

Item 9 – Background Briefing Note - Highways Safety on Derestricted Roads and Potential to put 40mph limits in place

The overall speed limit framework, including the setting of national limits for different road types, and where exceptions to these general limits can be applied, is the responsibility of the government. The three national speed limits are:

- The 30 mph speed limit on roads with street lighting (sometimes referred to as Restricted Roads).
- The national speed limit of 60 mph on single carriageway roads.
- The national speed limit of 70 mph on dual carriageways and motorways.

As the traffic authority in Lancashire the county council can consider alternative speed limits where appropriate whilst recognising these national standards.

To ensure consistency the Department for Transport (DfT) issues national guidance which is utilised as a framework throughout the Country when considering speed limits other than those nationally applied.

The latest guidance provided in 2013 (*Department for Transport Circular 01/2013*) reinforces previous guidance in saying that speed limits should only be considered on single carriageway rural roads by taking into account the history of collisions, the road's function, existing mean traffic speed, use by vulnerable road users, the road's geometry and engineering, and the road environment including level of road-side development.

Drivers must at all times exercise judgement and observe road conditions in respect of speed when using any road and this is particularly relevant on carriageways with a national speed limit applied.

It is not unusual for cyclists to traverse highways with speed limits above 30mph. As described above speed limits are set based upon specific considerations and it is unrealistic to expect drivers of motor vehicles to drive at a reduced speed on all roads due to the possibility of cyclists or other vulnerable user groups being present. Drivers should however, anticipate that other users may be on the road and be liable when they encounter them to drive in an appropriate manner.

The county council does have a duty to warn all road users of potential issues or dangers such as road bends, humps or the potential for cyclists to be present. Consequently warning signs and road markings are used in order to help drivers determine the most appropriate speed for any given situation.

If there are any specific locations members feel would benefit from signing please get in touch and we will investigate the options.