

A Cormie Comments on two RBWM documents;

1. "Traffic Calming Assessment and Options" for Holyport Road, by Phil Jacob, Principal Officer, RBWM Road Safety and Traffic.

Traffic Speed.

I have some time ago and on several occasions written to RBWM and Bray Parish Councillors and to RBWM Road Safety and Traffic Officers giving my views on their persistent use of the 85th percentile concept which to my mind is likely to persuade that traffic speeds are better than they actually are.

Consider as follows;

The 85th percentile speed is the speed below which 85% of vehicles are travelling. Conversely it is the speed above which 15% of vehicles are travelling.

The 85th percentile speeds given in the document are a minimum of 33.4mph and a maximum of 35.6mph.

See the RBWM Highways Design Guide;

http://www.rbwm.gov.uk/graphics/Highway_Design_Guide.pdf

It states on - Page 30 - "Local distributor roads in residential areas shall have speed controls incorporated with the aim of producing an 85th percentile vehicle speed of 50kph (30mph). On this class of road the controls should be roundabouts spaced approximately 200m apart."

This shows the purpose of the 85th percentile concept. RBWM Highways Design Guide requires that the construction (including the geometry, signage, or necessary traffic calming devices) of Local Distributor Roads shall be in accordance with a design that will ensure that the 85th percentile speed matches the intended speed limit, thus ensuring that only 15% of traffic will exceed the speed limit.

Although Holyport Road and Moneyrow Green are half a metre less in width than a Local Distributor Road as described in the RBWM Highways Design Guide pages 5, 6, 25, 26 and 30, it is clear that "Local Distributor Road" is the nearest applicable description. The fact that these roads are narrower than specified means it is even more important that the design of the road should be such that the 85th percentile speed must not be greater than 30 mph and could justifiably be set even lower.

From the RBWM measured traffic figures for Holyport Road Southbound traffic in June - July 2103, the total traffic was 3598 and the number of vehicles travelling above 30mph was 1851 so the percentage travelling above 30 mph was 51.8%.

The number of vehicles travelling above the 85th percentile speed (35.5mph) was 15% of 3598 i.e. 540, and the number travelling between 30 mph and 35.5 was 1311 (1851 minus 540).

If the Holyport Road construction was in accordance with a design as the RBWM Highways Design Guide specifies, then the speeding traffic would be reduced by 1311.

This would be a reduction of 70.8%. ($1311 * 100 / 1851 = 70.8\%$)

This possible 70.8% reduction in numbers of traffic travelling on Holyport Road in excess of the 30mph speed limit is a measure of the misleading nature of the RBWM Traffic Department's customary presentation of traffic figures.

Mr Jacob says that the 85th percentile speed is recognised as being the most representative of the general speed of traffic, but RBWM's own document on Road Design requires that when designing a road for a 30mph limit the road layout be such that the 85th percentile speed will be 30mph. This shows that Holyport Road is currently improperly designed.

Further, see the following government document;

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/2733/setting-local-speed-limits.pdf

which states in paragraph 34;

Mean speed and 85th percentile speed (the speed at or below which 85% of vehicles are travelling) are the most commonly used measures of actual traffic speed. Traffic authorities should continue to routinely collect and assess both, but mean speeds should be used as the basis for determining local speed limits.

Paragraph 35 states;

For the majority of roads there is a consistent relationship between mean speed and 85th percentile speed. Where this is not the case, it will usually indicate that drivers have difficulty in deciding the appropriate speed for the road, suggesting that a better match between road design and speed limit is required. It may be necessary to consider additional measures to reduce the larger than normal difference between mean and 85th percentile speeds or to bring the speed distribution more in line with typical distributions. The aim for local speed limits should be to align the speed limit to the conditions of the road and road environment.

Paragraph 119 states;

Fear of traffic can affect people's quality of life in villages and it is self-evident that villages should have comparable speed limits to similar roads in urban areas. It is therefore government policy that a 30 mph speed limit should be the norm in villages.

Injury Collision History

I have said at RBWM meetings that the Police Records of accidents (from which RBWM get their figures) are incomplete.

I do not know how incomplete they are but I know that an accident that took place outside my house where a car drove at speed at around 11:10pm into the back of a parked car resulting in both cars being written off and the driver of the moving car being hospitalised, with police being in attendance; was not recorded in the Police Database.

2. "Traffic Calming Assessment and Options" for Moneyrow Green, by Phil Jacob, Principal Officer, RBWM Road Safety and Traffic.

Traffic Speed.

Mr Jacobs says that there is no speed and volume survey data, but one was carried out in May 2015.

I was provided with a copy of it by Cllr Coppinger and I commented to him as follows;

A question arises - the results are said to be for the 12 day period from 16th to 27th May and show a total traffic number Northbound of 1075 and Southbound of 1038.

I am supposing that these totals are averaged somehow so that the aforementioned are average daily totals during the period. Otherwise there would only be 89 and 86 vehicles per day?

So assuming that I am correct so far, I then looked at the numbers in the various "Bins" and added them up across the table and found that the totals shown are mostly incorrect.

Perhaps this is because of the daily averaging process.

Having added a new column to add these up correctly I then added four more columns and explained it in notes on the table.

But basically I show that assuming the figures are "per day" , we have;

Northbound 35.87% of traffic (382 vehicles per day) travelling above 30 mph and of these 160 travelled at speeds above the 85th percentile, whilst 222 vehicles travelled at speeds between 30 mph and the 85th percentile speed.

And Southbound, 37.62% of traffic (386 vehicles per day) travelling above 30 mph and of these 154 travelled at speeds above the 85th percentile, whilst 232 vehicles travelled at speeds between 30 mph and the 85th percentile speed.

I think these figures are more informative and concerning than the statement you received.

Even in the peak periods we have up to 34.7 to 40.9% travelling above 30mph.

Bear in mind that this is a narrower road than called for by RBWM standards AND it has many parked cars.

The RBWM traffic planning document for roads such as this would require that the design of a new road would be such that the 85th percentile speed would be 30 mph, not the 35 mph currently obtained.

See the RBWM Highways Design Guide

http://www.rbwm.gov.uk/graphics/Highway_Design_Guide.pdf

Which states on Page 30 - "Local distributor roads in residential areas shall have speed controls incorporated with the aim of producing an 85th percentile vehicle speed of 50kph (30mph). On this class of road the controls should be roundabouts spaced approximately 200m apart."

This shows the purpose of the 85th percentile concept. RBWM Highways Design Guide requires that the construction (including the geometry, signage, or necessary traffic calming devices) of Local Distributor Roads shall be in accordance with a design that will ensure that the 85th percentile speed matches the intended speed limit, thus ensuring that only 15% of traffic will exceed the speed limit.

Although both Holyport Road and Moneyrow Green are half a metre less in width than a Local Distributor Road as described in the RBWM Highways Design Guide pages 5, 6, 25, 26 and 30, it is clear that "Local Distributor Road" is the nearest applicable description. The fact that these roads are narrower than specified means it is even more important that the design of the road should be such that the 85th percentile speed must not be greater than 30 mph and could justifiably be set even lower.

From the RBWM measured traffic figures for Moneyrow Green Southbound traffic in May 2015, the total traffic was 1026 and the number of vehicles travelling above 30mph was 386 so the percentage travelling above 30 mph was 37.62%.

The number of vehicles travelling above the 85th percentile speed (35.4mph) was 15% of 1026 i.e. 154, and the number travelling between 30 mph and 35.4 was 232 (386 minus 154).

If the Moneyrow Green road construction was in accordance with a design as the RBWM Highways Design Guide specifies, then the speeding traffic would be reduced by 232.

This would be a reduction of 60.1%. ($232 * 100 / 386 = 60.1\%$)

If this road accorded with the RBWM plan, 15% of traffic would travel above 30 mph.

That is;

Southbound 160

Northbound 154

Currently;

Southbound 38% (386) travel above 30 mph.

Northbound 36% (382) travel above 30 mph.

So due to non compliance with modern design we have an extra 226 vehicles Southbound and 228 Northbound that are travelling over 30 mph.

Bear in mind also that this road is narrower than the roads specified in RBWM design, and the walkways are not in accordance with that design, being either non-existent or too narrow and too close to the road.

Injury Collision History

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Conclusion

The only comment I can make about the rest of these documents is that the content fails to provide any hope that RBWM will provide suitable traffic calming on Holyport Road or Moneyrow Green.