Healthy places was the theme of the 9th Annual 20mph Conference on 8th March in Birmingham. Making 20mph the normal speed limit goes beyond road safety to provide a better quality outdoor environment to built up areas. Calmer traffic means less risk and pollution. Numerous wellness benefits follow as populations of whole towns begin to slightly change their exercise, mental and physical habits due to living in a happier, safer, cleaner and quieter community.

The key message of the latest research confirms that 20mph brings health improvement to whole populations. Giving 20mph limits to a wide area benefits everyone using those roads in the long term. Every person gains a little. Overall this adds up to huge gains for public health - for instance, in reducing heart and respiratory diseases, obesity or loneliness. 20mph acts as powerful preventative medicine, just like cleaning up sewers, or vaccinations do to help people enjoy more wellbeing as they get about on the streets where they live, learn, work, shop or enjoy leisure.

Case studies of 20mph implementation in Birmingham, Calderdale and Dublin were showcased. Police support the 20mph limits in Birmingham and explained their operational policy. The roll out of 20mph limits throughout Calderdale has already provided benefits including a 22% reduction in casualties. It has combined both traffic and public health resources and expertise in its signage and engagement process.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) are leading the Fourth UN Global Road Safety Week with its call for Speed Management. 20’s Plenty for Us have worked with WHO on a toolkit for anyone wanting to get involved with a Slow Down Day event in May. The toolkit will be available at https://www.unroadsafetyweek.org/en/get-involved

Transport for London have adopted plans for Healthy Streets and Vision Zero. They recognize the benefits of slower speeds and more 20mph limits in enhancing wellness and in avoiding preventable, predictable road casualties.

A presentation from Atkins on the Department for Transport funded 20mph on Tom Tom data found speeds on 20mph limited areas decreasing 0.7-0.9mph. The final report is anticipated in December 2017.

Delegates heard about 20mph benefitting air quality and reducing risk for the vulnerable. Also how camera technology supports driver compliance.

Updated signage regulations are recognising that 20mph is becoming increasingly mainstream and so making 20mph easier and up to 40% cheaper to implement. Repeater signs are now optional and only one (instead of paired) terminal signs is stipulated. Minimum cost implementations are now estimated at just £1.50 per head.

Susie Morrow and Robert Molteno won 2017 Campaigners of the Year Awards for their excellent, sustained work at changing mindsets and policy in Wandsworth.

The conference was hosted by Birmingham City Council, run by Landor LINKS, programmed by 20’s Plenty for Us and sponsored by Jenoptik, safety camera experts.

The expert speaker list and titles of presentations is at http://www.20splenty.org/2017_20s_plenty_conf
Power points will be available there.