

20mph update for Norman Baker

Meeting, 14th December 2011

20's Plenty

20's Plenty for Us are pleased to be invited to discuss 20mph speed limit opportunities with Under Secretary of State for Transport, Mr Norman Baker.



Where People Live

There is no doubt that UK is facing an economic crisis. One in which all of us are looking to our working practices and seeking ways to maintain our economy and create a better future. Whilst we should look for the possibilities for growth, we should not neglect those aspects of our daily life where our activities are both wasting money on unproductive tasks which actually burden our economy and causing human misery.

There is perhaps no better example of this than the £10,000m which is the estimated DfT cost of road casualties in the UK in 2010. This may be doubled by the costs of damage only collisions and when added to the DfT estimate of £9,800m for the costs of physical inactivity in the UK amounts to a total of nearly £30,000,000,000 per annum or £500 per man, woman and child each year.

Of course that £30,000m does not hit one particular department or sector of society, but it is consumed and becomes “dead” money both figuratively and unfortunately “literally” in our economy, businesses and government organisations.

Of course, 20mph limits will not eradicate road casualties or immediately turn us into a healthy nation. But it is increasingly being recognised that 20mph limits as a default (Total 20) for our towns, cities and villages is the necessary foundation for behaviour change that can reduce road danger considerably and make those places more friendly for cycling and walking. Evidence of this comes from both the 70+% wanting 20mph residential speed limits in successive British Social Attitude Surveys, the 112 local campaigns of 20's Plenty for Us, and not least the local authorities with a total population of 7.5m who have already committed to wide area 20mph limits for residential roads. It also has very strong support from health agencies.

But this meeting is not about making the case for 20mph limits but ensuring that our government can remove the barriers to 20mph limits that currently exist. From a 20's Plenty for Us perspective these are seen as :-

1. **Clarity of guidance.** Whilst the last major guidance was DfT Speed Limit Circular 01/2006, this was partially updated in the Dec 2009 Call for Comments Circular which ended with the sentence “We would ask you to use the advice contained in this letter to continue with your speed management activity until the final new guidance is in place.” Since 2009 successive announcements have been made about the “new guidance” and now this seems to be deferred until after Summer 2012. Whilst many Traffic Authorities are taking their “duty of care” on road safety seriously and implementing Total 20 schemes, the lack of clarity and contradiction in current guidance impedes some Traffic Authorities from adopting this initiative
2. **Local Speed Limit Tool.** We understand that the contract for this is about to be placed. However we have deep concerns regarding the specification for the tool. In particular :-
 - a. Does it take into account community-wide Total 20 schemes and differentiate compliance levels from isolated schemes?
 - b. Does it recognise that average or 85th percentile speeds may give poor representations of real world emissions and fuel consumption compared to maximum speeds, especially within a saturated network. These are most effected by acceleration/deceleration rather than steady state cycles.

- c. Does it recognise that current noise standard estimates for vehicles are based upon 30mph+ results from vehicles in the 1980's and are no longer representative of modern vehicles or lower speeds.
 - d. Does it recognise that consultation should come from organisations actively involved in the campaign for lower speeds.
 - e. Does it recognise and monetise the health benefits of lower speeds on consequences of modal shift and emission reduction.
3. **Monitoring and Evaluation.** There appears to be no DfT activity in monitoring the traffic authorities implementing Total 20, or the mapping of speed limits and coupling with Stats 19 and other data to provide clear ways of seeing developing trends. Provision of UK wide mapping of speed limits would also enable better compliance through incorporation into Satnav and other systems.
4. **ACPO Guidance.** Current guidance was developed in 1997/98 and predates 01/2006, Dec 2009 and also the deployment of Total 20 by so many traffic authorities. It is now out of touch with the current community aspirations to set 20mph speed limits and hinders local police empathy and support. It is no longer "fit for purpose" and acts as a barrier to wider implementation. A "light touch" police enforcement levers up compliance hugely compared to the refusal to enforce which is often the result from adhering to ACPO guidance.

20mph limits are increasingly being adopted by Traffic Authorities as a response to their statutory duty for road safety. ACPO needs to embrace Total 20 implementations and engage with organisations such as 20's plenty for Us and others to formulate new guidance. Recently 20's Plenty for Us has approached the Roads Policing arm of ACPO and has subsequently arranged a meeting. It is time for some vision and joined up road danger reduction liaison between DfT and Home Office on lower speed limits.

5. **20mph Places Conference – 1st May 2012.** This important conference in London will be co-hosted by 20's Plenty for Us and PTRC Training and will focus on how 20mph limits create better places to be. It follows on from well attended and successful previous conferences in Portsmouth and Warrington. Mr Baker is warmly invited to make the opening presentation at this important conference.

Safer streets can be delivered by communities who change their behaviour and make lifestyle decisions about how they share their streets. Communities in cities, towns and villages are implementing Total 20 as an initiative that has a proven record in reducing casualties, reducing emissions and increasing the choice of transport and quality of life within those communities.

20's Plenty for Us acknowledges the steps made by the government in recent years in both recognising the issues in "A Safer Way" and removing some of the barriers to Total 20 implementation.

This initiative is on the cusp of producing a real and substantial change in our communities that will both transform our streets and our nation's health. But it needs further encouragement so that it can be deployed universally to meet what is a universal aspiration and potential benefit for all. Whilst not solving the country's economic problems it could free up much government and community cash from being spent on avoidable and unnecessary death, injury and ill health.

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