

P-06-1422 Rescind the 20mph limit on TRA4076 at Johnston Pembrokeshire

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 8 Gorffennhaf 2024
Petitions Committee | 8 July 2024

Reference: SR24/8458 - 12

Petition Number: P-06-1422

Petition title: Rescind the 20mph limit on TRA4076 at Johnston Pembrokeshire

Text of petition: Welsh Government guidance for reduction of limits to 20mph said that “generally” A and B classified roads should be exempted.

TRA4076 through Johnston Pembrokeshire forms part of a principle urban network linking the south of our county to our county town and hospital. It is an urban clear way with no on street parking, footpaths both sides and two light controlled pedestrian crossings. There is no justification for this stretch of road being reduced to 20mph.

1. Background

In 2019 the Welsh Government set up a task and finish group to consider whether 20mph should become the default speed limit in residential areas. The Welsh Government accepted the group’s recommendations, including that the default



speed limit on restricted roads – those with street lights no more than 200 yards apart - should be reduced from 30mph to 20mph.

Following [public consultation](#) and a [pilot scheme across eight communities](#), the Welsh Government laid the [Restricted Roads \(20 mph Speed Limit\) \(Wales\) Order](#) in June 2022. The draft Order was [passed by the Senedd](#) in July 2022 and came into force on 17 September 2023 when the change was implemented.

The A4076 is a 9 mile [trunk road](#) in Pembrokeshire. The Welsh Strategic Road Network (the trunk and motorway network) is the responsibility of the Welsh Government, with day to day management delegated to two trunk road agents. The [South Wales Trunk Road Agent](#) is responsible for the A4076.

Local authorities are responsible for the remainder of the road network, where the majority of the restricted roads affected by the speed limit change are located.

2. Welsh Government action

In preparation for the implementation of the 20mph speed limit on restricted roads, the Welsh Government published guidance on [setting exceptions to the 20mph default speed limit for restricted roads](#) (the ‘exceptions guidance’). This is an addendum to [Setting Local Speed Limits in Wales](#), published in 2009.

The guidance is intended to be used by highway authorities to identify where exceptions to the new 20 mph restricted road speed limit should be made. These exceptions remain at 30mph.

There has been significant variation in the application of exceptions across Wales. [Analysis by Senedd Research](#) shows that 3% of roads by length are 30mph and after the change, there is a wide variation across Wales. For example, in Swansea, 10.3% of the road network remained at 30mph, compared to 0.6% in Denbighshire. These figures include restricted and non-restricted 30mph limited roads, and both trunk and local roads.

Following a significant public reaction to the implementation of the policy, on 24 January the Welsh Government [announced a review](#) of the approach to exceptions. The [terms of reference](#) for the review made clear that it would “examine the application of guidance given to highway authorities in setting exceptions to the default 20mph limit”. The [final report of the exceptions guidance review](#) was published on 24 May.

There's since been a change in First Minister, and a change in transport Minister. During his leadership campaign, the new First Minister, Vaughan Gething MS, said the Welsh Government had “got some of the communication side wrong” around the policy.

In setting out his priorities for transport in the Senedd, the new Cabinet Secretary for North Wales and Transport, Ken Skates MS, said that while the Welsh Government “continues to believe that 20 mph is the right speed limit in places such as near schools, hospitals, nurseries, community centres, play areas and in built-up residential areas” it is “pressing ahead with refining the policy”.

The Cabinet Secretary set out plans to engage with the public and stakeholders to achieve “the right speeds on the right roads”. This includes reviewing how its guidance to highway authorities on setting exceptions to the limit has been applied. While the Welsh Government had already committed to this, with work well underway, he said he has now asked for the review to be brought to a “rapid conclusion” and committed to publishing the report.

The letter from the Cabinet Secretary to the Chair on this petition outlines the approach to the review process.

Police collision data published on 6 June shows casualties and collisions have reduced in 20mph and 30mph areas.

The accompanying statement published by the Cabinet Secretary highlighted that quarter 4 2023 (October to December) casualties on 20mph and 30mph roads reduced by 218 from 681 in 2022 to 463 in 2023, the “lowest quarterly figure on record [in 20mph and 30mph areas] outside the Covid pandemic period”.

3. Welsh Parliament action

While the 20mph policy has been discussed extensively throughout the Senedd, the speed limit on the A4076 at Johnston, Pembrokeshire does not appear to have been raised.

More generally, the Petitions Committee has considered a number of petitions on 20mph, most recently the largest petition in Senedd history opposing the policy, and a smaller counter petition:

- P-06-1407 We want the Welsh Government to rescind and remove the disastrous 20mph law; and
- P-06-1412 We want the Welsh Government to keep the excellent 20mph law.

These were both considered at the Petitions Committee meeting on 22 April. The Committee referred petition P-06-1407 for a Plenary Debate which took place on 22 May.

On 17 April the Senedd rejected a motion calling for the policy to be reversed, instead it agreed an amendment welcoming “the Welsh Government’s recognition of the need to refine the implementation”. During the debate, the Cabinet Secretary suggested there was a “need to make sure 20 mph is truly targeted” in places “where children and the elderly are at risk”.

As noted above, the Cabinet Secretary set out his priorities for transport, including the 20mph policy, in Plenary on 23 April 2024.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.