

A stylized red dragon with a black outline, facing left. It has a long, pointed snout, a single eye, and a long, curved tail. The dragon is positioned behind a semi-transparent grey rectangle that contains text.

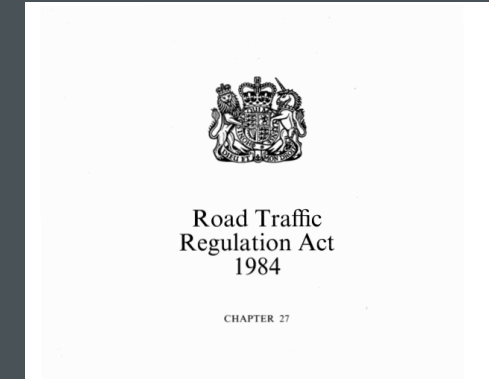
SoRSA Conference 2025

Wales – 20mph Default Urban Speed Limit
What does it mean for England?

Phil Jones, PJA

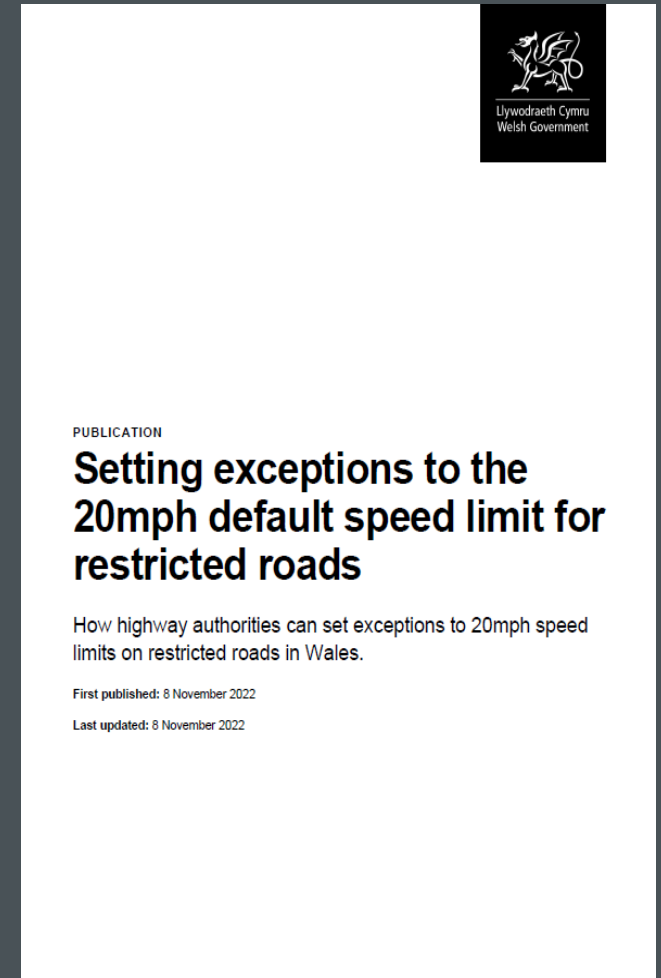
What did Wales Do?

- Changed **default speed limit** of roads with street lighting to 20mph
- Came into force 17 September 2023
- 20mph Zones removed
- Changes to Traffic Sign regulations – **No 20mph Repeaters**

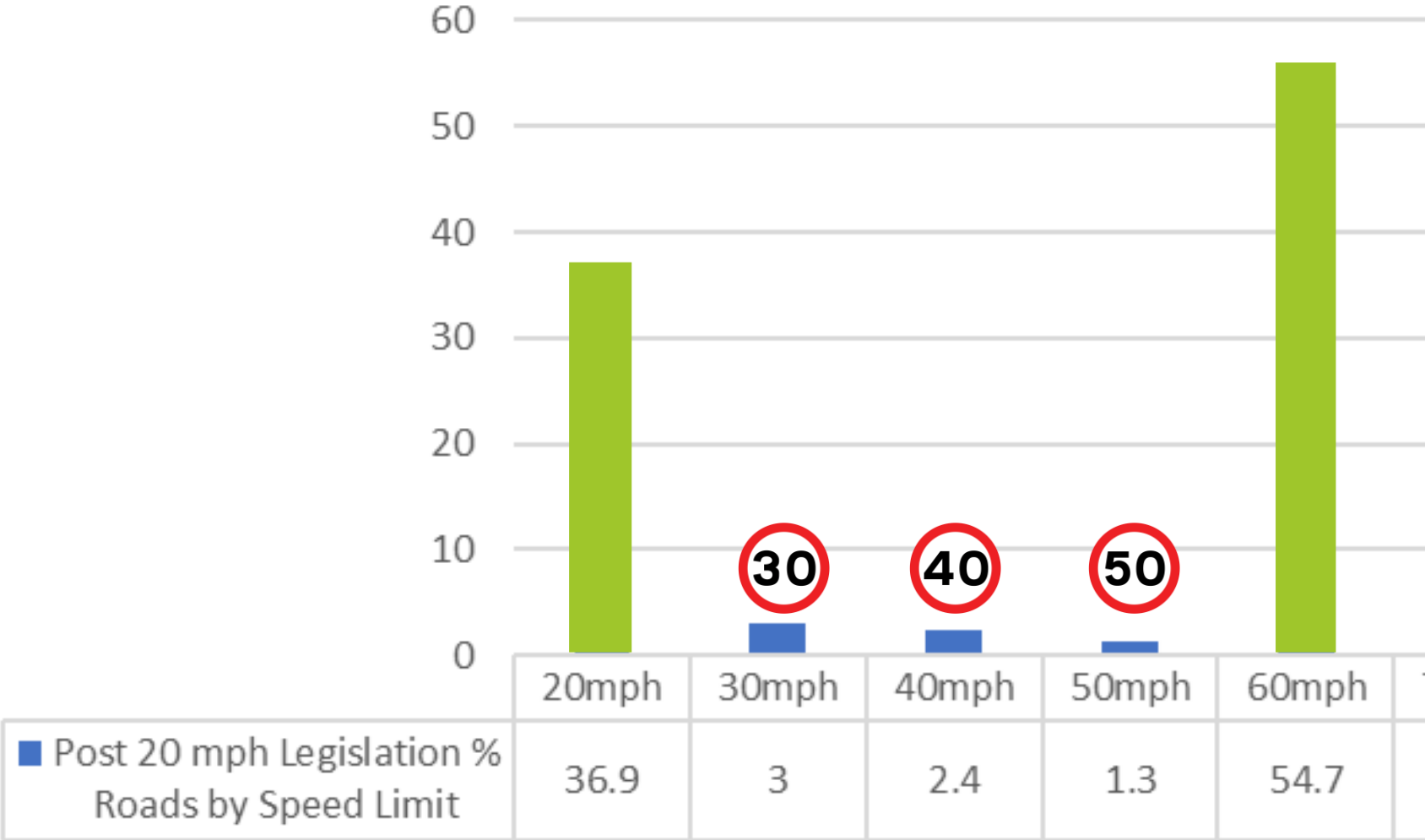


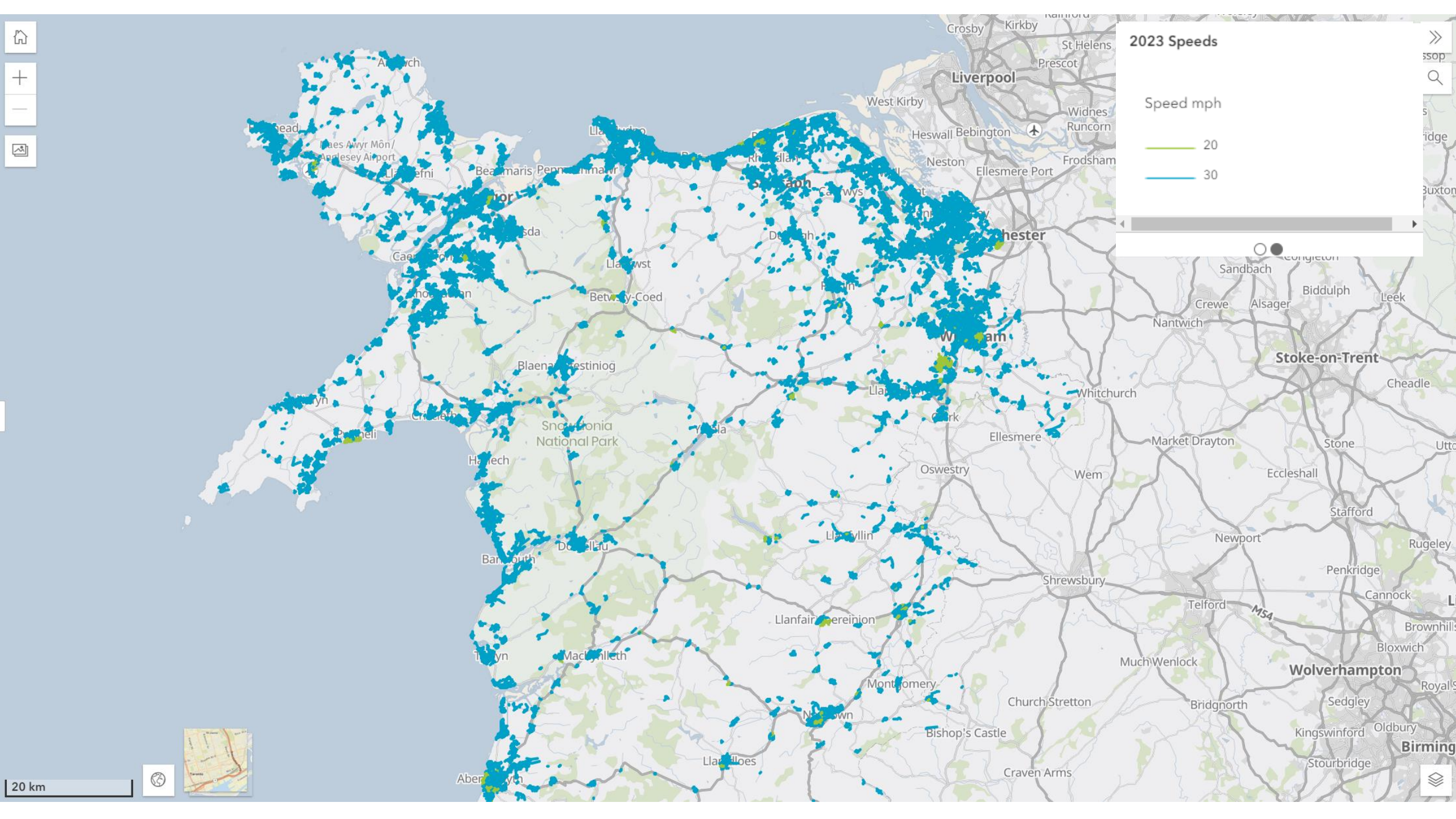
Setting Exceptions to the 20mph default speed limit

- Initial guidance November 2022
- Based on the aims of Article 11 of the UN Stockholm Declaration:
 - *mandate a maximum road travel speed of 30km/h in areas where vulnerable road users and vehicles mix in a frequent and planned manner, except where strong evidence exists that higher speeds are safe*
- Decisions should not be influenced by
 - existing traffic speeds
 - bus routes



Post 20mph Legislation Speed Limits





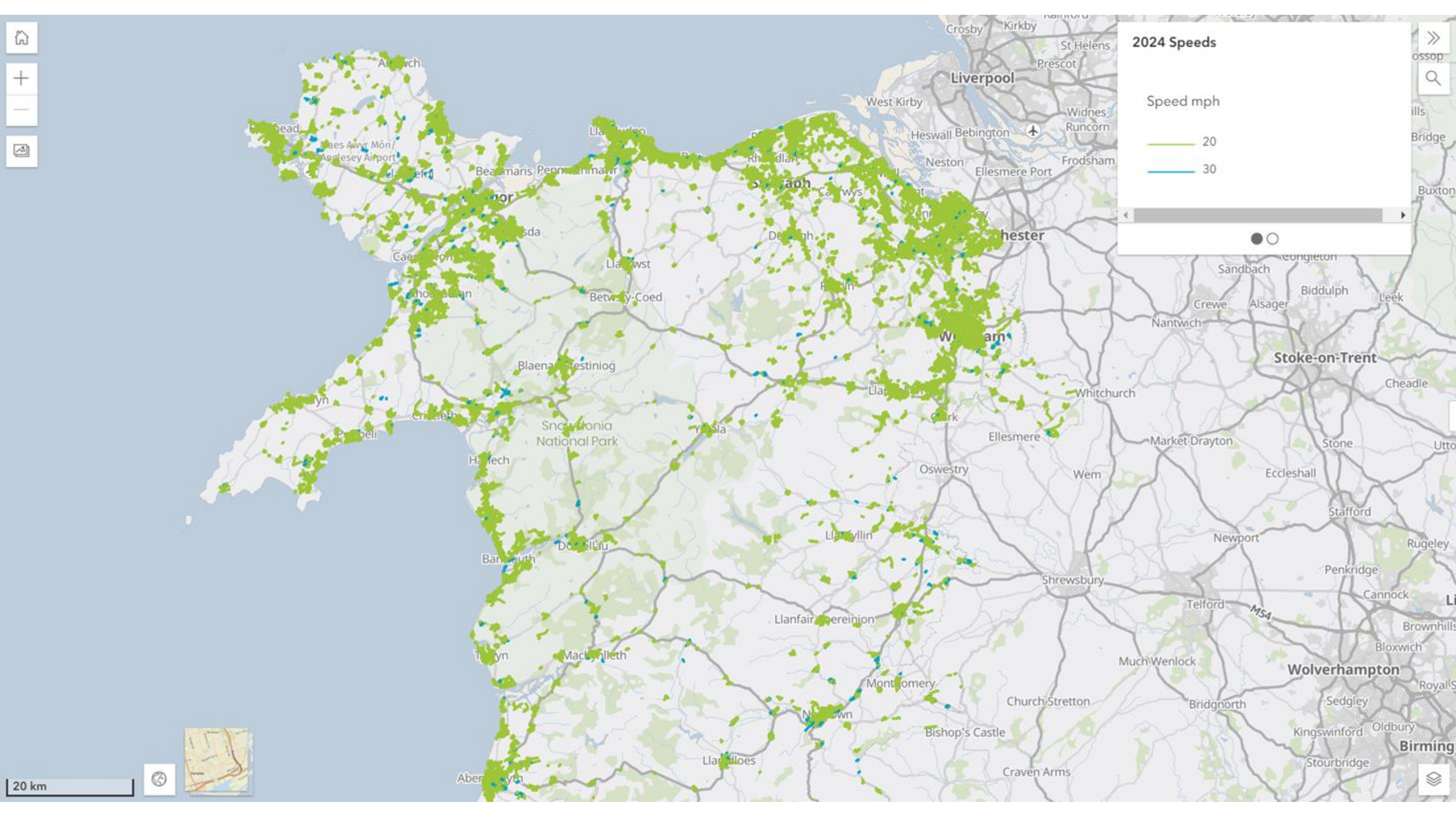
2023 Speeds

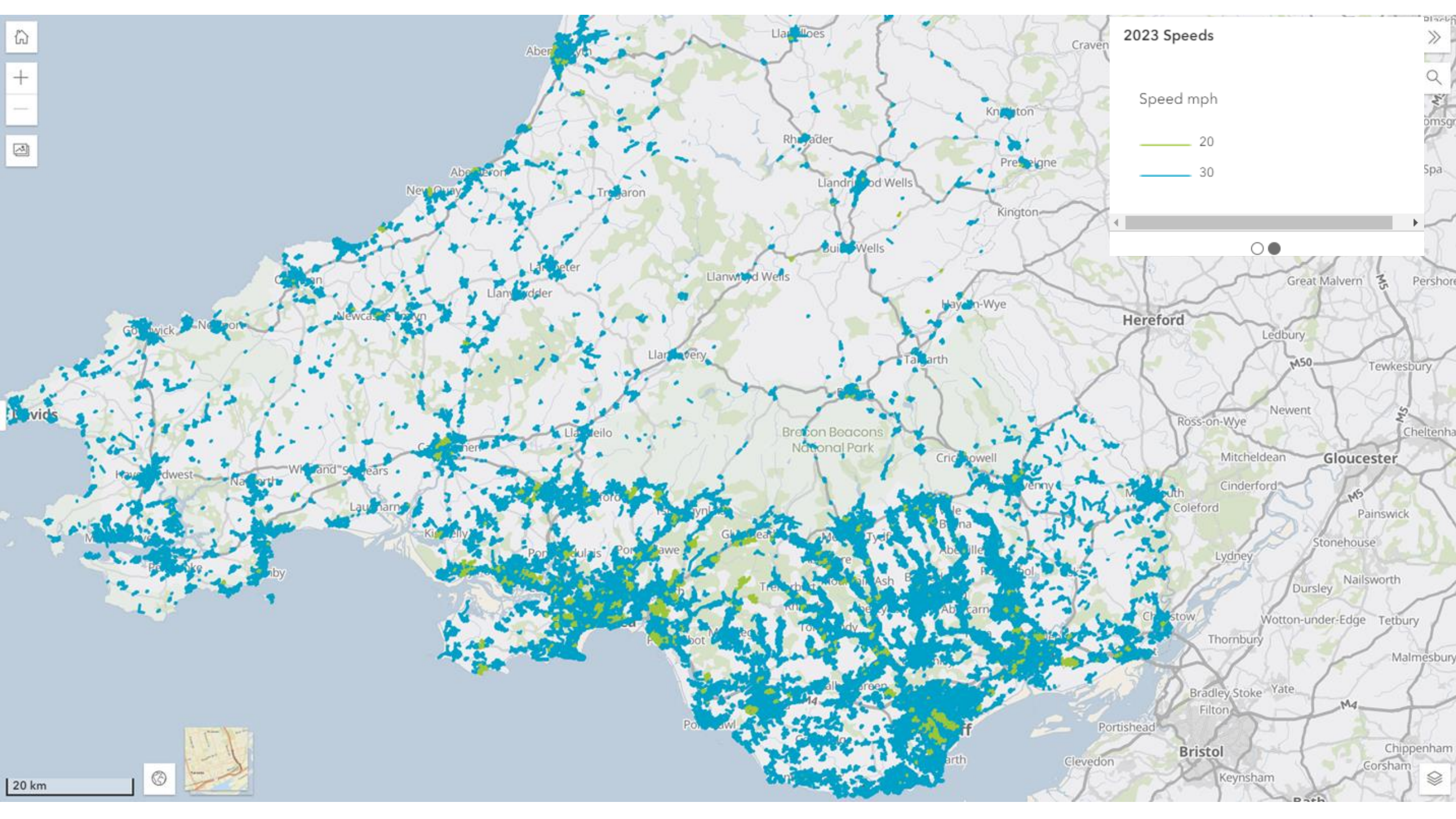
Speed mph

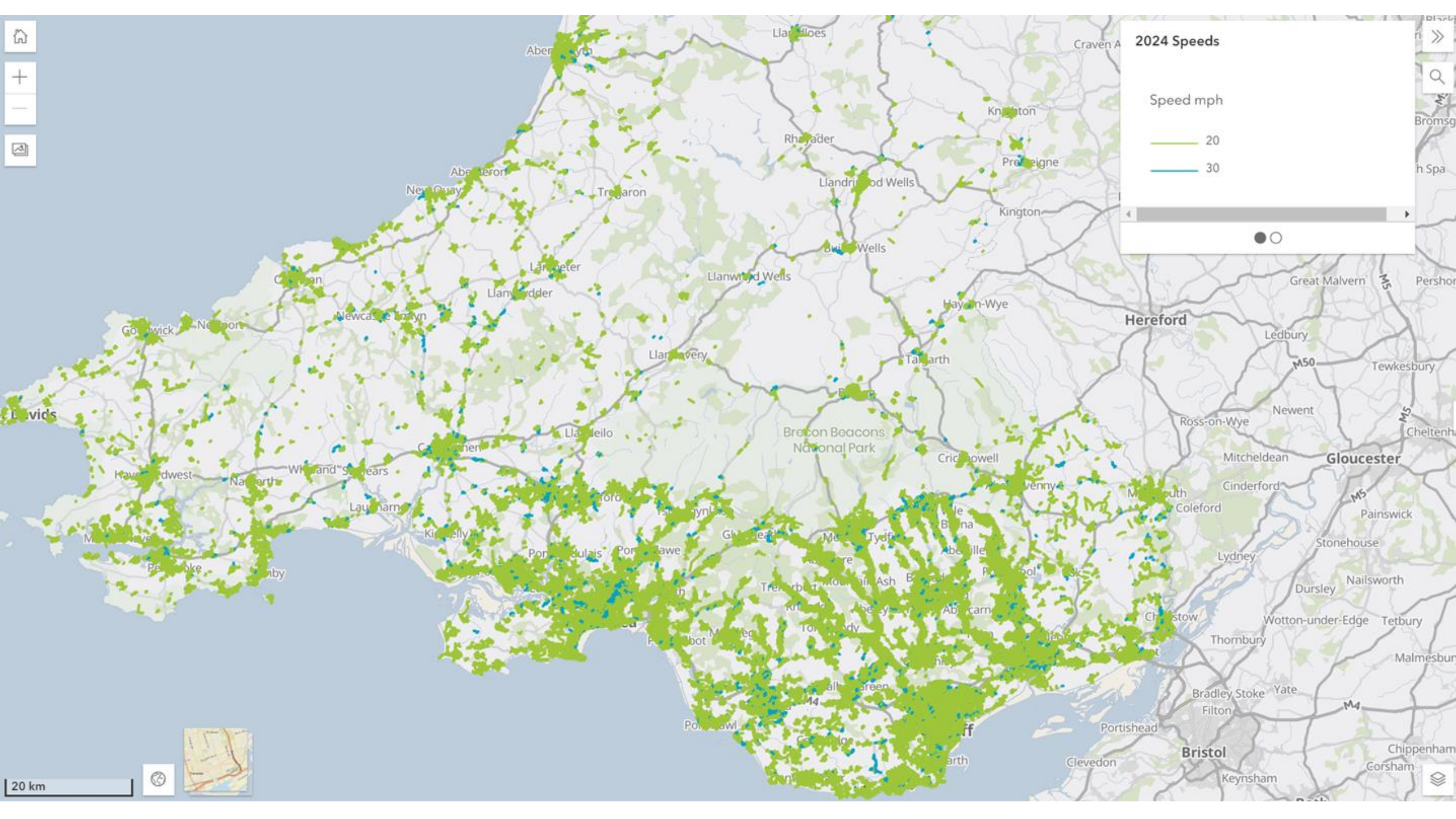
20

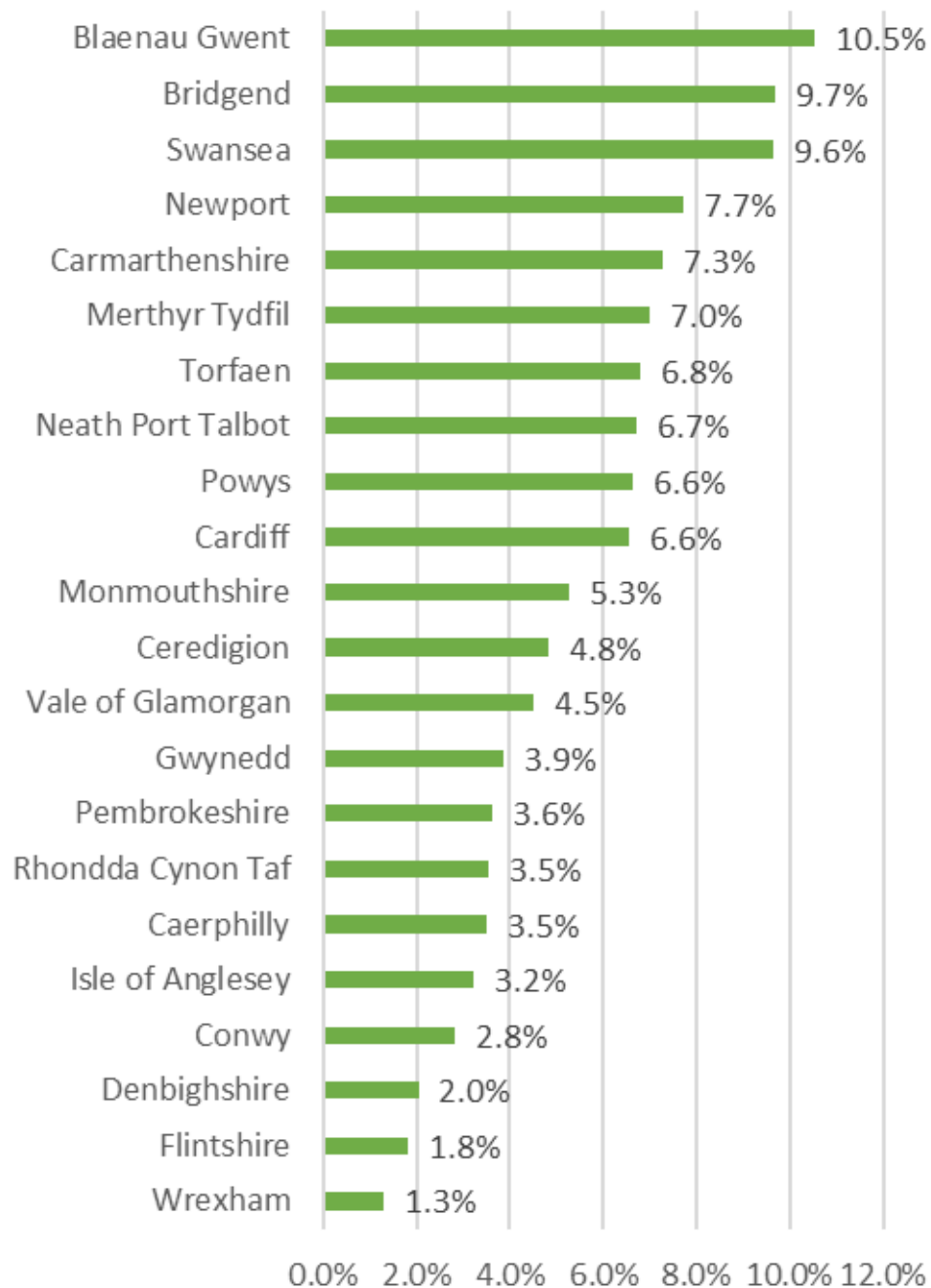
30

20 km









Significant variation in extent of Exceptions across Wales

Proportion of the Welsh road network retaining 30mph speed limits as percentage of all former 30mph roads



Petitions

Petition

We want the Welsh Government to rescind and remove the disastrous 20mph law

The new 20mph law is coming into force on the 17th September and it will mark the end of having socialism in power in Wales.

Welsh Government claim to have supporting evidence stating that reducing to 20mph EVERYWHERE saves lives! Yet we get flyers merely claiming that it will, and opinions from doctors that see RTCs coming into A&E. This is NOT evidence. The only true evidence is from Belfast and it states it makes NO DIFFERENCE to RTCs!

[More details](#) ▼

[Sign this petition](#) >

468,608 signatures

[Show on a map](#)

10,000



The Petitions Committee will consider this for a debate

The Petitions Committee considers all petitions that get more than 10,000 signatures for a debate

Current Exceptions Guidance

GUIDANCE, DOCUMENT

Setting 30mph speed limits on restricted roads: guidance for highway authorities

Helps highway authorities decide where 20mph speed limits can increase to 30mph.

First published: 8 November 2022 Last updated: 16 July 2024

- Published 16 July 2024
- Provides a framework to support highway authorities to make balanced decisions
- Consider benefits and disbenefits of increasing speed limit on case-by-case basis
- Criteria:
 - 20mph is suitable where people regularly mix with motorised traffic, including in built-up residential areas
 - 'Place' criteria – Housing density, shops etc
 - For **main roads** a 30mph limit can be set, **provided it is safe**
 - Road Characteristics: Assess segregated facilities and road geometry for safe higher speeds

Wrexham roads start 30MPH rollback – “We said we would listen – We’ve done that” says Ken Skates



Two roads in Wrexham have become the first in North Wales to return to 30mph following the controversial 20mph default speed limit change in 2023.

Flintshire Council to start reverting roads to 30mph in July

22ND MAY 20MPH IN WALES TRANSPORT FLINTSHIRE



A 20mph sign. (Image: Newsquest)

By Jack Harrison

JackHleader

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FLINTSHIRE County Council (FCC) has revealed when they expect to implement speed limit reversals back to 30mph.

Welsh council reviews all its 20mph roads and makes surprising decision

Councils across Wales have been looking at their 20mph routes after new Welsh Government guidance



Speed limit review completed in county (Image: WalesOnline/Rob Browne)

Ceredigion County Council reviewed 34 sections of road. All of the locations included in the review have been reassessed against the Welsh Government's 30mph exceptions guidance. The outcome of the review is that no further changes were identified, and the 20mph limits introduced on County Roads within Ceredigion in 2023 should remain.

No 20mph Denbighshire road will be suggested to become 30mph

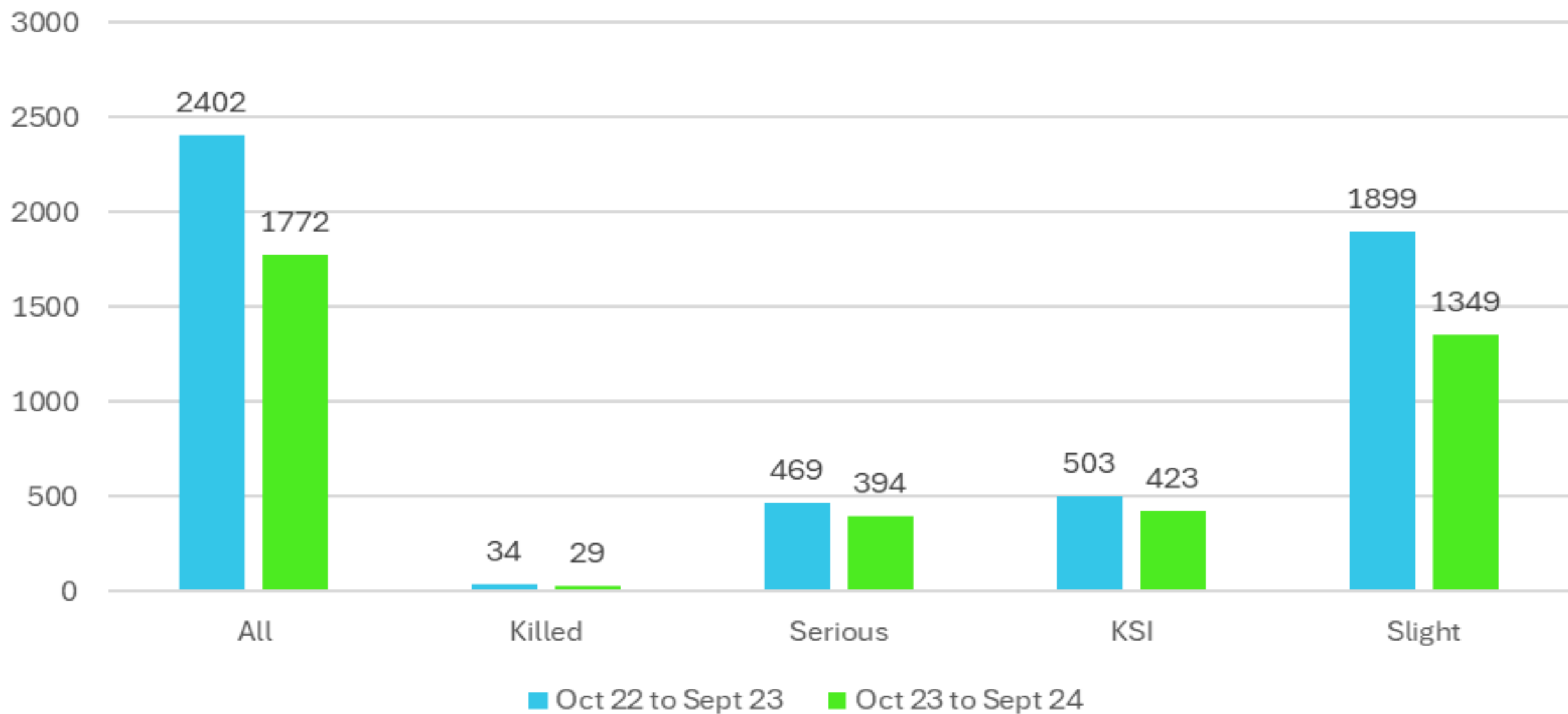
13TH JUNE LOCAL GOVERNMENT



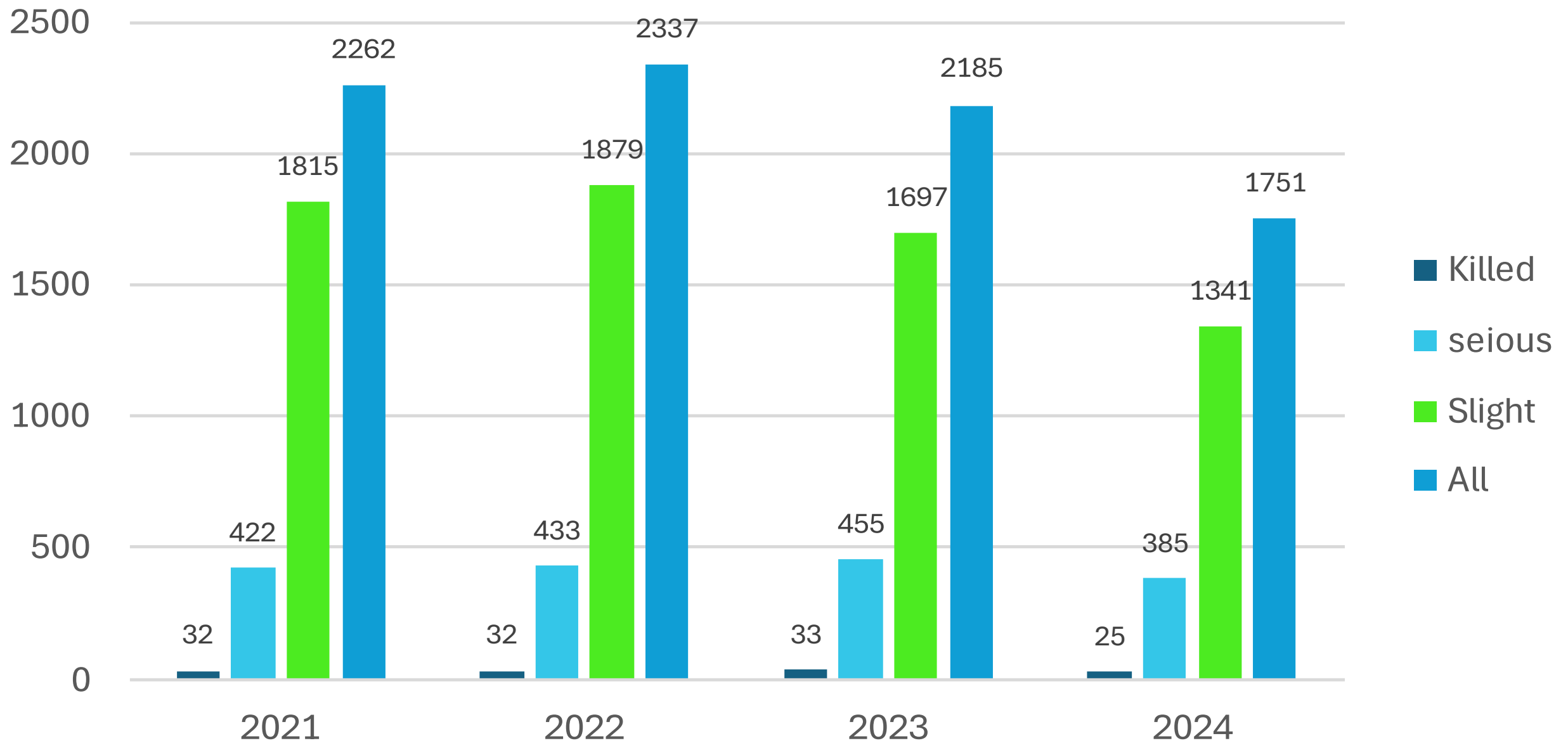
New 20mph signs in Bodelwyddan were vandalised in September 2023 (Image: Submitted)

One respondent said: "After many close calls (including kids waiting for a bus), and a death in our village I'm very pleased. People might not do exactly 20, but at least the majority aren't doing the 40-45 that used to be the case."

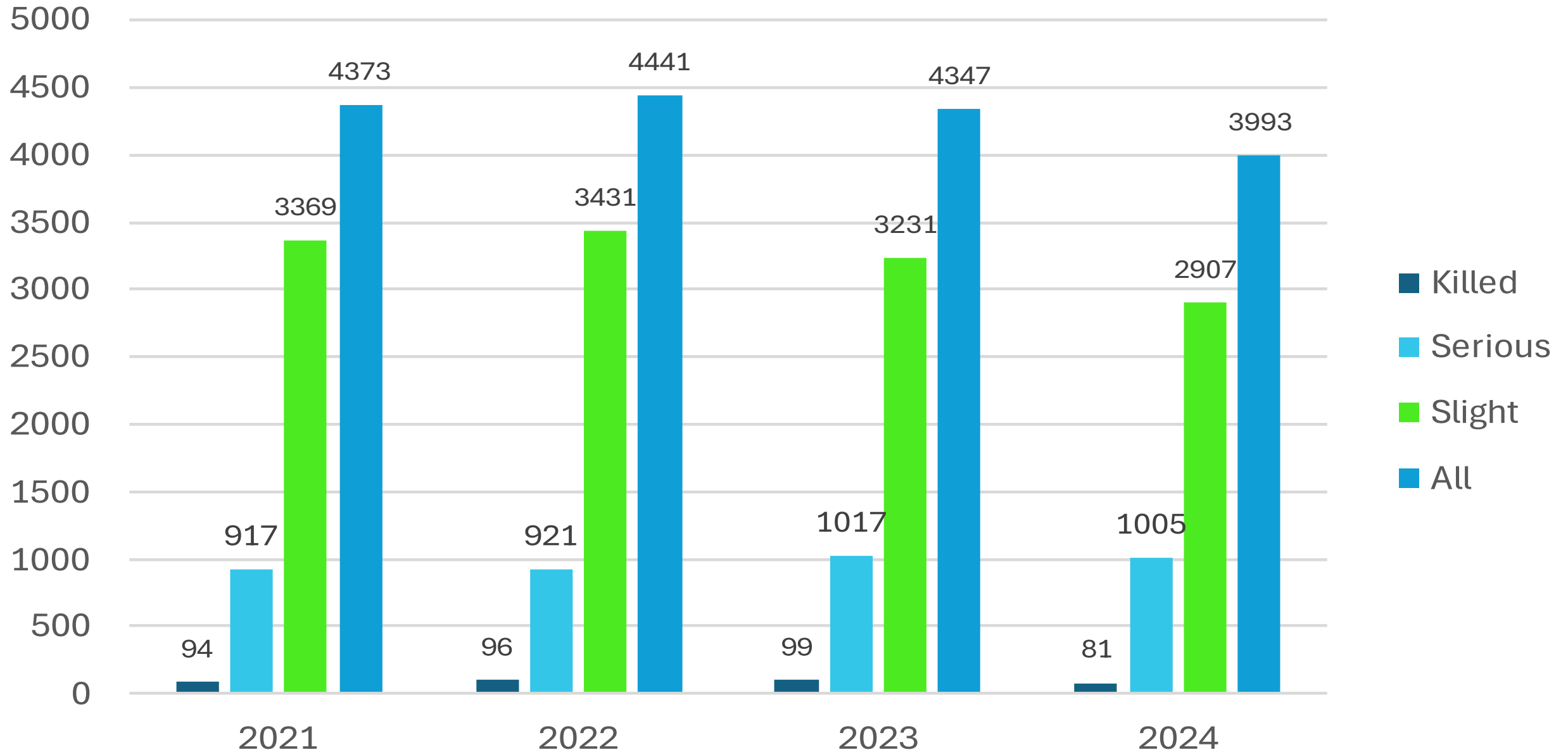
Wales - Casualties, 20/30mph Roads 12 months before/after



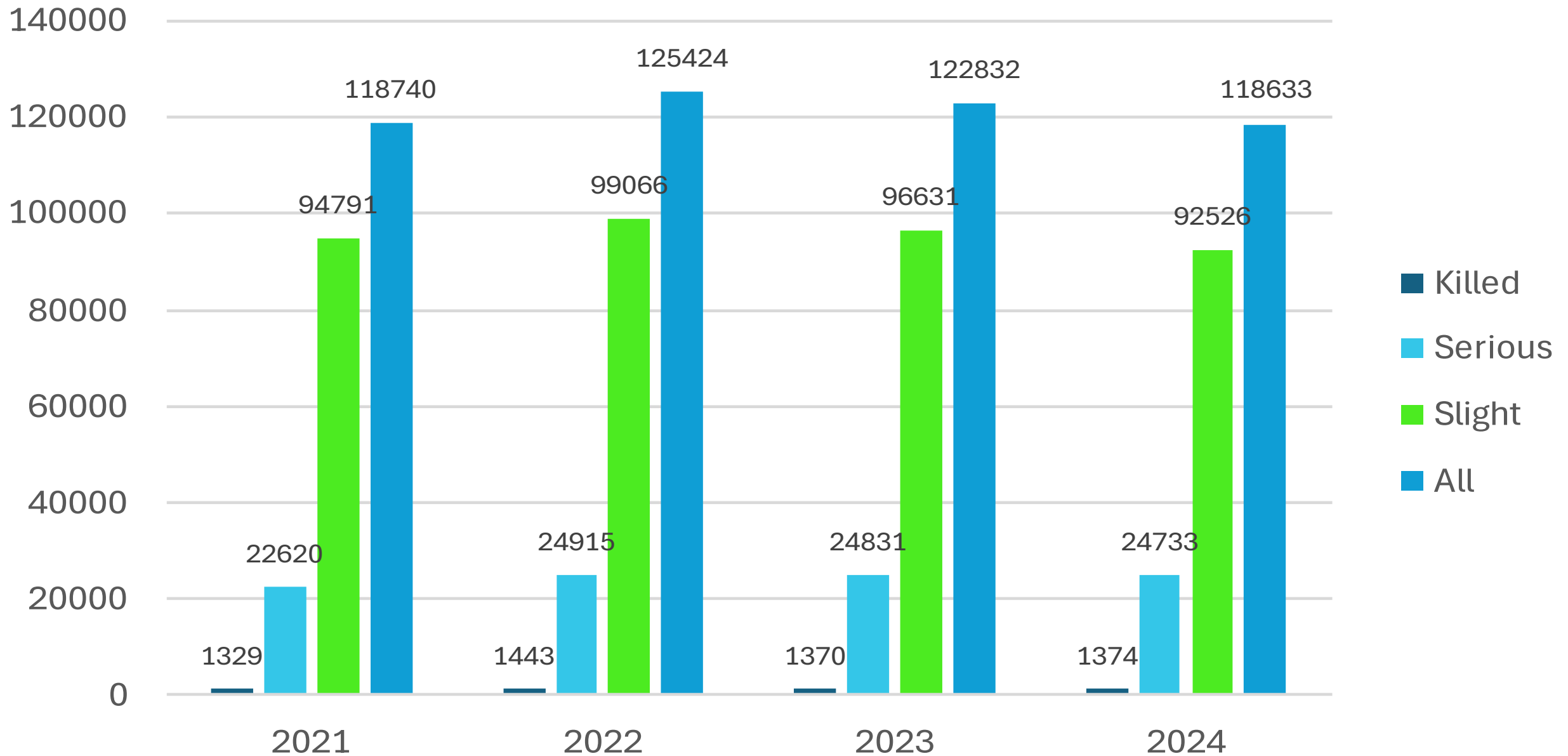
Wales 20/30mph Roads, Casualties by Year



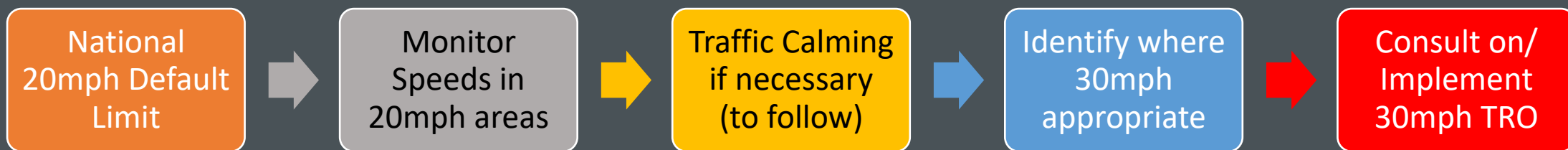
Wales All Roads, Casualties by Year



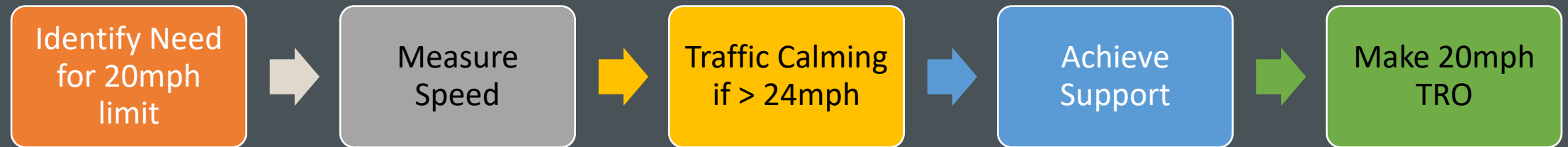
England All Roads, Casualties by Year



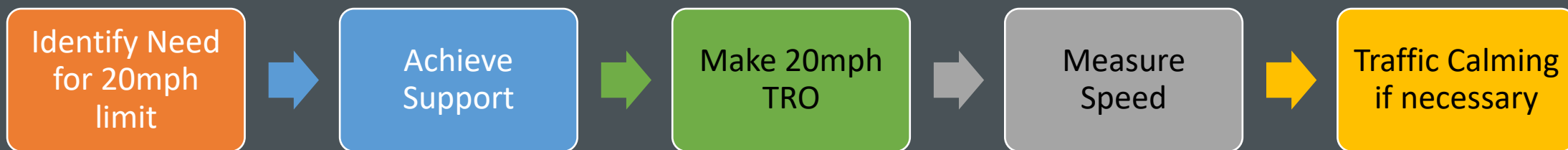
Process in Wales



English 'guidance compliant' process



Process in pro-20 English local authorities



What can rest of UK learn from Wales?

- Wide-area 20mph speed limits very cost-effective
- Concept of default 20 – where is 30 appropriate as an exception?
- Safe Systems approach/mixing principle
- 20 on minor streets and in centres
- Main streets through residential areas need further consideration





Thanks

phil@pja.co.uk



Jacobs

Challenging today.
Reinventing tomorrow.

An auditor's thoughts on wide-area 20mph limits

CIHT SoRSA Conference
17 June 2025

Kate Carpenter, Director of Operational Road Safety, Jacobs

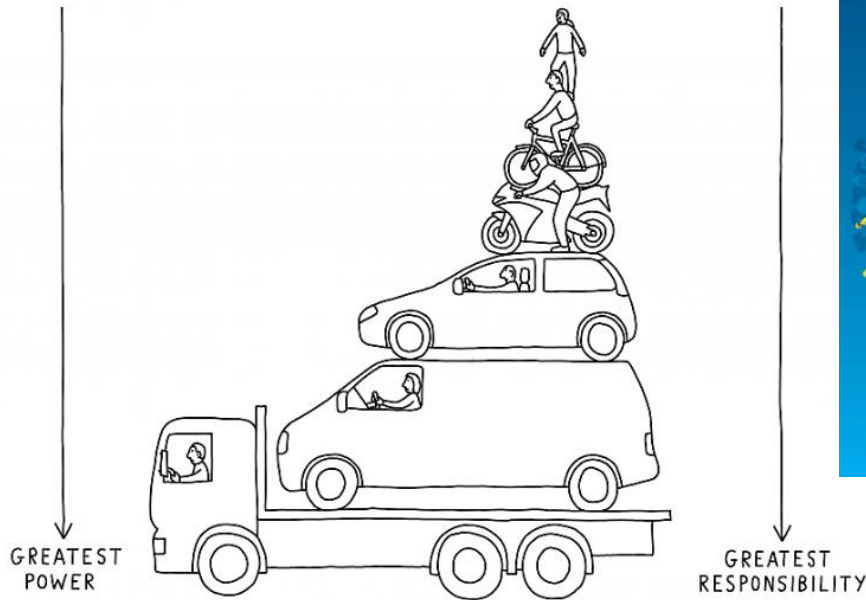


20mph limits reflect Highway Code changes

- More cycling / walking: safety-in-numbers
- Lower speed: fewer/lesser injuries to most vulnerable

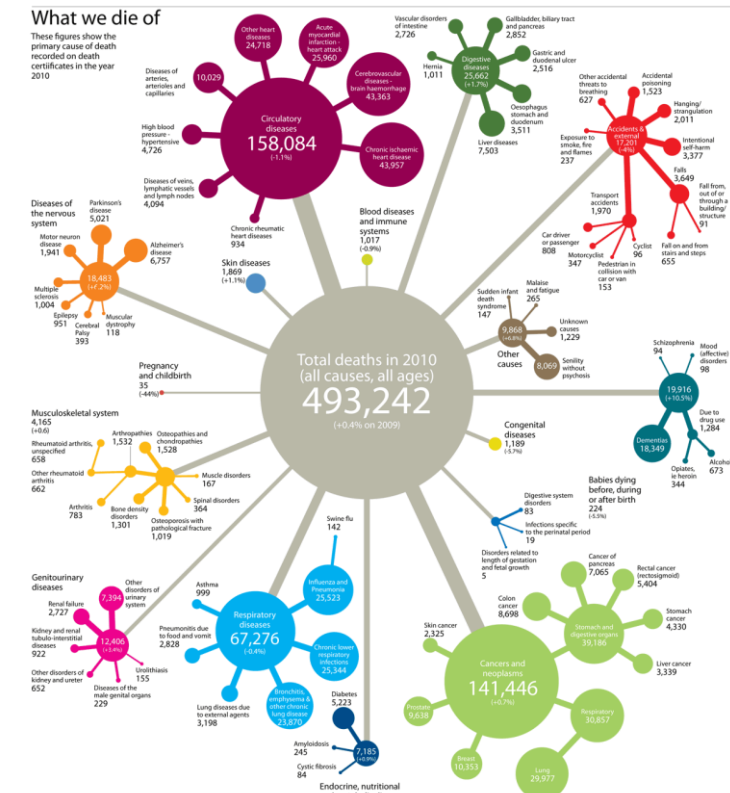
- Encourages cycling / walking
- Additional benefits from reduced morbidity/mortality
- Less acceleration/braking: reduces particulates inc brake/tyre wear

GREATER POWER SHOULD BRING GREATER RESPONSIBILITY



Physical inactivity costs the NHS up to **£1bn per annum**, with further indirect costs calculated at **£8.2bn**

£8.2bn



London data on 150 sites:



Summary of evidence*

Slower speeds are a key part of our goal to create Healthy Streets. Reducing vehicle speeds makes the street feel safer and more relaxed, which is likely to attract more people to walk, cycle and socialise in the street. London's boroughs and Transport for London (TfL) have implemented 20 miles per hour (mph) limits and zones on more than half of the capital's roads. There is strong evidence to support the introduction of 20mph roads in London and across the country:

Collisions are less likely at 20mph

There has been a

25% ↓

reduction in road collisions on TfL's strategic roads since the introduction of 20mph limits, using data from 2020 to 2022



20mph limit helps to prevent the most severe injuries when collisions do occur

A person is

5x

more likely to be killed if hit by a vehicle travelling at 30mph, than at 20mph



Travelling at excess speed is one of the main causes of collisions

Around

half

of collisions identified speed as a contributory factor in fatal collisions in 2022



Children are safer



The number of children killed or seriously injured was reduced

by half

after 20mph schemes were introduced between 1986-2006

20mph limit does not increase journey times



Negligible impact on

journey times

as these are largely dictated by junction delays, not vehicle speeds

Residents are in favour of these changes



78%

agree that 20mph is the right speed for the area in which they live

20mph limit enables more active travel as people feel safer

There is an

increase

in walking and cycling where 20mph limits have been implemented



No adverse impact on air pollution

There has been

no net increase

in exhaust emissions on 20mph roads



Streets are quieter and driving style improves

There is

reduced noise

when car speeds decrease from 30mph to 20mph, and driving style is smoother with less braking in 20mph areas in London



*This infographic uses statistics from research into 20mph limits and 20mph zones by TfL, DfT, independent academics, city councils and transport consultancies

Key learning points - I've been on a journey too

1. Lower insurance costs also sell benefits to less convinced stakeholders
2. Air quality improvements for residents
3. The biggest speed reductions where 'before' speeds were highest: conventional approach would block those benefits.
So: is measurement necessary?
4. Engagement with communities is vital to avoid the trial-by-media policy reversal
5. New car technology such as speed alert will increase compliance over time

Reducing speed limits to 20mph could reduce insurance policy costs for £50/year.

