

Report for Minister Donohoe meeting with Jake's Legacy Campaign

23 September 2014

Arising from a meeting between Minister Donohoe and the *Jake's Legacy Campaign* on 5 August 2014, the *Campaign* is seeking the following measures to be implemented:

1. Speed ramps to be installed in all current housing estates throughout Ireland and for specific legislation to ensure that they are in place before houses are sold or occupied
2. Bye-laws to be passed by all local authorities throughout Ireland creating special speed zones of 30 km/h in residential areas
3. Provision to be made in primary legislation to introduce a lower speed limit of 20 km/h

Following this meeting, the Roads Division of DTTAS immediately carried out a survey to examine the use and implementation of traffic calming measures (specifically speed ramps and speed limits) in housing estates and streets throughout Ireland.



**An Roinn Iompair
Turasóireachta agus Spóirt**

Department of Transport,
Tourism and Sport

DTTAS Speed Ramp Survey and 30 km/h speed limit implementation in local areas

Existing national guidelines regarding speed limits and ramps

There are a number of existing documents which are relevant to the discussion of low speed limits and ramps;

- Traffic Management Guidelines 2003
- Guidelines for the Application of Special Speed Limits 2010
- Traffic Signs Manual 2010
- Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets 2013

Traffic Management Guidelines 2003

This was the first Irish document to give detailed guidance regarding suitable traffic calming measures for different situations and to give detailed advice on the design and use of different types of ramps and other types of traffic calming measures. It also addresses the issue of speed management on roads. It introduces the concept of approaching the design of roads in new housing estates in a different way so that speed management is an intrinsic part of the road design and layout.

Guidelines for the Application of Special Speed Limits 2010

Section 5.7 of these guidelines gives particular guidance in respect of 30 km/h speed limits. It notes that in some instances such speed limits may need to be implemented in conjunction with physical traffic calming measures such as ramps. Following the Speed Limit Review in 2013 these Special Speed Limit Guidelines are currently being updated.

Traffic Signs Manual 2010

Clear and effective traffic signs are essential for the efficient operation of the road network, for the enforcement of traffic regulations and for road safety. The Traffic Signs Manual provides details of the traffic signs which may be used on roads in Ireland, including their layout and symbols, the circumstances in which each sign may be used and rules for positioning them.

Chapter 6 of the Manual provides details of the warning signs which may be used on roads in Ireland. Warning signs are used to alert drivers to danger or potential danger ahead. They indicate the need for special caution and may require a consequent manoeuvre or reduction in speed. Appropriate use of warning signs

assists with road safety. The application of the signs should be consistent, so that the signs are accepted by drivers as warnings of potential hazards.

Chapter 6.17.8 illustrates Sign W 142 Children Crossing (see *Figure 1 below*). This sign may be used to alert drivers to the danger of children crossing roads in *residential areas* other than at schools and playgrounds. The sign is provided for use in towns and villages and on roads of a primarily residential character with continuous housing frontage. The sign *may also be provided at the entrances to housing estates* from main traffic routes.



Figure 1: Sign W 142 (Children Crossing)

Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (2013)

The Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets is a joint publication between the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (DTTAS) and the Department of Environment Community and Local Government (DECLG) and re-examines the role and function of streets within our urban areas, where vehicular traffic is most likely to interact with pedestrians and cyclists and where public transport can most effectively and efficiently be planned for and provided.

It places emphasis on designing new urban roads and streets in such a way that excessive speeds are discouraged. It gives guidance on how to achieve this by using measures such as restricting carriageway width, limiting forward visibility and by careful horizontal design (including the avoidance of long straight sections of roadway). By following this new design standard for new housing estates and streets local authorities will avoid the need to have to retrofit ramps in the future. It is also open to local authorities to apply many of the principles set out in DMURS to existing estates and streets when a decision is made to upgrade them. However other approaches will also be needed when dealing retrospectively with existing estates which have problems with traffic speeds and these are referenced in the Traffic Management Guidelines.

DTTAS Speed Ramp Survey and 30 km/h speed limit implementation

On 6 August 2014, DTTAS contacted all local authorities requesting their participation in a national survey. The purpose of this survey was to examine the use and implementation of traffic calming measures (specifically speed ramps and speed limits) in housing estates and streets throughout Ireland.

The improvement and maintenance of regional and local roads is the statutory responsibility of each local authority, in accordance with the provisions of Section 13 of the Roads Act 1993. Works on those roads are funded from local authorities' own resources supplemented by State road grants. The selection and prioritisation of works is a matter for the local authority.

The provision of speed limits is catered for in the Road Traffic Acts. Default speed limits are limits which automatically apply and include the motorway speed limit of 120 km/h, the speed limit on non-urban national roads of 100 km/h, the speed limit on non-urban regional and local roads of 80 km/h and the built up area speed limit of 50 km/h. Special speed limits including 30km may also be applied to roads using bye-laws and these limits override the previous default limits. The making of bye-laws for special speed limits requires a public consultation procedure to be followed and ultimately any decision is made by the Elected Members of the relevant county or city.

As part of the survey on ramps and speed limits in local areas, the survey sought specifically to examine the following issues;

- The number of housing estates in each local authority area
- Percentage of estates with speed ramps
- Number of estates, streets and roads with 30km speed limits
- The decision-making process regarding the location of speed ramps
- The criteria used when deciding on ramp installation and
- The average costs of ramps

The survey period was 6 August to 2 September 2014. A total of 33 local authorities were contacted as part of the survey; that is, 28 county councils and 5 city council areas¹. The overall survey response rate was 97% (32 of the 33 local authorities surveyed provided a response).

There is no legal definition of a housing estate in Ireland. Across the country estates vary in size, type, location and population. It is important to note therefore that local authorities have to decide for themselves what constitutes a housing estate. For this reason it is probably more useful when comparing different local authorities to refer to the percentage of housing estates that have ramps rather than the number.

Summary of main survey findings;

- 8,725 housing estates nationally (from all local authorities who responded)
- On average approx. 14% of estates have ramps.
- 1,046 main roads/streets have ramps

¹ City Councils included Cork City Council, Dublin City Council, Galway City Council, Limerick City Council and Waterford City Council.

- Excluding Dublin City Council which is referred to separately, 135 estates (or 1.5% of estates) have 30 km/h speed limits
- Three residential areas in Dublin City have a 30 km/h speed restriction, namely; Marino (D3), Irishtown (D4) and adjacent to the South Lotts Road (D4).
- €3,200 is the average cost per speed ramp
- In general, decisions regarding speed ramp installation are made by the local authority Executive with input from the Elected Members and generally follows the receipt of representation and a public consultation process.
- The principal guidance documents that local authorities refer to when deciding on ramp installation include the Traffic Management Guidelines, the Design Manual for Urban Streets (DMURS) and also local policy documents.
- Local authorities have listed a wide range of criteria/factors which are considered when assessing the need for ramps on a particular road and these include:
 - Accident history
 - Traffic volume
 - Actual traffic speeds
 - Road alignment (horizontal and vertical)
 - Proximity of schools
 - Presence of “rat runs” where there is significant residential development
 - Possibility of alternative traffic calming measures
 - Positive / negative feedback from residents
 - Extent of direct access from frontage along a road
 - Pedestrian generators
 - Danger to vulnerable road users.

Appendix A (attached) sets out the detailed survey information as provided by different local authorities. It also provides some summary information

Proposed measures from DTTAS

The guidance documents already issued by the DTTAS provide a policy framework for public roads under the responsibility of local authorities in respect of:

- Designing new estates so that vehicles travel at much lower speeds than heretofore (DMURS) and
- Revamping existing estates using a wide range of measures (including the use of signage and ramps) to assist in lowering vehicle speeds (Traffic Management Guidelines, Speed Limit Guidelines and DMURS)

The DTTAS continues to update its guidance to take account of best practice. However, it is important to note that the local authority has a *statutory* status as Road Authority and it is therefore fully responsible for implementing Special Speed

Limits and for undertaking traffic calming works. The purpose of DTTAS's policy framework is to guide local authorities in assessing what actions can best deliver safety improvements in residential areas – the measures selected will depend on the particular location and local authorities need to have the flexibility to make decisions that take account of local conditions.

The most important objective is to reduce vehicle speeds in housing estates so as to improve safety for children and adults and DTTAS sees the increased use of a 30km/h speed limit in residential areas as a measure that will help to achieve that objective. DTTAS will issue a Circular to local authorities to:

- Reiterate the policy framework that is in place both in respect of the design of new roads and the management of speed within existing housing estates.
- Provide a review process which local authorities would be asked to follow so that the Executive and the Elected Members could focus on the issue of vehicle speeds in housing estates and seek to achieve lower average speeds where existing speeds are considered to be too high.

Roads Division
19th September 2014