

# Road Safety – Further information

## Speed limits on rural roads

### What is a rural speed limit?

Warwickshire is a largely rural County, and therefore a significant number of its residents live on rural roads which are either de-restricted (maximum speed of 60mph for cars) or 50mph. A rural road tends to have few dwellings, whilst vehicle speeds tend to be much higher than they are in built up towns and villages.

### Can a lower speed limit be requested on a rural road?

The County Council receives a number of requests from residents who live alongside rural stretches of roads. Many concerned residents who live on these roads would like to see a lower speed limit installed, to improve general safety, for the protection of their family and pets, and to improve access to their property. This is a totally natural and understandable request.

However, rural roads do not lend themselves very well to lower speed limits and many drivers will instinctively perceive the road speed as higher than in an urban area. With little development such as shops and schools to gauge speed, a significant proportion of road users would disregard a lower speed limit.

### Why does simply changing the speed limit not work?

Research carried out recently by the Department for Transport (DfT) found that in some situations where speed limits are lowered, there is not a corresponding lowering of vehicle speeds. The DfT guidelines explain that it is futile to introduce a speed limit unless there is strong evidence that most drivers will comply with it. If the speed at which most people instinctively drive is significantly higher than the proposed limit, then without engineering measures being introduced to lower average speeds, the limit is likely to be largely ignored.

Unrealistic speed limits on rural roads with few residential properties, no matter how desirable they appear, simply fall into disrepute and create an excessive enforcement burden on the Police. As Police time is also a limited resource, they have made it very clear that they will not support a change in speed limit if it is outside of the current Government guidelines.

### Why are some main roads 50mph, whilst minor roads are 60mph?

In 2009, the Council reviewed and implemented a number of speed limit changes on A and B class roads funded by the Department for Transport. After completion of the A & B road review, it was hoped that a further review of C & D class roads would be considered, however there is currently no funding available to undertake a full review of C & D class roads in Warwickshire. Occasionally, a speed limit may change, if it addresses a safety issue and there is funding available, for example Area Committee funding.

## Further information

**Warwickshire Speed Management Strategy:**

[www.warwickshire.gov.uk/roadsafetyinfo](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/roadsafetyinfo)

**Circular 1/06 – setting local speed limits:**

[www2.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roadsafety/speedmanagement/dftcircular106/dftcircular106.pdf](http://www2.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roadsafety/speedmanagement/dftcircular106/dftcircular106.pdf)