

Rod King

From: Rod King
Sent: 09 May 2020 14:02
To: Grant
Subject: Supporting government ambitions for walking and cycling as the lockdown is eased

Dear Mr Shapps

I understand that the government is planning some important changes to assist the expected increase in walking and cycling as lockdown eases yet social distancing protocols are preserved. We look forward to this announcement and trust that this will encourage the adoption of default 20mph limits.

In anticipation of this I have today contacted Conservative MPs with the following email and trust that you will be minded to consider adopting an emergency default urban 20mph as an important initiative to support your walking and cycling ambitions.

My best wishes

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Dear <MP name inserted>

We hope that you are staying well during this extremely unsettling time and that you will not mind our getting in touch with you; we are aware how especially busy you must be.

Like all of us, as we begin to emerge from the lockdown, I am sure that you will be thinking about the transport implications and how we will move about our cities, towns and villages. It is clear that the UK Government is keen to reduce the pressure on our roads by encouraging as many of us as possible to walk and cycle.

We understand that much can be achieved by pop-up pavements and cycleways and reducing through routes and rat-runs but there will be a huge number of streets and roads where physical changes will not be possible but where we will still want to enable people to walk and cycle safely.

As motor traffic returns, it is vital that we do all we can to ensure that people continue to be safe and feel safe so that people are not intimidated by large volumes of fast-moving traffic and thus once again become reluctant to walk and cycle.

Lower speeds limits and 20mph limits in particular can help create the context that ensures that high levels of active travel can continue. In all those places where it is not possible to widen pavements or create cycle lanes, people will still be supported to walk and cycle as much as possible through lower speed limits and lower speeds.

Such a move is strongly supported by NHS medics who at the start of the lockdown urged the UK Government to reduce the urban default speed limit to 20mph. Dr Robert Hughes (London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine) and 109 other NHS doctors wrote in the Times on 25th March,

“Lowering and enforcing speed limits would reduce the frequency and severity of road traffic collisions.”

This was backed up by population health expert Prof. Sunil Bhopal on 24th March said, in a BMJ blog on 24th March who wrote,

“We suggest an immediate reduction in motor vehicle speed limits...we suggest that the government urgently explore an emergency reduction of all national speed limits to 50mph, and to 20mph in urban areas.”

See http://www.20splenty.org/lower_baseline

20mph limits are the simplest, widest applicable and most cost-effective method of supporting the UK Government’s moves towards walking and cycling. An emergency 20mph limit cost is almost zero and can be applied at population level on all streets in built up areas in a very short timescale.

20’s Plenty for Us is asking MPs to add their voices to these calls from our medics and urge the UK Government to adopt an emergency 20mph limit on built-up roads. See our briefing at http://www.20splenty.org/social_distance

If you would like any more information about the Lower the Baseline campaign or 20mph limits then please do get in touch with us.

Many thanks and we wish you all the very best in assisting your constituents and the country during these difficult times.

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