

DfT Cycling & Walking Strategy: Demand default 20mph

A 20's Plenty for Us Press Release Apr 2016

<http://www.20splenty.org/cyclewalk20>

A 20mph national speed limit is the single most cost-effective change possible to boost cycling and walking. 20mph limits can treble cycling to school. Localism on setting safer speed limits isn't enough; the Government must lead with a 20mph default for built up areas.

20's Plenty for Us

...making your place a better place to be

The Department for Transport's Draft Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS)¹ states

"The use of 20mph zones and limits can make a difference to both actual and perceived levels of safety in our cities, towns and villages. We believe that local bodies are best placed to determine the speed limits for their areas, based on local knowledge and the views of the community."

20's Plenty for Us agrees that 20mph limits reduce danger and the perception of danger. The City of Edinburgh recorded a trebling of cycling to school and doubling of permission for children to play out². However, we disagree on who is best to set 20mph speed limits. **Our call is for the Government to agree a plan for Total 20 by 2020³ which sets a 20mph default for restricted roads but allows local authorities to make exceptions where justified.** Most forward thinking authorities have already funded wide area signs and lines 20mph as best practice and to avoid litigation. It's time that the Government recognised that 20mph is the foundation of active travel. 20mph limits are a popular, cost effective way to raise public health and exercise levels on the 90% of the urban public realm that is streets and pavements.

Most of the largest 40 UK authorities have decided the 'national speed limit' of 30mph is not fit for purpose. 15.5m people now live where the default speed limit is 20mph. Everyone needs protection near their home.

The Government doesn't allow local authorities to set local rules on health safety at work for instance, or other spheres where people engage in dangerous activities that might affect another's wellbeing. We have national air quality rules and a smoking ban for adults in cars with children.

Changing the national default to 20mph whilst letting local authorities sign the small number (perhaps up to 10%) of urban roads that might warrant a higher speed limit also makes more sense economically than suggesting that cash-strapped local authorities pay to sign 90% of roads 20mph. Indeed the Government is making local authorities pay over the odds to for road safety when 20mph could become the default national speed limit much more quickly and for less money if change came centrally.

Rod King MBE, Founder of 20's Plenty for Us commented:- *"The Government must wake up, urgently change the National limit to 20mph and let authorities choose roads where other limits are warranted. Otherwise they are simply using "localism" as a fig-leaf for not taking responsibility for the adverse effect of vehicle speed on public health, community life and road danger".*

Comment on the DfT's consultation by 23 May via <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/draft-cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy> - online form or to walking.cycling@dft.gsi.gov.uk. Ask for default Total 20mph.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/draft-cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy> para 8.37

² <http://www.20splentyforus.org.uk/PRel/Edinburgh.pdf>

³ <http://www.20splentyforus.org.uk/PRel/Total20by2020.pdf>

20's Plenty For Us campaigns for a 20mph default speed limit in built up areas without physical calming.

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