

CHANGING A SPEED LIMIT: WHAT'S INVOLVED?

NATIONAL SPEED LIMIT POLICY

All traffic authorities are expected to set speed limits in accordance with the national guidance. This was revised in January 2013 and is, set out in the document “**Department for Transport Circular 01/2013: Setting local speed limits**”.

The full document, together with the DfT’s ‘speed limit appraisal tool’ can be seen online at:-

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/setting-local-speed-limits>

A **summary of Circular 01/2013** has been produced by Transport for Buckinghamshire .This document can be seen online on the speed limit pages on www.buckscc.gov.uk.

COUNTY COUNCIL POLICY

Only those speed limit requests which are in accordance with the principles of Circular 01/2013 will be permitted to proceed. This is necessary to ensure that we comply with national guidelines and also to ensure a consistent approach countywide.

There is no dedicated funding allocation within Transport for Buckinghamshire for the delivery of speed limit schemes arising from public requests for a change in limit. The cost of such schemes therefore needs to be met directly by the local community either:-

- through self –funding by a Parish/Town Council, (or from some other local source)
- from the delegated ‘Local Priorities’ budget which is allocated by the county council to the relevant Local Area Forum of town and parish councils .

Speed Limits may also be amended as part of a

- section 106 Development agreement
- TfB casualty reduction scheme

NATIONAL SPEED LIMITS

The national ‘default’ speed limits are:-

- **30mph** for ‘restricted roads’-those with “a system of street lighting furnished by means of [3 or more] lamps placed not more than 200 yards apart”.
- **60mph** for single carriageway roads
- **70mph** for dual carriageway roads and motorways.

Traffic authorities such as Buckinghamshire County Council have the authority to introduce a variety of other speed limits.

We can make **20mph, 30mph, 40mph, 50mph or 60mph limits** (the latter only on dual carriageway roads).

Speed limits **below 30mph**, (with the exception of 20mph limits/zones); require individual consent from the Secretary of State.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Before a new speed limit can be put in place on a road, the county council has to follow a legal **procedure to make a 'traffic order'**.

The process is set out in "The Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996" (<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/1996/2489/contents/made>)

A full formal consultation procedure must take place which includes advertising the proposed speed limit change in a local newspaper and consulting directly with the emergency services; the Freight Transport Association; The Road Haulage Association and organisations representing other road users. We also publicise the proposals to enable other relevant people, (such as local residents and users of the road), to give their views.

HOW ARE SPEED LIMIT REQUESTS DEALT WITH?

Please also see flowchart at end of this document

1. Anyone requesting a speed limit change will be directed to/sent the **speed limit change application pack** ,(FORM SL1),and will need to

- read the document 'changing a speed limit: what's involved'
- compare their request with the national guidance to check it is appropriate
- complete the application form ,(Form SL1), giving details of the length of road involved, the preferred speed limit and reasons why the request is being made.
(NB If the applicant is not a local council, then the applicant should **not** complete Form SL1 but should instead make their local parish/town council aware of their concerns, as requests for speed limit changes must be supported by the local community in order to proceed further.)

2. The local council, if in support of the scheme, should endorse the request and sent the completed application form to Casualty Reduction at Transport for Buckinghamshire, together with a **fee of £450 +VAT** to enable a **formal assessment of the request** to take place. This assessment will include:-

- a **site visit** to identify the road(s) characteristics including width /sightlines /bends /junctions/ road-side development & accesses/ suitable locations for signs; composition of road users (including existing and potential levels of vulnerable road users); implications for all road users of a change in speed limit.
- **analysis of existing traffic data** (speed ,flow and crash records)
- comparison of the proposal with the criteria of the **national speed limit guidance**
- evaluation of the **implications** of the requested speed limit change **on the local road network** including effect on increased journey times for motorised traffic
- **factors affecting cost** of implementation (e.g. sign placement, vegetation issues)
- liaison with **police traffic management officer** and identification of enforcement issues
- identification of the **suitability of the proposed extent** of the speed limit and alternative suggestions where appropriate
- **assessment of signing changes** required including illuminated signs
- **need for** and potential environmental impact of, **additional engineering / other measures** to encourage compliance with proposed speed limit (and, where applicable ,to meet the traffic calming requirements of 20mph zones).

If there is no appropriate **speed/flow data** on record, then an additional payment of **£310 +VAT per data collection site** will then be requested from the parish/town council to enable the data to be collected.

3.. Transport for Buckinghamshire will inform the local council by email or letter of the outcome of the speed limit request assessment .A report will also be provided by TfB (FORM SL2)

a) If the assessment supports the request, an estimate of the likely cost of proceeding with the request will also be provided.

b) If the assessment is that the request is not appropriate, reasons for this decision will be provided.

4.. Once a funding source for an appropriate speed limit change has been identified by the local council it should then complete Form SL3 (Confirmation to proceed with speed limit change)and return it to Casualty Reduction, Transport for Buckinghamshire .

A typical cost for consultation and implementation is £5000-£7,000.This includes the following:-

- advertisement in local newspaper(s) of the proposed and final traffic order
- other public consultation measures (including 'Have your Say' signs)
- legal services' fees
- analysis of consultation feedback
- formal report
- sign installation
- preparatory work and correspondence associated with all of the above

(More details of the cost breakdown can be seen in the document "Speed limit change: budget estimate" which can be seen at www.buckscc.gov.uk/speedlimitreview

5. The applicant will then be informed of the way in which their request will be taken forward.

Before a speed limit can be changed, public consultation will need to take place and responses to this reviewed.. The applicant will be informed of the anticipated timetable for the various stages of the work (NB it can take about one year from the pre-consultation stage until a speed limit is installed.)

(See flowchart on following page)

FLOWCHART: SPEED LIMIT REQUESTS PROCEDURE

