

Mayor & Members,

I refer to the following Notice of Motion from Cllr Seamus McGrath which is on the Agenda for the Council meeting on the 12th of October:-

“To seek a written report outlining the timeframe and process for the next Countywide Speed Limit review.”

Response

The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport has requested the National Roads Authority and all Local Authorities to commence a comprehensive review and update of all speed limits in their administrative area in accordance with the process and methodologies set out in its publication “Guidelines for Setting and Managing Speed Limits in Ireland” issued in April 2015 and set a deadline of April 2017 for completion of the review. I understand that copies of the Guidelines have been circulated to the Members of Council.

The Department had indicated that training in the new Guidelines was to be arranged in the form of an initial National workshop followed by more in-depth specific training in late Autumn. The national Workshop was held on 17th June and was attended by staff members of Cork County Council but to date the anticipated in-depth training has not yet materialized.

Transport Infrastructure Ireland (formerly the NRA) have been tasked with leading the review in respect of National Roads and it is understood that it has recently appointed Consulting Engineers to carry out the review on National Roads with the intention that the consultation and bye-law approval phases would intermesh with the LA’s programme, with the ultimate passing of the bye-laws being a reserved function.

The requirements of the Guidelines in relation to the review are much more onerous than those previously in place and inter alia require:

1. Confirm existing Speed Limit bye-laws and signs, - this is in progress and nearing completion and should form the Draft start point for the 2016/2017 review.
2. For National Roads implement 80km/h on those sections that are not suitable for a 100km/h Speed Limit. [led by National Roads Authority], - initiated by NRA via Consulting engineer
3. For Regional and Local Roads Identify and implement 100 km/h Speed limits on those sections that are suitable.

4. Implement Speed Limits lower than 80km/h as appropriate for 'at-risk' locations.
5. Implement appropriate speed limits for urban areas.
6. Implement 30km/h for housing estates that are suitable, Pilot implementation in 37 estates almost in place.
7. Implement 'Slow Zones' for housing estates that are suitable: Slow zone signs under erection in the majority of the 37.
8. Review Speed Limits at locations where there have been queries. Queries received over the last few years have been collated but further recommendations can be expected to be received through the public advertisement consultation phase.

Clarification has not yet been received on what is meant by the term 'at-risk' locations in respect of No. 4 above and this clarification will be a significant factor in determining the scale of the review to be undertaken and the resource requirements and accordingly the Council's ability to complete the review within the prescribed timeframe.

The condition in the Guidelines requiring the blanket limit of 80 kph on all roads less than 7.0m in width will be an issue in West Cork where many Regional Roads of width less than 7.0m were reclassified from the default 80kph to 100 kph in the last review.

The following is the series of steps in relation to public consultation and approval by Members in the process:

- a) Notify TII, (NRA) An Garda Siochána, Elected members, District Engineers and Adjoining Local Authorities of proposed decision to review Special Speed limit bye-laws and invite submissions. These submissions are reviewed by the Local Authority Executive staff and amendments suggested as appropriate. The notifications will issue by 23rd October 2015.
- b) Schedule both submissions received and proposed amendments and place on the Agenda of each Municipal/metropolitan District Meeting for approval. (The representations received from the Garda Commissioner are also considered here)
- c) Elected Members consider the submissions and amendments and Draft Bye-Laws are prepared on foot of this review.
- d) A Public Consultation phase follows on the Draft Bye-laws consisting of newspaper advertisements, display of draft bye-laws at Council Offices and on LA website and

objections are accepted, in writing, within a period of 30 days. Consultation with adjoining Local Authorities is to proceed in parallel with this.

- e) Executive to consider objections and submissions received and to prepare a report for elected members, inclusive of comments from An Garda Síochána.
- f) Elected members consider the report at Municipal/Metropolitan District Level.
- g) A further Draft (B) of the bye-laws and maps is subsequently prepared and this is put before the elected members at Full Council level for adoption, with a specified date for implementation of the new bye-laws.
- h) The bye-laws are published stating the day upon which the bye-laws come into force and the signs are erected/moved in advance of the specified date.

The date currently specified by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport for the completion of this process is April 2017.

Tom Stritch,

Director of Services,

9th October 2015