

Petition: Road Safety Improvements Along the A487

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 3 Gorffennaf 2018
Petitions Committee | 3 July 2018

Research Briefing:

Petition number: P-05-823.

Petition title: A487 Reduce the speed limit on the A487 in Penparcau.

Text of petition:

We, the residents of Penparcau and visitors, petition Ceredigion Council Highways Committee, to reduce the road traffic speed from 30mph to 20mph, on the A487, from the Pelican Crossing, Penparcau Road, to the Zebra Crossing on First Avenue, in order to reduce the risk of injury and death to pedestrians on this dangerous stretch of road.

Background

The A487 trunk road forms part of the north-south network of trunk roads linking Fishguard in Pembrokeshire with north Wales. A map of the Welsh trunk road network is available [here](#).

The Welsh Government is the highway authority for the Welsh trunk road and motorway network, including the A487. Maintenance and operation of the A487 north of Cardigan is the responsibility of the [North and Mid Wales Trunk Road Agent](#). The Welsh Government is responsible for the safety of the trunk road network, and as highway authority is responsible for setting speed limits.

There are two approaches to the introduction of 20mph speed restrictions: the 20mph speed **limits** requested by the petitioners; and 20mph **zones**. The [Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidence \(RoSPA\) website](#) describes 20mph **zones** as follows:

20mph zones, are designed to be "self-enforcing" due to traffic calming measures which are introduced along with the change in the speed limit. Speed humps, chicanes, road narrowing, planting and other measures are typically used to both physically and visually reinforce the shared nature of the road.

RoSPA describes 20mph **limits** as follows:

20mph limits, which consist of just a speed limit change but no physical measures to reduce vehicle speeds within the areas. Drivers are alerted to the speed limit with 20mph speed limit repeater signs.

20mph limits are most appropriate for roads where average speeds are already low, and the guidance suggests below 24mph. The layout and use of the road must also give the clear impression that a 20mph speed or below is the most appropriate.

RoSPA has also [published a factsheet \(PDF 529KB\)](#) on 20mph limits and zones, which discusses the history, characteristics and effectiveness of the interventions.

A national campaign organisation, [20's Plenty for Us](#), was established in 2007 “to help communities who want a more live-able street environment where they live by setting a mandatory 20mph limit for most roads.” It provides a [map of local campaign groups](#), including a number in Wales – though none in the area covered by the petition.

Welsh Government Policy

The Welsh Government issued guidance on [Setting Local Speed Limits in Wales](#) in 2009. This guidance is to be used in setting “all local speed limits on trunk and county roads”. In relation to 20mph speed limits on trunk roads, the guidance says (paragraph 5.7):

20mph speed limits may be used on trunk roads in exceptional circumstances, generally over short lengths and for limited times of the day.

The guidance continues (paragraphs 5.8 to 5.11):

To be successful, 20mph speed limits and zones should ideally be self-enforcing. Highway authorities should take account of the level of police enforcement required before installing either of these measures and must always formally consult the police when considering their use.

Where highway authorities introduce 20mph speed limits for part of the day (e.g. around school hours), care should be taken to ensure that signing is clear and unambiguous to drivers.

20mph speed limits should only be used for individual roads or for a small network of roads. Research indicates that 20mph speed limits should only be used where mean vehicle speeds are 24mph or below or where traffic calming measures are planned as part of the speed management strategy.

20mph zones have a proven casualty reduction benefit and are usually used in town centres, residential areas and in the vicinity of schools. Their purpose is to create conditions in which drivers naturally drive at around 20mph largely due to vulnerable road user activity.

The *Wales Act 2017* provided the Welsh Government with a range of executive powers in relation to speed limits, and gave the Assembly competence to legislate in this area.

Welsh Government Action

During the last Assembly the Welsh Government conducted a road safety review which reported in 2015. The outcome of the review has been [mapped and published](#). For the section of road identified in the petition the review website indicates that the existing 30mph speed limit should be retained, however “other works to improve road safety” are identified. The entry summarises these as follows:

Continue to progress proposals to potentially detrunk the A44/A487 Aberystwyth (and trunk alternative routes, where appropriate) in line with the National Transport Finance Plan 2015.

The proposal to detrunk (i.e. reclassify as a local road) the A44/A487 Aberystwyth is scheme reference R26A in the [National Transport Finance Plan \(NTFP\) 2015](#). The [2017 update to the plan](#) says at page 7 that the “R25/26 – ...trunking and de-trunking programme” has been “reprofiled” in order to “prioritise schemes within the NTFP Update so as to align with the budget available over the 3 year period”. The trunking / detrunking programme does not appear to be listed in the updated delivery schedule set out in annex B to the update.

The Welsh Government is currently undertaking a further review of speed limits on the Welsh trunk road network. The Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Transport, Ken Skates, has replied to the Chair on this petition to say:

We are currently in the process of carrying out a three year Speed Limit Review, looking at road safety issues at over 600 sites on all trunk roads in Wales. Your comments will be taken into consideration as part of this process when this section of the trunk road is reviewed.

The results of the review will be made available online and any works arising from the wider review will be prioritised, as funding allows, for a programmed completion over the next three to four years.

National Assembly for Wales action

While this specific section of road does not appear to have been raised in the Assembly, the issue of 20mph speed limits and zones has been raised on a number of occasions.

For example, on 2 May 2018 the Cabinet Secretary responded to a [question in Plenary](#) on the introduction of a “20mph default speed limit in urban areas” in the context of the “20’s plenty” campaign. The Cabinet Secretary responded to say:

that Welsh Government's position is that we support the introduction of 20 mph zones and 20 mph speed limits where there is evidence that they are needed. The Member is absolutely right that the available evidence does suggest that they lead to a reduction in speed limits, and therefore to improved safety, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists. Highways authorities already have the power to alter speed limits by order, and any changes that they make obviously need to be done in conjunction with consultation of the local community.

On 6 June 2018, the Cabinet Secretary [replied to a further question](#) emphasising the importance of community involvement and consultation:

It's absolutely vital that residents, under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, are consulted on matters that relate to their safety and well-being, and that includes, of course, speed limits within their communities. This Welsh Government is supportive of the implementation of 20 mph zones and, where appropriate, the reduction of speed limits from 30 mph to 20 mph, for example, outside of schools.

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.