

**ANGUS COUNCIL**  
**SPEED LIMIT STRATEGY 2008**

**Background**

In August 2006 the Scottish Government published new guidance on setting local speed limits [Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning Department (ETLLD) Circular 1/2006]. The production of this guidance followed a 4 year period of development and consultation and it replaces the previous guidance [Scottish Office Industry Department (SOID) Circular 1/93] which has now been withdrawn.

Contained within Circular 1/2006 is a requirement to review formally the speed limits on all Class A and B roads in Angus by 2011, in accordance with the revised guidance. In order to ensure that all future speed limits are assessed consistently, in line with the review of A and B class roads, it was decided to update the current Angus Council Speed Limit Policy which was agreed by the Roads Committee on 22 November 2001.

The setting of national speed limits for different road types, and which exceptions to the general limits can be applied, is the responsibility of the UK Government. The three national speed limits are:

- The 30mph speed limit on restricted roads (in Scotland Class C or Unclassified roads with street lighting)
- The speed limit of 60mph on single carriageway roads
- The 70mph limit on dual carriageways and motorways

These national limits are not necessarily appropriate to all roads. The responsibility for determining local speed limits lies with Traffic Authorities having regard to guidance issued by the Scottish Government together with relevant advice from the Department for Transport (DfT).

The current guidance, to which this strategy makes reference, is as follows:

- ETLLD Circular No 1/2006 - "Setting Local Speed Limits"
- Scottish Executive Development Department (SEDD) Circular No 6/2001 - "20mph Speed Limits"
- ETLLD Circular No 1/2004 - "20mph Speed Limits Around Schools on Roads with Speed Limits Higher Than 30mph"
- DfT Traffic Advisory Leaflet 1/04 - "Village Speed Limits"

**Legislation and Regulations**

Speed limits are covered by legislation set out in Part VI of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. Local speed limits are made by Traffic Authorities, by order, under section 84 of this Act. Speed limits must be signed in accordance with section 85 of the Act and all signs must comply with The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002 as amended.

## **Strategy Objectives**

Effective speed management on the road network involves many components designed to encourage, help and require road users to adopt appropriate and safe speeds. Speed Limits are a key source of information to road users and play a fundamental role in indicating the nature of, and risks posed by a road to both themselves and other motorised and non-motorised road users. Therefore, speed limits should be evidence led, self-explaining and seek to reinforce peoples' assessment of what is a safe speed at which to travel. They should also encourage self-compliance and not be seen by drivers as being a target speed at which to drive in all circumstances.

## **Responsibility and Underlying Principles**

The Scottish Government is responsible for determining speed limits on the trunk road and motorway network. Angus Council, as Traffic Authority for Angus, is responsible for determining local speed limits on the local road network. The underlying principles of this new speed limit strategy are as follows:

- Angus Council and Tayside Police will work closely together in determining, or considering, any changes to speed limits
- Alternative speed management options will always be considered before a new speed limit is introduced
- The underlying aim is to achieve a 'safe' distribution of speeds which reflects the function of the road and the impacts on the local community. The needs of vulnerable road users will be fully taken into account.
- What the road looks like to road users will be a key factor when setting a speed limit.
- Mean speeds will be used to determine local speed limits.
- The minimum length of a speed limit will generally be not less than 600 metres to avoid too many changes of speed limit along a route.
- Speed limits will not be used to attempt to solve the problem of isolated hazards, such as a single road junction or reduced forward visibility such as a bend.

## **Speed Limits in Urban Areas**

The national speed limit in urban areas is 30mph. A 40mph limit may be used where appropriate and, in exceptional circumstances, a 50mph limit may be considered.

Roads suitable for 40mph are generally higher quality suburban roads or those on the outskirts of urban areas where there is little development. These roads should have good width and layout and wherever possible cater for the needs of non-motorised road users through segregation of road space or the provision of adequate footways and crossing points. In exceptional circumstances a 50mph limit may be used on higher quality roads where there is little or no roadside development and segregation of both junctions and vulnerable road user facilities. 20mph limits can be applied in residential areas and in situations where there is a particular risk to vulnerable road users subject to the criteria of SEDD Circular No 6/2001 - "20mph Speed Limits" being met.

## **Rural Speed Limits**

In accordance with the guidance set out in Circular 1/2006, the rural road network in Angus has been divided into upper and lower tier roads. Upper tier roads are those with a primarily through function where mobility is important, typically Class A and B roads, whilst, lower tier roads are those with a primarily local or access function. However, where accident rates exceed the thresholds specified in Circular 1/2006 lower speed limits will be considered. The accident rates for upper and lower tier roads are as follows:

- Upper Tier - threshold of 35 accidents per 100 million vehicle kilometres

- Lower Tier - threshold of 60 accidents per 100 million vehicle kilometres

The accident rate is a trigger for possible intervention, indicating that speed management measures may be required on a particular section of road. In accordance with the guidelines, accident remedial measures and alternative speed management options will always be considered in detail before the introduction of a lower speed limit. Circular 1/2006 states quite clearly “speed limits should not be used to attempt to solve the problem of isolated hazards, such as a single road junction or reduced visibility such as a bend”. For both Upper and Lower tier roads, 30mph will be the norm in villages.

### **Village Speed Limits**

In order to implement the government policy that, where appropriate, 30mph speed limit should be the norm in villages it is necessary to define a ‘village’. For the purpose of this speed limit policy Angus Council will adopt the definition from Traffic Advisory Leaflet 1/04 - “Village Speed Limits”. This definition is based on simple criteria relating to frontage development and distance. Both upper and lower tier roads, will therefore be subject to a 30mph speed limit through a village if the following criteria are met:

- 20 or more houses (on one or both sides of the road);
- a minimum density of 3 houses per 100m; and
- a minimum length of 600m.

The minimum length of 600m is recommended so as to avoid too many changes of speed limit along a given road and because many drivers are unlikely to reduce their speed to a new 30mph limit if it is over a very short stretch of road, particularly if the end of the limit can be seen from the entry point. However, in Angus there are several ‘villages’ where the development density criteria are met over a much shorter distance. In these instances the 30mph limit will be imposed over the length of the development (minimum length 300m), and in this case an intermediate (buffer) speed limit of 40mph will be implemented prior to the 30mph terminal signs at the entrance to the village to ensure a minimum ‘speed restricted’ length of 600m. Intermediate 40mph limits may also be considered where there are outlying houses beyond the village boundary, or roads with high approach speeds.

In situations where the above criteria for a village are not strictly met, and there are just fewer than 20 houses, extra allowances will be made for buildings such as schools or churches. In order to avoid ambiguity of this definition, a minimum of 80% of the required housing (16 houses) plus significant other building(s) is necessary for a 30mph limit. Housing density in the 50% to 80% range will be considered for a 40mph speed limit.

Village speed limits will be signed to a standard layout to ensure consistency across Angus. This layout is described in a separate section of this strategy.

All new 30mph speed limits will be monitored and should mean speeds be found to be significantly above the new limit then further measures, designed to reinforce the new speed limit, such as speed activated signs, will be considered.

Villages on ‘C’ and Unclassified roads are predominantly subject to a 30mph speed limit by virtue of the presence of street lighting. Any changes to existing limits where required will be made by Traffic Regulation Order. Buffer speed limits on C and Unclassified roads should not normally be necessary because of low traffic volumes and the localised nature of the traffic.

### **20mph Speed Limits**

As there has been no change to the Scottish Government Guidance on 20mph speed limits (Scottish Executive Circular No 6/2001), the relevant sections of Angus Council’s Speed Limit Policy of November 2001 remain valid. For completeness relevant sections from that report (1347/01) are updated below.

20mph Zones - These require traffic calming features to bring down vehicle speeds in order that the legal limit in these zones is effectively self enforcing. Such schemes can be very expensive and this level of expenditure can normally only be justified where a significant number of accidents have occurred or around schools.

It may be appropriate in new developments for developers to consider the introduction of 20mph limits from the outset and this is an issue which will be considered when approving proposed layouts.

Mandatory 20mph Speed Limits - Where there are no traffic calming features the guidance says that 20mph limits should only be introduced where vehicle speeds are already low (i.e. not greater than 24mph). However the following quote from the guidance is of particular relevance:- "Authorities may regard mandatory 20mph speed limits without relatively expensive speed reduction features as an attractive option, but such limits should not be introduced where there is no realistic expectation that they will achieve the required decrease in traffic speeds, or where the police are unable to give an undertaking to provide an effective level of enforcement.

In situations where speeds are low there is little benefit in introducing a mandatory limit simply to provide a "feel good factor". It is not considered best value to spend limited resources on providing such limits where speeds are already low (For example in town centres).

Part time mandatory 20mph limits (i.e. implemented with a traffic regulation order) have been introduced around schools where appropriate.

Advisory 20mph limits are suitable for areas where the existing speeds are in the range 25 to 30mph. By their nature, advisory speed limits cannot be enforced and therefore the guidance recommends that consultation to gain the support of local residents is crucial. The SEDD guidance recommends that monitoring of the effectiveness of advisory limits be carried out and that consideration be given to the possibility of introducing mandatory limits if the advisory limits are deemed successful. Many advisory limits have been introduced over the years in Angus and these have been well received by residents. However as they are not enforceable, the initial effect can soon wear off. Before and after speed measurements have shown only very minor reduction in speed. No more 'Twenty's Plenty' schemes are proposed, however, existing schemes will be reviewed with a view to making them self enforcing.

## **Data Collection and Analysis**

The following is a list of data required when carrying out a speed limit assessment:

- Traffic flow data - should be Annual Average Daily Flow (AADF)
- Traffic speed data - based on typical mean journey speeds along individual sections
- Accident data - typically for a minimum of 3 year period, personal injury accidents are required when calculating the accident rate, but such non-injury accidents as are known may be also considered in any detailed investigation.

## **Signing**

The signing of speed limits will be standardised throughout Angus. The layout will be based on a single sign plate incorporating the speed limit roundel, village nameplate and a 'Drive Safely' message, on entry to the village, complemented by a speed limit roundel marked onto the carriageway itself (see Appendix 4). Exit signs (see also Appendix 4) will also be used as indicated. On 'A' and 'B' class roads this sign arrangement will be installed on both the near and offside of the road. On 'C' and Unclassified roads will be by way of standard speed limit roundels in accordance with the requirements of the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (Diag 670 & 671). Where possible, the speed limit signs and a village nameplate, incorporating the 'Drive safely' message, will be brought together at a single location. This provision is also illustrated graphically in Appendix 4.

Current guidance recommends a minimum length of 600m for a single speed limit, with an allowable minimum of 400m. In situations where an appropriate limit is too short (for example villages where the development is over a short length such as Marywell) then buffer limits will be provided to give overall speed limit of 600m or more as appropriate to the circumstances.

If at any time, additional measures are deemed necessary, to improve the effectiveness of a speed limit, consideration will be given to using speed activated signs either on a cyclic temporary basis or on a semi-permanent basis depending on the individual conditions.