

Capitals Are Going 20mph

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British capital cities are embracing wide 20mph speed limits. Lewisham will soon join nine other London Boroughs at 20mph. Edinburgh's plans for 20mph cover high streets and residential roads. Cardiff's 20mph pilot has been installed. The streets of Paris will soon be almost entirely 30kmh (18mph).



Speed limits in many cities in the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Belgium are all set at 30kmh. Due to their success, slower speeds are now spreading to other major European centres. If it's good enough for our capitals then 20mph limits are surely right for other cities, towns and villages too?

Lewisham's Mayor Sir Steve Bullock announced his commitment to wide area 20mph limits at Full Council on 11 June. Lewisham will join a growing movement toward 20mph speed limits across London. All borough-managed roads already have 20mph limits in Islington (since Jan 2013) and Camden (since Dec 2013). Over summer the City of London and Southwark are bringing in 20mph limits on all borough-managed roads. Hackney, Lambeth, Greenwich and Waltham Forest are also committed to 20mph limits across wide areas.

Mayor of Paris, Anne Hidalgo, plans to limit speeds to 30kmh (18mph) over the entire city. Exceptions are a few major access roads and the banks of the Seine (50 kmh) and the ring road where the top speed was recently reduced from 80 to 70 kmh. There will also be "meeting zones" where pedestrians and cyclists have priority but can mix with cars which are limited to 20 kmh. There is discussion in Rome of similar plans. New York City has also caught the slower speeds bug. Its City Council has just voted to reduce its default speed limit from 30 to 25 mph and "Neighborhood Slow Zones" will slow speeds in residential communities to 20mph. A 20mph policy aims for:

- 20mph limits on the vast majority of residential roads and streets – 'Total 20mph' usually with targeted 30mph on certain major roads.
- An improved community environment which encourages walking and cycling.
- Changed driver behaviour – or 'social norming' where drivers accept that driving at 20mph is 'normal' and expect to drive at a 'default' speed of 20mph unless signed otherwise

20mph limits (rather than 30mph) have been proven cost effective at reducing injuries by about 20%. 20mph lowers risks especially to vulnerable people such as older residents and children. Plus slower speed limits promote active travel and fitter, healthier lifestyles. They also encourage fairness as lower speed neighbourhoods aid disadvantaged groups like those who are less well-off or with disabilities.

Jeremy Leach, London Campaign Co-ordinator of 20's Plenty for Us said

"Slower speeds are now high on the agenda in London. Many boroughs are using 20mph speed limits to reduce road casualties and encourage more people to walk and cycle. Transport for London is increasingly supportive of slower speeds on its own Red Route roads."

Rod King MBE, Founder of 20's Plenty for Us said

"Larger cities have always recognised that it is the interaction and movement of people that is a key factor in their success. There is now equal recognition that perhaps nothing 'moves people more' than the quality of life on their residential or high street. The widespread adoption of 20mph/30kmh limits reflects this as deliverable and effective initiative to create better and more successful capital cities."

20's Plenty For Us campaigns for a 20mph default speed limit in residential streets without physical calming.
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