

Offaly Local Authorities Traffic Calming Policy



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1. INTRODUCTION:

There is an increasing demand for traffic calming measures in new and existing housing estates and on access and distributor roads in towns and villages.

The demand is often as a result of perceived high traffic speeds on these roads or is an effort to make roads less attractive for “boy racers” or to reduce “rat running” through areas.

While the reduction of speed in built up areas is obviously desirable, the method of achieving this is not always agreed and the provision of vertical deflections (ramps) or rumble strips is frequently proposed as the only solution to this problem.

2. RESPONSIBILITY FOR SPEED MANAGEMENT ON PUBLIC ROADS:

1. Road Authorities are responsible for the maintenance and construction of public roads under the Roads Act 1993. In addition, under Section 38 of the Road Traffic Act, 1994, a Road Authority may, in the interest of the safety and convenience of road users, provide traffic calming measures. The provision of Speed Limits is a reserved function for the elected members of the County Council after consultation with the Garda Síochána, Transport Infrastructure Ireland and the general public.

2. The **enforcement of speed limits** and other Road Traffic Acts and Regulations is the responsibility of the **Garda Síochána**. The Local Authority has no role or responsibility in this regard.

3. Road users are required to comply with the provision of the various Road Traffic Acts. In particular it is an offence under the Road Traffic Act 2004 to drive a vehicle at a speed exceeding the speed limit. Furthermore the Roads Act 1993 obliges road users to take reasonable care for their own safety and for that of any other person using the road.

3. SPEED LIMITS IN COUNTY OFFALY:

- Offaly County Council carried out a comprehensive review of all the speed limits in the County in 2011. These were adopted by the elected members of the Council at their monthly meeting in October 2011 and the Speed Limit By-Laws came into force on February 1st 2012.
- The Byelaws are a comprehensive schedule of appropriate and safe vehicle speeds.
- Enforcement of the new speed limits is the responsibility of the Garda Síochána. Individuals must take personal responsibility in this regard also.

4. GUIDANCE ON TRAFFIC CALMING:

1. In 2003, the Department of the Environment, the Department of Transport and the Dublin Transportation Office published "*Traffic Management Guidelines*". This is a very comprehensive manual which deals with all aspects of Traffic Management with a particular emphasis on the safety of pedestrians and vulnerable road users. It is an excellent, authoritative manual and it is recommended that it be adopted en-bloc as the definitive guidance document for all traffic calming measures and schemes in Offaly.
2. The guidelines indicate which traffic calming devices may be considered on existing roads in decreasing order of preference, as follows:
 1. Road closure
 2. Traffic island
 3. Gateway
 4. Entry treatment
 5. Overrun area
 6. Rumble device
 7. Mini-roundabout
 8. Build-out/parking
 9. Pinch point
 10. Chicane
 11. Speed table
 12. Speed cushion
 - 13. Ramp**
3. **Ramps should only be chosen if no other suitable measures could be used.** In 2013, the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport published the "*Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets*". This manual complements the "*Traffic Management Guidelines*". However, it is now mandatory that Local Authorities ensure that the principles, approaches and standards of the manual are applied as appropriate.

5. TRAFFIC CALMING IN NEW DEVELOPMENTS:

The best way to deal with speed control on new roads is at the design stage when the layout and geometric design can be prepared so as to limit excessive speed levels.

Offaly County Council, at present, adapts a pro-active approach by specifically addressing speed control issues at pre-planning discussion with developers. All planning applications for new residential/commercial developments are examined by the Road Design Section and assessed from a speed control and safety perspective.

The procedure includes: -

- Where the proposed development has a major impact on existing roads, the developer is requested to submit a **Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) Report**.
- The developer is requested to carry out a **road safety audit** on certain elements of the road design proposed.
- A requirement for all residential/commercial developments to comply with the recommendations contained in the *Traffic Management Guidelines* and the *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets*.
- Pre-planning discussions include addressing traffic management and calming issues.
- Offaly County Council's Roads Engineers are involved in pre-planning discussions and in assessing all planning applications prior to decisions.

6. TRAFFIC CALMING ON EXISTING ROADS AND ESTATES:

1. The Council is often faced with demands from individuals and resident groups for traffic calming (usually ramps) on roads and estates. The following basic requirements must be met before the Council can consider traffic calming measures: -

- a) The site must be inside a speed limit zone (50 or 60 kph).
- b) There must be a significant majority of households in favour of the introduction of traffic calming.
- c) In the case of a through road, the minimum length of road is 300m.
- d) In the case of a cul-de-sac, the minimum length of road is 150m.
- e) There must be reasonably straight lengths greater than 100m.

- f) The average speed is 30 kph or greater.
 - g) It must be designed in accordance with the relevant design manual or guidelines.
2. Once a scheme has passed the criteria in 6.1, it can then be ranked in accordance with the attached assessment form (appendix 1). Once a priority list is agreed, the Council will design and cost a scheme in accordance with the *Traffic Management Guidelines*.
 3. Traffic Calming schemes will be installed in their entirety. Individual items such as ramps shall not be installed on a piecemeal basis.
 4. The council also intends to use Driver Feedback Signs at locations where speed has been identified as a problem. These signs display the actual speed that individual cars are travelling at as they approach the sign. Surveys have shown that they can be effective in the short term but speeds do increase again over time. It is intended that these signs shall be moved around to different problem locations to get the greatest benefit from them.

7. SPECIAL CONDITIONS FOR THE USE OF VERTICAL DEFLECTION MEASURES (RAMPS AND RUMBLE STRIPS):

1. The *Traffic Management Guidelines* emphasise that vertical deflections (ramps, speed cushions and tables) should only be used as a last resort and that all other measures should be considered first. The guidelines also advise that where vertical deflections are being considered they should be used to maintain low speeds. The *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets* also states that raised tables are primarily used to reinforce low speed environments. Poor design practice is to have features that encourage harsh braking and heavy acceleration.
2. There are many instances throughout the Country where local authorities have had to remove ramps and/or rumble strips due to unwelcome side effects such as noise, vehicle damage and personal injury.
3. Local Authorities have invested huge sums in recent years in improving the ride quality of their National, Regional and Distributor Road Network. Installing vertical deflections (ramps) on such roads is a retrograde step and would not be appropriate on such busy commercial routes and would reduce the capacity of these roads.

4. The **Ambulance Service**' generally, are not in favour of ramps and have concerns about the effect of ramps on people with spinal injuries travelling over ramps.
5. The **Fire Services** are also concerned that ramps delay the response time of their fire tenders.
6. As a result of the above, it is recommended that the policy of the Council should be as follows: -
 - No vertical deflections (ramps) shall be used in 60kph zone (must be in 50 kph zone).
 - No vertical deflections (ramps) shall be used on: -
 1. National Roads.
 2. Regional Road.
 3. Distributor Roads
 - No vertical deflections (ramps) shall be used on Bus Routes.
 - No rumble strips shall be used in Residential Areas.
 - Ramps should only be used when all other methods of Traffic Calming have been ruled out.

OFFALY COUNTY COUNCIL
TRAFFIC CALMING ASSESSMENT FORM

PROPOSED SCHEME _____

<u>QUALIFICATION</u>	Tick	Score
Site inside 50kph or 60kph speed limits	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Written agreement of the majority of residents obtained (Except in very exceptional circumstances)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Length of through road greater than 300m. or Length of cul de sac greater than 150 m.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Straights greater than 100m	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Average speed of 30 kph or greater	<input type="checkbox"/>	

RANKING

1.	Accidents due to excessive speed			
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	0	<input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	35	
2.	Average Speed			
	Between 30 and 50 kph	<input type="checkbox"/>	15	<input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
	Greater than 50 kph	<input type="checkbox"/>	30	
3.	Vulnerable Road Users (Play Areas, Shops, Schools)			
	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	0	<input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	20	
4.	Traffic Volumes			
	Less than 80 vehicles/hour	<input type="checkbox"/>	0	<input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
	Greater than 80 vehicles/hour	<input type="checkbox"/>	5	
5.	Local Conditions (Take into account parking, footpaths, houses on one side, scheme length)			
		<input type="checkbox"/>	0	<input style="width: 40px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	5	
		<input type="checkbox"/>	10	

Total Ranking (out of 100)
Estimated Cost

Signed: _____

Date: _____