



Meeting With DoT 29 August 2022

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Why should the default urban speed limit be changed to 30km/h

Stockholm

Ireland was a signatory in February 2020 of the [Stockholm Declaration of the Third Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety](#), which was subsequently endorsed by the General Assembly of the United Nations. Paragraph 11 committed to:



“mandate a maximum road travel speed of 30 km/h in areas where vulnerable road users and vehicles mix in a frequent and planned manner, except where strong evidence exists that higher speeds are safe, noting that efforts to reduce speed in general will have a beneficial impact on air quality and climate change as well as being vital to reduce road traffic deaths and injuries;”

Love 30 calls on the Government to fulfill the commitment in the Stockholm Declaration by introducing legislation to provide for a default speed limit of 30 km/h in built-up areas.

It will then be for councils to decide which 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, but the ultimate benefit of a low speed limit would be a cleaner environment and improved safety for people walking and cycling while also protecting our right to health and wellbeing. 30 km/h speed limits have long been recognised for the safety benefits they offer and in addition can assist in reducing noise and emissions and can help to make our towns and cities more pleasant places to live, work and play.

Many cities including London (20 mph), Brussels, Milan, Santander, Bilbao, Paris, Washington DC (20 mph), Boulder (Colorado, 20 mph), Wellington, have introduced widespread 30 km/h limits. Several countries are introducing default 30 km/h speed limits in all urban areas including Netherlands, Spain, and Wales (20 mph). Some locations have speed limits as low as 10 km/h. Love 30 believes that Ireland should follow this best international practice and legislate for a default 30 km/h limit in built-up areas. Over 26 million people in the UK live in 20mph areas.

Safety

Safety is the primary reason for introducing 30 km/h speed limits in urban areas.



30 km/h is fundamentally safer than 50 km/h for pedestrians, cyclists and other 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. For this reason residential areas in the UK and many EU countries have adopted a default 30 km/h speed limit.

HARD AND FAST FACTS

Pedestrians 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

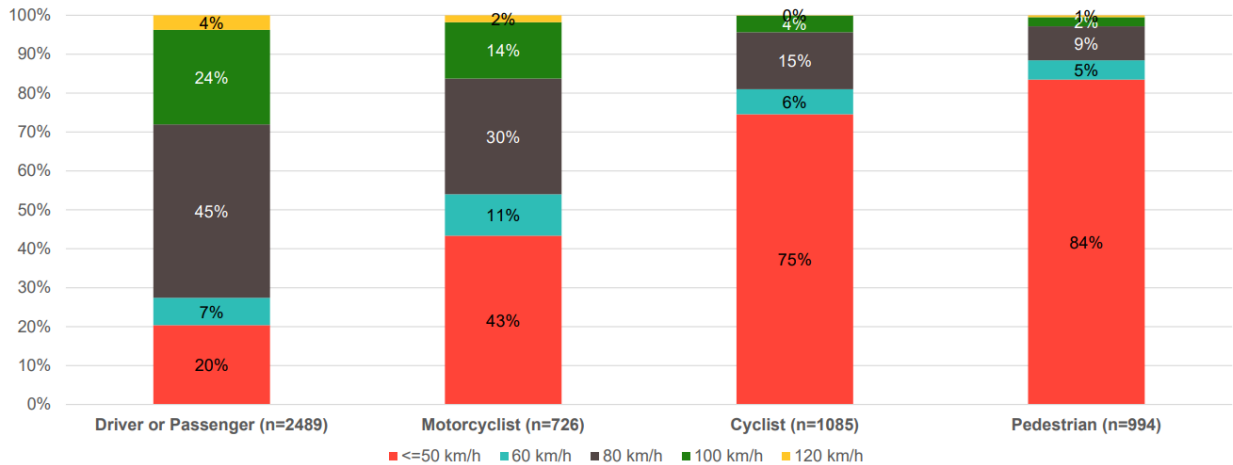


While there has been a downward trend in fatalities on the roads, serious injuries are on the rise and pedestrians and cyclists are disproportionately affected.

Serious injuries by speed limit of road, by road user type



2018-2021





Freedom for children and the elderly

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

People living in 30 km/h zones want to keep it!

The vast majority of residents in areas that have a 30 km/h limit want to keep it. For example, Marino in Dublin was one of the first urban areas to get a 30 km/h speed limit in 2005. A [door-to-door survey in 2016](#) found that 96% of residents would oppose reverting to the higher speed limit.

Quieter, cleaner streets

Lower speeds result in less noise and pollution. On residential roads and shopping streets, people simply don't want to be exposed to the noise, fumes and dangers from higher speed traffic.

Air pollution currently kills more than 1,000 per year in Ireland, primarily through asthma, cancers and other pulmonary illnesses.

Little impact on travel times

30 km/h has very little impact on journey times, since much of the travel time in urban areas is spent at traffic lights, or stuck in traffic, so motorists travelling at 50 km/h or faster are just racing to the next traffic lights. 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.

Encourages active travel and a healthier lifestyle

The introduction of 30 km/h urban speed limits has been shown to lead to an increase in the number of people walking and cycling, and thus enjoying healthier lives. The National Transport Authority's 2019 Bike Life survey found that 25% of adults in Dublin cycle at least once a week, while a further 21% would cycle if they felt safer on the roads.

Modal Shift

In the view of Love 30, a default 30 km speed limit will be a key factor in the implementation of several of the Goals in the Action Plan for the National Sustainable Mobility Policy.

Goal 1 "Improve mobility safety"



Goal 3: “Expand availability of sustainable mobility in metropolitan areas”

Goal 4: “Expand availability of sustainable mobility in regional and rural areas”

Goal 5: “Encourage people to choose sustainable mobility over the private car”

Goal 7: Design infrastructure according to Universal Design Principles and Hierarchy of Road Users Model

The danger arising from the speed of traffic is one of the main reasons why people do not currently choose walking or cycling for short trips. Default 30 km speeds will help to redress the balance between active travel and travel by private car.

Saves money

Wide area 30km/h speed limits require less signs and are relatively cheap to implement.

While every life is priceless, the Road Safety Authority estimates [the average cost of a fatal collision to be €2.7 million](#), so any reduction in fatal and serious collisions results in significant financial savings. There were [26 fatalities](#) on roads with a speed limit of 50 km/h in 2020. The cost of implementing 30 km/h is minimal.

Easier for Road Users

Frequent changes of speed limits can be confusing for motorists. A default speed limit of 30 km/h in urban areas makes it easier for motorists to know the speed limit. It also reduces the number of speed signs to be installed by Local Authorities, and thus reduces overall maintenance costs.

Encourages tourism

Towns, villages and cities with 30 km/h speed limits are more attractive places for tourists, as they can move around more freely and safely, and many EU tourists are used to 30 km/h in their home countries.

Built Up Areas - many urban areas excluded

Section 5 (Road Traffic Act 2004) sets a default ‘built-up area speed limit’ of 50 km/h across five cities and 80 former towns and boroughs. Built-up area speed limits do NOT apply to urban areas (see Tables 2 & 3) that are NOT within the boundaries of those 85 towns - these urban areas currently depend on special speed limits to have low speed limits.



The definition of built-up area is based on the areas that were cities, boroughs, or towns under the Local Government Act 2001. The definition of built-up areas also needs to be revised to better reflect the reality that quite a few large urban areas were not towns under the Local Government Act 2001.

The table below is an analysis of the implementation of 30 km/h speed limits by council area

<u>County or City</u>	<u>Housing Estates</u>	<u>Other Residential Roads</u>	<u>Schools</u>	<u>Town, Village & Neighbourhood Centres</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Carlow County	Some	None	Some	Few	-
Cavan County	Many	None	None	None	New bye-laws came into effect January 2021.
Clare County	Some	None	None	None	-
Cork City	Some	None	Few	City Centre, but not main roads through suburban villages.	-
Cork County	Few	None	None	None	-
Donegal County	Some	None	None	None	-
Dublin City	Nearly all	Many	Few	City Centre, but not main roads through suburban villages.	Draft bye-laws delayed by councillors due to proposals to reduce speed limits on main roads.
Dún Laoghaire–Rathdown County	Many	Few	Few	Few	-
Fingal County	Some	None	None	None	Existing situation up to August 2021.
Fingal County	Nearly all	Nearly all	Some	Few	New bye-laws September 2021.
South Dublin County	Nearly all	Few	Few	None	-
Galway City	Many	None	Few	None	Draft bye-laws delayed in 2020 by councillors due to proposals to



<u>County or City</u>	<u>Housing Estates</u>	<u>Other Residential Roads</u>	<u>Schools</u>	<u>Town, Village & Neighbourhood Centres</u>	<u>Comment</u>
					increase speed limits at periphery.
Galway County	Some	None	Few	None	Small number of housing estates to be added in 2021.
Kerry County	Some	None	Few	Tralee and Killarney town centres only.	-
Kildare County	Few	None	None	None	-
Kilkenny County	Many	Few	Nearly all	Kilkenny city centre only.	-
Laois County	None	None	Many	Portlaoise and Portarlington town centres only.	-
Leitrim County	Many	Few	Some	Some	-
Limerick City and County	Many	None	Few	None	Former county areas.
Limerick City and County	Few	None	None	Few	Former city areas.
Longford County	Many	None	None	None	-
Louth County	Some	None	None	Dundalk town centre only.	-
Mayo County	Many	None	None	None	-
Meath County	Some	None	None	None	-
Monaghan County	Some	None	None	None	-
Offaly County	Many	None	None	None	-
Roscommon County	Many	None	None	None	-
Sligo County	Many	None	None	None	-
Tipperary County	Many	None	None	None	-



Waterford City and County	Nearly all	Some	Few	Few	-
Westmeath County	Nearly all	Some	Few	None	-
Wexford County	Some	None	None	None	-
Wicklow County	Nearly all	Some	Few	None	-

Table 1 - Analysis of the implementation of 30 km/h speed limits by council area

Local Authorities

Section 9 allows local authorities to set 'special speed limits' in their area, which can vary the default speed limit. Depending on the road type, these can be between 20 and 120 km/h. The consent of Transport Infrastructure Ireland is required where the road is a national road.

Should the process for deciding speed limits be changed?

Should 30km/h speed limits be self-enforcing?

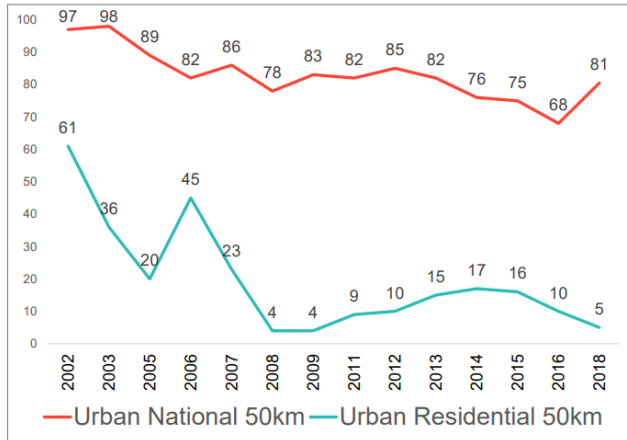
Drivers regularly exceed speed limits on all types of roads. Most drivers keep within 10km/h of the speed limits. 50kph is the current urban default speed limit, which is regularly broken, as outlined in regular RSA 'Free Speed' research.- see 2022 report [HERE](#). Introduction of a 30kph default urban speed limit may not guarantee speeds fall below 30kph, but will definitely reduce overall speeds in these areas. Coupled with appropriate infrastructural measures over time vehicle speeds can be reduced even further.



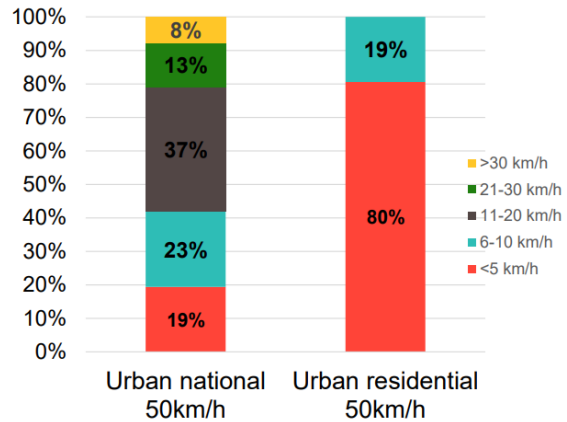
Historic survey of driver free speed



Percentage cars speeding on urban roads



Percentage cars speeding by degree of violation 2018



Irish motorists - results from Driver Attitude and Behaviour Study (RSA)



2019 – 2021 Speed results

Item – Motorists believe it is acceptable to.. (scale 1 – 10, acceptable 1 – 6)	2021	2020	2019
exceed 50km/h speed limits by less than 10km/h	63	61	53
exceed 100km/h speed limits by less than 10km/h	57	59	45
exceed 50km/h speed limits by more than 10km/h	30	34	26
exceed 100km/h speed limits by more than 10km/h	29	34	19
They also stated they 'strongly support' the use of safety cameras	42	41	57

RSA Research: A profile of Speeding in Ireland

https://www.rsa.ie/docs/default-source/default-document-library/rrd_res_20220421_rsaspeeddataa6-meeting-may22_final.pdf?sfvrsn=99ff4c79_5

Research from the UK shows that wide-area 20mp/h zones without traffic calming measures are cost effective and result in lower speeds.

https://www.20splenty.org/20mph_vfm



Questions for DoT

Is legislation required in order to change the default urban speed limit from 50km/h to 30km/h? Or can it be done via Regulation? Would each LA need to amend its Bye-Laws to provide for exceptions?



The following table shows towns that do not have a built-up area speed limit:

TownM	County	Approximate Population
Swords	Dublin	36,924
Celbridge	Kildare	19,537
Malahide	Dublin	15,846
Carrigaline	Cork	14,775
Maynooth	Kildare	12,510
Ashbourne	Meath	11,355
Laytown-Bettystown-Mornington	Meath	10,889
Skerries	Dublin	9,671
Portmarnock	Dublin	9,285
Rush	Dublin	9,231
Ratoath	Meath	9,043
Kildare	Kildare	8,142
Portarlington	Laois	7,788
Lusk	Dublin	7,022
Dunboyne	Meath	6,959
Donabate	Dublin	6,778
Clane	Kildare	6,702
Newcastle West	Limerick	6,327
Kinsealy-Drinan	Dublin	5,814
Roscommon	Roscommon	5,693
Kilcock	Kildare	5,533
Roscrea	Tipperary	5,403
Sallins	Kildare	5,283
Blessington	Wicklow	5,010

Table 2 - towns that do not have a built-up area speed limit



The following table shows cities and towns that have suburbs and environs outside their legal boundaries (these areas depend on special speed limits to have low speed limits).

Town	County	Approximate Population Outside Legal Boundary
Dublin City and suburbs	Dublin	583,015
Cork City and suburbs	Cork	79,352
Limerick City and suburbs	Limerick	34,348
Portlaoise	Laois	16,506
Kilkenny	Kilkenny	15,712
Mullingar	Westmeath	10,689
Carlow	Carlow	9,332
Midleton	Cork	8,268
Drogheda	Louth	8,185
Enniscorthy	Wexford	7,996
Greystones	Wicklow	7,295
Trim	Meath	6,827
Dundalk	Louth	6,667
Cavan	Cavan	6,556
Cobh	Cork	5,847
Gorey	Wexford	5,651
Ennis	Clare	5,180
Bray	Wicklow	5,020

Table 3 - cities and towns that have suburbs and environs outside their legal boundaries