

20's Plenty For Us - Press Release

Recent Government support for 20 mph speed limits is welcomed but its plans are flawed

20's Plenty



Where People Live

20's Plenty For Us welcomes the recent commitment from the Road Safety Minister, Jim Fitzpatrick to reducing road deaths and increasing safety through the increased use of 20 mph speed limits¹. **However the charity considers that the pronouncements demonstrate muddled thinking about the way 20 mph speed limits and zones work and are unlikely to create a universal and practical answer to Britain's road deaths which are skewed towards the vulnerable road users.**

Pedestrians make up 21% of road deaths in Britain compared to just 9.4% in the Netherlands and 11.4% in Sweden. Britain's %age pedestrian deaths is one of the highest in Europe². Most Northern European countries have default speed limits of just 18.5 mph in residential and urban areas. These countries achieve far greater road safety and urban quality of life without the need for the expensive average speed cameras proposed by Jim Fitzpatrick. These cameras rely upon registering and timing all cars entering and leaving a particular 20 mph area. They are very expensive to deploy requiring cameras on every entry/exit point, sophisticated communications and elaborate setup. Even then, they will not measure maximum speeds within the areas. They are only practical in small areas with few entry/exit points.

Default lower speeds which respect the needs of vulnerable road users are achievable by responding to the wishes of the vast majority of people who see the sense of lower speeds and being much tougher on the minority who do not feel the same responsibilities. Other countries use a combination of public debate/consultation and covert manned enforcement to achieve these aims. Enforcement is easy and inexpensive in manpower if used covertly at random times and locations.

The minister also focussed on speed limits around schools. Whilst these may help on main roads, in residential areas evidence shows that the children most at risk are those walking or cycling and this risk is lowest around schools. Even around schools the risk is greatest for being crushed by low speed manoeuvres by parent's cars whilst parking rather than other road users. Children walking or cycling to school face most risk from the high prevailing speeds of motor vehicles in residential streets away from schools. They need the protection and respect which comes from a default 20 mph speed limit in all residential streets.

Rod King, founder of 20's Plenty For Us said :-

"These proposals are simply tinkering with the problem of Britain having residential speed limits that are 60% higher than our European neighbours. We need the universal adoption of 20 mph as the default speed limit for residential roads, together with a commitment from government and police to enforcement. Until this is done then children and adults will needlessly die on our roads in order to preserve high vehicle speeds."

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

Contact details

Rod King - 07973 639781

rod@20splentyforus.org.uk

www.20splentyforus.org.uk

¹ See Times Article 16th May 2008 -

http://business.timesonline.co.uk/tol/business/industry_sectors/transport/article3941769.ece

² See European Road Safety Observatory report -

http://www.erso.eu/safetynet/fixed/WP1/2007/BFS2007_SN-KfV-1-3-Pedestrians.pdf Fig 3