

County Durham - Speed Management Strategy



Altogether Better Policing



Version Date	Version ref	Revision History	Reviser	Approved by	Review Date
14/11/18	1.1	Draft	John Reed, Head of Technical Services	Cabinet subject to a public consultation	
19/02/19	1.2	Final	John Reed, Head of Technical Services	Ian Thompson, Corporate Director – Regeneration and Local Services	

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Introduction

1. This Speed Management Strategy has been developed in partnership between Durham County Council (the 'Council') and Durham Constabulary. It provides a framework for the setting of appropriate speed limits on the public highway and addressing speeding issues within County Durham based upon current legislation, guidance and best practice.
2. Speeding can be categorised as either '**inappropriate**' or '**excess**':
 - **Inappropriate** speed means driving too fast for the conditions but not contravening the speed limit; and
 - **Excess** speed is both inappropriate and in excess of the speed limit.
3. It is proven that speeding increases the risk and severity of road traffic collisions. Speeding can also be a form of anti-social behaviour which can be disruptive to other highway users and the wider community.
4. The 3Es are used to address road safety issues including speeding and the 3Es stand for:
 - Education;
 - Engineering; and
 - Enforcement.
5. This Strategy outlines how the 3Es are used to address speeding issues in County Durham.

Responsibilities

6. Speed management is a shared responsibility between the Council as the Local Highway Authority and Durham Constabulary.
7. The responsibilities of speed management are summarised as follows:

Role	Council	Durham Constabulary	Others
Setting Speed Limits	√		
Speed Complaints	√	√	
Education	√	√	√
Engineering	√		
Enforcement		√	

8. It is important to note that whilst the Council and Durham Constabulary have specific responsibilities that partnership working and consultation with local partners and communities is key to delivering these responsibilities effectively.
9. Others who contribute to education include both local and national bodies such as:

- County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service;
- Department for Transport;
- The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents;
- Brake Road Safety Foundation; and
- Road Safety GB.

Objectives and Outcomes

10. The objectives and outcomes of the speed management strategy are:

Objectives	Outcomes
Introduce and maintain appropriate speed limits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improved respect for and compliance with speed limits ▪ Reduce the incidence of inappropriate and excessive speed ▪ Reduce the number and severity of road traffic collisions where speed is a contributory factor ▪ Improve the quality of life for local communities
Targeted and proportionate enforcement	
Provide an effective process for speed complaints	

Accidents in County Durham

11. All injury road traffic collisions that are reported to Durham Constabulary are recorded in a Stats 19 database that is shared with the Council and reported in national statistics.
12. The number and severity of road user casualties in County Durham are summarised in the graph below:

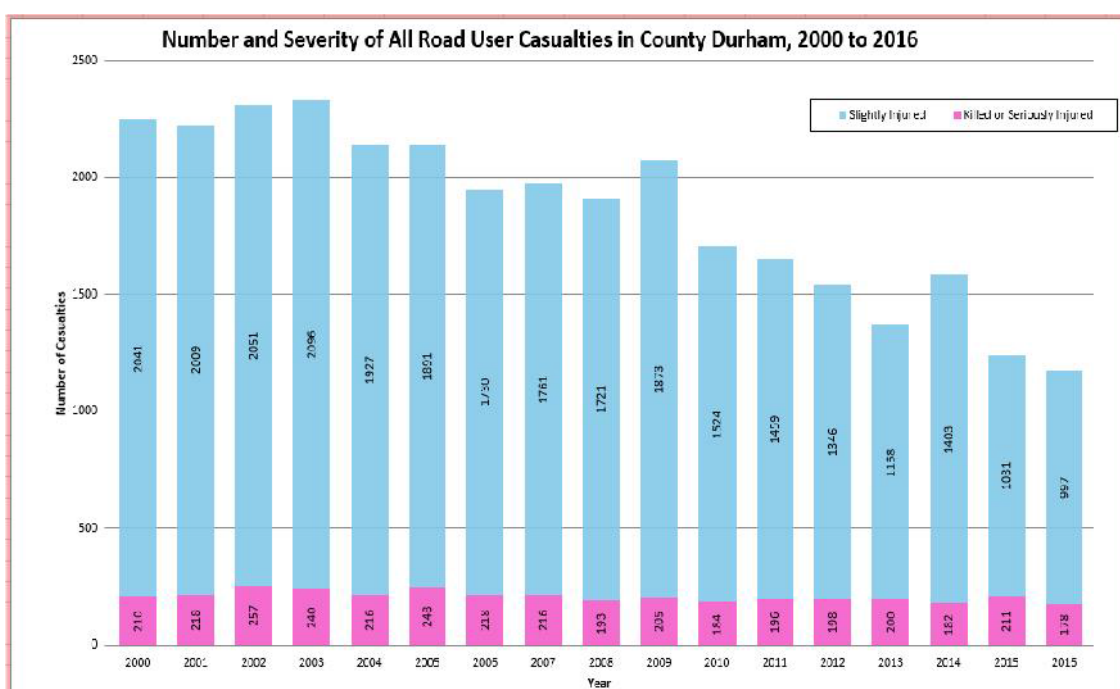
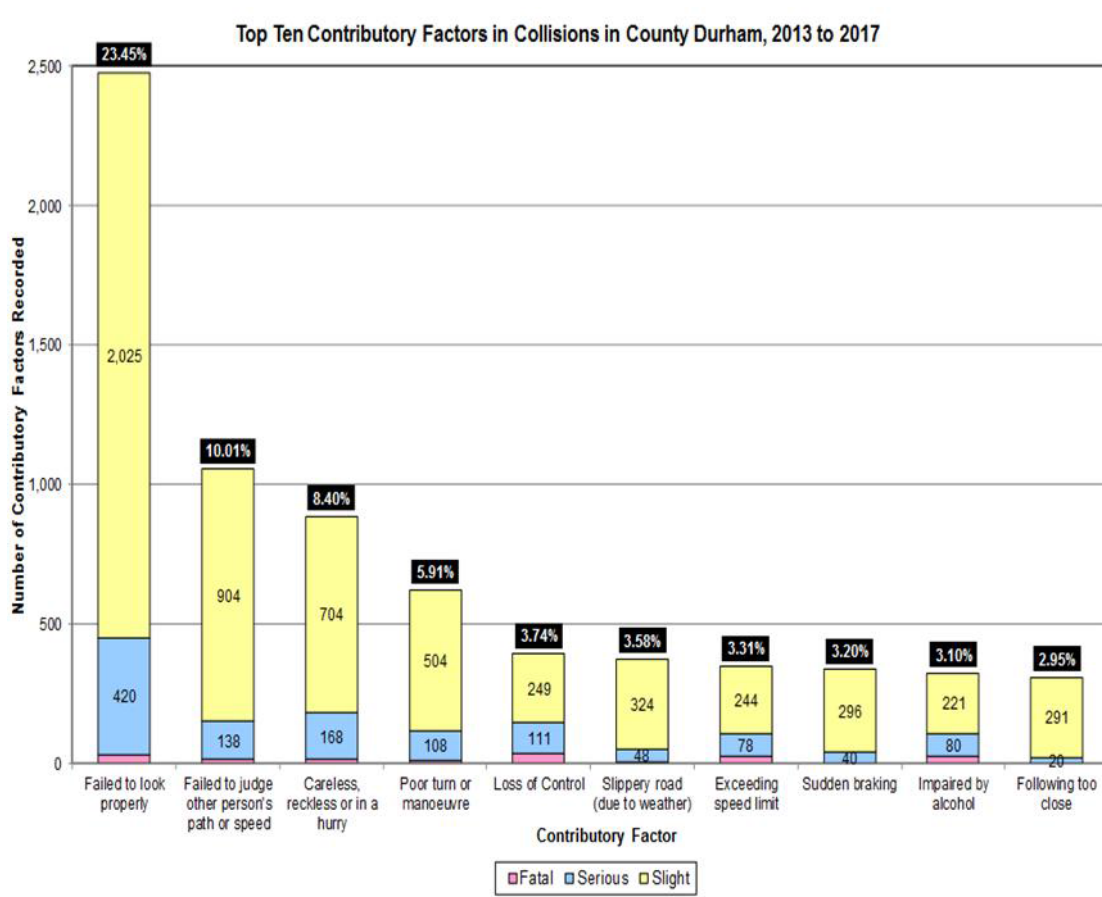


Figure 1: Number and severity of all road user casualties

13. It can be seen that there is a downwards trend and this is broadly in line with the national trend.
14. The Stats 19 accident database records the contributory factors to each collision which may be more than one per collision. The contributory factors for 2013 to 2017 are summarised below:



15. It can be seen that “exceeding the speed limit” (3.31% rank seventh) features in the top ten contributory large factors.
16. Therefore, whilst the majority of accidents do not involve excess speed it does remain a significant factor to be addressed in continuing to reduce accidents and the severity of accidents.

Setting Speed Limits

17. The Council is required to follow the Department for Transport’s guidance - Circular 01/13 Setting Local Speed Limits which can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/setting-local-speed-limits>

18. Speed limits for new developments are assessed as part of the planning process. All existing roads have speed limits and these are reviewed if there

- is a significant change to the road or its environment or in response to speeding complaints.
19. As part of the speed limit review of existing roads a traffic speed survey is undertaken over a period of 7 calendar days.
 20. If a permanent change in the speed limit is justified this requires a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) and this is subject to:
 - Informal consultations with affected parties including the statutory consultees (Police, Ambulance Service and Fire & Rescue Service). This allows any issues to be identified at an early stage and the plans amended as appropriate where possible;
 - A formal consultation is then undertaken with affected parties including statutory consultees on the amended plans; and
 - Outstanding representations and objections from the informal and formal consultations are reported to the Council's Highways Committee for consideration and Members make a recommendation. The final decision is delegated to the Corporate Director - Regeneration and Local Services.
 21. Speed limits should be evidence-led and self-explaining and seek to reinforce people's assessment of what is a safe speed to travel. They should encourage self-compliance. Speed limits should be seen by drivers as the maximum rather than a target speed at which to drive irrespective of the conditions. It is often not appropriate or safe to drive at the maximum speed.
 22. Speed limits should not be set in isolation but as a package with other measures (the 3Es) to manage vehicle speeds and improve road safety.
 23. If a speed limit is set unrealistically low for the particular road function and condition, it may be ineffective and drivers may not comply with the speed limit.
 24. The average speed (determined from a speed survey) also referred to as mean speed should be used as the basis for determining local speed limits as this reflects what the majority of drivers perceive as an appropriate speed to be driven for the road.
 25. Speed limits should not be used to attempt to solve the problem of isolated hazards, for example a single road junction or reduced forward visibility such as a bend, since speed limits are difficult to enforce over such a short length. Engineering measures are likely to be more effective in addressing such hazards.
 26. The aim should be to achieve a safe distribution of speeds consistent with the speed limit that reflects the function of the road and the road environment.
 27. The following factors are considered when determining what is an appropriate speed limit:

- History of collisions including frequency, severity, types and causes;
 - Road geometry and engineering (width, sightlines, bends, junctions, accesses and safety barriers, etc);
 - Road function (strategic, through traffic, local access, etc);
 - Composition of road users (including existing and potential levels of vulnerable road users);
 - Existing traffic speeds; and
 - Road environment including level of roadside development and possible impacts on residents (e.g. severance, noise or air quality).
28. It may well be that a speed limit need not be changed if the collision rate can be improved or wider quality of life objectives can be achieved through other speed management measures or other measures. These alternative measures should always be considered before proceeding with a new speed limit.
29. Where there is poor compliance with an existing speed limit on a road or stretch of road the reasons for non-compliance should be examined before a solution is sought. If the speed limit is set too low for no clear reason and the risk of collisions is low then it may be appropriate to increase the limit. If the existing limit is in place for a good reason, solutions may include engineering measures or changes to the road environment to ensure it better matches the speed limit, or local education and publicity. Enforcement may also be appropriate but should be considered only after the other measures.
30. Before changing an existing speed limit and introducing any engineering measures required to support a new speed limit the Council needs to be satisfied that the benefits exceed the costs (monetary and non-monetary) and that there is appropriate funding available.

20mph Speed Limits and Zones

31. The Council has developed a policy on 20 mph speed limits and zones which can be found at the following link:
- http://www.durham.gov.uk/media/16848/20-mph-Speed-Limits-and-Zones-Policy-2016/pdf/20mph_Speed_Limits_and_Zones_Policy_2016.pdf
32. 20 mph speed limits and zones can be summarised as follows:
- 20 mph Speed Limits: These involve 20 mph traffic signs only. They are suitable for residential estate roads and side streets, where the nature of the road tends to result in naturally low average speeds of less than 24 mph. Research indicates that limits achieve an average speed reduction of up to 1 mph unless speeds are already low;
 - 20 mph Speed Limit Zone: These involve 20 mph traffic signs plus traffic calming measures to ensure that the 20 mph limit is self-enforcing. In order that drivers are aware of the zones, traffic signs must be erected at every entrance/exit to the zone. Research indicates that a 20 mph speed

- limit zone with traffic calming can result in speed reductions of around 10 mph; and
- 20 mph Part-time Advisory Speed Limits: These involve advisory part-time flashing 20 mph signs on main/distributor roads outside of facilities for vulnerable road users such as schools that would otherwise be unsuitable for a full-time 20 mph speed limit or zone. The normal speed restriction for the road remains the legally enforceable limit.
33. The Council's criteria for supporting the introduction of new 20 mph speed limits and zones subject to available funding are:
- Where they meet the requirements of the Department for Transport guidance and legislation;
 - 20 mph self-enforcing zones could be considered on residential/side roads where measured average speed is greater than 24 mph;
 - 20 mph speed limits could be considered on residential/side roads where the measured average speed is lower than 24 mph; and
 - The use of 20 mph part-time advisory speed limits on main/distributor roads outside of schools could be considered where the measured average speed at school start and end times is greater than 24 mph.
34. The use of 20 mph limits should be introduced alongside a co-ordinated programme of wider social marketing and road safety education to slow traffic speeds, change driver behaviour and promote walking, cycling and active lifestyles.

Education

35. Education has an important role in addressing excessive and inappropriate speed. The County Durham and Darlington Road Safety Partnership delivers a comprehensive range of road safety education, training and publicity initiatives and further details can be found at:

<http://www.durham.gov.uk/roadsafety>

<https://www.durham.police.uk/Information-and-advice/Pages/Casualty-Reduction.aspx>

Engineering

36. Speed management through engineering involves the design of roads, signage, lining and traffic calming measures.

Design of Roads

37. The Council's "Highway Design Guide for Residential Developments - 2014" requires that residential roads should be designed such that the geometry and physical features limit vehicle speeds to 20 mph.

38. Physical traffic calming measures should be considered where the highway design layout does not reduce speeds to an acceptable level.
39. All new residential/side roads are required to have a 20 mph speed limit from 1 April 2016. Please see the link below for further details:

<http://www.durham.gov.uk/media/5887/Highways-design-guide-for-residential-development/pdf/ResidentialDesignGuide.pdf>

Speed Limit Signs

40. The provision of speed limit signs is governed by the Department for Transport's traffic signs regulations.
41. Under the Highway Code a system of street lighting indicates that the speed limit is 30 mph unless indicated otherwise by signs.
42. Therefore, 30 mph repeater signs or painted roundels (additional to terminal locations) can only be provided where a 30 mph Speed Limit Order is in place and there is no system of street lighting.
43. On rural single and dual carriageway roads, the speed limit is defined as being the National Speed Limit (60 mph or 70 mph respectively) unless signs advise otherwise. Where a speed limit other than the National Limit applies and/or there are street lights present, repeater signs are provided.

Speed Visors

44. Speed visors are activated by approaching vehicles to advise the motorist of the speed limit or their actual speed.
45. The DfT recommends that:
 - Speed visors should be considered only when there is an accident problem associated with inappropriate speed that has not been satisfactorily remedied by standard signing;
 - Speed visors are not to be used as speed limit repeater signs;
 - Speed visors should only be used when it is clear that the problem cannot be remedied by improving the fixed signing; and
 - Speed visors should be used sparingly.
46. It is important to note that the over use of speed visors will diminish their effectiveness due to motorists becoming accustomed to their presence and treating them as 'just another sign'. When used sparingly and at specific locations they will have more impact.

Rotational Speed Visor Programme

47. The Council delivers and funds a Rotational Speed Visor Programme which rotates 14 speed visors around 111 sites Countywide every 14 calendar days.

48. A rotational programme helps maintain the effectiveness of the speed visor and maximise the use of limited resources countywide.
49. The sites are determined in consultation with Durham Constabulary's Traffic Management Unit at locations where there are concerns about speeding.

Externally Funded Speed Visors

50. In addition to the Council's Rotational Speed Visor Programme the Council is able to facilitate further rotational and fixed speed visors where:
 - They are justified under DfT guidance;
 - It is safe to deploy speed visors; and
 - The capital and revenue costs are fully funded by external parties.
51. There are currently 48 fixed speed visors which are funded by Town and Parish Councils.

Traffic Calming on Residential Estate Roads (subject to 30 mph speed limit or less)

52. Physical traffic calming measures include road humps, speed cushions, speed tables, chicanes, build-outs and road narrowing.
53. Physical traffic calming measures may be considered where speed surveys indicate that the average speed is at or above 24 mph.

Traffic Calming on Other Roads (subject to 40 mph speed limit or above)

54. The introduction of physical traffic calming measures must be carefully considered against design standards and best practice when the road is subject to a 40mph speed limit. The use of physical traffic calming measures are not appropriate on roads with a speed limit greater than 40mph as they would increase the risk of road traffic collisions.
55. The Highways (Road Humps) Regulations 1999 only permits the use of vertical physical traffic calming measures on roads with speed limits of 30 mph or less where there is a system of street lighting and design standards can be satisfied.

Speed Enforcement

56. Durham Constabulary's approach to speed enforcement is based on national guidance provided by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) Speed Enforcement Policy Guidelines 2011 – 2015: Joining Forces for Safer Roads.
57. The enforcement of traffic law by Durham Constabulary is guided by the following principles:

- Proportionality in applying the law and securing compliance;
- Targeting of enforcement action;
- Consistency of approach; and
- Transparency about what enforcement action is taken and why.

58. Durham Constabulary will consider speed enforcement where:

- A mandatory speed limit has been introduced;
- There is a need for compliance;
- The speed necessary is clear to all drivers using the road; and
- Some decide to ignore the speed limit and a road safety benefit will be achieved through compliance.

59. It is important to note that speed enforcement is mainly reactive and should not be seen as a preventative measure to achieve vehicle speeds.

60. Durham Constabulary relies on the Council to set speed limits in accordance with Department for Transport guidance that are credible and self-enforcing.

61. There are various levels of speed enforcement actions available to Durham Constabulary depending upon the severity of the offence:

- Issue a summons for Court Action;
- Issue a Traffic Offence Report (TOR) (Fine of £100 and 3 penalty points);
- Offer of a Speed Awareness Course; and
- Warning or take no action.

Speed Complaint Process

62. Local communities sometimes have concerns about speeding in their areas and these concerns should be directed to Durham Constabulary's local Police and Communities Together (PACT) meetings. This enables local communities to agree priorities that they wish the Police to pursue.

63. Details of PACT meetings can be found at the following link:

<https://www.durham.police.uk/Your-Neighbourhood/Pages/default.aspx>

64. Alternatively, details can be obtained by telephoning Durham Constabulary on their non-emergency 101 telephone number and asking for the Local Neighbourhood Beat team.

65. Once a speeding complaint is agreed as a priority by the local PACT meeting the following process will be followed:

Speed Limit above 40 mph

66. Durham Constabulary will ask the Council to undertake a 7 calendar day 24 hour speed survey so that the scale of the speeding issue can be fully assessed. In addition, the accident record for the road will be reviewed to

ascertain if any speed related accidents have been recorded and/or any other trends of note.

67. Should the speed survey show that excess speed is not an actual issue and that the issue is one of perception then this information will be shared with those who have raised the speeding complaint and no further action will be taken.
68. Should the speed survey show that excess speed is an actual issue then Durham Constabulary will consider deploying Roads Policing Unit patrols and/or safety camera technology for speed enforcement.
69. The Council will also assess the suitability of the speed limit and consider if engineering measures can be implemented (subject to funding).
70. The outcomes will be reported back to those who have raised the speed complaint.

Speed Limit of 40 mph and Below

71. Durham Constabulary has developed the Community Speed Watch initiative to address speeding complaints on roads with a speed limit of 40 mph and below where it is safe to do so.
72. The aims of Community Speed Watch are to:
 - Raise awareness that exceeding the speed limit in communities is not tolerated;
 - Provide a visual deterrent to those travelling too fast;
 - Educate on the perception of speed;
 - Provide reassurance in communities that the issue of speed is actively being tackled;
 - Contribute to the prevention of accidents; and
 - Build on efforts to date to create safer communities by way of the police, highway authority and the community working together.
73. Community Speed Watch is about giving a degree of ownership to local communities to tackle the issue of speed and the perceptions around actual speed themselves in their own community.
74. Community Speed Watch volunteer groups will be provided with a “grab bag” of the following equipment:
 - Speed Indication Device;
 - Community Speed Watch Warning Signs;
 - High Visibility Tabards;
 - Clipboard;
 - Body Cam;
 - Recording Sheets; and
 - Letters to be handed out if challenged at the roadside.

75. The following activities will take place at the speeding complaint site:
- The site will be visited by the Neighbourhood Policing Team and/or Community Speed Watch volunteers using a hand held speed detection device or a Mobile Speed Indication Device (MSID) at the side of the road which displays the speed of a passing vehicle to remind drivers of their actual speed; and
 - Social media will also be used where possible and appropriate to publicise the speeding issue and actions taken.
76. Where vehicles speeds are noted to be high during Community Speed Watch activities the following actions will be undertaken:
- A record of the speed, model, colour and registration as well as the location is made at the time;
 - A check of the registration numbers recorded is made via the Police National Computer (PNC) to ascertain the registered keeper's details;
 - An advisory letter will then be sent out to educate the registered keeper that they have been noted exceeding the speed limit and should they be found to be continuing to travel at high speeds then further transgression may result in enforcement action; and
 - Should a vehicle be identified as exceeding the speed limit on a third or subsequent occasion then a further "Final Warning" letter will be issued to the registered keeper. The letter will be delivered where possible by a Roads Policing Unit Officer so they can help educate the driver on the requirement to obey the posted speed limits.
77. If, as a result of a Community Speed Watch activity, the data collected indicates a genuine overall speeding issue, this will be escalated to the Police Traffic Management Unit for further consideration.
78. The Traffic Management Unit will then examine the site to ascertain the feasibility of a full 7 day 24 hour speed survey being conducted by Durham County Council to gain a more detailed analysis of the problem which is not influenced by a uniformed Police presence or Community Speed Watch activity.
79. This may result in:
- Recommendations of engineering measures;
 - A speed limit change;
 - A Problem Profile created for a speed enforcement campaign to be carried out by Roads Policing Unit; or
 - Deployment of Mobile Safety Camera technology.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Overview of Speed Limits

Speed Limit (mph)	Speed Limits in urban areas (Lower Tier) : Where the limit could apply
20 (including 20 mph zone)	In accordance with the Council's Policy on 20 mph speed limits and zones.
30	Normal in built-up areas, with development on both sides of the road. Normal in villages where there is sufficient frontage development and the limit will be an appropriate length and credible.
40	On higher quality suburban and urban roads or those on the outskirts of urban areas where there is little development, or with few cyclists, pedestrians or equestrians. On roads with good width and layout, parking and waiting restrictions may be in operation, and buildings set back from the road. On roads that, wherever possible, cater for the needs of non-motorised users through segregation of road space, and have adequate footways and crossing places. Should be considered on strategic A and B class roads. Should be considered in villages where there is insufficient frontage development or where a 30 mph limit lacks credibility and the limit will be an appropriate length and credible.
50	On dual carriageway ring or radial routes or bypasses that have become noticeably built up with substantial direct access from the carriageway. On single carriageway roads with little or no roadside development.

Speed Limit (mph)	Speed limits in rural areas and inter-urban areas (Upper Tier) : Where the limit could apply
40	Could be considered where there is substantial development and many bends, junctions or accesses, a strong environmental or landscape reason, or where there are considerable numbers of vulnerable road users, and the limit will be an appropriate length and credible.
50	Can be considered and implemented as part of a package of measures where accidents are an issue and cannot be resolved by other methods.
60 (National Speed Limit)	Recommended for most high quality and strategic A and B class roads. Normal limit for rural roads with little or sporadic frontage development. Normal limit for rural and inter-urban lanes.
70	Dual carriageway roads with segregated junctions and separate facilities for vulnerable road users. Inter-urban and rural dual carriageways with little, sporadic or no frontage development.

Contact Details

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Alternative formats

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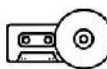
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