

24th February 2011

Dear Sir, I believe good governance should be about protecting the people based on factual evidence that is relative to the community, and not on politicians' whims or pipe dreams.

Given the above, I would guarantee that the majority of politicians or civil servants do not understand the very complicated case of road safety, along with speed limits and base all their thoughts on a perception rather than actual fact.

I would like to offer an opinion on the States of Jersey proposals to re-assess the current speed limits within the Island.

1. Most accidents in Jersey aren't caused by excessive speed, but careless driving.
2. Where speed is a factor, the accident usually results from drivers exceeding an existing limit, often by a big margin. Reducing limits won't stop this or indeed make any difference at all.
3. It is very often the case that the people who complain about excessive vehicle speed are the very perpetrators of the complaint.
4. For law-abiding motorists, having a plethora of limits is confusing and potentially dangerous - eg. motorists decelerating sharply from 40 to 20 as they approach St Peter's Village. Repeatedly meddling with the limits and the zones is also confusing, and costly in signage.
5. As an example of cost, the parish of St Clement have recently spent £20,000 on changing road signage from 40mph to 30mph on the grounds that the roads will now be safer, yet unfortunately only last weekend we have a fatal death on a parish road. It is clear that this cost has had no material benefit to road safety within the parish.
6. I can produce good evidence that reducing the speed limit of a road does not reduce the speed of vehicles on the 85% percentile rule. More emphasis needs to be placed on reducing excessive vehicle speed by reducing the confidence of drivers, this automatically reduces speed but more importantly makes drivers more aware of road conditions and their surroundings.
7. In relation to the above, there are more intelligent ways of reducing road speed other than the use of crude speed bumps which can be dangerous in their own right due to the hidden damage caused to vehicle suspension systems.
8. A poor example of using speed as a road safety tool is the green lane situation, a good idea that has failed because the wrong approach has been taken to road use. Surely the green lane is designated for the use of walkers, cyclists, horses etc and the motor vehicle has the least priority whilst using that lane, yet we promote all is ok as long as you drive at 15mph which is nonsensical. More emphasis should have been placed on who has a greater right of way, the pedestrian or the motor vehicle.
9. Having a zero road casualty target makes no sense given current vehicle technology

(though cars are getting safer all the time). The car brings huge benefits and in Jersey at least the casualty rate is already very low. Only banning cars would stop accidents completely, and then there would be accidents with bikes and horses, as there were 100 years ago.

I have recently written to the JEP who published a letter regarding speed limits which puts my argument more succinctly and I am sure this could be made available if contact with the JEP is made.

I hope the above helps in your determination and consideration to the current road safety laws and speed limits in place at this moment in Jersey

Yours faithfully

Ken Hudson