

**NOTES** of the Meeting between **ONCHAN DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS** and the **MINISTER FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE** held in the Boardroom, Hawthorn Villa, 79 Main Road on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2025 at 6:00 pm

**Present:**

Hon M Haywood MHK	(Department of Infrastructure Minister)
Mr A Allen	(Chairman)
Mr S Wilson	(Vice Chairman)
Mr O Lockwood	(Lead Member for Finance & General Purposes)
Mr D Quirk	(Lead Member for Environmental & Technical Services)
Mr R Turton	

**Apologies:** Miss G Corkish

**In Attendance:**

Mr R Phillips	(Chief Executive/Clerk)
Mr R Forgie	(District Surveyor)
Mr K Podmore	(Department of Infrastructure)
Mr B Acheson	(Department of Infrastructure)

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The Chairman made the introductions and thanked everyone for attending.

#### **1. Department of Infrastructure – 20 MPH Consultation**

- 1.1 The Minister for the Department of Infrastructure (“Minister Haywood”) provided the Board of Onchan District Commissioners with an overview in relation to the Department of Infrastructure’s (“DOI”) 20 miles per hour (MPH) proposals and the consultation which is currently taking place in relation to Douglas and Onchan.

It was noted that as part of the consultation process, the DOI intends to meet with local authorities to obtain views and to provide further information; hence the reasoning for requesting that the Board meet with the Minister this evening. It was noted that the Minister and the Department had recently met with Douglas City Council regarding the same matter.

The Board Members were requested to raise their concerns or to ask questions.

- 1.2 The Lead Member for Environmental and Technical Services highlighted that there are issues that occur at the junction of Windermere Drive and Whitebridge Road, including a recent road traffic accident. He stated that he is not sure why this area was excluded from the 20 MPH proposals, but other roads within the District are included, and that consideration could be given to extending the proposed 20 MPH limit on this section of road.

The Lead Member for Environmental and Technical Services also highlighted similar anomalies at the following locations:

- Hillberry Road between the junctions with Heywood Park and Birch Hill Close; and
- Governors Road between the junctions with Blackberry Lane and Lazy Corner.

It was suggested that if the 20 MPH limits are going to be introduced, then extensions to these three roads should be considered. It was further noted that the housing estates in Birch Hill and Ballachurry are already 20 MPH roads/ home zones.

Minister Heywood noted the Member’s comments and highlighted that this sort of local knowledge is why the consultation with stakeholders is important to allow the DOI to consider individual roads.

- 1.3 The Vice Chairman commented upon the Lead Member for Environmental and Technical Services’ observations in relation to Hillberry Road and Heywood Park, noting potential risks to

vulnerable pedestrians in the area linked to Bemahague School, the Beehive Nursery, Heywood Court social housing complex, and Sight Matters.

Minister Haywood highlighted that the DOI had previously considered pedestrian safety schemes for some of these roads, but funding had been an issue.

The Chief Executive/Clerk highlighted that within the Onchan 15 Year Road Map, there is commentary relating to pedestrian crossing on Hillberry Road and Governors Road, and that previous attempts had been investigated regarding Main Road to Whitebridge Road, but nothing progressed.

1.4 Minister Haywood asked the Board Members if there were any particular roads that they wished to see not included in the 20 MPH speed limit proposals, and gave Harbour Road as an example of a road in Onchan that may want to be considered to remain at 30 MPH. The Board Members provided no examples or comments.

1.5 Mr Turton queried the enforcement of any new speed limits and asked if there was any support from the Isle of Man Constabulary in relation to the proposals. Furthermore, it was noted that there is much negative public comment regarding the proposals.

Minister Haywood highlighted:

- That the majority of road users will self-enforce/ comply with any changes;
- An overview was provided of the DOI's previous £3,000,000 scheme which had failed to obtain funding for road safety to accompany 20 MPH limits, including additional street furniture, speed humps and crossings that would further support self-enforcement/ compliance of road users;
- Statistics were given regarding driver behaviours based on different speed limits and the benefits of 20 MPH limits for road safety, and examples given of other jurisdictions in Scotland and Wales; and
- That in the future, there may be other enforcement measures that the DOI could bring forward for implementation.

1.6 The Chairman highlighted that he has the following concerns:

- The level of negative public comments, especially those which have been made via social media;
- The perception of some people regarding how the consultation has been administered;
- The public lack of support from the Isle of Man Constabulary Chief Constable; and
- Views regarding expenditure being committed for the installation of new signage poles before the consultation period has closed.

Minister Haywood noted the following:

- The Isle of Man Constabulary will enforce the changes, but they will always prioritise high-risk areas where the majority of fatalities occur;
- That the implementation of 20 MPH speed limits originated from Tynwald has twice been supported through the House of Keys for the Minister of the DOI to bring forward and action;
- Some members of the public have misconceptions regarding the proposals. Many people are vocal in respect of the overall 20 MPH limits, but many are supportive of 20 MPH speed limits on individual roads;
- Wales keeps being used as an example of a failure of 20 MPH speed limits, but this is not accurate. Positive examples were given of successes in Cardiff and other areas;
- Highlighted the importance of members of the public completing the consultation to provide local feedback relevant to where they live; and
- Highlighted that Main Road appears to be the most contentious area in Onchan so far.

- 1.7 The Chairman and the Vice Chairman highlighted that if UK and Isle of Man road safety data were to be published this may assist in dispelling some public perceptions.

Minister Haywood noted:

- The Isle of Man road safety data can be misleading as many incidents are not recorded;
- 20 MPH limits are proven to reduce the likelihood and severity of accidents; and
- The difficulty when comparing UK and Isle of Man data is due to issues like the T.T. etc.

- 1.8 Minister Haywood stated that it is important to consider local views on Onchan. Furthermore, that priority will be given to responses received from people who live on the road that is being commented upon.

The Chief Executive/Clerk highlighted that he had completed the consultation in a personal capacity but now notes that as he is not a resident of Onchan his views may be less impactful.

- 1.9 The Chairman concluded that there were no further questions from the Board Members.

The Chief Executive/Clerk noted that he will compile a draft response for the Board to consider based on the views of the Board Members which if approved will be sent to the DOI in response to the consultation.

## **2. Other Matters**

- 2.1 The Chief Executive/Clerk noted that earlier during the meeting, the Minister or an Officer had mentioned a recent meeting with Douglas City Council, and that consideration was being given to one-way systems.

It was highlighted that within the Onchan 15 Year Road Map part of the contents relate to issues that regularly occur on Stoney Road, Nursery Avenue, Church Avenue, Elm Tree Road, Main Road and Avondale Road where road users use these roads as a means to by-pass the traffic lights at the crossroads at the Manx Arms public house due to issues experienced with the timing of the lights. It was requested that if one-way systems are being considered by the DOI, then this area be considered in relation to the contents of the Onchan 15 Year Road Map.

- 2.2 The Chairman thanks the Minister Heywood and the Officers on behalf of the DOI for meeting with the Board of Onchan District Commissioners.

***There being no further business the meeting ended at 6:35 pm.***