

CENTRAL MANAGEMENT BRANCH



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Paul Carlisle
Clerk to the Committee for Regional Development
Committee Office
Room 254
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BELFAST
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Dear Paul

ROAD TRAFFIC (SPEED LIMITS) BILL BRIEFING RE 20 MPH SPEED LIMITS

Thank you for your letter dated 5 February 2014, requesting written briefing on current and previous pilot projects where restricted zones have been put in place, and also a presentation from officials of the Department's views on the Private Member's Bill for default 20 mph speed limits in residential areas.

Speed Management policy in Northern Ireland is articulated in the Roads Service policy document 'Setting Local Speed Limits in Northern Ireland', published in April 2010. This gives clear support for the provision of 20 mph speed limits and zones in residential and other urban areas, where there are likely to be high numbers of vulnerable road users present. There is also further support for these within the current Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy to 2020.

When assessing the potential for a road to have a 20 mph speed limit introduced, many factors have to be taken into account, such as average vehicle speed, collision history, streetscape, community support, road usage and demographics. Each road is different in terms of its suitability to have a reduced limit applied and the practice has been to install engineering measures, such as road humps and central islands, so the reduced speed limit is, in effect, self enforcing. These measures have proven to be very successful over the years and have helped to significantly reduce pedestrian and cyclist

fatalities and serious injuries. There have been no formal pilots for these self enforcing 20 mph zones, but speed surveys before and after installation of these measures have shown a considerable reduction in vehicle speed.

The Road Safety Strategy also contains a commitment to establish pilot schemes for 20mph limits without additional self-enforcing engineering measures. Agreement has been reached with the PSNI on enforcement issues for five pilot schemes, and Roads Service is currently undertaking public consultation and assessing existing traffic speeds at the sites. The pilot schemes to be installed are:

- Belfast City Centre within the boundary of the 'Belfast on the Move' Project;
- Merville Garden Village in Newtownabbey;
- The Rosses in Ballymena;
- Whitehall in Ballycastle; and
- Langley Road area in Ballynahinch.

Officials will, in due course, be monitoring the effectiveness of these schemes, along with similar pilots being undertaken in tandem by road authorities in Scotland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland, to inform the way forward on this issue.

I can confirm that officials from the Department will attend the meeting of the Committee for Regional Development scheduled for 5 March 2014, to give an oral briefing to members in respect of the Private Member's Bill being taken forward by Mr Pat Ramsay MLA.

This letter is fully disclosable under FOI.

Yours sincerely



ALAN DOHERTY
Departmental Assembly Liaison Officer