

Report on
Special Speed Limits Review 2017
Westmeath County Council

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Background

The Road Traffic Act 2004 establishes default speed limits that apply to the different road classifications. The speed limits that apply on a default basis are as follows;

- The “motorway speed limit” of 120 km/h;
- The “national roads speed limit” of 100 km/h;
- The “regional and local roads speed limit” of 80 km/h;
- The “built-up area speed limit” of 50 km/h;
- The “residential area speed limit” of 30 km/h.

The default speed limits on non national roads can only be changed on a permanent basis by making Special Speed Limit bye-laws. The power to do so is vested in the Elected Members of Local Authorities. Section 9 (7) of the Roads Traffic Act 2004 also requires that the written consent of the TII is obtained for a *Special Speed Limit* being applied on a National Road. This consent shall be secured before the Local Authority puts the draft bye-law before the Elected Members of the Local Authority for their consideration.

The primary purpose of any such intervention should be to better match the maximum speed allowed to the road conditions, and to improve road safety.

Review Procedure

The process of reviewing speed limits is prescribed in the Road Traffic Act 2004 and in the document ‘Guidelines for the Setting and Managing of Speed Limits in Ireland’ (referred to hereafter as ‘the Guidelines’) published by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport in March 2015.

Following a ministerial direction issued to road authorities and Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) by the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport, in April 2015, TII appointed Consulting Engineers to carry out a speed limit review for the National Road network.

The current review of existing speed limits on the national road network in County Westmeath recommends a small number of speed limit changes in order to comply with ‘the Guidelines’. Section 9(9) of the Road Traffic Act 2004 states ‘*Where any such guidelines are for the time being in force, a county council or city council shall have regard to them when making any such bye-laws.*’

Figure 4.4 of 'the Guidelines' below outlines the various steps to be undertaken when undertaking a review of the special speed limit.

GUIDELINES FOR SETTING AND MANAGING SPEED LIMITS IN IRELAND

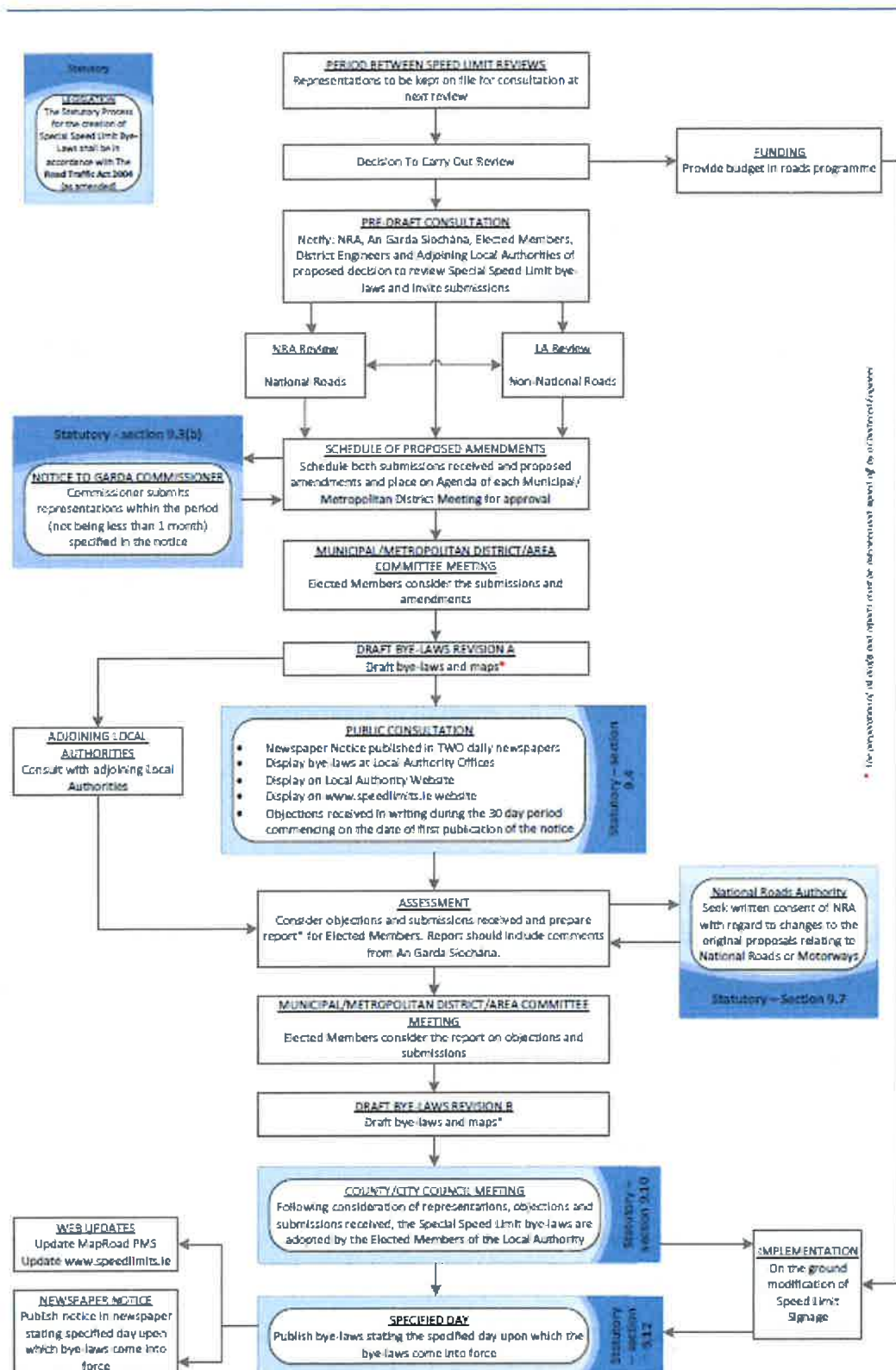


Figure 4.4 – Process of making bye-laws

The review process set out as prescribed in Road Traffic Act 2004 and as shown in Fig 4.4 (above) of ‘the Guidelines’ can be summarised as follows:

Stage	Status
1. Initiation of Proposal	Complete
2. Consultation with prescribed bodies	Complete
3. Amendments from prescribed bodies	Complete
4. Area Committee (proposed revisions to bye-law approval)	Complete
5. Public Consultation	Complete
6. Assessment of submissions	Complete
7. Written Consent from the TII in relation to National Road Speed Limits	Complete
8a. Members Approve Bye-Laws	Outstanding
8b. Publish notice in newspaper including date Bye Laws come into force	Outstanding
8c. Implementation of changes through the erection of appropriate signage	Outstanding

Stage 1 Initiation of Proposal:

The review process as prescribed in Road Traffic Act 2004 and in Figure 4.4 above was commenced at meetings of Athlone and Mullingar Municipal Districts in January 2016.

Stage 2 Consultation with prescribed bodies:

Westmeath County Council held meetings with both TII and representatives of the Garda Siochana throughout 2016 as part of the consultation process.

Stage 3 Amendments from prescribed bodies:

The proposed amendments from the elected members and requests received from members of the public since the previous review in 2014 were assessed by Roads & Transportation Section. A draft of the proposed amendments from the TII was received in December 2016.

Stage 4 Area Committee (proposed revisions to bye-law approval):

The proposed amendments were brought before the two Municipal Districts in February 2017.

Stage 5 Public Consultation:

The draft bye laws as agreed at Municipal District meetings were put on display in accordance with Section 9.4 of Road Traffic Act 2004. The closing date for receipt of submissions was 17th April 2017.

Stage 6 Assessment of Submissions:

No submission was received from An Garda Siochana. TII made a submission detailing 17 locations where changes were requested.

A total of 23 No. submissions were received from members of the public in relation to four different sections of public road. A summary and assessment of this submission are as follows:

A. Ballinahown

Road No. /Location: N62, Ballinahown
No. of Submissions: 4.

Submission From: Mr.Eoin Longworth
Date Received: 15th February 2017 & resubmitted 4th April 2017

Submission From: Deputy Willie Penrose
Date Received: 3rd April 2017

Submission From: James Corrigan
Date Received: 11th April 2017

Submission From: Anne Donnellan
Date Received: 12th April 2017

Summary of Submissions: Request that the existing 50 kph limit be extended to the north and south on the N62 approaches to Ballinahown or in the absence of this, request that 60 kph speed limit transition zones be introduced on the approaches to Ballinahown.

Recommendation: Retain the existing 50 kph speed limits at their current locations on both approaches to Ballinahown. However, it is proposed that the existing 100kph speed limit on the N62 northern approach to Ballinahown would be reduced to 80 kph over its full extent from the Creggan Roundabout.

(See Drg.No.: SL_17_59.2 in Appendix A for details).

Reason: The request was referred to TII who undertook an assessment of all national road speed limits in County Westmeath and the request was assessed in accordance with the Speed Limit Guidelines and the above recommendation is made on the following basis:

- 1) Level of development density on the approaches to Ballinahown is below that required in the Guidelines for the purpose of applying an urban speed limit of 50km/h.
- 2) The infrequency of junctions, crossing points and lack of on-street parking is not conducive to a 50kph or 60kph speed limit at this location.

Research and experience have indicated that a range of measures are required to achieve a reduction in vehicle speeds. For example, the feedback from the Vehicle Actuated Signs installed late 2016 as a Pilot Scheme within the 50kph zone in Ballinahown are showing a reduction in speed from 63kph to 59kph. The Council will continue to employ such measures to achieve a reduction in speed in Ballinahown and will monitor the impact of the change in the speed limit from Creggan. It may be the case that further changes to speed limits will be required under the next review or in advance of that review, if considered appropriate.

B. Ardmore Road, Mullingar

Road No. /Location: L1133, Ardmore Road, Mullingar
No. of Submissions: 5.

Submission From: Ronan Casey
Date Received: 16th March 2017

Submission From: Pat Brautigan
Date Received: 13th April 2017

Submission From: Ardmore Residents Association
Date Received: 13th April 2017

Submission From: Mel O'Hara
Date Received: 14th April 2017

Submission From: Anne Dunne
Date Received: 17th April 2017

Summary of Submissions: Request that the existing 50 kph speed limit on the Ardmore Road from its junction with Old Dublin Road (R392) to its junction with Newtown Road (L-1132) be reduced to 30 kph.

Recommendation: Retain the existing 50kph speed limit on the Ardmore Road but introduce a 30kph Periodic Speed Limit for a 400m section of the Ardmore Road at the proposed school.

Reason: The request was assessed in accordance with the 'Guidelines for Setting and Managing Speed Limits' and the recommendation is made on the following basis:

- (a) The Ardmore Road is considered to serve two functions within Mullingar town i.e. the road is of both strategic and distributor function. The guidelines state that 30 kph limits may be considered on local residential roads with no strategic or distributor function.
- (b) The existing 50kph default speed limit reflects the average speed and 85thile speed of traffic using the Ardmore Road
- (c) The success of a 30 kph limit should not be dependent on the use of an unreasonable level of enforcement. In order to consider the imposition of a 30 kph limit, additional traffic calming would be necessary along the entire length of the road.
- (d) The installation of a 30 kph speed limit on a through road is not consistent with the 30 kph speed limit bye laws and signage imposed on all the residential estates in County Westmeath in 2016.

C. R394 Castlepollard

Road No. /Location: R394, Castlepollard

No. of Submissions: 12.

Submission From: James McGrath, Deputy Principal, Castlepollard Community College

Date Received: 16th March 2017

Submission From: Anne-Marie Lohan

Date Received: 16th March 2017

Submission From: Mary Coyle, Principal, Castlepollard Community College

Date Received: 16th March 2017

Submission From: Lee Salmon
Date Received: 16th March 2017

Submission From: Dympna English
Date Received: 16th March 2017

Submission From: Maxine Kelly
Date Received: 16th March 2017

Submission From: Keith Goodwin
Date Received: 16th March 2017

Submission From: Tina McKeown
Date Received: 16th March 2017

Submission From: Dolores Wallace
Date Received: 16th March 2017

Submission From: Shirley Aughey
Date Received: 16th March 2017

Submission From: Therese Kenefick
Date Received: 16th March 2017

Submission From: Martina Lonican
Date Received: 31st March 2017

Summary of Submissions: Request that speed limit be reduced in the vicinity of Castlepollard Community School.

This change was made in the draft Bye Laws that went on display. Therefore, no further change is required and the speed limit will be reduced in the vicinity of the school.

D. R446 Kilbeggan

Road No. /Location: R446, East of Kilbeggan
No. of Submissions: 2.

Submission From: Coady Architects, Ranelagh, Dublin on behalf of the Board of Management of Mean Scoil Clochair, Kilbeggan
Date Received: 13th April 2017

Summary of Submission: Request that the existing 50 kph on the R446 be extended 600m eastwards to coincide with the location of a proposed new Kilbeggan Secondary School.

Recommendation: Retain existing 50 kph speed limit at its present location on R446.

Reason: The extension of the Special Speed Limit at this location, in the absence of any works to reduce speed, on the R446 is considered premature in advance of a planning decision on the proposed new secondary school.

Stage 7 Written Consent from the TII in relation to National Road Special Speed Limits

Following the review of submissions from the TII, further consultations between WCC and the TII took place in June 2017 to discuss the outstanding issues on the national roads.

Following detailed consideration, it is considered that the draft Bye Laws would be amended at the following four locations:

- N4 Ballinalack North: Change 210m of the 50kph zone to 60kph.
- N52 Delvin: From the southern approach, change the 60kph to 80kph for 800m and introduce 110m of 60kph transition before the 880m of 50kph zone through the town. A further 60kph transition on the north side of town for 295m from the Mart is recommended in advance of the current 100kph default speed limit.
- N4 Rathowen West: Change the first 265m of the existing 50kph to 60kph.
- N55 Glasson: From the south side extend the existing 60kph transition zone by 140m into the existing 50kph zone. Start the 133m long 60kph transition zone on the north side of the L5467 Killinure road.

These changes to the draft special speed limits on the National Road network as outlined above are appropriate having regard to the local environment, road layout and the current guidelines.

Stage 8 Members Approve Bye-Laws:

Following your consideration of the Draft Bye Laws and this report at the September meeting, the Bye Laws will be deemed to be made. Thereafter, Notice of the making of the Byelaws will be published and the necessary changes will be made to speed limit signage.



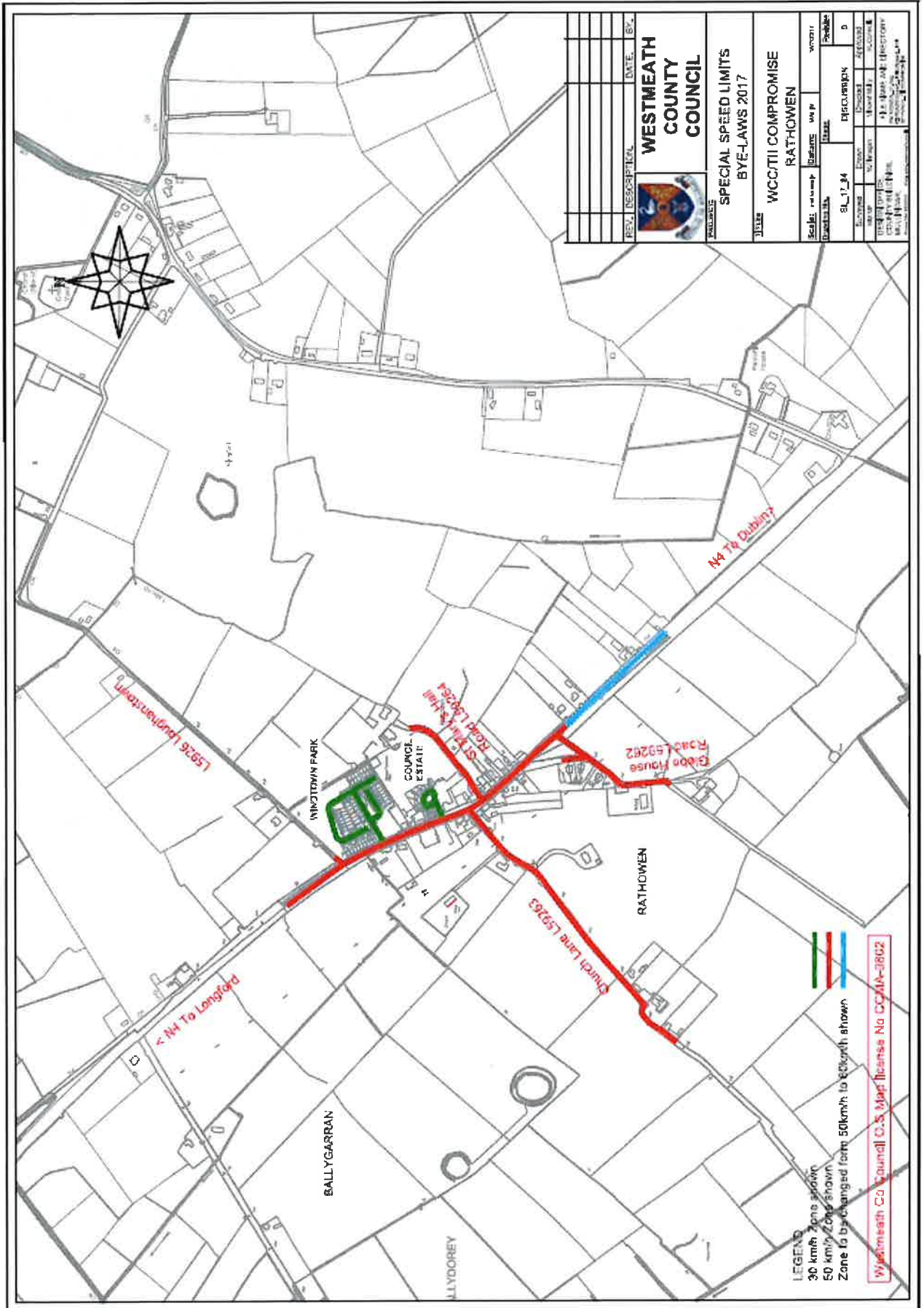
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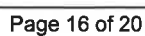
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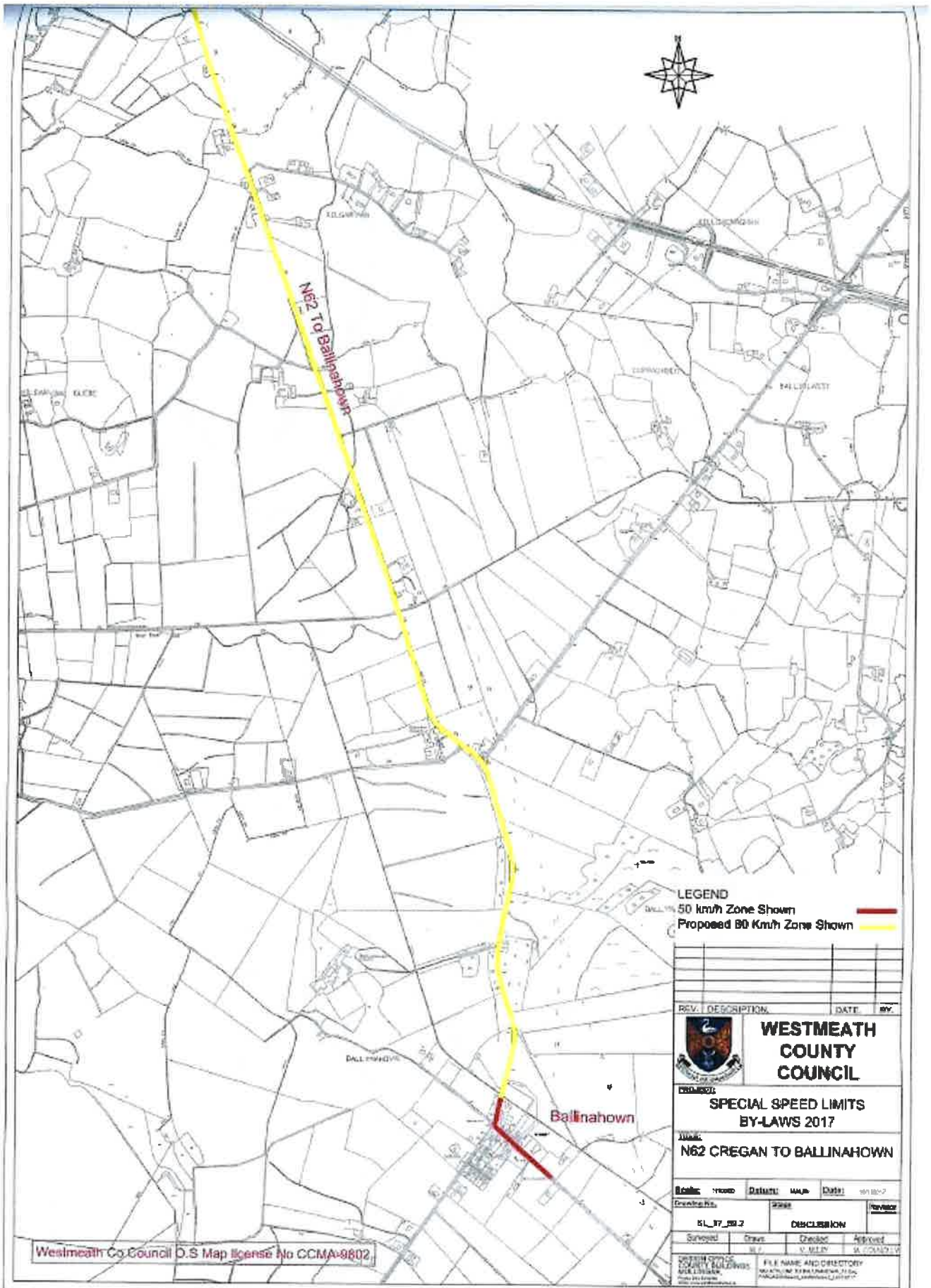
Appendix A

**Drawing of Proposed Special Speed Limits in
Ballinalack, Delvin, Rathowen, Glasson,
Ballinahown, Ardmore Road, Castlepollard and Kilbeggan.**

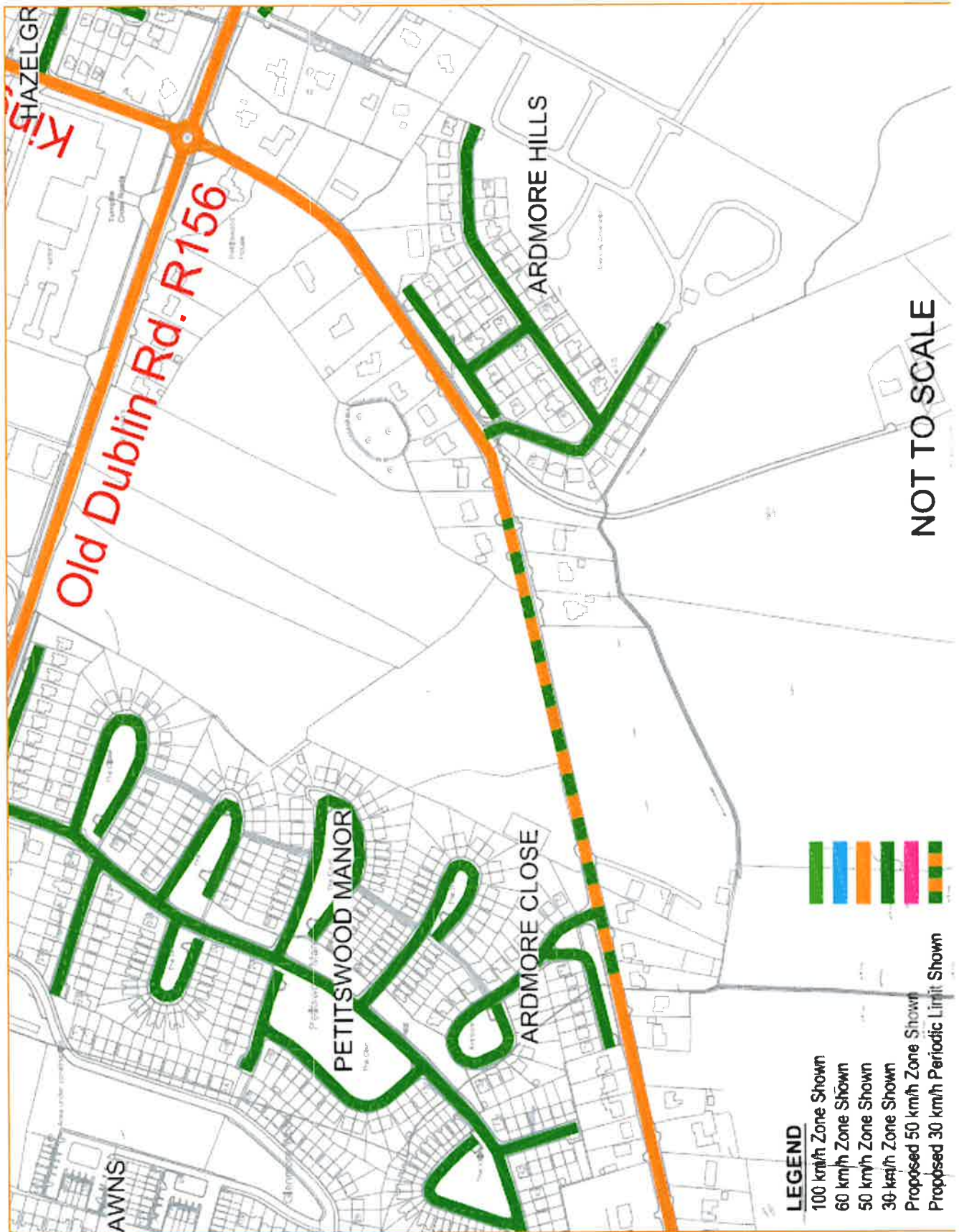




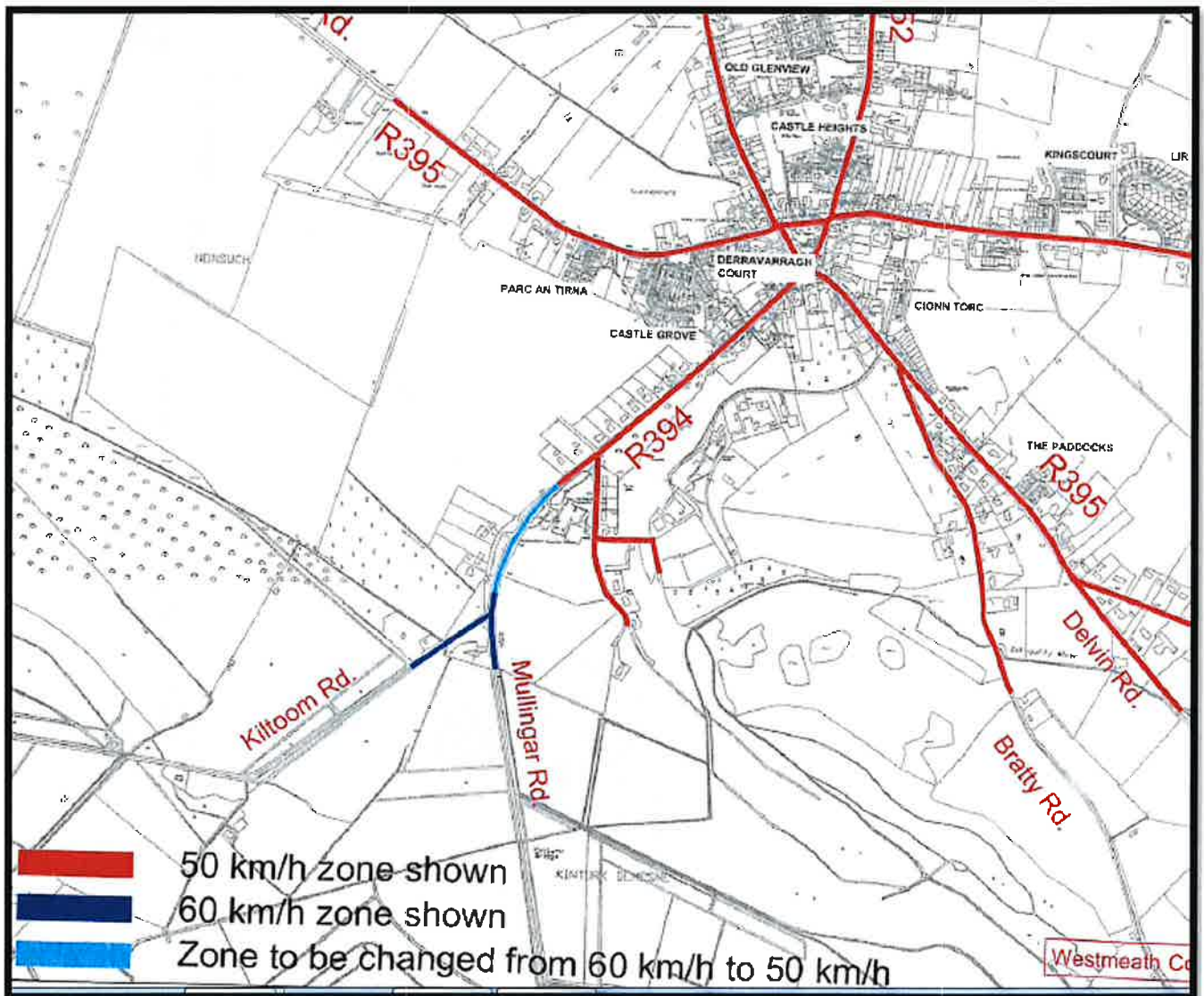




Ardmore Road



Castlepollard



Kibbeggan East

