

The Members of the Environment Scrutiny Panel,  
Scrutiny Office,  
Morier House,  
JE1 1DD

7/2/11

**Public Call for Evidence**

**Review of speed limit policy**

**Tell us what YOU think!**

I refer to your advertisement in the JEP for feedback on the above.

I applaud your action in placing this advertisement and hope very much that, when you have gathered and consolidated the feedback, you will publish a resumé of it in the JEP together with your commentary and explanations where appropriate for the benefit of **all** road users (including pedestrians). This iterative step in the process whereby the pros and cons and viable and non viable alternatives are set out and supported by reliable and objectively presented facts and data, will be essential if **all** the public are to be engaged and take ownership of the final result. Although I myself (due to my participation, over the last five years, in efforts to achieve a 30 mph limit by St Clement's church) am quite well informed on this matter, even I do not feel that all avenues have been explored and probably, like most of the public, lack a proper knowledge of the issues and facts involved as well as harbouring misconceptions due to this lack of knowledge.

I cannot imagine that the cost of (say) a double spread in the JEP would not be money well spent on such an important matter. I am aware that over the last couple of years that there have been attempts to draw the public into a debate but none of them have really succeeded and the public meeting at St Lawrence Parish Hall, where only a handful of islanders turned up, said it all. In theory, iterative use of the internet should work but, I fear that, at this point in time, much as one would wish it, only a small minority of islanders are in truth being engaged by this means and therefore the main vehicle still needs to be the JEP.

Even despite the 'deadlines' missed since the States accepting Deputy Ian Gorst's request to set up a Review Group two years ago, it is still well worth spending extra time on this matter and to get it right and understood by the public.

I have to reside in the UK on and off for 60% of the year (for family reasons) and I am therefore able to provide opinions based on first-hand experience of day to day driving in the UK as it relates to fixed speed cameras (see below). On the other hand, due to my frequent absences from the island, I may well have missed some of the recent developments and apologise if this is the case and if it is borne out in what I have to say.

One UK government statistic used frequently to advertise the danger of speeding was that **someone hit by a car travelling at 30 mph has a 20% likelihood of becoming a fatality; at 40 mph this likelihood increases to 80%.**

I would add that in general, even 'good' drivers have a tendency to exceed the given speed limits by a few points. I find the foregoing statistic very telling and one that underlies the propositions that I should like to submit for your consideration.

### **Proposition 1 (Simplify the system)**

#### **Background**

The following proposition is based on my opinion, but one that I believe is supported by most people on the island and visitors with whom I speak; namely that a majority of the main roads in Jersey are potentially highly dangerous. Amongst the special features are

- narrow roads (designed originally to take carts and not skips!)
- non existent pavements,
- doors opening directly onto main roads,
- innumerable blind corners and driveway exits.

Whereas a 40mph speed limit may previously have been acceptable, due to the growth both in population and in car ownership (particularly 'fast' cars), it is no longer so. Over the years, local residents have been successful in obtaining special limits all over the island and this has resulted in a hotch-potch distribution of 20, 30 and 40 mph limits changing at very frequent intervals. This makes driving hazardous especially for the large number of visitors who do not use the roads day in, day out, as do the residents. In addition, some people have also become very concerned as to the large increase in the number of signs generally and their effects on the environment. The following proposal would both simplify speed limit signposting throughout the island as well as resulting in the elimination and destruction of hundreds of signs. It would, however, cater, quite rightly, for those who felt that 30 mph would be unreasonable for certain roads. A decrease in the overall speed limit would also reduce the danger to cyclists and thus be in line with the environmental objective of encouraging this form of transport.

#### **Proposition 1**

**The whole speed limit policy should be turned on its head and simplified by introducing a 30 mph limit for the whole island with a small number of agreed exceptions where the limits could be raised to 40 mph (or possibly changed to 20 mph or 50 mph if considered appropriate). Examples of the latter might be the Esplanade and the North Coast Road, schools etc.**

#### **Proposition 2: Use of 'fixed' speed cameras (Gatso)**

## Background

During the course of one of the earlier speed policy review public meetings, it became absolutely clear to me (as a UK resident) that both the Review Group and T T S had a totally false impression as to the merits and demerits of fixed speed cameras. I can only imagine that this had resulted from the reading of the distorted and sensational reports dished out by the UK tabloid press, who have given much voice to a minority who blame their local councils for raising money by 'milking' the motorists. Much as these cameras are purported to be disliked (probably by 'racers' ) they have in my, and I believe most UK people's experience if they were to be asked, been extremely effective when used sensibly. I acknowledge that some councils have overdone their introduction but this does not have to happen in Jersey. They are expensive to buy and to maintain but these costs can be wholly or partly recovered if the resulting fines are set at the correct rate. Since they are expensive to maintain on a day-to-day basis it is my experience that they are very often left in a dormant mode in the UK. However, since the cameras, by UK law, must be positioned as to be totally visible to the motorist, very few people, in practice, take the risk of assuming that a camera is dormant, so they are, in effect, active 24-hours per day and perform much more effectively and economically than a salaried motorcycle 'speed cop' whose efforts are more suited to longer stretches of road. (By way of anecdote, it is interesting to note that the police refused to monitor speeds at St Clement church because it would have been too dangerous and would contravene the Health and safety laws!)

What has to be understood by TTS is that such speed cameras are only effective in relation to a very specific place (i.e. a 'blackspot') since most drivers who continually drive in excess of the speed limit will simply slow down when passing the camera and then accelerate away again afterwards. But, where there is a specific blackspot (not in excess of (say) 100 m - such as outside St Clements church) a speed camera would certainly achieve the required speed reduction 24 hours a day (and there would be no H&S implications). Therefore, I would strongly advocate the use of a very limited number of these cameras in the island.

Incidentally, I would fully support the introduction of Penalty Points. These work very effectively as a deterrent in conjunction with fixed speed cameras in the UK, especially when an accumulation of 10 points (eg 4 minor offences) leads to an automatic driving ban for one year. They are accompanied by a fine and an automatic increase in one's insurance premium, which is also a form of deterrent.

### **Proposition 2.**

**A very small number of fixed speed cameras should be placed in specific known danger/blackspots**

### **Proposition 3. Consider and provide for all road users equally**

## Background

The Policy that will be finally agreed and become law will affect not only motorists but pedestrians and cyclists. Since it is likely that those who are to be placed at the greatest personal risk or danger as a result of what is finally agreed (and, possibly, comprise the

largest proportion of the island's 90,000 individuals (plus visitors) using the roads on a daily basis in the island), I feel that the Scrutiny Panel should ensure that it obtains feedback from, and weight its final proposals fairly in respect of, each constituency on a proportionate basis (ie not just the motorists!).

### **Proposition 3.**

**Pedestrians and cyclists to be considered on a proportionate basis in forming a policy**

### **Proposition 4. Base final proposals on sound interaction with the public**

#### Background

The following matters should be considered

- a) The public need to be provided with the relevant facts and figures on which to decide and should be given access to information when it is requested. (They are, after all, paying for its collection)
- b) The public also need relevant factual background both on a proactive and reactive basis so as to enable proper discussion to take place and reasoned feedback to be given in response to their submissions.  
(eg. proactive information could include such information as probable increases in journey times – in the case of St Clement, residents themselves calculated that the increase in journey times to and from town would be negligible (ie seconds) were the speed limit to be dropped by 10mph. TTS only stated that journey times would be adversely affected which was true but somewhat misleading.
- c) An attempt should be made to avoid the publication and use of 'selected information' intended to point to a predetermined result when data can be read in several ways For instance it should be noted that
  - statistics indicating 'acceptable' average speeds on roads can mask a huge number of individual speeds dangerously over the limit, just one of which could have potentially have caused a fatal accident.
  - statistics regarding accidents that have happened are not necessarily fully representative and do not always reflect the reality on the ground. Many accidents and near misses can go unreported – and can represent future accidents 'just waiting to happen'. Thus, information must also be obtained from those on the spot.

(In the case of St Clement, the lowering of the limit was continually derided by TTS on the basis that there had been no accidents there over the last 3 years. In fact, local residents can point to many examples of 'near misses' but, since no accident occurred, most remain unreported.

e) Properly advertised discussion forums / meetings should be advertised well in advance

Background

The failing of the Review Group to involve the public in general was evidenced by the turnout to a public

Meeting held at St Lawrence Parish Hall at which only a handful of people attended on behalf of the island's

90,000 public (and 80% of those attending were St Clement Church campaigners). It is hardly surprising that

the public are now questioning the results of the island wide report subsequently issued. The main reason for

this was that the meeting was given almost no publicity and that which was given was given on the radio at

the last minute.

In general, better communications and more relevant data should be provided to the public so that it feels that proper consultation has taken place and that it has 'ownership' of whatever policy is finally arrived at.

**Proposition 4. Implement the agreed policy without exceptions**

T T S should be made to abide by whatever policy is to finally agreed and passed by the States without exception (this was not the case in the St. Clement's church).

I have not mentioned 'Green Lanes'; my personal feeling on this is that these tend to manage themselves and that any attempt to monitor or control speeds on them is likely to be impossible and uneconomical in practice. I would suggest that the 30mph (see Proposition 1 above) be imposed and that any known specific repetitive infringements or reported accidents be investigated on an individual basis with a charge for 'dangerous driving' being made if this proves to be the case.

I hope that the above provides some positive feedback that will assist you in your work.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you wish further comments with regard to any aspects of the above.

Yours faithfully

Michael du Pre