

# **STATES OF JERSEY**



## **SPEED LIMITS: REVISED POLICY**

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**Lodged au Greffe on 20th January 2004  
by the Environment and Public Services Committee**

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**STATES GREFFE**

## PROPOSITION

**THE STATES are asked to decide whether they are of opinion –**

- (a) to approve a revised policy with regard to speed limits on roads, as follows –
  - (i) a 40 miles per hour speed limit on all public roads not subject to lower limits or Green Lane status with vehicles with a laden weight of 3.5 tonnes or over being subject to a 30 mile per hour limit on these roads;
  - (ii) a 30 miles per hour speed limit –
    - (1) on roads through urban, built up areas with development on both sides;
    - (2) on lengths of road under ½ mile long in partially built up areas which are situated between 30 miles per hour limits and therefore not long enough to stand on their own as roads with a 40 miles per hour limit;
    - (3) on roads with development in depth on one side only producing significant numbers of vulnerable road users, particularly pedestrians and cyclists;
    - (4) on roads through built up villages where there are frequent junctions with inadequate visibility for higher speeds, and pedestrian crossings.
  - (iii) a 20 miles per hour speed limit–
    - (1) on roads in housing estates and discrete residential areas which are not main routes and which have little or no through traffic;
    - (2) on roads in bays which are not main routes and which have significant tourist pedestrian activity with such limits applying only during the summer season in appropriate cases;
    - (3) in areas outside schools where there are part time electronically signed speed limits.
  - (iv) a 15 miles per hour speed limit in all Green Lanes and on no other roads (subject to a review of Green Lanes).
- (b) to agree that the Environment and Public Services Committee should be required to consult with the Connétable of the Parish in which a road is situated before making an Order setting a speed limit on any road;
- (c) to charge the Environment and Public Services Committee to take all necessary steps to give effect to the revised speed limit policy.

**ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC SERVICES COMMITTEE**

## REPORT

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The previous Public Services Committee, under the Presidency of Deputy Hacquoil, approved the creation of a working group to review speed limits, to be Chaired by the Connétable of St. Helier, with representatives from the Home Affairs Committee, Comité des Connétables, States Police and Road Safety Panel.
- 1.2 The group was formed as follows –
- Connétable Crowcroft – Public Services Committee
  - Connétable De la Haye – Comité des Connétables and Home Affairs Committee
  - Connétable Coutanche – Comité des Connétables
  - Deputy Bridge – Home Affairs Committee
  - Mr. Philip Blake – Road Safety Officer
  - Inspector Nigel Trustcott – States Police
  - Mr. David St. George – Senior Traffic Engineer, Public Services Department
- 1.3 The group held several meetings including site visits and its recommendations were subsequently endorsed by the Environment and Public Services Committee. A consultation exercise to assess the views of the relevant authorities and the general public on those recommendations was then carried out and a substantial majority of support has been identified.
- 1.4 Although the power to set speed limits is vested in the Environment and Public Services Committee (under the Road Traffic (Jersey) Law 1956) the Committee believes that this sometimes contentious matter affects the whole community and therefore has decided to seek the support of the whole States of Jersey Assembly before implementing its policy.
- 1.5 The Committee feels obliged to do so particularly in view of P.22/99 passed by the States in March 1999, which gave the power to set 30 m.p.h. speed limits on by-roads to the individual Parish Authorities. This might lead to inconsistency with its proposed policy.

### 2. The need for a review

#### Public perception of existing limits

- 2.1 Jersey's speed limits have grown considerably in number and variety, particularly since the first 30 m.p.h speed limits were introduced in 1988, and Green Lanes in 1994. Compliance with the existing speed limits is poor, particularly where inappropriate limits have been set. Criticism that they are too varied is often received, but conversely requests for lowering of speed limits on particular roads are received regularly, which if approved, would lead to a substantial increase in the number of different speed limit zones, and the incidences of non-compliance. The Committee currently has 28 outstanding requests requiring a decision, and needs a policy in place, so that a consistent approach can be applied.
- 2.2 Green Lanes, though legally controlled by Environment and Public Services by designation of a 15 m.p.h speed limit, are considered to be a Parish initiative, and have lacked consistency between the Parishes. They have added to the profusion of limits and the feeling that a rationalisation is needed.

#### Senator Shenton's Proposition

- 2.3 In addition to the individual requests, the Committee needed to consider the implications of Senator Shenton's amended proposition P.32/98 which was approved by the States on 16th March 1999 and which requested the (then) Public Services Committee –

*“to introduce a 30 mile an hour speed limit on all byroads recommended by the Parish*

*Authorities, and introduce additional traffic calming features where appropriate **including the restriction to 20 miles an hour of heavy goods vehicles in built up areas and villages***

(N.B. Wording in bold added following a successful Amendment from Deputy P. Rondel; “30” changed from “20” following a successful amendment from Deputy G. Baudains.)

#### Public Concern

2.4 The States Police Plan 2002 identified that, in a recent public survey, speeding motorists were perceived to be the greatest problem in local neighbourhoods.

#### Sustainable Transport Policy

2.5 In its Sustainable Transport Policy the Committee (as previously constituted) proposed to investigate the feasibility of creating a 20 m.p.h. speed limit within the St. Helier ring road and in all built-up areas.

#### Previous Policy

2.6 The policy of previous Public Services Committees has been as follows –

“Green Lanes” (Rural narrow lanes with low traffic volume)	15 m.p.h.
Housing Estates and other discrete residential areas with little or no through traffic	20 m.p.h.
Built-up areas and villages	30 m.p.h.
All other roads	40 m.p.h.

2.7 However, the above policy has not been rigidly applied. Under this policy the 20 m.p.h. zones in St. Peter’s Village and St. Mary should be 30 m.p.h., but the Parish Authorities did not support an increase in those limits. The interpretation of the built-up area causes much debate and the areas subject to 30 m.p.h. limits have grown significantly since the original areas were set. Some 30 m.p.h. zones are clearly not in a built-up area. La Grande Route de Faldouet for example was recently designated a 30 m.p.h. limit following receipt of a petition from residents, although it is not within a built-up area. Clarke Avenue was recently designated a 15 m.p.h. speed limit although it is not a Green Lane.

### **3. Options/Issues**

3.0 The working group considered a number of issues and options in the search for a policy that would contribute to road safety and be better accepted by the public. These are discussed below.

#### All-Island 30 m.p.h. limit

3.1 The Speed limits working group considered that an all-Island maximum speed limit of 30 m.p.h. would be unreasonably low, given that accident rates in Jersey are low when compared to elsewhere. The group was mindful that the main purpose of a speed limit was to reduce the likelihood and severity of accidents. There was insufficient evidence to suggest that such a significant change could be justified or that it would have a significant effect on accident rates. In a J.E.P. poll, 577 out of 634 people voted against an all-Island 30 m.p.h. limit. Although an all-Island 30 m.p.h. limit, with no other differing limits, would produce significant reductions in signing, and avoid confusion, it is inevitable that calls for lower limit zones would continue, and the need to sign differing speed limits would not disappear.

#### “Default” 30 m.p.h. limit

- 3.2 The group considered a “default” speed limit of 30 m.p.h., with roads to be signed at 40 (or 20) where considered appropriate. The conclusion of the group was that there were very few roads of significant length where a 40 m.p.h. limit could be signed and not challenged by local residents as being too high, if the majority of roads had a 30 limit. The likely outcome was that only Victoria Avenue and La Grande Route des Mielles (Five Mile Road) would be signed at 40 m.p.h.. Again the group felt that this would result in an unpopular and unreasonably low speed limit for the remainder of the Island. Although the lengths of road where 40 m.p.h. is a reasonable speed limit are short, they are reasonably numerous.

#### 35 m.p.h. all Island maximum with 25 m.p.h. speed limits in built up areas

- 3.3 At a joint meeting between the Home Affairs and Public Services Committees, the possibility of two (35 and 25 m.p.h.) speed limits, instead of the current four limits (15, 20, 30 and 40) was suggested as a means of reducing the number of speed limits.

The group did not consider that such a system would produce an acceptable solution. It is not the variety of speed limits but the number of changes to speed limits, which was of concern. Changes in limit would still be numerous and some roads, which were currently subject to a 30 m.p.h. limit, would likely be increased to 35 m.p.h., to the considerable dissatisfaction of residents of those areas.

#### 20 m.p.h. for built up areas

- 3.4 The Sustainable Transport Policy recommends that consideration is given to a 20 m.p.h. limit within the ring road and in all built-up areas. The group considered that the ring road was not a logical start point for a lower speed limit as many roads with similar characteristics and problems lay immediately outside of the ring road. It felt that the town centre, where the highest pedestrian activity and the highest pedestrian accident rates occurred, had relatively low traffic speeds, which would be unlikely to be affected by a 20 m.p.h. limit. Quality town centre physical traffic calming schemes would be more appropriate and more effective in such locations.
- 3.5 The group gave consideration to applying a 20 m.p.h. limit to the village areas, as currently applies to St. Peter’s Village. It was noted that despite good enforcement, the speed limit in St. Peter’s Village was poorly respected by motorists. It was agreed that 30 m.p.h. was a more appropriate speed limit for main routes through built-up areas, and where speeds needed to be reduced further in village centres traffic calming would be more effective. It was noted however that traffic calming on main routes needed to be mindful of the emergency services’ concerns that measures such as speed humps could have a significant detrimental affect on response times. Traffic calming is discussed below.

#### Part Time 20 m.p.h. limits at schools

- 3.6 Previous Public Services Committees have approved the proposal to have electronically signed mandatory part time speed limits at schools. The electronic signs would flash at school opening and closing times, so drawing motorists’ attention to the need to slow down (to 20 m.p.h.) because of the presence of school children on the road. The two most common reasons for non-compliance with a speed limit are failure to notice the signing of the lower limit, and failure to respect the need for the lower limit. This proposal should overcome both these issues. The group fully supported this proposal.

#### Senator Shenton’s Proposition

- 3.7 On 16th March 1999, the States approved an amended proposition P.32/98 from Senator Shenton –

*“to introduce a 30 mile an hour speed limit on all byroads recommended by the Parish Authorities, and introduce additional traffic calming features where appropriate including the restriction to 20 miles an hour of heavy goods vehicles in built up areas and villages”.*

- 3.8 The group did not support this proposal as, if individual Parishes could choose to apply a 30 m.p.h. limit

on by-roads without reference to an Island-wide policy, there was a likelihood of inconsistency. The majority of accidents occurred on main roads and in built-up areas, not on Parish by-roads, which were predominantly rural, where the volume of traffic was lower, and speeds tended to be contained by road geometry. 30 m.p.h. speed limits on Parish by-roads in most cases would serve little purpose, other than to add to the proliferation of signage.

Only one Parish, St. Clement, had asked the Committee to introduce speed limits on its by-roads in accordance with the Proposition. On 15th April 2003, a Parish Assembly voted 47 to 45 in favour of lowering the limit to 30 m.p.h. on all its by-roads except those which were Green Lanes. The Committee has deferred action on this request pending the outcome of this review.

#### Lower speed limit for large vehicles

3.9 The restriction of 20 m.p.h. for heavy goods vehicles in built-up areas was included in Senator Shenton's proposition following an amendment from Deputy Rondel. It would be difficult to sign or legislate for if applied for some areas and not others at the request of the Parishes. There is currently an all-Island maximum speed limit of 30 m.p.h. for vehicles over 2.5t unladen weight. This is poorly respected by drivers of large vehicles. Many of the requests the Department receives for a lowering of the 40 m.p.h. speed limit relate to the speed of large vehicles, which are already subject to a 30 m.p.h. limit. Better enforcement of this provision could improve road safety without the need for new lower speed limit zones. The group supported a previous recommendation to the Committee that in order to assist in the enforcement of this provision, large vehicles should be required to display a 30 m.p.h. plate, and in order to avoid confusion, the provision should be changed to apply to vehicles over 3.5t laden weight, to tie in with driving license categories.

#### Green Lanes

3.10 The group considered that the Green Lane system was in need of review. The current 15 m.p.h. speed limit is not adhered to, and the application of the Green Lane system varies between Parishes. It may be that future legislation could control the use of Green Lanes by giving priority to pedestrians, rather than by application of a speed limit. Whatever future control was applied, the group considered that Green Lanes should be considered separately from this Speed limit review. The intention of the Green Lane system was that it would be the province of the Parishes, and it was therefore for the Comité des Connétables to initiate such a review.

#### Traffic calming

3.11 The group concluded that the provision of physical traffic calming needed to be considered where there was strong justification for low traffic speeds, such as high pedestrian activity or accident rate. Evidence showed that speed limits in themselves are ineffective in significantly reducing traffic speeds without strict enforcement, which will always be constrained by limitations in manpower.

3.12 Because traffic calming is known to be effective in reducing the speed of traffic, the group felt that significant benefits to road safety were more likely to be derived from its use than from speed limits, which are prone to abuse. Quality traffic calming schemes however can be costly and would take many years to implement in all the areas they could be justified. Quality schemes convey to the driver that it would be wholly inappropriate and antisocial to drive at other than a low speed. A variety of measures such as speed humps, chicanes, central islands, road narrowing, gateways, mini roundabouts, or simply different surface treatments to remove the impression that the car has priority, could be used. Residential side roads could be calmed to guarantee very low traffic speeds and give pedestrians equal priority. Main routes can also be traffic calmed but the methods used needed to allow for the higher volumes of traffic, and the use of the route by emergency services, buses and general commerce.

#### Enforcement

3.13 The group felt that enforcement was a key issue. The States Police, mindful that the public rated speeding

traffic their greatest concern in local neighbourhoods, have carried out several speed enforcement campaigns in recent times. Despite the public's concern, there was a reluctance to view speeding as a serious offence, and a feeling from some that the Police should concentrate on other issues. Educating the public to drive at more appropriate speeds cannot be achieved in the short term. However the Public's attitude to drink driving has changed in the past few decades, and it is hoped that it will become less acceptable in the public's mind to break a speed limit in the years to come. The group's brief was to review what speed limits are appropriate for the Island, not how to enforce those limits. Nevertheless the group viewed enforcement as crucial, and considered that the deterrence to speeding could be increased, particularly through increased likelihood of disqualification, which would have the benefit of removing gross speeders from the roads.

3.14 Speed cameras would enable enforcement in crucial areas to be improved but have significant cost and administration implications, which would need to be thoroughly investigated before a decision could be made on their appropriateness for Jersey. The issue of enforcement would be for the Home Affairs Committee to progress.

#### 4. Proposed policy

4.1 After much debate the group concluded that there was insufficient justification for significant sweeping changes to Jersey speed limits and what would be perceived as onerously low limits in certain areas. It therefore concluded that a continuation of the current policy with a more stringent application of the criteria for roads to be subject to a 30 or 20 m.p.h. speed limit as set out below should be recommended.

4.2 Where very low speeds are considered necessary physical traffic calming should be used. Traffic calming for main routes could also be considered but would have to take account of the need for the Island's population to go about its business.

4.3 The criteria should be applied to the current requests, and changes to current limits made as appropriate. Where existing limits did not fit these criteria, these should be identified and reviewed with the appropriate Parish. Agreement to raise a speed limit would need approval of a Parish Assembly.

4.4 Once set, further alterations to speed limits, would not be considered unless accident rates identified a particular problem, or significant changes to the area justified a review of the speed limit.

4.5 The proposed criteria are as follows –

<b>40 m.p.h.</b>	All public roads not subject to lower limits or green lane legislation, to remain subject to a maximum speed limit of 40 m.p.h.. (Currently large vehicles, over 2.5t unladen are subject to a maximum 30 m.p.h.. (It is recommended that this should change to over 3.5t laden to fall into line with current driving license categories, and that a 30mph plate must be displayed).
<b>30 m.p.h.</b>	Roads through urban, built-up areas with development on both sides, partially built-up lengths lying between 30 m.p.h. limits and not long enough (under ½ mile) to stand on their own as 40 m.p.h. limits. Development in depth on one side of the road producing significant numbers of vulnerable road users (pedestrians and cyclists). Roads through built-up villages, with frequent junctions with inadequate visibility for higher speeds, and pedestrian crossings.
<b>20 m.p.h.</b>	Housing estates and discrete residential areas, not main routes, little or no through traffic. Bays, not main routes, with high tourist pedestrian activity (in some cases during the summer season only). Part-time electronically signed 20 m.p.h. speed limits at schools.

<b>15 m.p.h.</b>	15 m.p.h. to continue to apply to Green lanes, at least until a review of the green lane system has been completed. 15 m.p.h. would not be applied to any other roads.
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## **5. Consultation**

- 5.1 The Committee, aware that speed limits could be contentious, were anxious to assess whether its proposals were representative of what the public wanted. A balance needs to be struck between the Committee's obligation to continue to improve road safety, and the need to allow the public to go about its business without unreasonable restrictions. As well as consulting all the relevant official bodies, it also advertised its proposed policy in the local media to give the general public the opportunity to comment.
- 5.2 The consultation exercise identified a significant level of support for the proposals from official bodies. In particular it is supported by the Home Affairs Committee, States Police, Comité des Connétables and Road Safety Panel.
- 5.3 The Connétables agree that a review of Green Lanes is needed. As part of that review they intend to consider whether 20 m.p.h. would be a more appropriate speed limit than 15.
- 5.4 The Parish of St. Helier Roads Committee is the only consulted organisation that does not support the proposals. It recommends that a 20 m.p.h. speed limit be applied to all roads with high pedestrian activity. The Committee does not believe that this is practical, as it would need to apply it to the entire town area. This has been discussed above (section 3.4).
- 5.5 Despite the issue seeming to generate strong views and significant media interest, only 25 members of the public responded to the request for comments through media statements and a Jersey Evening Post notice. 14 were in favour, 3 against, and 8 neither for nor against. A small number of States members responded independently, the majority in favour.
- 5.6 Speed limits have not been applied consistently in the past. To achieve a more consistent approach it may not only be necessary to reduce the speed limit on particular roads, but to increase certain limits, although this would not be done without the approval of the relevant Connétable and Parish Assembly. It is proposed that the Road Traffic Law be amended so that the Committee is required to consult the relevant Connétable before making an Order prescribing speed limits. This would normally be done as a matter of course, but it is not at present a legal requirement. Although the Comité des Connétables supports the proposals it has stated that the 20 m.p.h. zones by St. Marÿs school, in St. Peter's Village, and the 30 m.p.h. zone on La Grande Route de Faldouet should remain. The Committee will discuss with the Connétables of the relevant Parishes whether alterations to those speed limits combined with other measures, could be acceptable to the residents and users of those areas whilst being consistent with the proposed policy.

## **6. Conclusions**

- 6.1 The Committee is confident that its proposed policy will be supported by the public, and is a sensible balance between the obligation to address the issues of road safety, and the need to allow the public to go about their business without unreasonable restrictions.
- 6.2 The States are asked to approve the policy as detailed above.
- 6.3 The proposals have no man power implications. Signage for new speed limits will be carried out by existing staff.
- 6.4 The majority of the proposals have modest financial implications and would be covered by the Public Services Department annual budget for maintenance of signs. The signage of part-time speed limits at



schools however would involve installation of electronic equipment with power supplies. Although in some cases the existing school warning flashing lights would be adapted, it is estimated that to install electronically signed part-time speed limits at all 35 schools would cost approximately £100,000. It would therefore be necessary to assess those locations where the need is greatest and those locations where it would be unnecessary, and to install the speed limits over a period of up to five years to enable the cost to be met within the Public Services Department's existing budget.