



## SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

**Enterprise, Transport & Lifelong Learning Department**  
Transport Division 3

Victoria Quay  
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Director of Roads (or Equivalent)  
Roads Authorities in Scotland

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Your ref:  
Our ref:

28 October 2003

Dear Sir/Madam

### **TRIAL OF PART TIME TWENTY MPH SPEED LIMITS IN SCOTLAND**

#### **Introduction**

1. Roads authorities in Scotland will know that a pilot study into low cost twenty mph part-time speed limit signs outside schools has been ongoing since 2001, with the trial period set for 2 years. The pilot involved 5 road authorities (West Lothian, Aberdeenshire, Angus, The City of Edinburgh and Glasgow City Councils).

The sign used (after a range of options were considered) was a form of an activated invariable sign (with no advanced signing or traffic calming specified). The monitoring data for the trial period between 2001 and 2003 has been analysed in a final report prepared for The Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland (SCOTS) by David Campbell, Lex Harrison and David McGuigan.

#### **Results of Findings**

2. The key findings of the report are:

- speeds are seen to be reduced.
- speed reductions seem to be similar across the trial sites.
- no specific characteristics of the trial sites were found to influence speed reduction.

These findings would suggest that location and specific site characteristics would not be barriers to the introduction of similar schemes elsewhere in Scotland. SCOTS are very encouraged by the findings of the report and have recommended to the Scottish Executive that the roll-out of this low-cost signing be extended to all road authorities in Scotland.

#### **Criteria for use/Future Action**

3. The purpose of this letter is to invite all Directors of Roads to apply for a blanket authorisation for use of a traffic sign to diagram 670, 600mm diameter with non-standard plate



"when lights flash" on a white panel set on a black backing board with four flashing amber lights. The lights would flash alternately top and bottom when speed limit is in force for use outside schools in their area. There is also an additional sign for use at side streets/ cul de sacs as shown on the attached drawings.

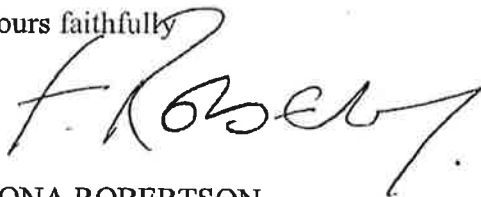
4. The authorisation will permit a 'suite' of different signs as shown on the attached drawings which can be used to accord with circumstances within the individual roads authority area and which shall be erected in tandem with an appropriate Traffic Regulation Order. However, when considering where such signs would be appropriate, roads authorities should bear the following points in mind:

- a. the length of the part-time limit should be kept as short as possible in front of schools so that drivers will identify the lower limit with the school;
- b. single-sided signing will be permitted **for the use of this sign only**;
- c. a 30 mph sign is required on the exit to the part-time 20 zone; and
- d. the variation for side streets is only authorised in conjunction with the main signs, and **not as an alternative to be used on their own**.

#### Enquiries

5. Any enquiry relating to this letter should be made to Iain Gardiner, Scottish Executive, Transport Division 3, Area 2F, Victoria Quay EH6 6QQ (telephone: 0131 244 0838).

Yours faithfully



FIONA ROBERTSON  
Head of Branch  
Transport Division 3

Date	31/10/05
From	
To	
Subject	
Comments	



Enterprise, Transport & Lifelong Learning Department  
Transport Division 3

Victoria Quay  
Edinburgh EH6 6QQ

**ETLLD Circular No. 1 /2004**

To: Chief Executives, Scottish Local Authorities  
Chief Officers of Transportation, Scottish Local Authorities  
Chief Constables

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Your ref:  
Our ref:

26 March 2004



Dear Sir/Madam

**20 MPH SPEED LIMITS AROUND SCHOOLS ON ROADS WITH SPEED LIMITS HIGHER THAN 30 MPH**

1. This circular provides guidance on the introduction of 20 mph speed limits outside schools on roads with speed limits higher than 30 mph. It supplements the guidance on 20 mph speed limits in SEDD Circular 6/2001 and revises the advice in that Circular on variable (part-time) speed limits.
2. The Executive believes that a 20 mph speed limit should be the norm outside schools. Outside schools on roads subject to a 30 mph speed limit the options described in Circular 6/2001 are available to local authorities.
3. The advice in Circular 6/2001 that variable 20 mph speed limits should not be introduced on roads subject to a speed limit higher than 30 mph no longer applies. In relation to 20 mph speed limits outside schools, roads with existing speed limits higher than 30 mph are generally through routes. The aim is to increase the safety of children walking or cycling to and from school while minimising delays and disruption to through traffic. A permanent 20 mph speed limit is less likely to be appropriate in these circumstances and a mandatory variable 20 mph limit, operating only on school days at times when children are going to or from school, is considered to be the most suitable option.
4. The length of road on which a 20 mph speed limit should apply at individual schools will be determined by a number of factors, including the exact location and access point of the school in relation to adjoining roads; severance from the community; and desire lines taken by pupils. As an example, it may be that the position of existing school warning signs would provide suitable starting/finishing points for the 20 mph limit.
5. As with other speed limit proposals it is important that consultation with the police should take place at an early stage.



## SIGNING

6. The Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland has now completed trials of low cost electronic signs with flashing lights indicating a part-time speed limit. The Executive's letter of 28 October 2003 indicated that it is prepared to give blanket authorisation, on request, for the use of the signs, shown in Appendix 1, in a local authority's area. These low cost signs can be used as an alternative to the signs prescribed in Regulation 58 of the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002 (TSRGD).
7. On roads with existing speed limits higher than 30 mph it will be necessary to warn drivers of the existence of a 20 mph speed limit ahead and to achieve the necessary reduction in speeds. It is considered that, in most cases, a single advance warning sign would be appropriate to indicate the operation of a reduced speed limit ahead, while keeping costs and sign clutter to a minimum. A manually operated sign or permanently visible sign would not be appropriate, the former because of health and safety issues, while the latter would be visible outwith the times of operation of the 20 mph limit. A permanent electronic sign linked to or synchronized with the main sign is, therefore, recommended. Advance signs should include diagram 545 with sub-plate 546 of the TSRGD above a legend reading '20 limit ahead', as shown in Appendix 2. The '20 limit ahead' legend will only be visible when the part-time speed limit is in operation. The sign assemblage should normally include flashing amber lights and can be activated by a timer or a combination of a timer plus vehicle approach speeds. Signs without flashing amber lights may be used on low flow roads or sites where the installation is remote or battery powered, where an authority considers that an intermittent sign will attract sufficient attention without flashing lights. The 85th percentile speed on the approach to the proposed starting point of the 20 mph limit should be used to determine the most appropriate location of the advance sign.
8. The Executive will be prepared to issue blanket authorisation, on request, for the use of the advance warning signs by individual local authorities.

## PUBLICITY

9. When implementing 20 mph schemes outside schools, particularly those on roads with speed limits higher than 30 mph, it will be important to raise public awareness of the schemes. The aim would be to achieve an understanding that the schemes are being introduced to make the areas round schools safer for children as well as alerting drivers to the likelihood that they will encounter a 20 mph speed limit outside schools in what could be unexpected circumstances. Local authorities may wish to consider how best to generate awareness of the 20 mph speed limit outside schools initiative in their areas.

## RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

10. The Scottish Executive is providing additional resources for local authorities, totalling up to £27 million (£5 million in 2003-04, and £11 million in each of 2004-05 and 2005-06) for the introduction of 20 mph speed limits around schools, including schools on roads with speed limits higher than 30 mph, and related safety projects.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

11. For further information about the content of this Circular, or to request additional copies, please contact Ian Robertson, Scottish Executive Enterprise, Transport and Lifelong Learning



Department, Transport Division 3, Area 2-E, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ (telephone 0131 244 0848, e-mail [ian.c.robertson@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:ian.c.robertson@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)).

Yours faithfully

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**ANN WHATCOTT**

