

**MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY REVIEW - 20 MPH SPEED LIMIT
MONDAY, 15 NOVEMBER 2010**

Councillor Basu, Bull (Chair), Newton and Webers

LC11. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

LC12. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

LC13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

LC14. MINUTES

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of 18 October 2010 be approved.

LC15. 20 MPH SPEED LIMIT

The Committee received evidence from Jenny Jones, a Member of the London Assembly. As a member of its Transport Committee, she had played a leading role in an inquiry that it undertook on 20 mph speed limits, entitled "Braking Point".

She reported that each road death cost the economy approximately £1.5 million. Serious injuries could cost almost as much. Road casualties disproportionately affected children and people from black and ethnic minority and deprived communities. A number of London authorities had been looking at the reducing speed limits. There was a general consensus that reducing speeds to 20 mph saved lives and this included motoring organisations such as the AA and the RAC.

Having a default 20 mph speed limit made expectations clearer to people and simplified the issue. Physical calming measures had proven very effective in reducing casualties. Over 400 had been implemented across the capital and this had led to a 46% reduction in casualty rates. A further 900 were planned for future years, They had been found to be cost effective by the Assembly.

The move to default 20 mph speed limits was a logical and practical progression. However, the overall effectiveness of these had not yet been fully tested although the scheme in Portsmouth had been evaluated and Islington were now implementing a similar scheme. In Hull, all of the individual zones had been joined together to produce an overall 20 mph speed limit. A reduction in speed of just 1 mph could lead to a significant reduction in road casualties. Official guidance was that signage alone should not be used but it was a cheaper option than using zones. There was a need for such schemes to be accompanied by widespread public consultation.

Department of Transport advice was that a steady speed could improve traffic flow and reduce emissions. A 20 mph speed limit could have a small positive effect on

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this. There was a lack of research currently about whether lower speed limits had the potential to get people out of cars, although Hull had seen a huge increase in cycling following the implementation of its 20 mph scheme. The London Assembly was convinced of the benefits of cycling.

The Mayor had previously agreed to fund the setting up of pilot 20 mph default speed limits in two boroughs. Hackney and Southwark had been interested and were ready to implement this. Hackney were no longer interested but Southwark still were and a potential agreement had been brokered. The Mayor had been asked for the funding but this had not yet been forthcoming.

Eight London boroughs had been progressing 20 mph speed limits. The majority of these were going for it in a piecemeal way by creating a network of zones. Hackney had wanted to extend its limit to TfL roads as well, although permission from them would be required. The biggest sticking point had been the attitude of the Police. ACPO advice was not favourable to default 20 mph limits. The Police did not like road humps and preferred road narrowing or speed cameras. The Police view was that government guidance had to be followed and that they could not enforce 20 mph speed limits.

Residents could determine the priorities for Police Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs) and speeding cars were nearly always amongst the top three concerns. It had been suggested that SNTs could play a more active role in enforcing speed limits. Ms Jones felt that the Police had sufficient resources to pursue speeding issues. For example, very large numbers of officers could often be involved in murder investigations. There was a feeling that traffic policing was not proper policing and attempts had been made to cut funding.

It was possible to reduce the number of speed signs if a default level was set. She felt that the speed limit should be 20 mph everywhere except for main roads. There had been TfL resistance to lower speed limits. The transport research laboratory had shown that there could be more emissions at 20 mph. However, less emissions were produced where traffic moved at a steady speed.

In Southwark, the intention was to engage with a wide range of community groups such as churches, resident associations, neighbourhood watches etc. in promoting a 20 mph speed limit. Lower speed limits benefited everyone and improved the quality of life. The term "accident" was not popular and most groups with an interest in these issues used terms like "crash", "casualty" and "incidents".

The Transport Committee at the Assembly worked well together and had the opportunity to hold the Mayor's Transport Commissioner to account twice per year. Members undertook pieces of research and "rapporteurships" where individual Members worked with officers to produce policy documents. Assembly Members could take up issues on behalf of individual boroughs.

The funding to resource pilot 20 mph schemes would have come from TfL but had not been forthcoming. It was possible that an update to the report would be commissioned in due course. 20 mph speed limits reduced the level of road danger and delivered significant cost benefits to communities.

The Committee thanked Ms Jones for her assistance.

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**Clr Gideon Bull
Chair**