



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

Committee for Regional Development

# OFFICIAL REPORT (Hansard)

Road Traffic (Speed Limits) Bill:  
DRD Briefing

10 June 2015

# NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

## Committee for Regional Development

### Road Traffic (Speed Limits) Bill: DRD Briefing

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**Members present for all or part of the proceedings:**

Mr Seán Lynch (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr Joe Byrne  
Mr John Dallat  
Mr Alex Easton  
Mr Ross Hussey  
Mr Chris Lyttle  
Mr Declan McAleer  
Mr David McNarry

**Witnesses:**

Mr Matthew Alford	Department for Regional Development
Mr Gerry Anketell	Department for Regional Development
Mr Philip Hamilton	Department for Regional Development
Mr Greg McClelland	Department for Regional Development

**The Deputy Chairperson (Mr Lynch):** I welcome Gerry, Philip, Greg and Matthew and invite them to make a presentation before I open it up to questions.

**Mr Philip Hamilton (Department for Regional Development):** Thank you very much, Chairman. Thank you for this opportunity to provide the Committee with information on 20 mph limits in the context of Mr Ramsey's Bill. The nameplates should indicate who we are. Greg McClelland is, like me, from Transport NI; and Gerry Anketell and Matthew Alford are from transport legislation. Our short presentation aims to set out what we see as the key points at this stage of the debate. We will then be happy to attempt to answer any questions that members have.

I would like to highlight from the outset that the Department fully supports the drive to improve safety on our roads. Our Minister supported the aims of Mr Ramsey's Bill during the Second Stage debate, and DRD is the primary stakeholder in Northern Ireland's road safety strategy, along with DOE and the police. We are the lead Department in over 60 of the 200 or so action measures in the strategy. In the last 10 years, DRD has spent around £230 million specifically on local transport and safety measures. Of that, in the region of £20 million has been spent on speed reduction measures. Almost 500 20 mph zones have been created. These have been targeted measures engineered to maximise benefits and have been implemented in areas where there was a history of collisions or where there are high levels of vulnerable road users.

Our preference is to provide communities with the choice to opt in to 20 mph limits rather than impose them, as would happen with the Bill. We feel that community engagement and therefore ownership of the 20 mph limit is an important part of the process. We can do this using existing powers contained

in Part 6 of the Road Traffic Regulation (Northern Ireland) Order 1997. Additional legislation is not required to introduce 20 mph limits. In most urban areas, the speed limit is 30 mph, but the Department can change that if desired. We have the flexibility to establish the speed limit on any road, either permanently or for specific periods, or at times that can vary, with the speed limit displayed on an electronic sign.

Perhaps the most striking example of that occurs on the M1 at Westlink. That is illustrated in one of the slides in members' packs. In this case, the 1997 Order has been used to apply a speed limit of 30 mph on the length of road adjoining Westlink and running from Broadway roundabout to Great Victoria Street station. The same order applies a 50 mph speed limit on Westlink from its junction with the M1 at Broadway to its junction with York Street and introduces variable speed limits between the M1 at Blacks Road and the Clifton Street junction. The picture in your slide shows south-bound traffic on the M1 approaching the Stockmans Lane junction under a 50 mph speed limit, which reduces down to 30 mph at the junction. As you can see, we have considerable flexibility in applying speed limits under existing legislation.

Further flexibility is available to us through the use of part-time speed limits, such as those introduced in the vicinity of some schools. This is achieved by specifying the relevant length of road as in the schedule that forms part of the order. That permits the national speed limit on that length of road to be reduced to 20 mph where a 20 mph limit is indicated by a traffic sign. Again, that is achieved through the use of electronic signs.

The Department's policy for setting local speed limits in Northern Ireland encourages and supports 20 mph limits and zones where there is a particular risk to vulnerable road users, especially in residential areas. Factors such as average speed, collision history, streetscape, community support, function and demographics are used to assist in the decision-making process. A favoured solution has been to install engineering measures, such as road humps and central islands, so that the reduced speed limit is, in effect, self-enforcing.

I draw your attention to the difference between what we term a 20 mph zone and a 20 mph limit: 20 mph zones use physical measures such as humps, chicanes and gateway features to achieve speed reduction; whereas 20 mph limits use traffic regulation orders, signified by the use of 20 mph signs, without physical measures. Studies carried out by the Transport Research Laboratory into the relative impacts of zones and limits have concluded that 20 mph zones reduced average speeds by 9 mph and achieved significant reductions in accidents, most notably in those involving children. The use of 20 mph signs alone, without associated traffic-calming measures, led to speed reductions, but of a much lesser magnitude than was achieved through traffic calming.

Several national organisations, including Sustrans and 20's Plenty for Us, with high-profile lobbying campaigns, have submitted material to the Committee in which they outline a vision of a safer, healthier environment, facilitated through 20 mph limits. We are also pursuing that vision, but, in our opinion, in a more balanced and pragmatic way as a key stakeholder in the road safety strategy for Northern Ireland and, more recently, the bicycle strategy that was launched by the Minister for consultation last autumn.

Since we submitted the presentation, we have received two opinions that we feel are significant. I will now outline those. The Office of the Legislative Counsel (OLC) has commented that the Bill is unnecessary, given that the Department already has the power to set 20 mph speed limits and the cost and other implications that legislating for a mandatory 20 mph speed limit would have. Furthermore, if the Bill is enacted, the position in the legislation and on the ground will be unsatisfactory in its opinion. It is also its opinion that the Bill cannot really be diluted. The Department's legal advisers have stated that the Bill does not confer any additional power, nor is any additional power required to achieve the Bill's apparent purpose.

Effectively, therefore, the Bill would become a means of making the Department spend its funds on a certain type of safety measure and, due to the diversion of funding, would remove our ability to prioritise the road safety interventions that will have the greatest effect. If the proposed Bill is approved by the Assembly, it will have resource implications for DRD. Those areas where the 20 mph limit would apply would need to be signed with 20 mph limit signs, and repeaters may need to be placed within those areas. Any lengths of road where a 30 mph limit would still apply would then require to be signed up to 30 mph.

The map that is included with your slides is an attempt to give an indication of what the picture would look like with the introduction of new signs. Those are shown by the black dots. The area shown in

the map is quite close by. The road that runs along the centre of the slide is the Newtownards Road, and the road to the top of the slide is the Belmont Road. As you can see, the black dots indicate the signs that would be required to show a change from 20 mph to 30 mph as you join the main road and leave side roads.

In an attempt to give some perspective to the cost of implementing the Bill, we have obtained costs for two schemes in England and Scotland. A 20 mph scheme in Portsmouth, which was implemented in 2007 and covered most of the city, cost £573,000 for 410 km of road. A more recent scheme in Edinburgh, which I believe the Committee has seen, cost £214,000 for 40 km of road. Given that Northern Ireland's unclassified roads network extends to 430,000 km in urban areas, using the above schemes to provide a broad comparison would indicate a cost of between £6 million and £26 million to implement the measures in the Bill. Spending that money as the Bill intends would reduce the funding that is available for other road safety-related activity that has proven benefits.

The views expressed in the varied response to the Committee's call for evidence reflect the debate that is taking place in GB, where the implementation of 20 mph limits is still in its infancy. Proponents claim various benefits that everyone would aspire to, and the unconvinced claim that the measures are largely ineffective. The DRD approach is reflected in the evidence that was submitted to the Committee by the RAC Foundation, which stated:

*"whilst 20 mph speed limits have an important role to play in improving road safety on residential roads a targeted approach involving a range of road safety interventions is more likely to be ... enforceable than a blanket 20 mph speed limit."*

We are currently in the process of using the powers available to us to pilot a number of 20 mph limit projects to test the Northern Ireland experience. We intend to monitor the effectiveness of those pilots, in conjunction with similar pilots being undertaken by our counterparts in Scotland, Wales and the Republic of Ireland. We will then use the results to consider the roll-out of further 20 mph limits in areas where they would be most effective and where there is a desire from the local community to have them. It is worth noting that, if the Bill were brought into operation, there will not be an opportunity for consultation on which streets are signed as 20 mph; the Bill would determine them.

We met Mr Ramsey on Monday to explain the existing powers that the Department has in the area and to outline the views of the Office of the Legislative Counsel in respect of the Bill. As both parties aspire to improve road safety, we would much prefer to work with Mr Ramsey on the issue. He undertook to reflect on our discussion, and he welcomed a further meeting.

**The Deputy Chairperson (Mr Lynch):** Thank you, Philip. I will bring in members straight away.

**Mr McNarry:** You said that you can do this without legislation. Is that actually saying that you can embrace Pat Ramsey's Bill without it being tabled?

**Mr P Hamilton:** We can implement 20 mph signed limits —

**Mr McNarry:** I know what you can do; I have asked you a question. You said that you can do this without legislation, in particular reference to a Bill: are you saying that you can embrace all that is in Pat Ramsey's Bill without legislation?

**Mr P Hamilton:** We can implement the measures that Mr Ramsey wishes to implement through our existing legislation.

**Mr McNarry:** Good. I am very much in favour of 20 mph limits and zones, particularly at schools, nursing homes, GP surgeries, built-up areas — especially where children and families are engaged — and leisure centres. If you do as you say and embrace the principle of the Bill, what costs are involved?

**Mr P Hamilton:** We are not sure. We do not have a full inventory of the roads that could potentially be involved. One of the key issues for us is that we would want to implement it where there is the desire from the community and where it is appropriate to do so.

**Mr McNarry:** How long would it take you to find out what the community desire is — I take it that we are talking about the community of Northern Ireland — before you could come back to the Committee with a full inventory of the roads that you are going to do and the costs involved?

**Mr P Hamilton:** Our preference would be to do it in a staged approach. As I said, we are still at the point where we are undertaking pilot schemes.

**Mr McNarry:** You say "staged approach", but, if the Bill were passed or taken forward, it might push that forward. It would be the wish of the Assembly if it backed the Bill; it would decide what approach you take. What you are saying is, "We don't need to do this without legislation. We're actually going to be in control. We're going to determine which community might get this and which wouldn't". What criteria will you use to determine why areas of my constituency of Strangford may or may not get it, whereas areas of other members' constituencies, such as East Belfast or wherever, will or will not get it?

**Mr P Hamilton:** The 20 mph signed-only limits are most appropriate for roads where speeds are currently in the range of 20 mph to 24 mph.

**Mr McNarry:** Yes.

**Mr P Hamilton:** That will be an important criterion in identifying appropriate sites. I mentioned the community support for the scheme. That would also be necessary; it is a factor. Other factors that currently are brought into play when we have rolled out our 20 mph zones with the engineering measures are the volume of traffic, collision history, the local environment in terms of the density of housing or the presence of public buildings or schools —

**Mr McNarry:** I understand that.

**Mr P Hamilton:** — and so forth. All of that would feature in the mix in determining where the schemes were done.

**Mr McNarry:** As there is an identification of need, which I, personally, am grateful to Pay Ramsey for raising, and I certainly know that there is tremendous community support all round for this in terms of safety, how advanced are you in being able to introduce the measures that you say you can introduce without this Bill being tabled? Are we talking about next week or a year away? How soon can the communities be prepared, consulted or whatever for those measures to take place?

**Mr P Hamilton:** We have an ongoing programme of introducing 20 mph zones. I indicated that, to date, we have spent in the region of £20 million on that, rolling out over 500 schemes. That is ongoing, and there are a number of schemes that will be introduced this year. In terms of the 20 mph signed-only limits, our intention is to run with the pilots to see how effective they are and to see what the reaction is. My feeling is that, if we are able to introduce 20 mph signed-only limits and show that they are effective, the public will be more likely to embrace them, rather than having a blanket approach imposed on them.

**Mr McNarry:** I accept that, and I certainly feel that whatever happens will be a reflection of your professionalism, which I also accept and respect. However, what I need to know, and what the Committee needs to know, relates to the fact that all of this, as far as we are concerned, is information gathering so that we can inform our constituents as to what is happening. You quoted some figures. I do not know how anybody comes up with a quote between £6 million and £26 million. I would not go into bidding on that. Here is a house for sale, and it is between £6 million and £26 million, so I would offer £4 million for it. I do not know how you got that £6 million and £26 million, but it is quite a gap. If I am reading correctly the reports that we have, the favoured solution is road humps and central islands. Can you close that money gap for us in due course? We would like proper estimates — no guesstimates. What will it cost for whatever you are proposing to do? You must have some figures based on the £20 million that you have spent on 500 schemes.

This is my final point, Chairman, and I think that it is important. Are we, as community representatives, likely to get engaged in some kind of argument about choosing between the signs and the road humps, the central islands etc? At what stage would the Department come down with a definitive option that says, "This is best", rather than saying that we will have the humps that cost this amount of money or we will have the signage? Personally, I would prefer the signage, but in somebody's

document in front of me it states, "the preferred option". When we are particularly talking about community areas, schools, hospitals and built-up areas where children play, do you have a preferred recommendation that you are prepared to put down in front of the Committee?

**Mr P Hamilton:** The preferred option to date has been to use the physical measures to achieve the reduction in speed. If I could just pick up on —

**Mr McNarry:** Are those the engineering measures?

**Mr P Hamilton:** Yes; the humps and chicanes and so forth.

I will pick up on your point about the estimate. I fully accept that it is a very broad range and is not as informed as we would like it to be. We got it from the two schemes — one in Portsmouth, which is quite a long-standing one, and a more recent one in Edinburgh — and it relates to 20 mph signed-only limits. We simply pro rata-ed the cost of the schemes that we were able to find out about to the length of road that would, potentially, be affected in Northern Ireland, that is, 4,300 km. When you apply each scheme, it is in the range of £6 million to £26 million.

**Mr McNarry:** I do not get that, but OK, I understand what you are saying.

**Mr P Hamilton:** There is quite a bit of work involved to try to work out the cost of the number of signs that we would have to erect on the 4,300 km of road that could be affected. That small map shows quite a number of black dots for relatively small areas. There would be a lot of work involved.

**Mr McNarry:** From the Committee's point of view, we now have this issue. I was fully supportive of Mr Ramsey's Bill. I hear what you are saying, and I think that you are making a reasonable case. To close up on it, you talked about an inventory: this money different from your preferred option against signage, etc. At what stage — I ask that it be treated as an urgent matter — would you be able to put before the Committee recommendations that would clearly say: "This is a better way than adopting Mr Ramsey's Bill."?

**Mr P Hamilton:** Our preferred method is to go forward with the 20 mph signed-only limits as pilot schemes, monitor them, and see how they perform. There are conflicting —

**Mr McNarry:** Let me stop you there. When will the pilots be over? How quickly can they be done? At what stage will you say yes or no and come back to say, "It is a go" or "It is not a go."? When you enter into an issue like this, the last thing that any of us wants to hear about is some child being hurt because of signage and, because this is topical, the whole thing collapses. Invariably, and unfortunately, it does happen. Now that it is out in the open and topical, the pressure is on. That is basically what I am saying.

**Mr P Hamilton:** One of the pilots has been operational from the start of the year. We have had objections to three of the other schemes that we are dealing with. We need to resolve those objections before we can get the schemes on the ground. In order to monitor it fully, you are probably looking at several years before you can draw definite conclusions.

**Mr McNarry:** Do not think that I am being Victor Meldrew, as your Minister called me the other day. I am not being pedantic either. However, when I get estimates varying from £6 million to £26 million, I think that you understand. I do not like the idea of "several" either. How many are we talking about? Is it three years? Five years?

**Mr P Hamilton:** You are probably talking about three years to get a full picture. That ties in with a monitoring survey that the Department for Transport is doing in England. We are working with the other road authorities to pool evidence and get the most out of those trials.

**Mr McNarry:** I am much obliged to you. Thank you.

**Mr Dallat:** Chairperson, how much longer will the Department rely on pilot schemes as a way of fobbing off people?

**Mr P Hamilton:** It is certainly not our intention to fob anyone off.

**Mr Dallat:** How many pilots have you had down through the years on road safety that never went anywhere? How can you convince anybody that, without legislation, we can make a significant improvement to road safety in urban areas?

**Mr P Hamilton:** You do not need legislation in order to introduce 20 mph signed-only limits. It is a case of establishing the most effective way of improving road safety in our areas. At present, we use quite a range of measures. We are pursuing the same aspirations as Mr Ramsey did when he introduced his Bill. A disadvantage of his Bill was its blanket approach and its requirement to introduce a huge number of 20 mph signed-only limits across the Province within a defined time period and the cost that that would bring.

**Mr Dallat:** So it is the big cost.

**Mr P Hamilton:** It is not just about cost, because there are areas that are potentially suitable for signed-only 20 mph limits and others where it would not be appropriate to introduce signed-only limits. You may need other engineering measures to assist in the reduction of speed.

**Mr Dallat:** Mr Hamilton, would you agree that, because of social differences, there are areas in Belfast, for example, where children might have a six-acre garden and other areas where they do not even have a window box and the street is their playground. How can you claim that legislation to give ownership of community space back to the people is a bad thing?

**Mr P Hamilton:** I am certainly not saying that it is a bad thing. The point that I was attempting to make was that there is legislation in place that allows us to put in 20 mph signed-only limits where we wish to do so. I think that you will find that most social housing areas — for want of a better term — have actually been treated by the 20 mph zones and physical traffic-calming measures.

**Mr Dallat:** The Department — maybe not your Department; it might be DOE — relies heavily on shock-horror TV ads to keep the road safety picture in our minds. Some of them are quite shocking, but, sadly, necessary. Is it not time for a new approach that embraces commitment and ownership and in which communities clearly would be involved in agreeing the zones that would be chosen, as they do in Scotland?

**Mr P Hamilton:** The 20 mph zones that we have rolled out over the years have all been implemented through public consultation and by taking cognisance of requests from communities as to what areas they feel require traffic calming. That is how it has been rolled out.

**Mr Dallat:** Mr Hamilton, I think that the term "rolled out" is probably not the most appropriate one; it should be "dragged out". They happen here and there, where community groups are vocal, stand up and demand it, and get your officers out with their high-vis vests, usually after somebody has been seriously injured or worse — I do not want to even say it. Yet if I go to Edinburgh or Glasgow, it is immediately clear to me that there is a policy in place that protects *[Inaudible.]* What is so wrong with putting that into legislation whereby it would actually become the norm, rather than what appears to be an exception? I drive a lot. I go through areas where there are bumps in the road for a mile. I know the reason for them; people have been screaming from the rooftops. I drive through other areas where there is no traffic calming because people simply have not got round to squealing about it. What is wrong with having a Bill?

**Mr Greg McClelland (Department for Regional Development):** I will take over on that. I am the road safety policy manager for Transport NI.

**Mr Dallat:** I used to teach it myself, and that is why I feel so strongly about it.

**Mr McClelland:** I know that you do. We have a very rigorous policy in Northern Ireland that mirrors much of what happens in, say, Scotland. I work closely with Transport Scotland. We are doing a joint project on 20 mph limits.

On the issue of the level of support, we hear claims from campaigning groups that they are screaming out for this. The only actual hard evidence that we have is the annual road safety monitoring undertaken by the Government here in which 2,000 households are interviewed. We asked them, "Would you support the reduction in speed limits from 30 mph to 20 mph in built-up areas?". It was roughly evenly split; 51% supported it and 49% did not. Obviously, a long education process is

required to encourage drivers on the road network to drive at a safer speed in residential areas, and that is why we support the principles of Mr Ramsey's Bill. I contend that this is a longer-term education process for the public to embrace it. Where there are local requests or demands from the community, the Minister has already indicated that he will respond positively to reductions in speed limits in those areas.

**Mr Dallat:** Finally, Mr McClelland, do you agree that the introduction of 20 mph speed limits would allay the fears of parents who worry day and night that their children will be run over by juggernauts? It can be a small car as well, of course. Road signs are bound to be cheaper than all the expense of putting down traffic-calming cushions or bumps or whatever you want to call them.

**Mr McClelland:** Yes, I fully understand and appreciate the concerns of everybody in the community about the dangers from traffic. Can I ask you to repeat the second part of your question, Mr Dallat? Was it on the expense?

**Mr Dallat:** Yes.

**Mr McClelland:** As a driver, I naturally would prefer sign limits because I do not like road humps, but the issue here is how effective they are. That is why we are running pilots. The limited studies show that just erecting a sign can result in a 1 mph reduction in the speed of traffic.

**Mr Dallat:** I totally agree with you. If communities do not buy into it, it is worthless.

**Mr McClelland:** Yes, community buy-in is essential.

**Mr Dallat:** That is the key feature of the Scottish experiment. Communities have bought into it, and they can say, "Hey, that is the law around here". According to you, Mr Hamilton, we will not have any law because you can do it without law.

**Mr P Hamilton:** The point that I was trying to make was that the law is in place that would allow us to put in 20 mph signed-only limits.

**Mr McNarry:** I appreciate what John was bringing up there. Do you have any PSNI enforcement figures for the people who are speeding and how many the police are catching where you are putting in these controlled areas?

**Mr McClelland:** The PSNI has very limited resources, and it targets those resources to areas where speeding has been identified as a problem or is perceived to be a problem. The police will respond to that. I do not have any breakdowns; you would need to speak to the PSNI for specific figures.

**Mr McNarry:** You have not collated any information from the PSNI. You have gone to all the trouble and expense of putting in humps etc, because they are and have been areas of speed that the PSNI targets. The police are not targeting areas where you put in humps. Is that what you are saying?

**Mr P Hamilton:** Where an area is identified as a potential zone for 20 mph limits, one of the things that we look at is the speed of traffic, collision history etc. In that process, we look at speeds, both before and after.

**Mr McNarry:** We can get that information as well. OK, that is fine. Thank you.

**Mr Lyttle:** Thanks for your presentation. I too am a strong supporter of 20 mph speed limits in zones. Whilst it is not a silver bullet, there obviously is a clear relationship between speed and accidents and injuries. I think that it would go a long way towards increasing more mixed road use, including safe cycling and safe walking, although there needs to be a package of measures in that regard such as dedicated cycle lanes and improved cycle parking. Can you say a bit more about the survey that was conducted? I am interested to hear a bit more about how the default speed is set. Can we make 20 mph the new 30 mph across Northern Ireland, for example?

**Mr P Hamilton:** Through signed-only limits?

**Mr Lyttle:** Yes.

**Mr P Hamilton:** It is how you go about it. We agree with the aspirations of organisations such as Sustrans and 20's Plenty for Us, which are aiming to reduce road traffic accidents and so forth. We do not have an issue about that; it is how you achieve it.

Our approach is to introduce pilots, see how effective 20 mph signed-only limits are in Northern Ireland, work with our colleagues in Scotland and in the Republic, pool that information and make an analysis of those pilots to see exactly how effective they are.

Twenty mph signed-only limits are in their infancy, and various claims are made about their effectiveness. We would like to establish just how effective they are and use that as a platform to roll them out. We also feel that if you do it through a staged process, it is more likely that you will be able to point to the successes achieved and, therefore, avoid rejection of the principle of what we are doing.

**Mr Lyttle:** What are the ways in which speed limits are communicated to road users?

**Mr P Hamilton:** Signs.

**Mr Lyttle:** Just signs? It is not just signs.

**Mr McClelland:** There is also street lighting [*Inaudible.*]

**Mr Lyttle:** Pat has come at this from introducing signage. Thinking about the cost of signage, is there another way to radically adjust speed limits in Northern Ireland?

**Mr McClelland:** We then get into enforcement issues in trying to enforce a speed limit [*Inaudible.*]

**The Deputy Chairperson (Mr Lynch):** Greg, you will need to speak up a wee bit.

**Mr McClelland:** Oh, sorry.

**Mr Lyttle:** What did the survey you referred to ask, Greg?

**Mr McClelland:** The annual Northern Ireland road safety monitor assesses seat belt wearing and attitudes to drink driving.

**Mr Lyttle:** Was just one straightforward question posed?

**Mr McClelland:** It was a straightforward question that we inserted to establish the level of support. Because we have heard so many conflicting claims, we thought that this was at least one bit of evidence that we can throw into the pot. It will be interesting to monitor the trends if we ask that in subsequent years.

**Mr Lyttle:** When was that conducted and how many people were surveyed?

**Mr McClelland:** It was published in October 2014; it is available on the Internet.

**Mr Lyttle:** Roughly how many responses did you receive?

**Mr McClelland:** It is run by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. Households are asked the same questions about their attitudes to issues such as "Would you break the speed limit in a built-up area?", and 20% of respondents replied that, yes, they would. They would feel that it was safe to break the speed limit.

**Mr Lyttle:** That is concerning in itself and is obviously another issue.

**Mr McClelland:** It is interesting to gather evidence from normal households in Northern Ireland.

**Mr Lyttle:** How many households were surveyed?

**Mr McClelland:** Two thousand. It is a standard government survey.

**Mr Lyttle:** OK. Are there other ways of communicating or signing speed limits to introduce greater 20mph coverage?

**Mr Matthew Alford (Department for Regional Development):** We would put speed limit orders in subordinate legislation. An example is the SL1 before the Committee today. Those are the powers that are there for us to put speed limits in place and restrict or derestrict roads from 30mph. It would be those powers that we would use to put in place the 20 mph speed limits that have been put in place for traffic-calmed areas and for the ongoing pilot schemes. Part of that process involves consultation with the relevant local council and the PSNI, and there is a requirement for public consultation prior to the order being taken forward before the Committee. So, there is an element of consultation built into the existing provision of speed limits.

**Mr Lyttle:** You say that you do not have a full inventory of roads that might be affected and that that would take quite a bit of work. Can you quantify that? In the absence of costs, it is difficult to make decisions on some of the proposals. What does "quite a bit of work" mean in respect of what it would take to identify the number of roads that would be impacted?

**Mr P Hamilton:** It is difficult to quantify that here and now. It would be fairly resource-intensive. At this point, I am afraid that I cannot give you a definitive figure that, perhaps, would be as meaningful as you would like.

**Mr Lyttle:** OK. As other members said, the power for the community to choose to have a pilot programme on 20 mph is one thing, but whether any of them know that they can choose to approach DRD to have 20 mph is another thing. Are you proposing an awareness-raising campaign of the existence of this power, given that you are saying that legislation is not necessary?

**Mr P Hamilton:** Over the years, we have worked our way through a list of requests for traffic-calming measures, where the request has been, "Do something in order to reduce speeds in my community". If we added the 20 mph signed-only limits as a tool that we could use, it could become wider known and be used to respond to requests for a reduction of speed in a community.

**Mr Lyttle:** Have you any concerns about a lack of consistency in a targeted as opposed to blanket approach? If we are talking about community awareness and community education, does it not need to be a bit more wholesale than that approach?

**Mr P Hamilton:** Education is an aspect — I accept that — as is cost. We have tried to be as even-handed as possible in providing our traffic-calming programme across the divisions and in bringing forward a balanced programme. We will attempt to do something similar with the 20 mph signed-only limits. It will be an extension of our tools to reduce vehicle speeds in communities.

**The Deputy Chairperson (Mr Lynch):** There are no more questions. Thank you for coming to the Committee. No doubt, this is an issue that we will come back to, because, as you said, you are working with Mr Ramsey. You have met him and are moving forward in conjunction with him.

**Mr P Hamilton:** Hopefully, yes.

**The Deputy Chairperson (Mr Lynch):** Thank you.