

Question to the Cabinet Member for a Greener Powys on speed limits in Newtown

Background provided by Mr John Williams

In Early October, a poll was carried out within 3 of the more popular community Facebook groups in Newtown, to determine how people felt about the imposition of 20mph zones on Pool Rd and Kerry Road in Newtown. In just 2 days, the overwhelming majority of recipients were in favour of returning both Pool and Kerry road to 30mph.

I subsequently undertook research on how both roads might qualify for exemption from 20mph and came up with the following information

1) Pool Road Newtown (A4811) – that section recently revised to 20mph (840m approx.)

On this section of road pedestrians and cyclists do not mix in a frequent manner, there are pavements either side of the public highway, and one of these has a dedicated to cyclists lane incorporated into its design, **this is a valid reason for an exemption from 20 mph, as stated by Welsh Gov Guidance (Setting exceptions to the 20mph default speed limit for restricted roads)**

Whilst I have not undertaken any research, I travel this section of Pool rd on a regular basis both by car and cycle, I would not say that there are significantly more pedestrians or cyclists travelling long that road, I would say that mechanically propelled vehicle use is anecdotally far higher. **This is a valid reason for an exemption from 20 mph , as stated by Welsh Gov Guidance.**

Do pedestrians and cyclists mixing with motor traffic? Not significantly, there are dedicated cycle and pedestrian paths on this route. **This is a valid reason for an exemption from 20 mph, as stated by Welsh Gov Guidance.**

Pool Road is an A road, this is one of the main arterial route for traffic passing through Newtown

Most exceptions are expected to be made on A and B classified roads. These generally form the main routes carrying traffic through urban areas. **This is a valid reason for an exemption from 20 mph , as stated by Welsh Gov Guidance.**

Place criteria

1. Within a 100m walk of any educational setting (e.g. primary, secondary, further education and higher education) The nearest educational setting is is Ysgol Calon y Dderwen, this is over 900m distant when walking **This is a valid reason for an exemption from 20 mph , as stated by Welsh Gov Guidance.**

2. Within 100m walk of any community centre The nearest community centre I can find is Newtown public library approximately 850m distant. **This is a valid reason for an exemption from 20 mph , as stated by Welsh Gov Guidance.**

3. Within 100m walk of any hospital The nearest hospital is 1km distant, and not on pool rd. **This is a valid reason for an exemption from 20 mph , as stated by Welsh Gov Guidance.**

4. Where the number of residential and/or retail premises fronting a road exceeds 20 properties per km. **All** the retail premises on this section of road, apart from the BP garage (for obvious reasons) do not have direct access from the main road, they all use service roads. **This is a valid reason for an exemption from 20 mph , as stated by Welsh Gov Guidance.**

There are 9 residential properties on this section, the majority of which are set back some considerable distance from the road, all are well served by footpath, cycle paths. This is considerably less than the 20 threshold. **This is a valid reason for an exemption from 20 mph , as stated by Welsh Gov Guidance.**

I have no information on accidents on pool road, and whilst Powys does have the highest road casualty figures in Wales, this is undoubtedly a reflection on the counties extremely large road network. Road casualties in Powys have declined by over a quarter in the past 7 years. There are several factors that in themselves serve to reduce vehicle speed on pool road, without having to recourse to a default 20;

- The Tesco traffic lights,
- Morrison/Aldi roundabout
- 3 sets of traffic calming bollards, a pedestrian crossing.

All of these are significant road safety features that make a default 20mph redundant.

The section of road we are discussing is significantly higher than the threshold for minimum length of speed limit (300m SLSLW recommendation) . **This is a valid reason for an exemption from 20 mph , as stated by Welsh Gov Guidance.**

With all of the above factors taken into consideration, I believe that the decision taken by Powys CC Highways to advise a default 20mph speed limit set for this section of pool road, was one made in error, and needs to be addressed. The Welsh government guidance states that the highway authorities continue to have the flexibility to set local speed limits that are right for individual roads, reflecting local needs and considerations. I hope that you can meet this expectation.

2) Kerry Road Newtown (A489) – that section recently revised to 20mph (600m approx.)

On this section of road pedestrians and cyclists do not mix in a frequent manner, there is a pavements on the side of the public highway, this is primarily due to the severity of the hill en-route to Kerry that deters all but the most fit and keen cyclist. **This is a valid reason for an exemption from 20 mph, as stated by Welsh Gov Guidance (Setting exceptions to the 20mph default speed limit for restricted roads)**

Whilst I have not undertaken any research, I travel this section of Kerry Rd on a regular basis both by car, I would not say that there are significantly more pedestrians or cyclists travelling long that road, I would say that mechanically

propelled vehicle use is anecdotally far higher than cyclist. **This is a valid reason for an exemption from 20 mph , as stated by Welsh Gov Guidance.**

Do pedestrians and cyclists mix with motor traffic? Although you might expect to see the occasional cyclist between the Pool/kerry Road traffic lights and the pedestrian controlled traffic lights leading to a nearby path to the Treowen estate, the road is quite wide, and with good visibility, **The absence of any significant mixing is a valid reason for an exemption from 20 mph, as stated by Welsh Gov Guidance.**

Kerry Road is an A road, this is one of the main arterial route for traffic passing through Newtown

Most exceptions are expected to be made on A and B classified roads. These generally form the main routes carrying traffic through urban areas. **This is a valid reason for an exemption from 20 mph , as stated by Welsh Gov Guidance.**

Place criteria

1. Within a 100m walk of any educational setting (e.g. primary, secondary, further education and higher education) The nearest educational setting is is Ysgol Calon y Dderwen, this is over 900m distant when walking **This is a valid reason for an exemption from 20 mph , as stated by Welsh Gov Guidance.**

2. Within 100m walk of any community centre The nearest community centre I can find is Newtown public library approximately 850m distant. **This is a valid reason for an exemption from 20 mph , as stated by Welsh Gov Guidance.**

3. Within 100m walk of any hospital The nearest hospital is 1km distant, and not on pool rd. **This is a valid reason for an exemption from 20 mph , as stated by Welsh Gov Guidance.**

4. Where the number of residential and/or retail premises fronting a road exceeds 20 properties per km. **There are only 2** retail premises on this section of road, neither have direct frontage onto Kerry road, they both use a service road. **This is a valid reason for an exemption from 20 mph , as stated by Welsh Gov Guidance.**

There are 5 residential properties on this section, all bar 2 are set back some considerable distance from the road, all are well served by footpath, cycle paths. This is considerably less than the 20 threshold. **This is a valid reason for an exemption from 20 mph , as stated by Welsh Gov Guidance.**

I have no information on accidents on Kerry road, and whilst Powys does have the highest road casualty figures in Wales, this is undoubtedly a reflection on the counties extremely large road network. Road casualties in Powys have declined by over a quarter in the past 7 years. There are several factors that in themselves serve to reduce vehicle speed on kerry road, without having to recourse to a default 20;

- Build up of traffic approaching Pool road traffic light.
- 1 pedestrian crossing.

Both of these are significant road safety features that make a default 20mph redundant.

The section of road we are discussing is significantly higher than the threshold for minimum length of speed limit (300m SLSLW recommendation) . **This is a valid reason for an exemption from 20 mph , as stated by Welsh Gov Guidance.**

With all of the above factors taken into consideration, I believe that the decision taken by Powys CC Highways advise a default 20mph speed limit set for this section of Kerry road, was one made in error, and needs to be addressed. The Welsh government guidance states that the highway authorities continue to have the flexibility to set local speed limits that are right for individual roads, reflecting local needs and considerations. I hope that you can meet this expectation.