads could be dramatically reduced by agreeing to 20 mph speed limits on the many roads without pavements where pedestrians are forced to walk in the road.

#### **WHY IS DORSET OUT OF STEP?**

Up to date information & advice is available from the 20's Plenty for Us group.

Highway Authorities in Wales, Cornwall, Southampton, Herefordshire, Oxfordshire & Cambridgeshire have used their evidence when fully considering implementing a 20 mph policy on appropriate roads.

Dorset should not be out of step. Reconsider & implement 20 mph without further delay.

### **2. Statement from Ian Vaughan-Arbuckle**

Good morning Ladies and gentlemen. My name is Ian Vaughan-Arbuckle. I am a parish councillor in Langton Matravers with particular responsibility for highways matters. I have been personally involved in two unsuccessful bids for 20 mph and have since made it a priority to understand the whole question of 20 mph. I am also a member of the Purbeck Transport Action Group in which my main focus is road transport.

I was first alerted to this matter on 11<sup>th</sup> April with comments required by 13<sup>th</sup>, giving only two days to absorb and analyse this important issue and to prepare comments. Such a short lead-time cannot be good for democracy.

My overall impression of the paper is a desire to place as many obstacles as possible in the path of a community wishing to reduce speed in their area from 30 to 20 mph, whereas the general thrust elsewhere in the country, including our neighbours in BCP, is the opposite. Many shire boroughs have set 20mph as the norm throughout their communities, an approach which reduces accidents and greatly enhances the quality of life, particularly in villages which are blighted by speed and volume of traffic.

The paper appears to 'hide' behind rather than considering and interpreting DfT guidance and criteria, which was promulgated some eight years ago and, in some aspects, is now outdated.

I have the following specific comments on the proposed principles, criteria and process:

- DfT guidance makes no mention of A and B roads being unsuitable for 20 mph limits. Indeed, through villages it is on such roads where 20 is often badly needed to improve safety and quality of life. This should be reworded.
- Where a village/community has conducted a survey to gauge support for 20 mph, this should be preferable to the opinion of the local councillor, who may not even live in the area. The requirement should be amended.
- A record of 'near misses' should be afforded equal weighting as injury collisions. This should be reflected in the appropriate criteria.
- Once a decision is reached on a bid for 20 mph, the reasons in full should be passed to the applicant who should then be given the opportunity to appeal the decision to an independent committee eg. the Transport and Highways Board.

### **3. Statement from Cllr Andrew Davis (Fontmell Magna Parish Council)**

Fontmell Magna requires a 20-mph speed limit throughout the village and in particular along the dangerous A350. The A350 passes through Fontmell Magna effectively cutting the village in two. The majority of the road is narrow carriageway with blind corners edged with either high banks or walls. To access village amenities – shop, inn, village hall and church on one side, and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the wildlife reserve and residential streets on the other - villagers and visitors have to walk in the carriageway, negotiating these blind corners and speeding traffic with nowhere to jump to for safety.

Speed limits and other road safety issues have been discussed at the last three parish meetings and we are currently canvassing all residents for their views road safety and speed limits. Our view on a 20-mph limit has the support of our Ward Councillor.

The proposed Dorset Highways policy largely repeats the DfT **2013** guidance for setting speed limits, and fails to take into account best practise from other County Councils regarding the effectiveness of their 20-mph speed limits. The proposal fails to deliver a balance between safety objectives for all road users and mobility objectives to ensure efficient travel, as well as environmental and community outcomes. Furthermore, no consultation has taken place with Parish or town representatives.

We urge the Councillors to support the 20-mph speed limit now or, as a minimum, put the proposal out for public consultation.

We all want everyone to get home safe.

#### **4. Statement from Susan Clay (Community Speedwatch Co-ordinator for Okeford Fitzpaine)**

The Dorset Council approach to the subject of a 20 mph speed limit where people have to share space with traffic is baffling in the extreme. Instead of listening to the people who vote for them, the councillors have drawn up a draft report that is no improvement on the previous one and shows that they have no intention of conforming to Department For Transport Guidelines or of recognising the United Nations recommendation for a 20 mph speed limit in residential areas where people share road space with traffic. The Council has, once again, 'cherry-picked' their way through the DFT guidelines and inserted 'clauses' that tell the world that the Dorset Council is not remotely interested in keeping their voters safe. It also says to all of us that the only reason for this inexplicable intransigence is that no councillor has any intention of slowing down their own speeds in the interests of the well-being of the rest of the Dorset residents – have I touched a nerve by any chance? Those councillors must be the same inconsiderate drivers who speed recklessly through my village and I find myself wondering if those councillors ever get out and walk or get on a bicycle or a horse, or if they are ever out with a dog on a lead, or with a child either on a scooter or being held by the hand, or if they have ever tried crossing a road with a zimmer frame, especially in a place where there is no pavement.

28 million British people live where there is a 20 mph speed limit and whilst Scotland and Wales, amongst other places, are fast approaching a universal default 20 mph in residential settlements, there are relatively few in Dorset outside urban areas. Dorset Council received a multi-million pound injection of cash from Central Government for Highways expenditure but, apparently, they are only allocating £75,000 of that towards implementing lower speed limits. The British Government introduced the 30 mph speed limit in 1934, a time when few people had cars anyway, when you could drive for an hour and not see another car on the road and when all vehicles were much smaller and much slower. In 2022, 88 years on, with a population explosion, when many families have at least two cars and when many people drive to work, to school or to leisure pursuits in their own cars, it is time for a major overhaul, a major rethink and a major implementation of the need to slow traffic down by introducing a 20 mph speed limit in all areas where people have to share space with traffic.

**STOP PROCRASTINATING, DEMONSTRATE SOME COMMON SENSE AND EMPATHY WITH YOUR VOTERS AND VOTE FOR A BLANKET 20 MPH SPEED LIMIT IN ALL RESIDENTIAL SETTLEMENTS THROUGHOUT DORSET – TODAY AT THIS MEETING.**

#### **5. Statement from Mick Duncan**

20mph speed limits in residential areas.

The above request is of immense important.

It would go some little way towards discouraging vehicles from using villages as bypasses. Quick passages between two major A Roads. West Moors is a good example , between Ringwood and Ferndown. I am one person who wishes to see

this happen , especially to curb , Traffic numbers through West Moors where recently a death happened on a pedestrian crossing.

## **6. Statement from Giles Watts (Dorset Climate Action Network)**

Time moves on and social norms change. What would have been acceptable even a short time ago is no longer appropriate today. Five years ago I would probably have been against wholesale 20mph zones but now I think it makes excellent sense. What I have realised is that:

- 20mph is safer.
- 20mph reduces fuel consumption, improves air quality and reduces noise pollution all of which is good for the environment.
- 20mph is better for cyclists and pedestrians. It goes some way towards creating better shared spaces for all road users and it reduces the allure of cars supporting behavioural changes towards public transport.

In successive UK government surveys, 70% said that 20mph was the right speed limit for residential streets. Implementing them should be the community choice and be relatively easy to implement. This draft paper from Dorset Council is, sadly, a backward-looking policy. Those responsible (which would have been me a few years ago) need to feel which way the wind is blowing and recognise that 20mph zones are very likely to become the norm across the country in the very near future for very good safety, environmental and social reasons. I urge the committee to reject this paper and to ask that it be revised in a simpler and form which more closely follows the DfT guidelines; and to do this as soon as possible to avoid any further delay.

## **7. Statement from Peter Henshaw**

**I believe the report on 20mph is fundamentally flawed for the following reasons:**

It does not follow current DfT guidance, which does not prohibit 20mph limits on A and B roads (note 20-limit on A30 in West Coker).

30-limits are already widely ignored, but 20-limits have been proven to reduce average speeds.

The link between speed and severity of injuries/death is well established.

It ignores evidence accepted in many rural and urban local authorities in the UK - eg the Welsh government has introduced 20mph as the default urban speed limit, for example.

National government policy (and presumably Dorset Council policy) is to encourage walking and cycling - fear of traffic is a key factor in preventing walking/cycling, and lower speeds produce a less intimidating and safer environment.

The recent Highway Code changes, giving greater priority and protection to vulnerable road users, will be far more effective with a 20mph limit.

The £75,000 allocated is grossly inadequate compared to the budget for road schemes in general.

## **8. Statement from Dilys Gartside (Parish councillor for Okeford Fitzpaine and 20sPlentyforDorset campaign coordinator)**

The Report of Dorset Council's Road Safety Manager on '20mph speed limit Approach' has long been anticipated by communities across the county in expectation that it would address their concerns at inappropriate traffic speed where people and motors must mix for lack of alternative road space.

Dept for Transport Guidance issued nearly a decade ago gave highway authorities the ability to set wide-area 20mph limits which has already led to 20million people in England enjoying the many benefits of living where these schemes are implemented; they include shire counties, unitary authorities and metropolitan boroughs. Wales and Scotland are fast moving towards a national 20mph limit as the norm in towns and villages. Most 20mph limits in the UK are now authority-wide with no additional physical calming, and proven 7 times more cost effective in reducing speed across urban and village networks.

In contrast, Dorset is proposing its own criteria for judging who may qualify to live on safer roads. There is a key requirement in the DfT guidance that 'the needs of vulnerable road users **MUST** be fully taken into account when setting speed limits' and is one of the few mandatory statements of the Guidance yet it appears, in Dorset, these needs can be arbitrarily waved if, for example, according to this Report now before Committee :-

- a. its an A or a B road
- b. drivers have decided that they will drive above 30mph and ignore any risks or hazards
- c. the local ward Member doesn't want it !

I therefore call on this Committee and Dorset Councillors to **reject this Report** as being :

**contrary** to Government Guidelines

**contrary** to the wishes of communities across Dorset

**contrary** to its commitment to reduce carbon emissions

**contrary** to its equality policies concerning young old and disabled people

**contrary** to the national movement towards 20mph being the norm where soft human bodies must mix with hard motor vehicles.

Statements continue over...

## **Statements relating to agenda item 7 – Results of the Draft Air Quality Action Plan Consultation and proposed Air Quality Action Plan**

### **Statement from Sal Robinson (Clerk to Chideock Parish Council)**

The Chideock Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) has not been reviewed since 2011 and the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) was reduced in size in 2012, yet the factual evidence is that, in 2019, it was reported that Chideock had the highest recorded NO<sub>2</sub> in England on the Western section of the A35. Yet, the current Air Index mapping in use by Dorset Council does not recognize rural villages and therefore Chideock is recorded by the council as having no problem with pollution. This AQAP needs to be Chideock specific and to seriously consider the chronic issues that have existed for the last twenty years.

(1.2 / 4.6 / 6.8 / 11.1 / 11.2).

Chideock Parish Council does not accept that Dorset Council has no direct control over pollution from congestion on a trunk road. Dorset Council has direct access, a voice and influence strategically with DfT, DEFRA, the Western Gateway Sub-National Transport Body, the Dorset LEP, and other partners, to directly contribute and influence strategic highway planning through RIS3 and other road strategies, where they could strongly advocate for an alternative route or bypass being sought to take traffic away from Chideock. The Parish Council does not accept that just because things take time to achieve, they are not achievable and in fact the re-evaluation of the current East - West strategic route would benefit Dorset Council economically as the current road is not fit for purpose, which is why congestion levels are so high. For example, Cornwall and Devon Council A30 improvements including bypass.

(1.4 / 4.3.2)

The AQAP measures are not **SMART** (**S**pecific; **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, **T**ime bound), and they are not outcome based, therefore they have no basis to actually be delivered or be relevant.

7.1.1 - not achieved yet and outcome unknown.

7.1.2 - no firm commitment by Dorset Council and will not address congestion.

7.1.3 - no real actions - could have included commitment to redirect HGVs and tourist traffic.

7.1.4- does not apply to Chideock because building that is taking place in local towns does not take into account the additional congestion caused by cars and construction traffic.

7.1.5.- limited because the pollution in Chideock is due to congestion.

7.1.6 - Additional measures – key issues are missing e.g., the impact of the West Dorset Leisure Holiday (Golden Cap) development at Seatown and the lack of alternative road access, the commitment by National Highways and Dorset Council to continue monitoring NO<sub>2</sub>. While other proposals are at best ambiguous and, of course, Bristol University's research project was an initiative led by the Parish Council because of the lack of concern about PM<sub>2.5</sub> and PM<sub>10</sub> from burning tyres / brakes and overweight lorries on the steep hills by Dorset Council. (8.2).

Chideock Parish Council does not consider that the proposed measures seek to

address the air pollution in Chideock and asserts that there has been a distinct lack of interest by Public Health Dorset in the health issues that have arisen for our residents / holiday makers, and their children. (11.5)

Risk assessment -given the lack of adequate measures to achieve a reduction in pollution within this proposed APAP, Chideock Parish Council DOES NOT accept that the level of risk to the residents can be identified as currently medium. Furthermore, the Parish Council does not accept that the residual risk is low in the Council carrying out its responsibilities. The evidence is that it has taken 11 years for the current AQAP to be reviewed, and it is understood that the new legislation states that the AQAP should be reviewed every twelve months not every five years as previously required.

(4.6 / 13.1 / 13.2)

Committee members may find the article (England's most polluted place: a Dorset village) from the Wednesday 29 July 2020 edition of the Daily Telegraph of interest.