Dear Sir/Madam

ROAD TRAFFIC ACT 1991: ROAD HUMPS AND VARIABLE SPEED LIMITS

1. On 3rd June 1992 an Order was made to commence, with effect from 1st July 1992, the provisions of Section 45 and Schedule 4, paragraph 12 (amongst others) of the Road Traffic Act 1991. This circular provides guidance to local highway authorities on those provisions.

VARIABLE SPEED LIMITS

2. Section 45 of the Road Traffic Act 1991 amends Section 84 of the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984 (Speed limits on roads other than restricted roads) to remove the requirement that a single speed limit must apply to each section of road.

3. The amendment empowers the Secretary of State to grant consent to a Speed Limit Order made by a Local Highway Authority to introduce a variable speed limit on a section of road specified in that Order. The different speed limits may apply according to conditions specified in the Order and must be indicated at the roadside by means of traffic signs showing which speed limit is in force at any particular time.

4. Section 45 also empowers the Secretary of State to make Regulations governing the conditions under which speed limits may be varied, after which variable speed limits made in accordance with the Regulations will not require the consent of the Secretary of State. In order to obtain guidance on the most appropriate form for these Regulations, the Departments will be carrying out a number of trials of variable speed limits on trunk roads and with a view to widening the experience from these trials, the Departments are also seeking trial sites on local roads. Local Highway Authorities are therefore invited to submit proposals for trial sites containing the following information:-

(1) a map showing the proposed
(2) accident statistics for the previous three years;
(3) proposed speed limits and their times of operation;
(4) the views of local residents and emergency services;
any environmental factors which should be taken into account in establishing a trial;

any other relevant information.

This information should be sent to Road Safety Division, Room C17/08, Department of Transport, 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 3EB and for Wales to the Director of Highways for the Welsh Office, Transport and Highways Group, Govt, Buildings, Ty Glas Road, Llanishen, Cardiff CF4 5PL by 31st December 1992.

5. The most likely use for variable speed limits will be outside schools, where a lower speed limit would apply at times when children are going to school or returning home. However, Local Highway Authorities are also invited to propose trial sites at any other suitable locations in their areas. The length of road affected by these trials will vary according to local conditions but should normally be between 100 metres and 600 metres.

6. It is the Departments’ intention to authorise approximately 100 trial sites. Those authorities whose sites are selected for trial will be informed and invited to make a Traffic Regulation Order in accordance with the outlined proposals and subject to the procedures laid down in the Local Authorities’ Traffic Orders (Procedure)(England and Wales) Regulations 1989 for submission for the consent of the Secretary of State. A draft model order for this purpose is attached at Annex A.

7. All trials will be monitored by the Transport Research Laboratory under contract to the Department of Transport. The monitoring will be carried out in collaboration with each Local Highway Authority, which will be expected to pay for the supply and installation of signs and speed monitoring equipment.

ROAD HUMPS

8. Schedule 4, paragraph 12 of the Road Traffic Act 1991 amends Sections 90A(1) (Construction of road humps by highway authority) and 90B(1) (Additional powers of the Secretary of State) of the Highways Act 1980 to empower the Secretary of State to authorise the use of non-standard road humps.

9. Under current legislation, Local Highway Authorities do not require the consent of the Secretary of State for the use on local roads of road humps which are constructed in accordance with the Highway (Road Humps) Regulations 1990. The new provisions empower the Secretaries of State to authorise the use on any local road of road humps which do not comply with the 1990 Regulations.

10. It is not intended to use these powers to provide widespread derogation from the 1990 Regulations, which are generally satisfactory and consent is unlikely to be granted to any scheme where it is possible to comply without difficulty with those regulations. These powers will be used mainly where proposed schemes have been devised in the spirit of the regulations but where, for one reason or another, they cannot all be met. For example, this may be the case on a bus route, or where an unusual road configuration precludes a layout of humps as required by the Regulations.

11. Applications for authorisation should be made to the Department of Transport’s Regional Offices in England and for Wales to the Director of Highways; they should contain the following information:-

   (1) an explanation of why the Regulations cannot be met together with a brief description of the purpose of the scheme and the estimated casualty savings;

   (2) three copies of plans showing the scheme and the location of each road hump;

   (3) diagrams of any special signs for which authorisation is requested, showing the sizes and colours to be used;

   (4) where the proposed hump does not have profiles conforming with those in the Regulations, drawings showing the proposed profiles; and

   (5) the comments of the emergency services on the proposed scheme.
12. It will be important to assess the effectiveness of any new designs, so monitoring of speeds and flows should be undertaken wherever possible.

MANPOWER AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

13. The measures contained in this Circular are additional options for highway authorities to use and consequently need have no manpower or financial implications.

DISTRIBUTION

14. Any enquiries on distribution of this circular should be addressed to NGAM Division, Room 3/11, 2 Monck Street for the Department of Transport and to the Director of Highways for the Welsh Office, Transport and Highways Group, Government Buildings, Ty-Glas Road, Llanishen, Cardiff CF4 5PL - telephone 0222 761456 ext. 5251. Any other questions should be address to Room C17/08, 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 3EB: telephone 071-276-6322.

P H MARTIN
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT

J G EVANS
NETWORK MANAGEMENT
WELSH OFFICE
1. The Council of the County of ………… In exercise of their powers under Section 84(1), and 1A of the Road Traffic Act 1984(a) and of all other powers enabling them in that behalf and with the consent of the Secretary of State under paragraph 13 of Schedule 9 to that Act and having given public notice in accordance with section 84(2) of that Act and having consulted the chief officer of police in accordance with paragraph 20 of that Schedule, hereby makes the following order:-

(1) This order may be cited as the [                 ] Order 19 [     ] and shall come into force on [            ].

2. (1) No person shall drive a motor vehicle on any of the lengths of roads specified in the Schedule to this Order at a speed exceeding -

   (a) 20 miles per hour at a time when such a speed limit is indicated by a traffic sign in accordance with paragraph (2) below; or

   (b) [         ] miles per hour at any other time.

   (2) Such an indication may be given between the hours of [9.00 a.m. and 5.00 p.m.] [9.00 and 10.00 a.m. and 4.00 and 5.00 p.m.] on [Mondays to Fridays (inclusive)]* and at no other time.

3. (1) the [               ] Order 19 [     ] shall be amended as follows;

   (2) [                                                                 ].

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(a) 1984 c.27; section 84 was amended by paragraph 61 of Schedule 8 to the New Roads and Streetworks Act 1991 (c.22) and by section 45 of the Road Traffic Act 1991 (c.40).

• Complete as appropriate.