



Response to Request for Information

Reference FOI 0515102
Date 26 May 2015

20 mph limits

Request:

We are requesting the following information:

1. Electronic copies of any research, consultations, or analysis into 20mph limits that you have conducted. This includes: materials reviewing whether they should be introduced, consulting local stakeholders, or explaining their introduction; materials exploring the impact of 20mph limits in your area; and materials outlining reasons for not implementing 20mph limits, if this was decided.
2. If your council has introduced any 20mph limits, on what proportion of roads have you done so, on a sign-only, area-wide or zone (traffic-calmed) basis? (Should you not have the precise lengths of roads that have been treated in this way, an estimate of the proportion of road types that have 20mph limits would still be useful, for example 20mph zones with traffic calming are in place around 90% of schools, and 20mph limits of some form are in place on around 50% of residential roads).
3. What are your future plans for (a) the (further) development of 20mph limits and/or (b) consideration or review of whether to implement (more) 20mph limits?
4. a) For areas where you have introduced 20mph limits, what are your reasons for doing so? b) For areas where you have not introduced 20mph limits, what are your reasons for not doing so?
5. Can you give us an idea of the costs of implementation of 20mph limits where you have done so? We would like to know the costs of i) research/consultations, ii) public engagement, iii) road signs (if possible broken down by the cost of new repeater signs, and replacement signs).

Response:

We can confirm that the Council holds information falling within the description specified in your request. However, Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 allows a public authority to refuse a request if the cost of providing the information to the applicant would exceed the 'appropriate limit' as defined by the Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004.

We are unable to provide a report that incorporates the level of detail in the request as manual extraction of the records to provide the specific detail in the format or your request would exceed the 'appropriate limit'.

The Regulations provide that the appropriate limit to be applied to requests received by local authorities is £450 (equivalent to 2.5 days of work). In estimating the cost of complying with a request for information, an authority can only take into account any reasonable costs incurred in:

- (a) *Determining whether it holds the information,*
- (b) *locating the information, or a document which may contain the information,*
- (c) *retrieving the information, or a document which may contain the information, and*
- (d) *extracting the information from a document containing it".*

For the purposes of the estimate the costs of performing these activities should be estimated at a rate of £25 per hour.

As such I believe that the aggregated time that it would take to collate the information would be in excess of 18 hours (equivalent to a notional cost of £450).

However we are able to provide the following information:

1. I attach a copy of a PowerPoint presentation by Tim Philpot (Section Leader Road Safety at the time of the presentation in 2010/11) which provides information regarding 20 mph speed limits.
2. Wolverhampton introduced a blanket signed only 20 mph speed limit on all roads in the City Centre (inside the ring road) in 2002. Analysis of 5 year Personal Injury Accident (PIA) data revealed a modest 4% decrease in accidents and a slight increase in casualties. Subsequent introduction of vertical traffic calming features at key locations within the City Centre had resulted in a 30% reduction in PIA by 2010. We have interrogated our accident database and can report that PIA during the 5 year period (2009-2014) are 53% less than the 5 year period (2002-2007) following implementation of the signed only 20 mph speed limit. Approximately 50% of the City Centre roads are classified as "Local Distributors" under Wolverhampton's road hierarchy. When implemented in 2002, the City Centre 20 mph represented approximately 1.3% (9.7km) of Wolverhampton's entire highway network (735.5km).

3. Wolverhampton Highways Authority will continue to assess all speed limit changes and local safety scheme proposals on a case by case basis using DfT guidance principles set out in point 1 above. Wolverhampton City Council currently have no proposals to introduce blanket wide 20 mph speed limits in residential areas.
4. Wolverhampton City Council Highways Authority follow DfT guidance regarding the introduction of 20 mph speed limits / 20 mph zones i.e. 20 mph speed limits should be self-enforcing. Therefore we commission speed surveys, analyse resultant speeds and assess road geometry on an individual basis. If existing speeds are 24 mph or less then we would consider introducing a 20 mph speed limit without any form of traffic calming. There are currently twenty 20 mph zones in Wolverhampton and no 20 mph speed limits in Wolverhampton (with the exception of a few small cul-de-sac residential developments, where the length of the cul-de-sac is less than 100 metres in length)
5. This is difficult to provide anything meaningful as it will be dependent on many factors including the scale of the area to be covered (economies of scale), whether repeater signs can be placed on lamp columns i.e. the number of poles required, location of electrical feeds, location of other services which may need to be relocated to accommodate signs.