
Scrutiny Review - 20 mph Speed Limit

MONDAY, 15TH NOVEMBER, 2010 at 10:00 HRS - CIVIC CENTRE, HIGH ROAD, WOOD GREEN, LONDON N22 8LE.

MEMBERS: Councillors Basu, Bull (Chair), Newton and Weber

AGENDA

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
2. **URGENT BUSINESS**
3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

A member with a personal interest in a matter who attends a meeting of the authority at which the matter is considered must disclose to that meeting the existence and nature of that interest at the commencement of that consideration, or when the interest becomes apparent.

A member with a personal interest in a matter also has a prejudicial interest in that matter if the interest is one which a member of the public with knowledge of the relevant facts would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the member's judgment of the public interest **and** if this interest affects their financial position or the financial position of a person or body as described in paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct **and/or** if it relates to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to them or any person or body described in paragraph 8 of the Code of Conduct.

4. **MINUTES (PAGES 1 - 4)**

To agree the minutes of the meeting of 18 October 2010 (attached).

5. 20 MPH SPEED LIMIT

To receive evidence from the London Assembly on the conclusions and recommendation of their recent report entitled "Braking Point", which addressed the issue of 20 mph speed limits on a London wide basis.

6. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

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08 November 2010

**MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY REVIEW - 20 MPH SPEED LIMIT
MONDAY, 18 OCTOBER 2010**

Councillors Bull (Chair) and Weber

LC6. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Received from Councillors Basu and Newton.

LC7. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

LC8. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

LC9. MINUTES

It was noted that the evaluation of the Portsmouth 20 mph speed limit had shown that a speed reduction of 6.3 mph had been achieved in areas where the average speed before implementation of the speed limits had been over 24 mph.

In reference to emissions, it was reported that there was very little evidence on the affect of a 20 mph speed limit on emissions. However, it was possible that lower speeds caused more hydrocarbons to be released rather than other emissions. If vehicles maintained a steady speed, this caused less emissions. However, accelerating between physical traffic calming measures caused emissions to increase. Lower speed limits could assist smoother traffic flow as evidenced by the variable speed limits on some motorways.

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of 4 October 2010 be approved.

LC10. 20 MPH SPEED LIMIT

The Panel received evidence from Inspector Mark Long from the Police Safer Transport Team and Martin Young from the Traffic Police.

Mr Long reported that the Police were not against the 20 mph speed limit. The issue for them was how it was to be achieved and enforced. Policing resources were finite. Speed humps caused huge amounts of damage to police cars. Signage alone would not be enough to reduce speeds. Whilst speeds in some side roads were relatively slow due to their narrowness, reducing speed would be a problem on wider roads.

Mr Young stated that signs alone would probably only reduce speeds slightly and many vehicles were likely to travel well in excess of the limit. There needed to be some means of enforcing limits. The Police were not able to enforce a 20 mph speed limit unless it was properly implemented using an engineered solution. However, if speeds were already under 24 mph it was unlikely to be a major problem. This could be the case where streets were narrow. In such circumstances, there might not be the need for engineering measures.

**MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY REVIEW - 20 MPH SPEED LIMIT
MONDAY, 18 OCTOBER 2010**

It was noted that the government had relaxed the requirements for introducing 20 mph speed limits and it was now more a matter for local determination. However, local authorities would normally consult the police regarding enforcement. Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs) had ward panels who decided upon priorities for their area and it was possible for them to make enforcement of speed limits one of these. 4 wards out of 19 had set traffic as a priority

Mr Young stated that the traffic police liaised with SNTs on a regular basis. If necessary, speeds could be monitored. It was quite often found that the reality did not match the perception that speeding was a problem in an area. Where an issue was identified, the information gathered could be used to decide whether an engineering solution or education was required.

Mr Long stated that if SNTs were asked to focus on speeding, they would. Whilst they were supportive of the principle, they were concerned about enforcement. There was a balance between forcing traffic to slow down through physical measures and, if this did not work, through enforcement by the police. If there was likely to be a significant amount of additional enforcement required, it would not be possible for the police to commit the extra resources required. The Police would have a clear preference for engineering instead of enforcement as a solution.

Mr Young stated that properly engineered physical calming measures worked and did not need enforcement. Without them, the speed limit would only work with the aid of enforcement. Traffic issues needed to be investigated properly and expenditure focussed on where there had been collisions. He noted that there had only been a small number of collision sites in Portsmouth. If speed limits were brought in "willy nilly", it could bring them into disrepute. Hackney was bringing in a borough 20 mph wide speed limit through a patchwork of zones. This was a better way of achieving a 20 mph speed limit on a borough wide basis.

The Panel received a presentation from Tony Kennedy, the Group Manager for Transport Policy and Projects in the Urban Environment Directorate. A 20 mph zone was an area where traffic speed was restricted to 20mph by boundary signage and physical traffic calming measures. A 20mph zone could not be implemented without physical traffic calming features as the zone had to be self-enforcing. Although it could be introduced on a single road, it was normally introduced in residential areas and included several roads.

As with a 20mph zone, a 20mph limit was applied to a road to restrict the maximum legal speed to 20mph. This was however achieved through the introduction of signage alone. The current regulations only allowed the consideration of roads that already had relatively low average speeds - i.e. 85% under 24mph - to be made 20mph speed limits.

The Council was looking to further increase the number of areas with 20 mph speed limits and the overall policy had been discussed at the Transport Forum and received approval, in principle, from all user groups. The method of implementing such a limit was the main issue and, in particular;

- Whether it should be achieved by zones or limits
- Whether they should be in priority areas only
- The enforcement implications

**MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY REVIEW - 20 MPH SPEED LIMIT
MONDAY, 18 OCTOBER 2010**

- The raising of public expectations
- Financial implications

The option of achieving the speed reduction by speed limits was considerably cheaper than through zones - £600,000 to £1 million compared to £10 million. The Tower Gardens zone alone had cost £400,000.

The Council valued the benefits of 20mph and recognised its contribution to accident reduction, the perception of safer roads and encouragement of walking and cycling. Its current policy was to increase the number of 20mph zones in the borough through the neighbourhoods programme. This programme looked holistically at neighbourhoods with a view to providing physical measures and initiatives to make them safer and more pleasant.

Work was currently being undertaken on a scheme called DIY Streets. This was an initiative run by the sustainable transport charity Sustrans who had been contracted for 2 years to work with the local community to help residents develop low cost solutions to making streets safer and more attractive, aiming to find simple interventions and materials which can be both effective and durable. The neighbourhood to the south-east of Turnpike Lane station, which included Langham Road, Carlingford Road, Stanmore Road and Graham Road, was being looked at this year. This was a pilot project and it was intended to roll it out in other neighbourhoods and to cover 2 to 3 each year including 7 to 8 roads in each exercise. The Council had also set up a Sustainable Transport Commission to review its Sustainable Transport Policies.

The London Assembly Transport Committee had produced a report titled: 'Braking Point: 20mph speed limits in London' and recommended the introduction of pilot projects for borough wide 20mph speed limits. Eight London boroughs including Islington, Hackney and Southwark were currently aiming to implement borough wide 20mph speed limits on residential roads. The majority of boroughs taking forward this approach were currently doing so on a piecemeal basis, introducing 20mph zones rather than setting borough wide default limits through Local Implementation (LIP) funding from Transport for London.

The London Borough of Islington was the only borough, at this present time, planning to implement a default 20mph limit on residential roads. The majority of their streets (78%) were already in 20 mph zones and there relatively low average speeds in the borough. It would be more difficult to follow such an approach on Haringey where only 30% of streets were in such zones. However, there might be some merit in introducing a pilot scheme in a street with an average speed of around 27/28 mph to see what happens.

DIY Streets would look at possible ways forward such as cycle training and car clubs in order to try and change the way that people think. £68,000 had been invested in this so far. Residents led on the scheme and the intention would that they would come up with an outline scheme for a bid to TfL. It was not merely about physical measures - education was included as well.

In terms of a pilot scheme, it was noted that Wood Green was already slow and calmed. Green Lanes was also already fairly slow. Crouch End or Muswell Hill would

**MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY REVIEW - 20 MPH SPEED LIMIT
MONDAY, 18 OCTOBER 2010**

probably be better options. It would be important to obtain measurable statistics so the effectiveness of the pilot scheme could be properly evaluated.

He had reservations about raising expectations. The Council had bought speed guns but training was still being awaited for SNTs. However, motorists generally slowed down when they saw the fluorescent jackets of officers using the guns. If a default limit was introduced across the borough, it probably would not be possible to enforce it. In particular, SNTs only worked until midnight. Average speed cameras were currently very expensive but the price was likely to come down. Flashing speed signs were introduced where needed and worked well. Mobile ones were available but needed to be manned.

It was noted that Green Lanes and Tottenham High Road were to most dangerous roads in the borough. However, residential side roads could also be dangerous irrespective of their lower average speeds.

The Panel thanked Mr Long, Mr Young and Mr Kennedy for their contribution.

Cllr Gideon Bull
Chair

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