

# **Road Traffic (Speed Limit) (South Dublin County Council) Bye Laws, 2016 – RSL No. 1 of 2016**

**Submission by**

**Dublin Cycling Campaign**

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## **2.0 Introduction**

Dublin Cycling Campaign strongly supports the expansion of the number of roads in South Dublin that have lower speed limits, and in particular the introduction of 30 km/h speed limits in residential estates as proposed in the draft bye-laws. The proposals are very welcome and are to be commended.

We would like to support the submission made by the Love 30 campaign.

## **3.0 Dublin Cycling Campaign**

The Dublin Cycling Campaign is an independent, voluntary group which works to promote everyday cycling and walking for all age groups. The Campaign was formed in the early 1990s to encourage cycling and to represent the interests of everyday commuting cyclists. We want to make streets safer for cyclists and to increase public awareness of the benefits of cycling. We want to see a quantum increase in the use of the bike for commuting to study, work and for utility purposes, recognising that a 'critical mass' of cyclists in traffic leads inevitably to safer streets. Safer streets for cyclists are also safer streets for pedestrians.

Dublin Cycling Campaign is a member of Cyclist.ie [www.cyclist.ie](http://www.cyclist.ie) and the European Cyclists' Federation [www.ecf.com](http://www.ecf.com)

Dublin Cycling Campaign has been campaigning for more appropriate speed limits for more than 10 years and was central to the formation of Love 30 [www.love30.ie](http://www.love30.ie)

See [www.dublincycling.ie](http://www.dublincycling.ie) for further information.

## 4.0 General

Dublin Cycling Campaign strongly supports the expansion of the number of roads in South Dublin that have lower speed limits, and in particular the introduction of 30 km/h speed limits in residential estates as proposed in the draft bye-laws. Lower speed limits are safer; reduce noise and air pollution; and help enable all road users – young and old, impaired or able-bodied – to go about their business more easily.

The scope and scale of the changes proposed are very welcome. The South Dublin County changes alone will be the most radical change in speed limits in the entire country since the change to metric speed limits.

While this is substantial progress, we feel that there is much greater scope for lower speed limits throughout the county, even to make 30 km/h the default limit in pedestrian-rich areas like schools, colleges, town & village centres and places of assembly like cinemas, theatres and churches. If appropriate, exceptions can be made for certain roads. However, under the council's proposals, there will still be some residential areas, most village / town centres and many country roads / lanes that have extensive ribbon development that will remain at 80 km/h.

We propose that additional residential areas, urban centres, halting sites and minor rural roads be included in these lower speed limits. Subject to assessment, it may be appropriate to raise the speed limit on a small number of other roads. These matters are detailed in *Appendix B – Proposals for Additional Changes to Speed Limits*.

This submission examines how the draft bye-laws can be improved. Dublin Cycling Campaign fully supports the Council's proposals for lower speed limits. However, we are concerned that there is a large amount of variation between the text and the drawings. These variations go beyond what should be picked up in the public consultation and we have requested a meeting with the engineers.

Dublin Cycling Campaign assumes the Council is fully aware of the benefits of lower speed limits, so we do not propose to argue the merits here. However, we would welcome the opportunity to brief councillors and others.

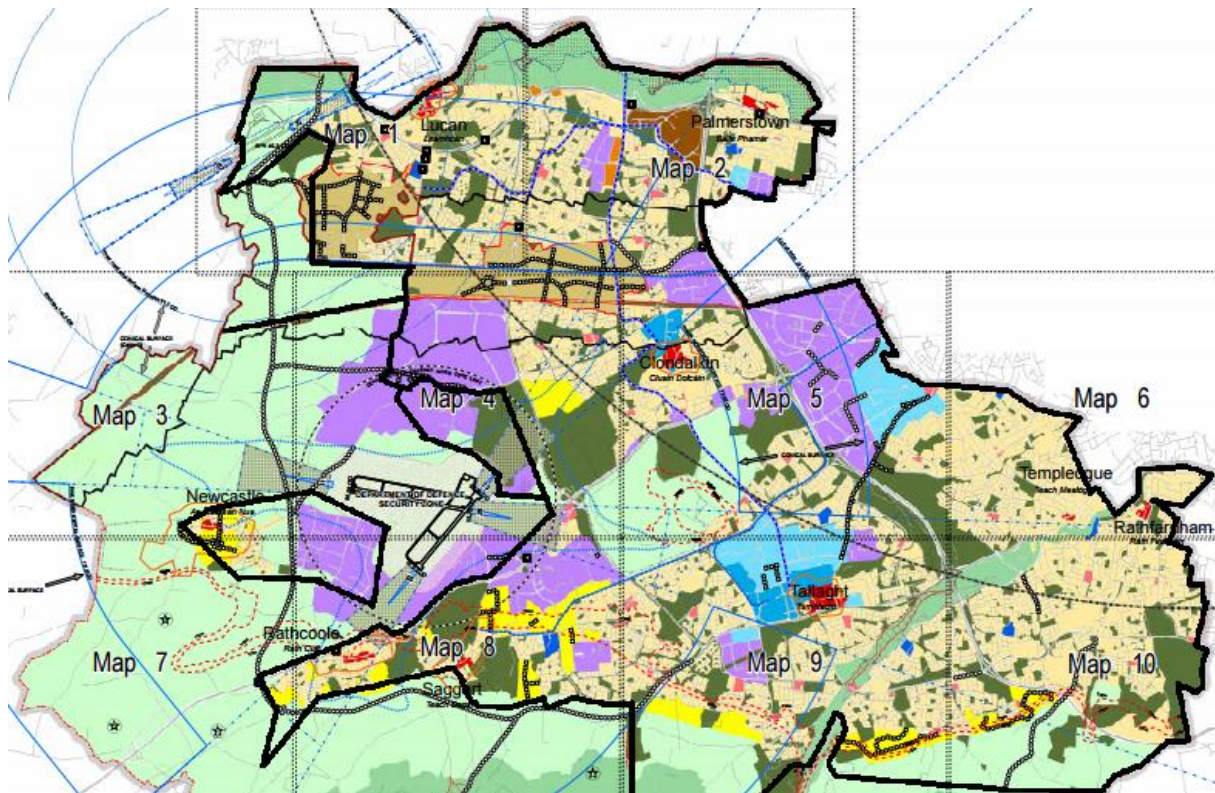
This document is focused on the proposals as shown on the maps, as opposed to the draft bye-law text, which is dealt with in detail in *Appendix A – Analysis of Bye-laws*.

## 5.0 Policy Issues

The South Dublin County Council Development Plan 2016-2022 details several policies at sections 6.4.0 and 6.4.3 of that document. Older people, children, disabled people, pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users are all road users under the Roads Act, 1993 whose rights are at least equal to those of drivers of motorised vehicles and must therefore be considered in any road or traffic measures. Additionally, the Disability Act 2005 and various other pieces of legislation and policy (National Cycle Policy Framework, National Cycle Manual, Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets) have specific requirements. The principals of the Equal Status Act 2000 should also be considered when implementing the draft bye-laws. Worryingly,

the council is proposing that many of the halting sites in the county will remain at 50 km/h, when in our view 30 km/h could be easily implemented.

Regarding the development plan, there are lands at Adamstown, Grange Castle, Greenogue and Baldonnel zoned for residential and commercial development that are outside the 50 km/h zone proposed by the draft bye-laws. The draft bye-laws need to be brought into line with the development plan.



**Image 1: County development plan zoning map with the 50 km/h speed limit boundary (heavy black line) overlaid.**

## 6.0 Analysis of Draft Bye-laws and Maps

Issues may arise regarding certain housing areas. There seems to be a pattern of estates owned by housing associations, new estates not yet 'taken in charge' by the council and halting sites – not being marked as 30 km/h, the problem being that these are the very estates that are likely to have young children. While some of these roads aren't in the charge of the council, they are likely to be in the future and the draft bye-laws and maps should reflect this. Further, publishing maps which appear to indicate a higher than appropriate speed limit, may lead residents and drivers to believe that these are the actual speed limits and safe speeds to drive at.

Many residential rural roads and boreens are proposed by the council to remain at 80 km/h, including housing estates like Newcastle Glebe & Castlebrook (both Newcastle), Redgap Estate (near Rathcoole) and Slade Castle (Saggart). We address these and many other issues in *Appendix B – Proposals for Additional Changes to Speed Limits*.

## 6.1 Analysis of Maps

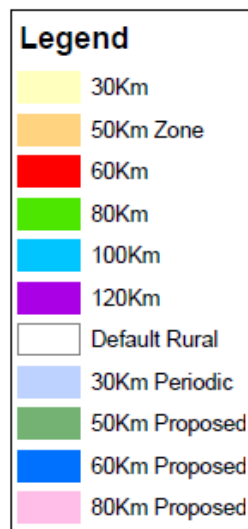
The scale included on the legend page (see image) is meaningless without stating drawing size. Note that the different drawings (OS Discovery Series Map, index map, individual maps) have different scales.

### South Dublin County Council Speed Limit Review 2016

1:7,000 Extract Maps

**Note:**

This book of maps has been produced for reference only. The Maps are numbered to facilitate ease of reference.



#### Image 2: Legend as included in the public consultation book of maps.

There is a note on the legend that says:

*"This book of maps has been produced for reference only."*

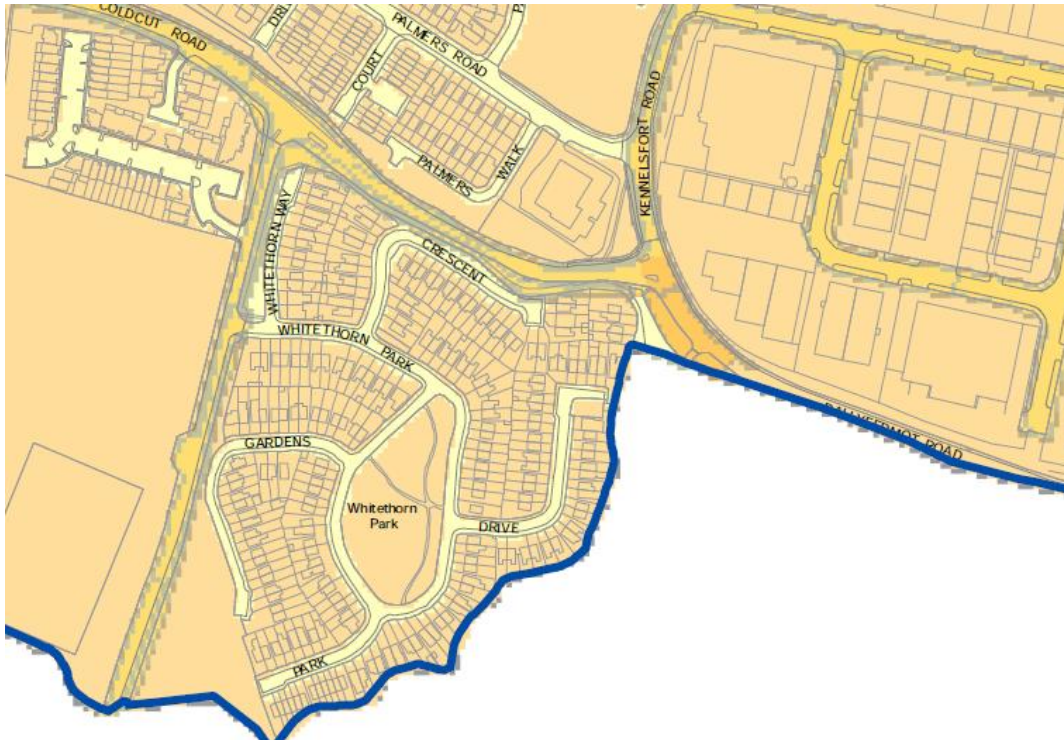
This is inappropriate, as the text of the draft bye-laws (8.1.4) is dependent on the accuracy of these drawings.

*"All residential housing estate roads within South Dublin County and as indicated on accompanying map(s) and coloured Yellow Ref: SL/2016/01 to be 30 kph."*

The legend does not apply to the Discovery Series Map and it should be moved to the orange-coloured index map on the following page.

The colours included in the legend do not necessarily match those on the maps, where there are at least four different cream / yellow / orange colours. Additionally, what may appear as orange on a computer screen looks more yellow in the printed public consultation displays that were reviewed at County Hall and at Ballyroan Library. These colours should be rationalised to avoid confusion.

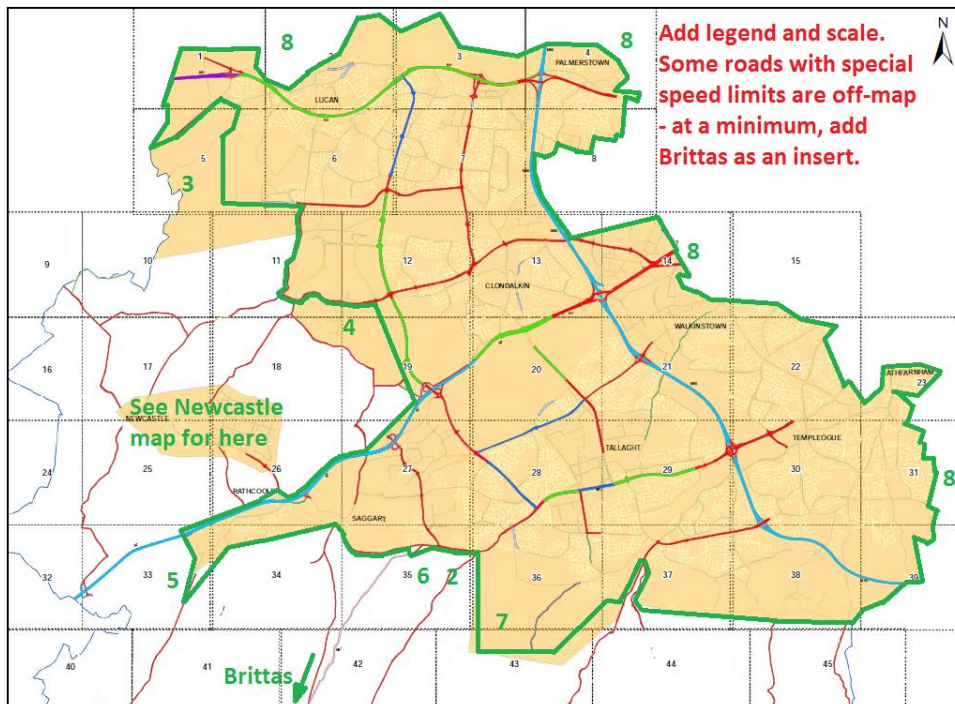
In the case of the proposed 30, 60, 80, 100 and 120 km/h speed limits, the legend should be changed from "30Km" to "30 km/h". In the case of the "50Km Zone" (the only zones proposed will have 50 km/h speed limits) should be revised to "50km/h Zone". Similarly, "30Km Periodic" should change to "30km/h Periodic". In the final version of the drawings, to be voted on by the council, the colours for "50Km Proposed", "60Km Proposed" and "80Km Proposed" should be omitted from the legend and the maps adjusted accordingly.



**Image 3: Four different cream / yellow / orange colours on maps.**

Further, the fifth schedule refers to the colour blue applying to a 120 km/h speed limit, whereas the maps use this for 100 km/h speed limits and the sixth schedule refers to the colour green applying to a 50 km/h speed limit, whereas the maps use this for 80 km/h speed limits. **All the colours used on the maps and in the by-law text should be thoroughly reviewed.**

There are repeated references in the text to Drawing No. SL/2016/01, but none of the drawings carry this number. It would be important for the final version of the drawings to carry this number and for it to represent the entire book of maps.



**Image 4: Comparison of Map and Text**

We have analysed the boundary for the main urban area - see image (numbers of bullet points matches the green numbers on drawing).

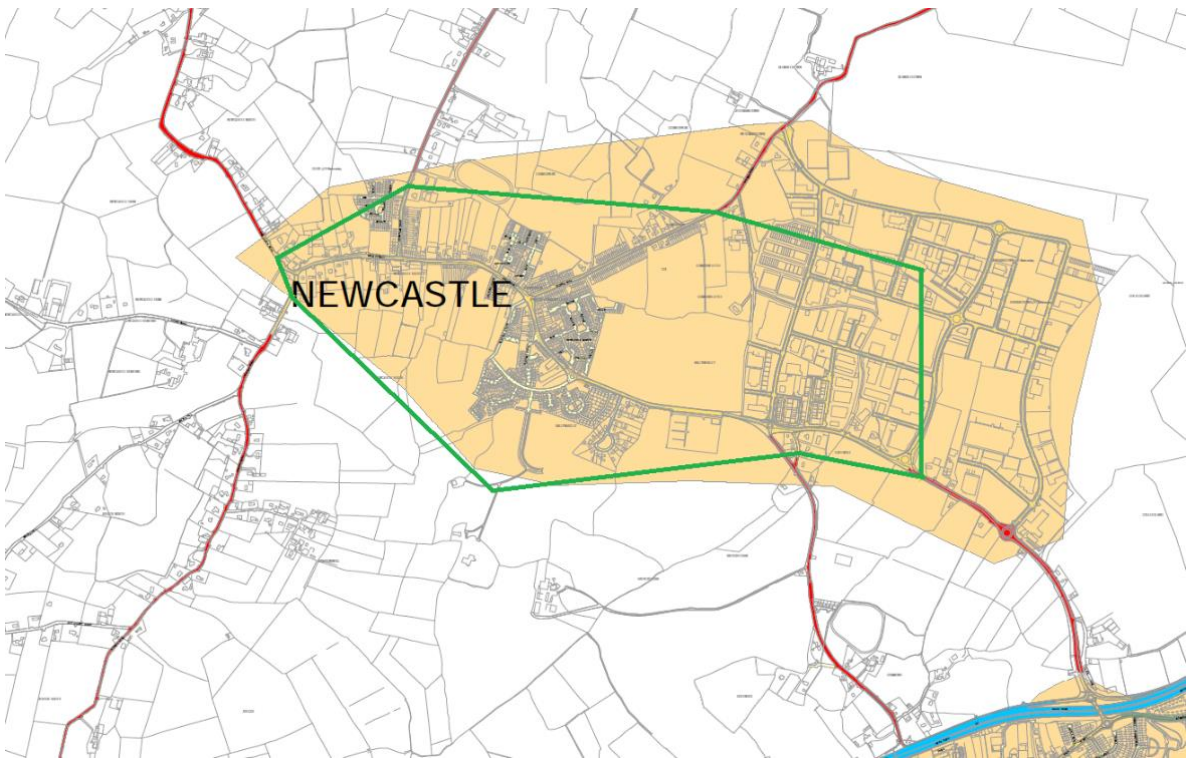
1. General - where the boundary runs along a road, it doesn't say whether the road is in or out of the 50 km/h zone. In places this is a problem.
2. In some places, e.g. Kiltalown Cottages (see photograph), the main road is 60 km/h, but the residential road is 80 km/h.



**Image 5: Blessington Road at Kiltalown Cottages. Blessington Road is proposed to have a speed limit of 60 km/h, while the local access road (left, beyond grass) for Kiltalown Cottages is proposed to remain at 80 km/h (Image © Dermot McNally via Mapillary.com)**

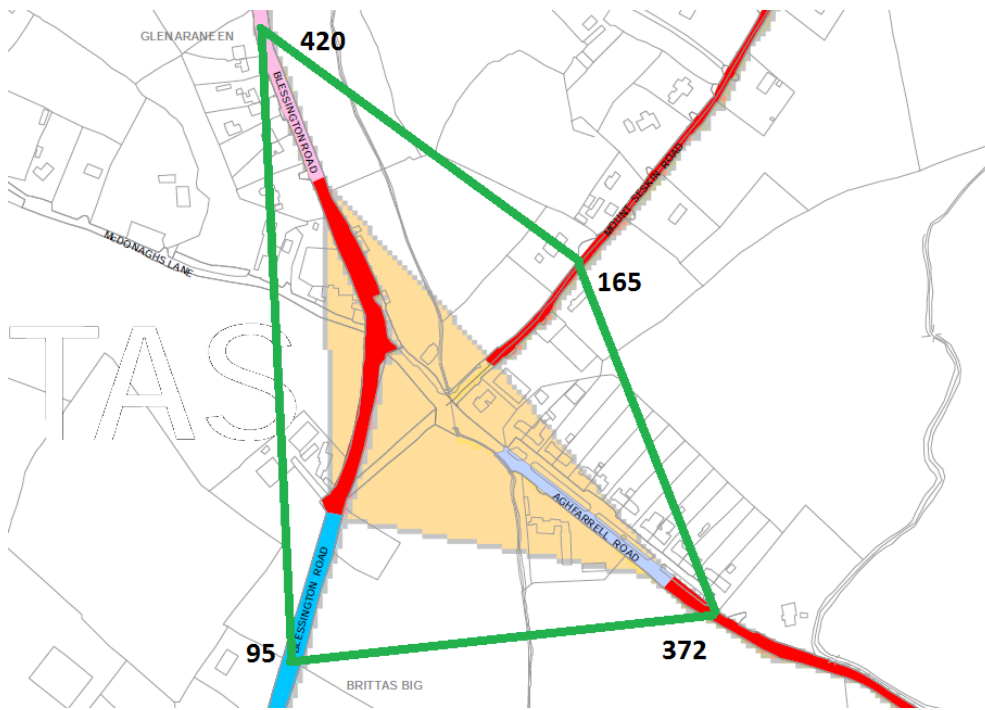
3. Backweston to Adamstown - map overstates text - mostly rural area, but some residential frontage.
4. Grange Castle to Citywest - map overstates text - mostly rural area / golf course.
5. Rathcoole - map understates text slightly - mostly rural area, but this location is residential.
6. The Embankment, Blessington Road - map understates text slightly - mostly rural area, but some businesses and the transition from rural to urban.
7. Jobstown to Bohernabreena - map overstates text slightly - very rural area.
8. The rest of the area is bounded by the boundaries with the other councils.

There are similar issues with the smaller 50 km/h zones at Newcastle and Brittas. In Newcastle, the map covers a much larger 50 km/h zone than the draft bye-law text, while in Brittas the map covers a much smaller 50 km/h zone than the draft bye-law text.

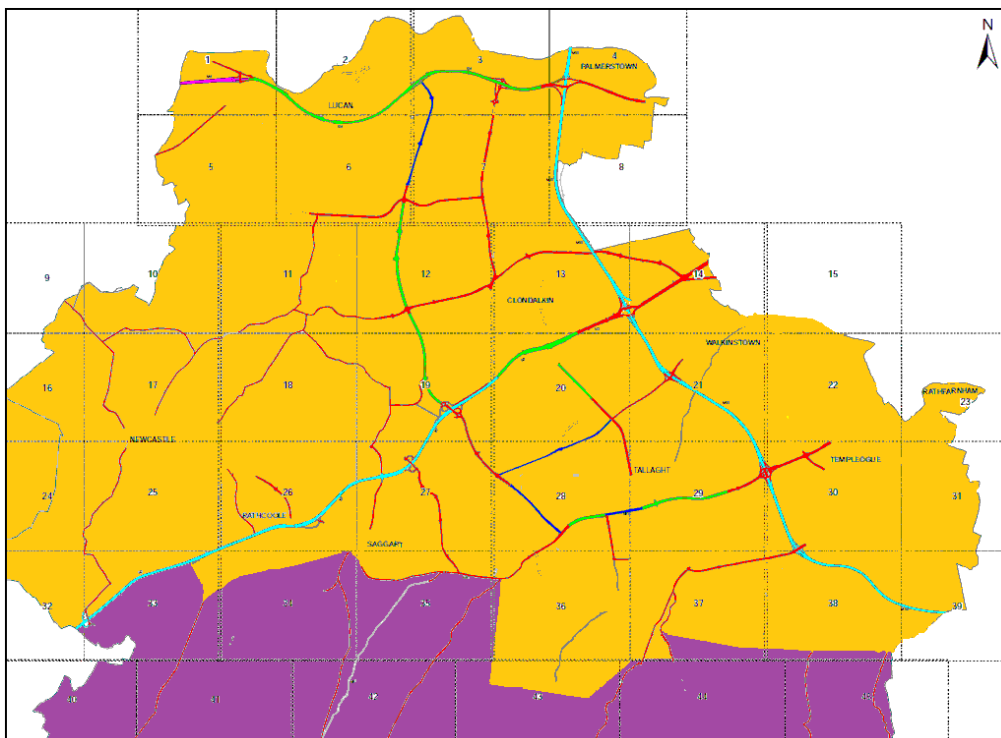


**Image 6: Extract from map of Newcastle and Greenogue showing the 50 km/h zone included in the draft bye-law text with a green line.**



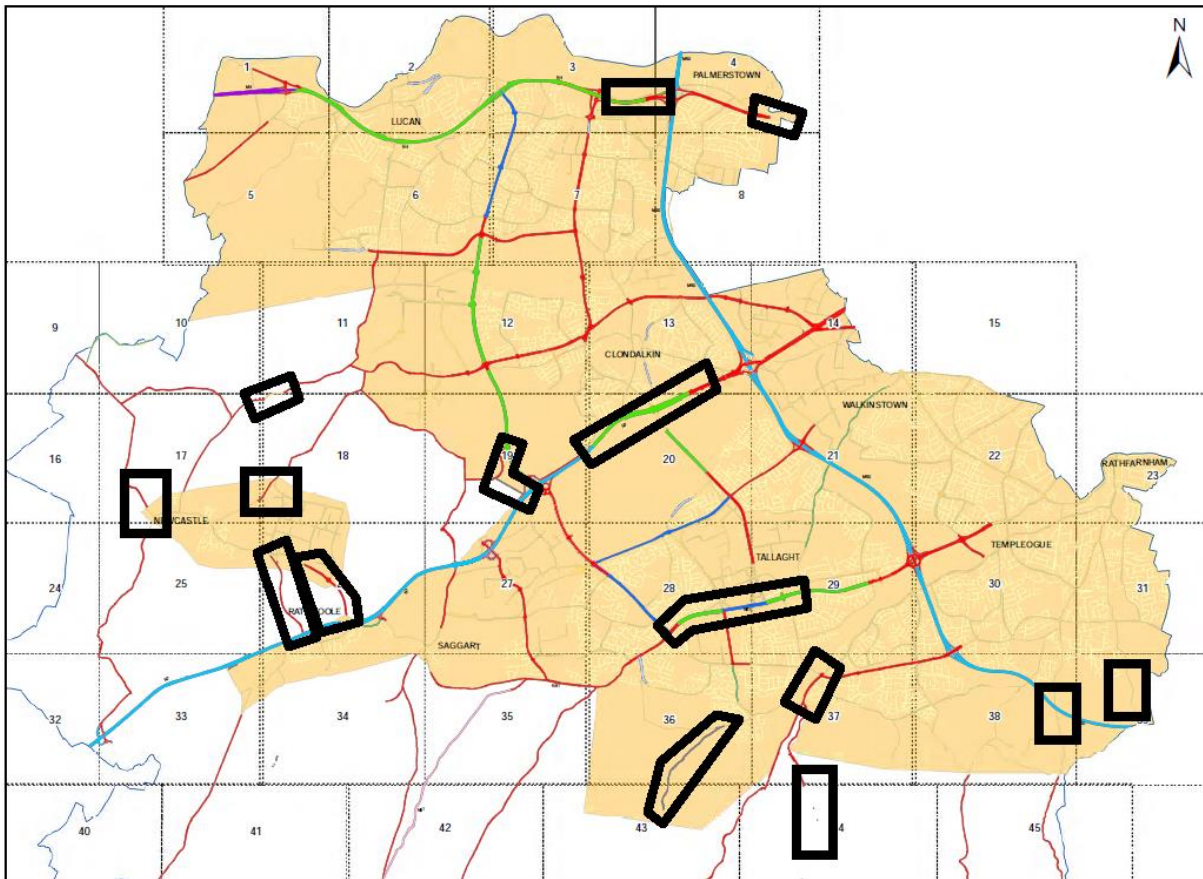


**Image 7: Extract from map of Brittas showing the 50 km/h zone included in the draft bye-law text with a green line. The dimensions (measured from different points) mentioned in the text are shown in black.**



**Image 8: Suggested Zones – orange (50 km/h) and purple (60 km/h)**

We suggest that the main urban area, the Newcastle area and the west of the county be merged to create a combined 50 km/h zone and that the southern half of the county (excluding the Brittas zone) have a default 60 km/h speed limit, not the current 80 km/h. Individual roads can, of course, still have context-specific speed limits, but this will avoid the issue of the large number of very minor roads having 80 km/h speed limits.



**Image 9: Individual main roads where draft bye-laws don't match map.**

Regarding individual roads, as opposed to zones, there are differences between draft bye-law text and maps with the following sections of main road:

- 8.2.21 Naas Road(N7)/R110/R810 - incorrect distances either side of Newlands Cross.
- 8.2.23 N4(Lucan By-Pass) - marking on map stops short of city boundary and generally hard to verify as measurements are based on numbered public lighting poles.
- 8.2.64 Newlands (Cross) Interchange - as 8.2.21.
- 8.3.2 Blessington Road/Tallaght By-Pass (N81) - 60 km/h proposal on map not in text. Notably, it appears that the section west of this has a high fatality rate.
- 8.3.3 Naas Road (N7) - as 8.2.21.
- 8.3.4 N4 (Lucan By-Pass) - as 8.2.23.
- 8.4.2 Naas Road (N7) - as 8.2.21.
- 9.1.1 Peamount Road – R120 - hard to verify as measurements are based on numbered public lighting poles.
- 9.2.1 Hazelhatch Road – R405 - map and text don't quite agree.
- 9.2.3 Peamount Road – R120 - as 9.1.1.
- 9.2.5 Baldonnell Road – L2001 - fails to consider Baldonnell Road realignment.
- 9.2.14 Bohernabreena Road – R114/L7114 - names of roads very confused.
- 8.1.6 Ballyboden Road (a.k.a. Edmondstown Road) – R116 Edmondstown National School - hard to verify as measurements are based on numbered public lighting poles.
- 8.1.9 Glassamucky Road (Friarstown) – L7239 – Glenasmole National School - not on map, hard to verify as measurements are based on numbered public lighting poles.

- 8.1.15 Whitechurch Road – L4020 – not on map, hard to verify as measurements are based on numbered public lighting poles.
- On map only – Adamstown Road (towards Peamount Road).
- On map only – Tay Lane (Newcastle).
- On map only – College Lane (Newcastle).
- On map only – Ballymana Lane – unknown marking.

Outside the coloured zones, many minor rural roads, some of them primarily residential or commercial, would appear to have 80 km/h speed limits. This is in sharp contrast to, say, the Draft Road Traffic Special Speed Limit Bye-Laws 2015 for Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County, where such roads have a 50 km/h default, with some specific exceptions. In South Dublin’s case, while some of these 80 km/h speed limit roads are genuinely rural, many of them have substantial residential or commercial frontage (typically without footpaths, road markings or other safety features) or are otherwise unsuitable for 80 km/h speed limits, e.g. poor line of sight, excessive narrowness, sharp bends and roadside hazards. This is quite inappropriate. We have identified roads in *Appendix B – Proposals for Additional Changes to Speed Limits* where the speed limit should be revised, typically downwards.

## 6.2 Analysis of Draft Bye-laws

The structure of text of the draft bye-laws is unduly complicated, with individual sections that are bloated and some speed limits included in more than one schedule and there are two First Schedules and two Eighth Schedules. It should be sufficient to have one schedule for each speed limit and an additional schedule for periodic speed limits. It may be useful to consider the style of the *Dublin City Council Special Speed Limit Bye-Laws 2013* for their simplicity. The text of the draft bye-laws needs simplification, updating and general revision. We include detailed amendments in *Appendix A – Analysis of Bye-laws*.

As mentioned previously, there is no clarity as to whether the text of the draft bye-laws or the book of maps take precedence. As there are substantial differences between the two documents, this may lead to unnecessary confusion. The documents need to be de-conflicted and clarity given as to which takes precedence.

Importantly, some parts of the draft bye-laws are out of date or otherwise legally questionable. Bye-laws 4 and 5 quote from other documents, but do not appear to meaningfully add to the draft bye-laws. However, they do introduce confusion:

- The concept of “general speed limits” appears to no longer exist under the 2004 Act and are otherwise undefined.
- Section 86 of the Road Traffic Act, 2010 which amended the Road Traffic Act 2004, enabled speed limits of 30 km/h on motorways and 40 km/h generally.
- The concept of “built up area”, as included in the Road Traffic Act 2004 does not apply to South Dublin, as “built up area” means the area of a city, a borough or a town within the meaning of the Local Government Act 2001. None of these entities exist within South Dublin.
- The most recent Guidelines for Setting and Managing Speed Limits in Ireland would appear to be dated 2015, not 2016.

It may be best to delete these two bye-laws completely.

Bye-law 6 attempts to exempt the drivers of fire brigade vehicles, ambulances and Garda vehicles from speed limits, which would seem to be beyond the council's power. The matter is addressed in the Road Traffic Act 2004, so the council shouldn't continue to include the matter in bye-laws. The potential issue would be that exempting all ambulance drivers from speed limits creates the risk that the drivers (who might not be trained in emergency driving) of private ambulances - used for transport not emergencies - would attempt to abuse the exemption. Similarly, the drivers of private fire appliances used at industrial sites and the like shouldn't be exempted.

*"Road Traffic Act 2004 (Number 44 of 2004)*

<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2004/act/44/enacted/en/html>

*Exemptions for emergency vehicles.*

*27.—Requirements under the Road Traffic Acts 1961 to 2004 relating to vehicles and requirements, restrictions and prohibitions relating to the driving and use of vehicles, other than those provided under sections 49 and 50 (inserted by sections 10 and 11, respectively, of the Act of 1994), 51A and 52 (inserted by sections 49 and 50, respectively, of the Act of 1968) and 53 of the Principal Act and sections 12, 13, 14 and 15 of the Act of 1994, do not apply to a driver of a fire brigade vehicle, an ambulance or the use by a member of the Garda Síochána of a vehicle in the performance of the duties of that member or a person driving or using a vehicle under the direction of a member of the Garda Síochána, where such use does not endanger the safety of road users."*

Again, it may be best to delete this Bye-law 6 completely.

Bye-law 7, dealing with the revocation of the existing (2009) bye-laws is poorly written, as were its predecessors, insofar as the stated name of the existing bye-laws is incorrect. It may be useful to include all previous bye-laws and regulations and include a general revocation.

Within the text of the draft bye-laws, there is some variation in the names and numbers of roads, although as with many Irish roads, some have more than one name. The council has put substantial effort into signage of both urban and rural roads, with a combination of nameplates and/or number-only signs, but this is not universal. Based on the only copy of the roads schedule (dated 2014) available to us, hosted at <http://wiki.openstreetmap.org/wiki/Ireland/Roads/SouthDublin> the vast bulk of *main* roads do have numbers assigned. In parallel to the exercise of revising speed limits, the council should put effort into maintaining the roads schedule, to ensure that roads are identified correctly. Issues appear to arise primarily with local access carriageways, and newer / realigned roads, e.g. Naas Road, Bowstring Bridge, Ronanstown Road, Thomas Omer Way, Cookstown Road, Tay Lane, Baldonnell Road, College Lane and Athgoe Road.

## **7.0 Conclusion**

The proposals to change most residential estates to 30 km/h and other roads to 50 km/h are very welcome and are to be commended. Dublin Cycling Campaign fully supports the Council's proposals for lower speed limits.

The large number of conflicts and other issues within the draft documents somewhat compromises the intention of revising the bye-laws and careful consideration will need to be given to the issues we have raised.

We would like to thank the council for the opportunity to make this submission.