

First Minister of Wales makes historic announcement of plans to implement default 20mph limits for residential areas in Wales

A 20's Plenty for Us Press Release May 2019

http://www.20splenty.org/welsh_government_to_set_20mph_default

First Minister of Wales, Mark Drakeford, today made a historic announcement that “The Welsh government believes that 20mph zones should be the default speed limit for residential areas. The Deputy Transport Minister, together with the Welsh Local Government Association, is taking forward work to identify the practical actions needed to implement 20mph speed limits in residential areas across Wales”¹.

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The announcement came after a question from David Melding AM who congratulated the First Minister for his answer and fully endorsed the Government position. He said that “It is logical that we set the standard limit in built-up areas to 20mph and then councils have the power to set 30 for those arterial routes in their urban areas”.

The cross-party support in the Welsh Assembly was referenced by John Griffiths AM who noted the community support and wide benefits for communities from lower speed limits. This not only included a foundation for walking and cycling, healthier neighbourhoods, but less severance of communities due to traffic speed.

The First Minister explained that the Deputy Transport Minister, Lee Waters AM will be setting up a Task and Finish Group to identify how to set a national limit of 20mph for urban/village roads with local authorities able to choose exceptions, such as arterial roads, where a 30mph limit may be retained.

The move follows on from growing interest and support for 20mph limits by Welsh organisations and NGOs since the setting of a national limit was devolved to the Welsh government last year. The Institute for Welsh Affairs advocated a default 20mph limit as part of their “Decarbonising Transport in Wales” strategy². Public Health Wales released a position statement supporting a 20mph default³. The move also aligns with many Welsh aspirations and legal obligations as embodied in the Future Generations Act, Children and Families Act, Commissioner for Older People Act and Active Travel Acts. Other NGOs such as Sustrans Cymru, Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health⁴, Living Streets Cymru, Cycling UK Cymru, Play Wales, BRAKE and RoadPeace are all in support of a national default 20mph limit. In addition, several Welsh Councils including Cardiff, Vale of Glamorgan and Newport have all urged the government to set a national 20mph limit.

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

“We are delighted that the Welsh Government is taking this historic initiative. Over the course of the last 12 months we have sensed an increasing demand in Welsh communities and organisations to look at how the 85 year-old 30mph limit can be replaced with a people-friendly 20mph default. Across the world it is recognised by organisations including World Health Organisation, United Nations, OECD, etc that the safe speed for where motor vehicles mix with pedestrians and cyclists is 20mph or 30km/h.

Creating a Task and Finish Group to identify how best to implement a national 20mph default limit is an intelligent way of delivering it in an efficient, consistent and effective manner. But most of all, it is encouraging to see a national government taking the lead to create a better environment in all communities to make them better places to be.”

¹ <https://vimeo.com/334682259>

² http://www.20splenty.org/iwa_calls_for_welsh_20mph

³ <https://tinyurl.com/PHWales-20mph-position>

⁴ <https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/news-events/news/rcpch-responds-welsh-assembly-members-proposals-20mph-speed-limit>

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

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