



## Joint Oireachtas Committee on Transport and Communications Meeting 1 March 2022

### Love 30 Campaign for 30 km/h Speed Limits Opening Statement

A Chathaoirligh and members of the Committee, Love 30 would like to thank you for the invitation to address you on the important topic of Speed Limit Reductions in Urban Areas and the RSA Road Safety Strategy.

Love 30 is a national alliance of individuals and organisations who support a default 30 m/h speed limit in built up areas.

We say to you that 30 km/h as a default urban speed limit is an opportunity to:

- Significantly reduce the number of vehicle collisions and related serious injuries
- Allow children to play outdoors more safely
- Make our cities and towns more liveable by allowing people of all ages and abilities to walk or cycle to study, work, shops, and visits to friends and family
- Improve the general health of the population
- Contribute to our climate action plan

At a recent school road safety event in Kilcoole, where the speed limit is 50km/h, one of the 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils said

“Their speed was quite shocking. To think that there could be kids crossing the road and the cars are going at that speed”.

### Why are we seeking 30 km/h speed limits in built up areas?

#### 1. Safety

30 km/h is fundamentally safer than 50 km/h for pedestrians, and vulnerable road users. Where speeds are reduced to a maximum of 30 km/h in built-up areas a decline in casualties of more than 40% will occur with fewer and less severe injuries.

If a pedestrian is hit by a car:

- At 30 km/h 1 in 10 will die
- At 50 km/h 5 in 10 will die



- At 60 km/h 9 in 10 will die

Lower speeds give drivers more time to notice and react to the unexpected and, importantly, reduce the severity of injury when collisions occur.

The importance of 30 km/h speed limits for improved road safety and enhanced liveability is recognised internationally. Many countries such as the Netherlands, Spain and Wales, have legislated for mandatory 30 km/h in all built-up areas.

## **2. Freedom for children and the elderly**

With lower speeds children can safely play, walk, scoot and cycle in their neighbourhood. Confident, independent, healthy, active travel habits form on safer streets. Also, many elderly people have slower reaction times, and so slower traffic makes it easier for them to cross the road.

## **3. Quieter, cleaner streets**

Lower speeds result in less noise and pollution. And air pollution currently kills more than 1,000 per year in Ireland.

## **4. Cost effective**

Introducing widespread 30 km/h is one of the most cost effective ways of improving road safety. [Studies in the UK](#) found that wide area 30km/h limits are seven times more cost effective than isolated zones with physical traffic calming.

## **5. Little impact on journey times**

Much of the travel time in urban areas is spent at traffic lights, or stuck in traffic. On a typical 20 minute journey, travelling at 30 km/h instead of 50 km/h will add between 20 seconds to a minute to the journey time.

Local and international experience shows that drivers quickly acclimatise to lower speed limits in built up areas.

## **6. Stockholm and WHO Decade of Action for Road Safety**

Ireland was a signatory to the [Stockholm Declaration](#) of the Third Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety in February 2020. It mandates in [Resolution #11](#) 'a maximum road travel speed of 30 km/h in areas where vulnerable road users and vehicles mix in a frequent and planned manner'.



This same Stockholm Declaration also recognises that road deaths and injuries constitute a preventable epidemic. This agreed resolution #11 needs to be acted upon here in Ireland.

A move to lower speed limits nationwide here in Ireland is also in line with the WHO [‘Decade of Action for Road Safety’](#).

## National Default Legislation

At present, the setting of speed limits is a matter for local authorities, subject to national legislation. Reviews have resulted in most local authorities introducing some 30 km/h speed limits, but their introduction has been patchy and inconsistent and has focussed almost exclusively on residential estates. The recent introduction of an appeal mechanism may be helpful in reducing some speed limits but is unlikely to bring about the paradigm shift that is required.

We believe that the best way forward is to introduce national legislation mandating a default 30 km/h speed limit in built-up areas. It will then be up to councils to decide which (if any) roads should have a different speed limit. A default limit does not prevent a higher limit being introduced where it is deemed necessary and safe.

## Road Safety Strategy

We were very pleased to see that the Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030, included a High Impact Action (Number 6) to "*Establish a working group to examine and review the framework for the setting of speed limits, including introducing 30km/h limits as the default in urban areas.*"

We believe that this working group should be established without delay. It must recognise that

- For every one road death there are nine serious injuries on Irish roads.
- Pedestrians, motorcyclists, and cyclists account for over half of all serious injuries

## Conclusion

We urge that you the members of this Committee recognise the wealth of local and international evidence in support of 30km/h speed limits in built up areas. By endorsing the call for a national default



urban speed limit of 30km/h, you will leave a lasting legacy of safe, liveable neighbourhoods which can be enjoyed by everyone.