

P-06-1325 Lower the speed limit on the A5 through Glasfryn, Correspondence – Petitioner to Committee, 20.03.23

20 March, 2023

REF: P-06-1325

Dear Petitions Committee

Thank you for the invitation to share my views in light of the document sent to me. In preparation for my response, I have also read the hyperlinked report and the Senedd's ambitions as set out in Llywybr Newydd: the Wales Transport Strategy 2021 in great detail.

I have also studied the **Setting Local Speed Limits in Wales** guidance which clearly states the following:

The current national speed limit on rural single carriageway roads is 60mph and a limit of 70mph applies on rural dual carriageways. 40 and 50mph speed limits may be used where appropriate, and the speed limit in rural towns and villages should generally be 30mph.

Also: Section 5.3 The national speed limit in urban areas is currently 30mph, representing a balance between the mobility and safety of road users, especially the more vulnerable groups.

Local speed limits of 20mph are encouraged where appropriate, particularly in situations

Key points:

- Lower speeds benefits all users of urban roads, especially vulnerable road users.
- Highway authorities are encouraged to adopt the Institution of Highways and Transportation's Urban Safety Management Guidelines. The guidelines propose the use of a road hierarchy approach which reflects a road's function, the mix of vehicular traffic that it carries and its use by vulnerable road users **(In the case of Glasfryn, this would refer to residents of all ages but in particular, the children and families living in the village).**
- The national speed limit in urban areas is currently 30mph.
- Highway authorities are encouraged to consider any new speed limits or modifications to existing limits on an individual case-by-case basis.
- The Welsh Assembly Government encourages and supports 20mph speed limits and zones at appropriate locations. 20mph limits may even be introduced on trunk roads in exceptional circumstances, generally over short lengths and for limited times of the day.

I am deeply concerned that Lee Waters' response to the call for reducing the speed limit on the A5 through the village of Glasfryn, contradicts his own views in parts e.g. *'The views of local residents assist us in making informed decisions when sections of road are reviewed and I appreciate the serious nature of the concerns raised by this petition'*. In writing this, Lee Waters acknowledges that residents' concerns and the possible outcomes of the speed limit being set at 60mph though the village are serious.

In Llywybr Newydd: the Wales Transport Strategy 2021

Section 3 : 0.3

Confidence and safety

We want everyone to feel confident, safe, secure and welcome using the sustainable transport mode of their choice.

I can assure you that the residents of Glasfryn and people living in the wider area **do not** feel safe. This is particularly true of children and their families who live in the village, alongside the busy A5

trunk road. Walking on the pavement e.g. to the village playground does not feel safe when cars speed past at 60mph. Having children picked up and returned on the school transport mini-bus which has to park on the A5 is certainly not safe. The reason being that cars enter the village from the direction of Pentrefoelas around a corner at 60 onto the stretch that is the village and have to break from 60mph to 0mph to avoid hitting the back of the minibus. This happens on a regular basis, however as it has not yet resulted in a serious accident (through sheer luck) it can only be deemed as a 'near-miss'. Also, farm vehicles and lorries enter this stretch of road from junctions at either end of the village. They cannot gather speed at the same rate as cars and when this happens, cars entering the village from either direction at speed overtake through the village or are forced to break to avoid a collision.

Section 5.4 Well-being measures - For safety, we will consider monitoring how safe people feel using different types of public transport, and also walking and cycling.

Children in the village of Glasfryn have expressed publicly and in a TV interview that they do not feel safe and are worried that they or a family member will be killed. It is having a detrimental effect on families' wellbeing. A child who lives less than 2 meters from the road saw his cat being run over and is now even more scared of the speeding cars. Four houses have no option other than to park in the layby which is below their home and is on the A5. Therefore, when opening a car door on one side, they do so into the passing traffic which can appear very suddenly when traveling at speed.

Section 7.4: Roads, Streets and Parking: Our Vision

We will ensure that our roads and streets are safe, well-maintained and managed for all road users, and also support sustainable transport options including active travel and more public transport.

Priorities: introduce a new national default speed limit of 20mph in residential areas and tackle pavement parking.

The point I would like to underline to the Committee is that all the government's narrative around transport focuses on:

- 1. Reduce emissions**
- 2. Reduce the use of cars**
- 3. Improve road safety**

Reducing the speed of driving in Glasfryn would contribute to those goals, therefore the Committee would be wise to underline that and to press for better consistency across the roads policy. In my view, the Minister cannot argue over the above and then ignore the situation in Glasfryn.

Finally, as I have stated in previous correspondence, Glasfryn is the only village on the A5 where cars are allowed to travel at 60mph and is in my view a massive discrepancy and "anomaly" on the part of the Government.

I'm afraid that we cannot afford to wait for the publication of your updated guidance, when you will consider reviewing the speed limits across the trunk road network. In the last 4 months, a speed restriction of 40mph has been implemented on the A5 starting at just before the National Trust centre at Dinas and all the way down to Betws y Coed. This is a winding part of the road with many sharp bends where it is natural that cars will not drive excessively. However, touring motorcyclists visiting the area do speed on this part of the road and there have been accidents. This leads me to question whether the Government values the lives of tourists who chose to risk their lives over the lives of the residents and in particular, children of Glasfryn.

Sincerely

Gwennol Ellis

Cynghorydd Gwennol Ellis
Councillor Gwennol Ellis

Cynghorydd Sirol - Uwch Aled – County Councillor
Cyngor Bwrdeisdref Sirol Conwy – Conwy County Borough Council