

## REPORT FOR INFORMATION

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	All Members
<b>REPORT NO:</b>	COET/34/24
<b>DATE:</b>	4 October 2024
<b>LEAD MEMBER:</b>	Cllr David A Bithell, Lead Member for Housing & Climate Change
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	Gareth E Jones, Tel 01978 298913
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	20 mph Road Review
<b>WARD:</b>	All

### 1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To inform Members of the outcome of the public consultation regarding the 20 mph roads review and update them on the next steps of the process.

### 2 INFORMATION

- 2.1 Welsh Government introduced a default 20 mph speed limit on restricted roads across Wales from 17 September 2023. Wrexham Council implemented this successfully within only a small number of 30 mph roads being determined as exempt.
- 2.2 The principle behind the introduction of 20 mph roads was to:
- reduce the number of collisions and severe injuries from them (also reducing the impact on the NHS from treating the people who are injured);
  - encourage more people to walk and cycle in our communities;
  - help to improve our health and well-being;
  - make our streets safer;
  - safeguard the environment for future generations.
- 2.3 The introduction of the 20 mph was not universally welcomed. The concerns ranged from personal driving preference to the impact on the journey times. A petition opposing the 20 mph limit contained nearly 470,000 signatures, the most ever received by a Government within the UK.

- 2.4 In April 2024, Welsh Government announced a review of the 20 mph scheme. Guidance has since been issued for Local Authorities to use as a tool for assessing which roads they would consider to revert back to 30 mph. The public were encouraged to contact the Council with their feedback and suggestions on this review.
- 2.5 All Local Authorities were to collect residents' feedback on 20 mph limits so that they could assess this against revised Welsh Government guidance on setting 30 mph speed limits on restricted roads and other 20 mph speed limit roads. This revised guidance (Appendix 1) was published in July 2024.
- 2.6 The guidance provides a framework for highway authorities in Wales (who are traffic authorities when regulating speed limits) to assess whether it is safe and appropriate to raise the speed limit to 30 mph on restricted roads and other roads subject to a 20 mph speed limit, while also accommodating local factors and circumstances. It is anticipated that most speed limit changes from 20 mph to 30 mph will be made on A and B roads, which are typically main or strategic roads.
- 2.7 The Council again used the 20mphConsultation@wrexham.gov.uk e-mail address for the consultation. This was initially set up for the original consultation. This was advertised via blogs, social media posts and directly by officers in response to enquiries. The public were encouraged to send their comments on the proposed review, either supportive or otherwise, to the central e-mail address. Ken Skates MS liaised with Members on this matter on behalf of Welsh Government and Officers assisted Members when enquiries were made to them by their constituents.
- 2.8 A total of 440 e-mail responses were received, of these:
- 207 were general comments against the 20 mph scheme in its entirety;
  - 152 provided individual locations they wished to be increased back to 30 mph;
  - 54 provided numerous locations they wished to be reviewed;
  - 27 responses supported the 20 mph limit and did not wish to see any roads revert back to 30 mph.
- 2.9 In addition to the public consultation, officers have used professional knowledge and judgement in consideration of some roads. This has been supported by data held on each road (number of collisions etc). The full list of roads proposed can be found in Appendix 2.
- 2.10 The roads will be grouped and each Local Member informed of those within their ward. Members will be notified which of these are discounted based on the Welsh Government guidance (for example is by a school). The remaining roads will then be fully assessed using a Welsh Government Assessment Toolkit in conjunction with the guidance. Consideration at this stage is also given to whether the road contains a variety of speed limits at present and would engineering work be required to assist with road safety.
- 2.11 Following the assessment, Members will be notified which roads are eligible within the parameters of the guidance to be proposed for reversion to a 30

mph speed limit. The roads would each be subject to the full Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) process, which involves public consultation on the specific proposals. Member feedback forms part of this process. It is anticipated that the full assessment will be undertaken throughout October and November and the consultation process of the TRO to commence in December.

- 2.12 Consideration is given to proposed developments in and around the relevant road. For example, if a housing estate is subject to a planning application it would impact on the decision to revert. Equally if a road does revert to 30 mph, but then has development in future years, it could be subject to reverting back to 20 mph.
- 2.13 Welsh Government have made £5 million of funding available for Local Authorities to access as part of any changes back to 30 mph and this funding would cover any required works. The deadline for funding applications was at the end of September 2024 so the Council have applied based on an estimated cost.
- 2.14 As referenced, any changes back to 30 mph must be processed through a Traffic Regulation Order and this will require a period of consultation. Works will depend on numerous factors, however it is anticipated that some roads could be changed as early as January 2025 based on initial assessments, though this will also depend on external factors (adverse weather, contractor availability etc.)