



**To/
Councillor Andrew Stevens,
Cabinet Member for Environment &
Infrastructure**

BY EMAIL
cc: Cabinet Members

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SPC/2022-23/12

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Summary: This is a letter from the Scrutiny Programme Committee to the Cabinet Members following the Committee meeting on 20 March 2023. It is about the proposed Cabinet decision on the National 20 Mph Default Speed Limit. A formal written response is not required.

Dear Councillor Stevens,

**Pre-decision Scrutiny of Cabinet Report:
National 20 Mph Default Speed Limit**

The Scrutiny Programme Committee met on 20 March 2023 to consider the report that you intend to present and recommend to Cabinet on 23 March. We thank you and officers, in particular Alan Ferris, Road Safety Manager, for attending the meeting to present the report and answer questions.

Your Cabinet report advises on the mandatory requirement to make the national default speed limit on restricted roads 20mph and details those roads which will be exempt and remain at 30mph following Welsh Government guidance. It sets out the consultation process to be followed and seeks confirmation of the approach taken in respect of implementation of the change in law. It also asks Cabinet to agree to delegate authority to yourself to approve the exceptions agreed with individual ward members leading to the formal public advertisement of the appropriate Traffic Regulation Orders. We noted that the legislation concerning the reduction in the default speed limit comes into effect on 17 September 2023, and that there is no transitional period as such. The default 20mph limit will be in force on this date.

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Taking into account your report, questions and discussion, we are writing to confirm our views on the proposed decision for Cabinet to consider before it makes a decision.

Committee Feedback

It was a very useful session which helped the Committee to understand what is happening, the process and implications for the Council and citizens. It was clear to the Committee that the department has a sound grasp of the situation and preparations are well underway to fulfil the Council's obligations. Councillors have reflected positively on the engagement so far with them on proposals for their areas.

In the time available to review your report and ask questions, overall the Committee had no issues with the recommendations in the report and proposed Cabinet decision and broadly supports the reduction in the national speed limit on safety grounds. However, the Committee recognises this represents a significant change in the law which will require a culture change, and carries with it a number of risks to success.

The Committee offers some views on implementation that it wishes to bring to the attention of Cabinet:

- Funding
Our local implementation is subject to funding. Cabinet should consider what contingency is in place should the Welsh Government not meet the Council's estimated requirement of £2.9 million to support the implementation during the next financial year. We understand this money is needed to install all new signing and remove obsolete signs and markings, and includes staff costs in managing and developing the programme of highway and infrastructure works. The Committee requested a more detailed breakdown of this cost figure, which officers undertook to provide. This can be sent to scrutiny@swansea.gov.uk. There is also some concern about possible ongoing costs associated with the change.
- Compliance and Enforcement
There is some concern about a lack of enforcement to ensure compliance of the new speed limit. The change in law requires a behavioural change, which may take time to achieve. An absence of effective enforcement and deterrent at the outset will likely increase the time necessary for a change in mindset. We understood that decisions about speed measures and enforcement are with the Go Safe Partnership, but as an equal partner this Authority can exert some influence.

- Current 20Mph Zones

The Council should make the case to retain, wherever possible, existing road signage / markings that are consistent with the new speed limit, particularly around schools, as a reminder about the limit and to reinforce the message about the speed reduction. This would be preferable than simply replacing signage with a new “traffic calmed area” sign, and should also help to reduce overall costs. We understood that the priority ahead of 17 September would be to remove any signage / markings that does not conform to the new legislation. We noted that no existing traffic calming measures would be removed on any roads unless there is evidence to support their removal.

- Communication and Engagement

The extent of public communication necessary, for successful implementation, should not be underestimated. We understand that Welsh Government are proposing to undertake a National Campaign to inform communities across Wales of the changes to the default speed limit. Locally, we will need to repeat and reinforce this messaging and find effective ways to raise awareness amongst the public not only on how and when changes will occur, to get ready, but giving emphasis to the road / community safety benefits. The Council should signpost the public to the new [Data Map Wales website](#), when populated, which will show all roads affected by changes to the speed limit on restricted roads, to facilitate consultation / feedback on proposals.

Local Councillors should be kept informed, as much as possible, of works in their area in preparation of the change, to facilitate their engagement with local residents and awareness of what is happening.

I will attend the meeting on Thursday to address Cabinet with the feedback from Scrutiny, as contained in this letter.

Your Response

We hope that you find the contents of this letter helpful. No formal response is required unless there are any material changes to the report and/or variation to the recommendation/proposed Cabinet decision, which the Committee should be alerted to.

Yours sincerely,



COUNCILLOR PETER BLACK

Chair, Scrutiny Programme Committee

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