

Cork City Council
Traffic Operations Division
City Hall
Cork T12 T997

29 July 2022

RE: Cork City Speed Limit Review – Initial Consultation

To Whom It Concerns,

Cork Chamber represents 1,200 members together employing 100,000 people throughout the city, metropolitan area and county. Our vision is to be a world-leading Chamber of Commerce, delivering on a progressive economic, social and sustainability agenda at the heart of a vibrant business community.

As such, we are determined to ensure that our 203-year-old Chamber continues to create a positive legacy. Our direction is guided by our formal pledge to uphold the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals five of which have been identified by the Chambers Ireland network. Goals 11, Sustainable Cities and Communities, and 13, Climate Action are particularly relevant to this consultation.



Cork Chamber has long advocated for reduced speed limits of 30km/h across Cork city. The benefits to public health and safety, along with the wider societal benefits regarding climate action and placemaking have been widely acknowledged.

Proven reduction in fatalities and collisions

In 2019, Cork witnessed 14 deaths and 861 injuries as a result of road traffic accidents¹. Further preliminary figures from the Road Safety Authority indicate an increase in deaths, with 22 road traffic fatalities in the county in 2020².

Studies have shown that a reduction in speed limits in urban areas to 30km/h has resulted in decreased road traffic collisions, injuries and fatalities. Between 2016 and 2018, a reduction in speed limits in 80% of the city centre in Edinburgh to 30km/h, reduced road traffic collisions by 40%, casualties by 39% and road traffic fatalities by 23%. Similarly, Belfast witnessed a reduction in traffic fatality rates by 44.3% after implementing 30km/h speed limits³.

Improved air quality

Along with improvements in road safety, improvements in air quality and pollution are associated with reduced speed limits. Reduced speed limits from 50km/h to 30km/h can reduce the concentrations of NO₂ and PM₁₀⁴. With Cork City Centre being declared a clean air zone, this factor is especially important in considering the introduction of reduced speed limits in the centre.

Reducing car dependency

Finally, through the implementation of 30km/h speed limits, City Council has a distinct opportunity to advance the climate agenda and further support the 100 climate-neutral cities initiative. Traffic calming measures on their own may not reduce car dependency, but if they are implemented in conjunction with active travel infrastructure and a well-connected public transport network, they can contribute to climate action.

Cork Chamber recommends that low-cost traffic calming interventions be installed to further aid in the adoption of lowered speed limits in residential and built-up areas. The visual narrowing of roads, alternating parking, adding in buildouts, planters and parklets to create a chicane effect, and the narrowing of carriageways are advised as best practice measures. To ensure rapid adoption of 30km/h speed limits throughout the city, we strongly recommend that changes be implemented across wide areas, rather than street by street. To satisfy this, public surveys and consultations should take place across wide areas to reduce the time, expenses, and signage involved as well as increase the rate of adoption.

City centre HGV restrictions

Cork Chamber would also advise that restrictions on HGVs and trucks in Cork City centre be put in place, to improve road user safety, congestion in the city, and placemaking. We are cognizant that some trucks will require access to the city to deliver supplies for example to Lidl and Tesco. To account for this and ensure business is not disrupted, we recommend that licenses are issued to Heavy Goods Vehicles delivering goods to businesses on an individual basis, allowing entry into the city at off-peak hours, for example between 7am-8am.

¹ <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-tranom/transportomnibus2019/roadsafetyandroadlengths/>

² <https://www.rsa.ie/news-events/news/details/2022/01/01/2021-records-lowest-number-of-road-fatalities-since-recording-began-in-1959>

³ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2214140521001717>

⁴ <https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/16/1/149>

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we witnessed an emphasis on walking, cycling and improving community spaces. While that crisis is behind us, we cannot let this positive legacy slip away. The provision of vibrant, green public spaces and amenities in the city that contribute to place-making will be key to ensuring that Cork remains a competitive and quality of life-oriented location for talent and investment. We commend Cork City Council for all their efforts in advancing this agenda and we ask that our recommendations be taken into consideration.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Conor Healy', is positioned above a horizontal line.

Conor Healy

Chief Executive