

STATES OF JERSEY



SPEED LIMITS: REVISED POLICY (P.167/2010) – SECOND AMENDMENT (P.167/2010 Amd.(2)) – COMMENTS

**Presented to the States on 4th April 2011
by the Minister for Transport and Technical Services**

STATES GREFFE

COMMENTS

The Connétable of St. Helier's Amendment is in 4 parts –

1. To include tourist areas within those areas appropriate for a 20 mph limit.
2. To designate all roads within the ring road 20 mph.
3. To require the proposed appeals panel to include representatives of the Roads Committee of the relevant Parish.
4. To change the word “minor” to “certain” for traffic offences which could be dealt with by a penalty points and fixed penalty system.

Part 1 (20 mph in tourist areas)

The review group did not consider the appropriate speed for tourist areas. I concur with the Connétable of St. Helier's view that where there is a high level of tourist activity on the road side as is the case at Havre des Pas and St. Brelade's bay, such areas should be eligible for a 20 mph speed limit, the latter already being designated as such. It may also be sensible to apply a seasonal speed limit. I am minded to support this part of the amendment.

Part 2 (20 mph on all roads within the ring road)

I have some sympathy with this part of the amendment as it would be hard to argue that motorists should be allowed to travel at higher speeds through the town area where the concentration of vulnerable road users are at their greatest. That said I do believe there are difficulties associated with this proposal.

The ring road does not necessarily make a logical boundary to determine a change in speed limits. For example roads such as Roussel Street and Parade Road, which are immediately outside the ring road, have a similar character and use to Great Union Road and Saville Street opposite them, which lie just within the ring road. These urban roads are of similar character inside and outside of the ring road and from the review group's public consultation there is evidence that the majority of the public favour a 30 mph limit rather than 20 mph in the urban area.

The central town area is where the highest level of pedestrian activity occurs and where a 20 mph limit would seem most appropriate. However speeds during the busy daytime are already very low on roads such as Beresford Street, Halkett Place and Broad Street so a 20 mph limit would have no significant impact on actual speeds of traffic in those areas at those times and therefore no safety benefit. Traffic calming and streetscape improvements to town centre roads recently carried out by both TTS and the Parish in areas such as La Motte Street, Broad Street and York Street are much more effective in guaranteeing low speeds than by simply changing the legal limit. My Department will continue to develop and implement high quality schemes of such nature.

The Connétable's proposal would also be difficult to sign. There are about 35 side road connections to the ring road, which would all require signage, though the exact number depends on the definition of the ring road to the south east of the town. Repeater signs throughout the town may be necessary. Although the method and level of signage is undetermined it is estimated that the cost could be of the order of

£20,000. It is much easier to sign a change in speed limit on a straight section of road as is typically the case where 40 mph changes to 30 mph on reaching the built up area approaching town, than to sign changes to speed limits on side roads. Motorists turning on and off the ring road have to share the road space with a high volume of other road users and observe many other signs and signals in order to drive safely. There is anecdotal evidence that local motorists do not always notice the current speed limit signage. It would be even more likely that they would fail to notice this additional signage.

Nevertheless it can also be argued that motorists have a better chance of understanding speed limits if they are applied to a comprehensible town zone system. The ring road is clearly understandable to the north of the town centre, but has a less certain definition to the south and east.

The review group's consultation identified support for 30 not 20 mph in the urban areas and I would suggest that acceptance of this proposal should be subject to further consultation on this particular proposal.

I am therefore minded to accept this part of the amendment in principle subject to appropriate consultation and the establishment of a clear definition of the entire ring road.

Part 3 (Roads Committee of the Parish to be involved in appeals)

It is always tempting to make an emotional case for a lower speed limit for a particular location, the argument being that surely it would be welcomed by local residents and if people want to drive their cars faster they can do so somewhere else. But speed limits are rarely increased and the inevitable result of considering local requests without the framework of an island wide policy would be a proliferation of inconsistent speed limits, and the greater the proliferation the less effective the limits would be. I therefore support the group's recommendation that in order to ensure an impartial hearing the appeals panel should draw from a pool of people so that members of the panel would not adjudicate on limits within their own Parish or constituency. The Connétable's amendment is at odds with this principle and does not have my support.

Part 4 (change "minor" to "certain" traffic offences)

In drafting the proposition I did not wish to infer that speed limit infractions should not be taken seriously. The use of the word "minor" is to infer that a fixed penalty system would apply to a range of less serious offences, including breaking a speed limit by a modest amount or perhaps not wearing a seat belt. More serious breaches such as excessive speeding or drink driving would result in a charge which could not be dealt with by a fixed penalty and would result in the accused facing charges through the courts. The detail would be developed assuming the States approve my proposition. I do not believe that this part of the amendment is necessary but I am content to accept it as it is simply a question of semantics.