

Engagement is More Cost Effective Than Consultation on 20mph

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20's Plenty



Where People Live

The aim of 20mph limits is slower speeds. High compliance is gained by positive engagement rather than just asking resident's views.

Impartial research shows 20mph limits in cities, towns and villages is best practice.

Consultation is valuable if you can't predict the outcome, but is costly and takes time. If the question is "do you want 20mph limits?" the majority reply Yes! Should public funds be spent asking people questions we know the answers to, or on getting on with increasing safety? On 20mph limits there is little point half-heartedly sounding out general opinion and wasting resources and time when surveys consistently show over 70% support it. Reducing danger by setting safe speed limits is a core council responsibility, not an optional extra.

There are 3 main time periods when Council's tend to seek local opinions on 20mph:-

1) Prior to a political decision – e.g. supposedly to provide a mandate. Over 7 out of 10 people want limits. Only 1 in 10 is against. Little new information is found except the almost universal wish for lower speeds also exists locally. It may make Councillors feel more secure when democratically deciding 20mph. Yet, consultation is unlikely to gain the views of children, frail, elderly or disabled, who are major beneficiaries. It creates a perception of indecision rather than leadership or vision. There is a duty to keep vulnerable people safe from the daily risks of injury they face on the roads.

2) When seeking objections to Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) – e.g. on the extent of 20 mph limited roads. Legal requirements are designed as a statutory mechanism to alert the public to exact detail and allow objections. So door to door TRO surveys are not designed primarily to communicate the benefits.

3) Engagement prior to and as limits change to 20mph – is the crucial time - selling the wide benefits of slower speeds. The range of marketing options include driver compliance pledges, street celebrations; video testimonials, posters, social media, ask for champions, celebrity endorsements, personal stories and people to display their support eg with 20mph vehicle stickers.

Stage 3 is the most cost-effective focus for public agencies. Pre-consulting 40,000 people's homes can cost £30k compared to implementation of 20 mph limits at £120k (£3 per head). This creates delays and could add 25% extra to costs. Wholeheartedly recommending 20mph limits to communities post decision and pre roll-out of signs is the best stage to engage - eg Multi-agency collaboration can best educate people and gain compliance through health promotion once politicians have committed.

Rod King MBE, 20's Plenty for Us Founder said "*Traffic Authorities have a duty to set local speed limits appropriately and have been urged by DfT to prioritise 20mph for residential streets. Commitment and engagement are key to people understanding why it is to be implemented and maximising success*".

Anna Semlyen, 20's Plenty Campaign Manager said – "*20mph is best practice. Councils can now take the lead and decide to commit, engage and deliver 20 mph for better public health and equality.*"

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

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