

Traffic Calming

Identifying a suitable area for treatment – When an area has been assessed as requiring attention, the process leading to implementation of a scheme can begin.

Definition of area to be treated - The extent of the treatment area must be defined. The potential detrimental effect on the surrounding road network by the introduction of traffic calming measures should be considered.

Consultation - Preliminary design is presented for comment to the Police, emergency services, bus companies, local residents representatives and other interested parties. The needs of cyclists are also taken into account.

Final Design - Following consultation, final design is prepared and the statutory legislative process can begin.

Statutory notification - Traffic calming proposals are published in the local press as part of the statutory requirement. Interested parties have the opportunity to comment on the proposals within a 30 day period.

Construction - Following the resolution of any objections the scheme can be implemented. Some disruption is likely during construction.

Monitoring - The effect of treatment on the general area is monitored to judge the success in terms of reduction of vehicle speeds and road traffic accidents.

One of the keys to a successful scheme is local community involvement. Local concerns identified through well planned consultation will help ensure that the appropriate measures are provided in the necessary locations to meet expectations of residents.

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Legislative Documents

The Road Humps Regulations (NI) 1999
The Traffic Calming Regulations (NI) 1995
Traffic Signs Regulations (NI) 1997
The Roads (NI) Order 1993
The Road Traffic Regulation (NI) Order 1997

The objective of a traffic calming scheme is to improve driver behaviour and control speed to a level in keeping with the surrounding urban street environment.



Traffic calming can:-

- reduce the number and severity of casualties resulting from road traffic accidents
- discourage heavy vehicles and 'through traffic' from using unsuitable routes
- reduce speeding
- improve the urban street environment and reduce community severance
- promote a greater feeling of safety
- promote cycling and walking



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Assessment procedure

The demand for traffic calming greatly exceeds our capacity to provide schemes. An assessment procedure has therefore been introduced to enable Roads Service to identify those sites where the greatest benefits may be achieved, primarily in terms of accident reduction.

The main factors considered are:-

- 5 year road traffic injury accident history as provided by the Police
- vehicle speeds recorded on site
- volume and type of traffic recorded on site
- environmental factors presence of schools, playgrounds,shops.

Sites are assessed and points allocated under the above headings. A priority rating is assigned to each site.

It has to be recognised that the function of major routes and main distributor roads is to carry the majority of the traffic and traffic calming can only be considered on routes subject to a speed restriction.

Areas such as culs-de-sac will be considered low priority as those using the route should be aware of the residential nature and drive with due care and attention.

Other traffic management measures such as signs and road markings may be used to improve road safety at locations where traffic calming is not considered appropriate.

The provision of self enforcing traffic calming measures aims to ensure that vehicles are driven at speeds that are appropriate to local conditions. However, they should not be seen as the answer to all road safety problems.

Only with an integrated approach involving engineering measures, road safety education, research and enforcement together with a change in attitude on the part of many road users can the road safety problems on our streets today be effectively addressed.

Examples of traffic calming features

- vertical and horizontal deflection of traffic

Road Humps - a raised portion of road across the carriageway to reduce traffic speeds. A number of various alternatives are available to address local conditions, such as speed cushions and raised table junctions on bus routes. Road humps are normally only considered within a 30mph speed limit area.



Build-outs - physical feature extending from one side of the carriageway or both sides forming a pinch point to reduce road width and assist pedestrian movement.



Central Islands - raised areas used on main routes to narrow the road width thereby reducing speeds and assisting pedestrian movement

Mini Roundabouts - to control the flow of traffic at major and minor road junctions to reduce the dominance of one particular flow.



Chicane - a series of two or more build-outs on alternate sides of the road but not opposite. These are effective in constraining drivers speeds.



Priority junctions - are used to interrupt long straight stretches of 'through road'. Specific signing for priority flow and give way markings are essential.



Effective speed control measures, such as road humps, are normally only considered for residential streets where the main objective is to reduce average vehicle speeds to approximately 20mph. Where an extensive network of streets is involved and self-enforcing measures can be provided it may be appropriate to introduce a **20mph speed limit zone**.

Road humps are inappropriate for main traffic routes, as they may encourage drivers to seek alternative routes through residential streets. Traffic calming on main routes could consist of central hatched road markings with, where appropriate, pedestrian refuge islands to help pedestrians cross the road.