

Scrutiny Review – 20 mph Speed Limit



A REVIEW BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MARCH 2011

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Chair's Foreword:

Research on road traffic collisions shows quite clearly that speed kills. Even small reductions in speed can have a significant effect on casualty figures. Slowing traffic down has therefore been a priority for many local Councils across the country and considerable success has been achieved in recent years. Physical calming measures, such as road humps and chicanes, have contributed significantly to this. The setting of default 20 mph speed limits for whole areas, enforced by signage alone, can be seen as the logical next step to this. Our review looked specifically at the feasibility of adopting this approach in Haringey.

The Panel considered the evidence from schemes currently in place as well as the views of a range of local stakeholders and community and resident associations. There is no doubt that significant progress has been made in recent years in reducing road casualties. However, there is still scope for further improvement and I hope that the Panel's conclusions and recommendations, which are outlined in the following report, will contribute towards this.



Councillor Gideon Bull
Chair of the Review Panel

Executive Summary

In recent years, considerable success has been achieved in reducing road casualties through the establishment of 20 mph zones, particularly in London. These are self enforcing due to the use of appropriate physical calming measures, such as road humps. Generally, the most high risk or dangerous locations have been prioritised for action. In London, many local authorities have already addressed most, if not all, of such areas. Some, such as Hackney, have been considering joining up all their 20 mph zones to form a borough wide 20 speed limit. Haringey, in common with many other authorities, has a long term strategy of increasing the number of 20 mph zones in the borough until most residential streets are covered.

Several local authorities, such as Portsmouth, Islington and Oxford, have taken the step of setting 20 mph as the default speed limit for their area, enforced by signage alone. The scheme in Portsmouth has been independently evaluated and showed that it has been associated with reduced traffic speeds and casualty figures. Islington Council has also recently implemented a borough wide 20 mph speed limit which has been well supported amongst local residents. Whilst more evidence is needed on the long term effectiveness of default 20 mph speed limits, that which is currently available has demonstrated some promising results.

The cost of establishing a default 20 mph speed limit enforced by signage alone is considerably less than that of extending the number of 20 mph zones by physical calming measures. The Islington scheme cost £1.6 million to implement which compares with a cost of £10 million for Haringey's current strategy. A default 20 mph speed limit can also be established quickly – in approximately two years as opposed for the Council's current strategy which will take 10 – 15 years to complete.

The Panel is therefore of the view that there would be merit in introducing, subject to consultation with residents, a default 20 mph speed limit for the borough for all side roads. This would be enforced by signage alone in areas not currently within 20 mph zones. It is essential that local residents are fully engaged in the process as the success of such a scheme is dependent on their support. The Panel also believes that the Council should work with Transport for London to set up a pilot 20 mph speed limit in a town centre. This should be subject to monitoring, evaluation and, if successful, extended to suitable other town centres

Realistic expectations should be built for the scheme. Whilst the Panel is of the view that it is likely to reduce average traffic speeds, the change is unlikely to be substantial, at least in the first instance. This is due in part to the fact that many of the side streets included in the new speed limit are likely to already have low traffic speeds thus limiting the potential for reductions. In addition, reductions in casualties may be modest due in part to the fact that many of the higher risk locations are already in 20 mph zones.

The Panel nevertheless feels that a default 20 mph speed limit would be of benefit. In addition to reducing road casualties, it has the potential to lead to a long term change in the behaviour of drivers, simplifies the issue of speed limits and makes expectations clearer. Over time, drivers will become more familiar with the lower speed limit and therefore more sympathetic to it. There is also evidence that it increases the perception of safety and makes residents feel more positive about their area.

The Panel notes the concerns about enforcement but is of the view that it should not necessarily be a major issue. The 30 mph speed limit is not enforced rigorously by the

Police and it would therefore be unrealistic to expect any great level of enforcement of a 20 mph speed limit. Where persistent problems do occur, ward panels can make the issue a priority for their Police Safer Neighbourhood team. Physical calming measures can be considered as a last resort in areas where problems prove to be difficult to resolve.

Finally, the body of evidence on 20 mph speed limits, although increasing, is still limited. Any Haringey scheme should therefore be carefully monitored and evaluated so that progress can be mapped and the borough can contribute to developing a stronger evidence base on the issue.

Recommendations:

1. That the Council undertake a borough wide consultation process on the proposal to establish a borough wide default 20 mph speed limit for all side roads and the establishment, in consultation with TfL, of a pilot 20 mph speed limit in a suitable town centre.
2. That such a scheme be financed with the use of appropriate LIP funding.
3. That a comprehensive publicity and promotional campaign be developed for the scheme to encourage compliance.
4. That Council vehicles and those of contractors be specifically required to comply with the new speed limit.
5. That such a scheme be subject to monitoring and evaluation.
6. That where persistent problems are identified that are not possible to resolve, officers work with local residents to identify creative and cost effective solutions such as psychological traffic calming.

1. Background

1.1 A scrutiny review on sustainable transport was undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2009/10. It recommended that the Council develop a borough wide 20 mph speed limit to be operational in all residential areas and, where appropriate, enforced by traffic calming measures. The recommendation was partially agreed by the Cabinet on the basis that a 20 mph speed limit in residential areas was only effective with physical measures to slow traffic.

1.2 Following this, a motion was submitted to Council on 19 July 2010 proposing that a 20 mph speed limit be implemented on all residential roads in Haringey over a four year period and that a town centre 20 mph speed limit be piloted. In response to this, the issue referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to look at the proposal.

1.3 The Committee commissioned a time limited scrutiny review on the issue, with the following membership:

Councillors Gideon Bull (Chair), Dhiren Basu, Martin Newton and Lyn Weber

1.4 The Panel agreed the following terms of reference for the review:

“To consider:

- the feasibility of the introduction of a default borough wide 20 mph speed limit for suitable residential streets and, in particular, whether reductions in traffic speeds and casualty figures are likely to be achieved without the need for physical calming measures and enforced by signage alone;
- whether a time limited pilot scheme in a suitable town centre *location* should be set up to test the potential effectiveness of such a scheme”.

1.5 In undertaking its work, the Panel considered:

- The potential for reductions in traffic speeds and road casualties through the introduction of 20 mph speed limits in areas not already covered by existing 20 mph zones that are enforced by signage alone
- The views of local residents and whether such a policy has potential to gain wide support. As such schemes are intended to be self enforcing, this is particularly important.
- The relative cost effectiveness of this approach in comparison to the current approach to reducing speed limits, where appropriate, to 20 mph
- The sustainability of potential benefits i.e. whether initial improvements are likely to be maintained without the need for physical calming measures

1.6 The review considered the following sources of evidence in undertaking the review:

- Interviews with key stakeholders and local residents organisations
- Research documentation and national guidance

- Evidence on the effectiveness and outcomes of schemes in local authorities which have already implemented default 20 mph speed limits, such as such as Portsmouth, Bristol and Islington.
- Information on relevant work in this area being by Transport for London and the Mayor
- Relevant financial data including comparative costs of specific schemes

2. Introduction

Background

- 2.1 It has been established clearly that there is a link between traffic speed and road collisions. Excessive speed has been shown to be a direct contributory factor in about 20% of all collisions and a major factor on a third of all road deaths. This does not necessarily mean that drivers are breaking the speed limit but may instead be driving faster than appropriate for the conditions. Reducing speed limits has therefore been widely accepted as an important means of reducing road casualties. Research has shown that for every 1 mph reduction on average traffic speed, road collisions are reduced by 5%.
- 2.2 London boroughs have lead responsibility for changing and enforcing speed limits on minor roads in London whilst Transport for London (TfL) is responsible for major arterial roads. Many local authorities have introduced measures to reduce traffic speed to 20 mph. Nationally, police forces have generally been reluctant to enforce lower speed limits and there is an expectation that any such schemes should therefore be self enforcing. For example, the current policy of the Metropolitan Police is not to enforce 20mph speed limits except in exceptional circumstances.
- 2.3 Self enforcement has typically been through the use of physical calming features such as speed humps and cushions, speed cameras, width restrictions and chicanes. Research published by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents in 2009 showed that the more disruptive measures are the most effective:
- Signage alone reduces speeds by 1 mph
 - Road humps reduce average speed by 10 mph
 - Speed cameras reduce average speed by 20 mph

20 mph Zones

- 2.4 Until recently, the principal means used to reduce speed limits to 20 mph was through designating specific areas as 20 mph “zones”. These are areas where speed is restricted to 20mph by boundary signage and enforced by physical traffic calming measures such as speed humps or chicanes. Although zones can be limited to a single road, they normally include a cluster of streets. There are now around 400 of these in London, covering 11% of total road length. Their use has been targeted particularly at areas that are considered to be “high risk”, such as around schools and hospitals.
- 2.5 Evidence from Transport for London (TfL) has shown that 20 mph zones have been very effective in reducing road casualties. Casualties have gone down by 42% and fatal or serious casualties by 46% in streets where zones have been introduced. The impact has been particularly great in more deprived areas, which typically suffer higher road casualty figures.

Default 20 mph speed limits

- 2.6 A number of local authorities have considered introducing default 20 mph speed limits for entire areas. Some, such as Portsmouth City Council, Oxford City Council and the London Borough of Islington, have implemented specific schemes. As with

a zone, a 20mph limit is applied to roads to restrict the maximum legal speed to 20mph. In streets not already within 20 mph zones and subject to physical calming measures, enforcement is by signage alone i.e. *without* any physical calming measures. The limits apply to all residential roads in a particular area.

DfT Guidance

- 2.7 The introduction of limits and zones is subject to specific Department for Transport (DfT) guidance which states that if the mean speed on a road is 24 mph or lower, a 20 mph speed limit can be set and enforced by signage alone. If mean speeds are any higher than this, physical calming measures should be used. The Metropolitan Police currently require that the relevant guidance is followed or appropriate exemption is sought for the Department for Transport.

3. Stakeholder Views

Current Council Policy

- 3.1 The Panel received a presentation from Tony Kennedy, the Group Manager for Transport Policy and Projects in the Urban Environment Directorate which outlined the Council's current position. It noted that it was looking to further increase the number of areas with 20 mph speed limits. The overall policy had been discussed at the Council's 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 it should be in priority areas only
 - The enforcement implications
 - The raising of public expectations
 - Financial implications
- 3.2 He stated that the option of achieving the speed reduction by speed limits and without physical calming measures was considerably cheaper than through zones - £600,000 to £1 million compared to £10 million. The Tower Gardens zone alone had cost £400,000.
- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 As part of this approach, 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 to work with the local community for 2 years in order to help residents develop low cost solutions to making streets safer and more attractive. It aimed to find simple interventions and materials which can be both effective and durable.
- 3.5 The neighbourhood to the south-east of Turnpike Lane station, which includes 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 current policy was ongoing and would take approximately 10 – 15 years to complete. 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. In addition, the Council had also set up a Sustainable Transport Commission to review its sustainable transport policies.
- 3.6 He stated that the London Borough of Islington was the only borough to implement a default 20mph limit on residential roads at the present time. The majority of their streets (78%) were already in 20 mph zones and there were already relatively low

average speeds in the borough. It would be more difficult to follow such an approach in Haringey where only 30% of streets were currently in 20 mph zones. However, he felt that 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 effect it had.

- 3.7 In the event of a pilot scheme being set up in a town centre, he felt that Crouch End or Muswell Hill would probably be the best options. Wood Green was already slow and calmed and Green Lanes was also already fairly slow. It would be important to obtain measurable statistics so the effectiveness of the pilot scheme could be properly evaluated.
- 3.8 He had reservations that setting 20 mph speed limits without physical calming measures might raise expectations that could not be met. If a default 20 mph speed limit was introduced across the borough, it probably would not be possible to enforce it. It was noted that 12 of the 19 Police Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) areas of the borough had officers trained to use speed guns. The trained officers currently also covered the 7 areas without dedicated trained officers. However, SNTs only work until midnight. Average speed cameras could be used but were currently very expensive, although 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. He stated that, in general, the number of prosecutions for speeding within the borough was currently comparatively small.

Enforcement

- 3.9 Inspector Mark Long from the Police Safer Transport Team and Martin Young from the Traffic Police gave the Panel their views on 20 mph speed limits. Mr Long reported that the Police were not against the 20 mph speed limit in principle. The issue for them was how it was to be achieved and enforced. Policing resources were finite. He felt that 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.
- 3.10 Mr Young felt 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 physical means of enforcing limits. The Police would not be 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 would probably be the case where streets were narrow. In such circumstances, there might not be any need for engineering measures such as speed humps.
- 3.11 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. 5 wards out of 19 in Haringey had already set traffic as a priority. These are Alexandra, Harringay, Noel Park, Northumberland Park and Woodside.
- 3.12 Mr Long stated that if SNTs were asked to focus on speeding, they would. Whilst they were supportive of the principle of 20 mph speed limits, 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 that would be required. The Police would have a clear preference for engineering instead of enforcement as a solution.

- 3.13 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.
- 3.14 Mr Young stated that properly engineered physical calming measures worked and removed the need for 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 was of the view that if speed limits were brought in haphazardly, it could bring them into disrepute. Hackney and other boroughs were bringing in a borough 20 mph wide speed limit through a patchwork of zones. He felt that this was a better way of achieving a 20 mph speed limit on a borough wide basis.

4. Evidence from Other Local Authorities

London Assembly

- 4.1 A London Assembly report entitled “Braking Point” looked at the issue of default 20 mph speed limits in detail. The report was of the view that there was, as yet, incomplete evidence to determine the potential effectiveness of default 20 mph speed limits. It concluded that there was a case for testing further the likely benefits and recommended that the Mayor work with boroughs planning to introduce default 20 mph limits to monitor their effectiveness and that the results of the programme should be published and used to inform future TfL and borough policy.
- 4.2 In terms of cost, the report noted that Islington were planning to spend £1 million to introduce a borough wide default limit. The cost of zones could vary considerably depending on their size and the enforcement measures that are used. The report quotes a range between £40,000 and £250,000. Southwark had calculated an average figure of £143,000 per zone and a total of £1.9 to cover the remaining 20 mph zones that it was planning.
- 4.3 The Panel 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 the “Braking Point” investigation. 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. 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. A reduction in speed of only 1 mph could lead to a significant reduction in road casualties.
- 4.4 She was of the view that having a default 20 mph speed limit made expectations clearer and simplified the issue. Physical calming measures had found by the Assembly to be very effective in reducing casualties. A further 900 were planned in London for future years. The move to default 20 mph speed limits was a logical and practical progression from this. However, the overall effectiveness of them had not yet been fully tested although the scheme in Portsmouth had been evaluated. In Hull, all of the individual zones had been joined together to produce an overall 20 mph speed limit. There was a need for the introduction of such schemes to be accompanied by widespread public consultation.
- 4.5 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 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.
- 4.6 There were a range of views amongst London boroughs about the potential of default 20 mph speed limits:
- Eight boroughs had been actively pursuing the option
 - Other boroughs felt that further evidence was required on their impact
 - Some did not believe that they should be considered and were taking forward alternative approaches.

- 4.7 Several boroughs were intending to implement 20 mph speed limits on a piecemeal basis through introducing more 20 mph zones over a period of time until all their residential streets were covered. Hackney had wanted to extend its 20 mph speed limit to TfL roads as well, although permission from them would be required. 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.
- 4.8 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, in the normal course of events, enforce 20 mph speed limits. Nevertheless, residents could determine the priorities for Police Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs) and speeding cars were nearly always amongst the top three concerns. Ms Jones was of the view that the Police had sufficient resources to pursue speeding issues. There was a feeling that traffic policing was not proper policing and attempts had been made to cut funding.
- 4.9 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. Ms Jones felt that the speed limit should be 20 mph everywhere except for main roads. In her view, 20 mph speed limits reduced the level of road danger and delivered significant cost benefits to communities.

Portsmouth

- 4.10 Portsmouth was the first local authority to introduce a default 20 mph limit on all residential roads. It has a population of approximately 200,000 which is slightly smaller than Haringey (circa 225,000). On most of the roads where the speed limit signs and road markings were installed, the average speeds before installation were less than or equal to 24 mph. The relatively low speeds on these roads before the implementation of the scheme were mainly due to the narrow carriageways and on-street parking that are common within the city, which reduces the effective width. 20 mph signs were also provided on roads with median speeds greater than 24 mph in order to avoid inconsistency and confusion. These were not accompanied by any physical calming measures. As this was contrary to the Department for Transport guidance, special dispensation from the Secretary of State needed to be obtained before implementation.
- 4.11 An independent evaluation of the scheme was published by the Department for Transport in September 2010. The evaluation found that the overall average speed after the 20 mph speed limits were imposed was 1.3 miles per hour lower than the average speed beforehand. At sites where the average before speed was greater than 24 mph, the average speed reduced by 6.3 mph. Despite a reduction in the number of sites with average speeds above 24 mph, which was 21 before the schemes implementation, 19 sites were found to still have average speeds between 24 mph and 29 mph after the schemes were implemented. The changes were regarded as being statistically significant.

Average Traffic speed changes after 20 mph speed limit implementation

Sector	Average Before Speed (mph)	Average After Speed (mph)	Speed Change (mph)
Central West	20.2	19.1	-1.1
South East	19.6	18.6	-1.0
Central East	18.5	17.9	-0.6
North East	18.2	16.4	-1.8
South West	18.4	16.9	-1.5
North West	23.9	22.2	-1.7
All Sectors	19.8	18.5	-1.3

4.12 The analysis showed the total accident reduction was 21% and the number of casualties fell by 22%. The number of killed or seriously injured (KSI) accidents increased by 8% and casualties by 6%. However, the total numbers of KSI accidents were very small and therefore susceptible to variations. These figures compare against a national reduction in casualty rates of 14% and of 12% in KSI casualties.

4.13 The evaluation came to the following conclusion:

“early figures suggest that the implementation of the 20 mph Speed Limit scheme has been associated with reductions in road casualty numbers. The scheme has reduced average speeds and been well-supported during its first two years of operation.”

4.14 In summary, the report states that the effects of implementing the 20 mph Speed Limit scheme (use of signing alone) were as follows:

1. “The average speed reduction achieved by installing speed limit signs alone is less than that achieved by the introduction of 20 mph zones partly because 20 mph Speed Limits are implemented where existing speeds are already low;
2. Within an area-wide application of 20mph sign only limits, those roads with average speeds higher than 24 mph may benefit from significant speed reductions, but not to the extent that the 20mph speed limit is self enforcing;
3. Based on the available data for two years after scheme implementation, casualty benefits greater than the national trend have not been demonstrated”;

Islington

4.15 Islington is London's smallest borough, with a size of six square miles. It has a population of approximately 200,000. The Council has recently decided to implement of default 20 mph speed limit for the borough.

4.16 The Panel met with Zahur Khan, Bram Kainth and Michelle Thompson from the Council. They reported that Islington had completed its programme of setting up 20 mph zones in 2009. It had then been decided to extend 20 mph speed limit to the remaining 22% of the borough's roads not covered by zones through the use of signage alone. The Council's Cabinet had made this decision but there was unanimous cross party support. The Council's new administration had re-affirmed this position.

- 4.17 There had been strong cross party support for reducing traffic speeds. This had initially been through the setting up of 20 mph zones. The number of accidents had gone down from 227 in 2001 to 71 last year following the implementation of them. The most dangerous streets within the borough had been done first. There normally had to be an accident before any action could be taken. The approximate cost of an accident was £80,000. Schemes had to demonstrate to TfL that they were cost effective. The original plan had been to extend 20 mph zones to every part of the borough and there had been a programme to do this until 2016 but this had been built on the assumption of there being continued funding.
- 4.18 The implementation of a default 20 mph speed limit had cost £1 million initially. However, the Department for Transport (DfT) and the Police had advised that the signs should all be illuminated and this had added another £600,000 to the cost. This was contrary to the approach that Portsmouth had adopted with the setting up of their scheme as the signage used there was not illuminated. The costs of the scheme came more from excluding particular roads as illuminated repeater signs were needed where speed limits changed. If signs were not properly illuminated, it might cause any prosecutions to fail. The DfT had worked closely with Islington on the implementation of their scheme.
- 4.19 It was doubtful whether the streets that had not been incorporated into 20 mph zones would have received funding. Residents appeared to generally feel safer and happier about their area following implementation of a lower speed limit. A traffic survey would be undertaken to evaluate how well the new scheme worked. This would use radar technology and be undertaken during the first 18 months.
- 4.20 Reducing traffic speeds could, conversely, reduce journey times through increasing the capacity of roads. This had been tried on both the M1 and M25 and had shown to be effective. The issue of whether to put main roads in the scheme was controversial and would be reconsidered after the scheme had been reviewed. The Police had generally been supportive. Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs) would deal with any issues arising from complaints in relation to speeding. The Police had admitted that they were not even able to enforce the 30 mph speed limit.
- 4.21 They felt that, before implementing a scheme such as this, local authorities needed to ask themselves what their criterion for success was – whether it was reducing speed and accidents or increasing the perception of safety or making people feel happier about their environment. They were of the view that it was not a road safety issue - traffic calming was the most effective way of addressing this. Although there was not much evidence available on the effectiveness of default 20 mph speed limits, that which there was had shown that they made a minimal difference. They could not recommend a default 20 speed limit as professionals as there was limited evidence that they would reduce collisions or traffic speed.
- 4.22 However, the lower speed limit could nevertheless deliver some benefits. It might make residents feel happier about their area. The lower speed limit could also possibly make it possible to prosecute people for driving at 29 – 30 mph. Where default 20 mph speed limits had been implemented, reductions in traffic speed had been bigger in streets areas where speeds had been comparatively high before implementation but this might not be sustainable.
- 4.23 It was not possible to say whether the lower speed limit would increase cycling or

walking. There was also no evidence so far the default 20 mph speed limits led to a step change in the psychology of drivers. It was nevertheless hoped that speeding would eventually become as unacceptable as drink driving. If it was possible to get the Police to enforce 20 mph speed limits, there was a chance that they might work.

- 4.24 There had been a backlash against speed humps and default 20 speed limits were probably more popular now. A large scale consultation exercise had been undertaken before their scheme had been implemented and 25% of the 40,000 people consulted had responded. Two thirds had been favourable. Residents would not be aware of average traffic speeds in their area so would be unable to quantify any improvement. The scheme could nevertheless be used to identify problem areas and help to change mind sets and would not do any active harm.
- 4.25 The decision to introduce the default 20 mph speed limit had been contrary to officer advice. Members had the right to ignore officer advice but their view had been that there was no factual evidence to support the policy. However, they had been able to make the scheme work effectively. Given the choice, officers would prefer to spend what money was available on where particular problems had been identified. It would have cost £3 to £3.5 million to put the remaining part of the borough into 20 mph zones. This would have been undertaken in stages and not all at once. It could not be done now due to the financial climate.
- 4.26 There had been little negative feedback to the introduction of the scheme so far and there had only been good publicity. However, the lack of complaints from residents suggested that the policy had been ineffectual. There were some resources available for enforcement. Although 20 mph speed limits were cheaper to implement, there was still a significant cost. In the long term, it was possible that it would lead to a change in culture and mindset. It was noted that much less of Haringey was currently covered by 20 mph zones so implementing a similar scheme was likely to be more challenging.

5. Feedback from Community Organisations

5.1 The Panel received evidence from a number of community and residents organisations. They also received a written submission from 20's Plenty.

5.2 The view of Rod King, from 20's Plenty, was that in today's economic climate, value for money was very important. A comparison between traditional 20 mph zones and 20 mph limits was therefore an important one. In the past 20 mph zones had been used to target the streets most requiring speed reduction and in these cases had usually been effective. However they were expensive. 20's Plenty had done a comparison between the use of zones and limits and were of the view that 20mph speed limits were 7 times more cost effective than zones.

5.3 He highlighted the fact that Portsmouth had spent just £1,100 per km for limits compared to £60,000 per km for physically calmed zones. Comparing £100,000 spent within a community with 50 miles of roads, they had found that 20 mph limits with signage alone gave better value for money than 20 mph zones. This was demonstrated by the following:

Option 1: Spending £100,000 on 20mph zones with physical calming; This would fund one mile of streets with a 20 mph zone with physical calming. Average speed was likely to drop by 9 mph. As the speed limit on the other 49 miles of roads remained the same, the average speed reduction across the whole network would be 0.18 mph.

Option 2: Spending £100,000 on 20mph limits without physical calming; This would fund 56 miles of streets with a 20mph limit and cover the whole community. The average speed reduction (based on the results of the Portsmouth evaluation) will be 1.3 mph.

5.4 From this, he concluded that 20mph area-wide limits were 7.2 times more cost effective than physically calmed zones. He stated that there are other benefits from community-wide limits such as the fact that they:

- Increase the collective ownership of lower speeds where people live.
- Deliver a 20 mph street to most drivers, hence increasing value and compliance.
- Provide a more consistent approach linked to road usage rather than road design.

5.5 He stated that there are now over 5m people living in Local Authorities who had adopted a 20 mph speed limit policy for all residential roads. He hoped that Haringey would be the next to be added to that list.

5.6 The Panel also received evidence from Paul Bumstead from the West Green Residents Association and, in particular, on the DIY Streets Scheme operating in the neighbourhood. The area was primarily residential in nature with streets that were often short and narrow and therefore traffic speeds were normally comparatively low. There were nevertheless some exceptions to this, such as the link between Lordship Lane and West Green Road formed by Downhills Way and Belmont Road. The DIY Streets programme was not supportive of physical calming. However, there was a need for lower speed limits to be self enforcing. Signage and

appropriate road markings were preferable as well as being cheaper options.

- 5.7 Evidence was received from Chris Barker from the Sustainable Haringey Network, Haringey Living Streets and Haringey Federation of Residents Associations. Experience had shown that schemes enforced by signage alone could bring speeds down by a little and this approach should therefore be considered as beneficial. As the 20 mph speed limit became more prevalent, it was possible that there would be a greater level of observance. Drivers would be more likely to live in an area with such a limit and therefore become used to it. He felt that, given time, people would begin to drive slightly more slowly if there was a default 20 mph speed limit. For example, there was now a greater observance of the 30 mph speed limit than previously.
- 5.8 However, enforcement was not the most critical issue. Most people ignored the 30 mph speed limit. It was acknowledged that most people disliked speed humps but streets that appeared to be long and open needed some means of reducing traffic speed. Entry arches, narrower road sections and chicanes could all be used. Vegetation could also be used, such as trees in pots. Such calming measures were not necessary where streets were narrow. If signage alone was found not to work, then physical calming measures could then be considered. It was acknowledged that enforcement was important but it would not be necessary for the Police to stop everyone who was exceeding 20 mph – it could be applied selectively. Speed guns were an excellent idea as were average speed cameras.
- 5.9 Jennifer Bell from Hawthorn Road Residents Association stated that speeding was often a problem in her area. Nightingale Lane was narrow and motorists often speeded up after passing through it. She had written to complain about this but the response she had received had stated that accident rates were low and therefore there was no immediate need for action. She felt that it should not be necessary to wait until there was a fatality for action to be taken and that it would be beneficial to make a cultural change. She acknowledged that it would be difficult to stop “boy racers” from speeding but there were a lot of other people who were likely to be more receptive to lower speed limits. She felt that the default speed limit should be 20 mph in residential areas. A lower speed limit would make people feel safer and increase awareness amongst drivers. Debora Lucarelli, also from Hawthorn Road Residents Association, felt that the Council needed to take into consideration a range of different options as there was not a single solution.
- 5.10 David Rennie of the Crescent Road Residents Association felt that psychological traffic calming, such as trees being placed in close proximity to traffic, could be effective. Research had shown this to work well. One option that could be used was to place trees within concrete boxes. These also had the advantage of being moveable. Chevron parking and chicanes were other options but these could also result in the loss of parking space, which was not always popular. He drew attention to the removal of railings and road markings in areas of Kensington and Chelsea. As well as reducing speeds, these could make streets less cluttered and save money. Innovative schemes had the potential to work but relied on local councils being brave enough to adopt them.
- 5.11 Adam Coffman from Haringey Cycling Campaign stated that the SNT in his neighbourhood, which was Harringay, had been proactive in addressing traffic issues and used creative means of addressing the issue. However, the enthusiasm of the Police for addressing speeding was something of a “post code lottery”. He

felt that pressure should be put on the Police to enforce lower speed limits. Speeding affected everyone and there should be a strong message given out that it was a serious issue. He noted that the DIY Street project was looking at alternatives to road humps but he was nevertheless still in favour of them. He felt that the main issue with road humps was that they were often not well built. The project was looking at cheap ways to calm traffic and these could be used in other areas of the borough.

- 5.12 He felt that 20 mph speed limits were beneficial. They built confidence in cyclists. There was a correlation between low speed limits and the number of cyclists. For example, Germany and Denmark both had low speed limits and large numbers of people cycled. In contrast, the default speed limit in Australia was 60 kmh and there were fewer cyclists. A 20 mph speed default limit for Haringey would be consistent with the greenest borough strategy and be a brave move by the Council. It could be promoted in a number of ways such as car stickers and other publicity. In addition, Council employees could sign pledges to observe the 20 mph speed limit and Council vehicles required to observe it.
- 5.13 John MacBryde, from Kingsley Place Residents Association and Bus Watch West Haringey, reported on efforts being made to centralise access to bus services in Highgate Village. The angled parking that was used in certain areas was only feasible where there was a 20 mph speed limit. He felt that the Village area would benefit from a 20 mph speed limit. It was noted that it was possible to have cross borough arrangements on speed limits so that any issues around borders could be resolved.

6. The Panel's Conclusions

- 6.1 The Panel is of the view that, on balance, there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that a default 20 mph speed limit will be of benefit to the borough. However, the Panel believes that it is important that there are realistic expectations from such a scheme. There is clear evidence to suggest that it should lead to a reduction in traffic speeds and casualties. Whilst these are likely to be relatively modest, they will nevertheless be beneficial. Due to congestion and the narrow nature of some streets, traffic speeds in many areas may already be relatively low and therefore the scope for reduction will be limited. For example, the current average speed on 'A' roads within the borough during peak hours is only 12 mph. In addition, many higher risk areas are already in 20 mph zones and have already benefited from the considerable difference that these have made.
- 6.2 A default 20 mph speed limit should nevertheless deliver a number of long term benefits to the borough and have the potential to provide a more cost effective approach than the current policy. The potential cost of the current strategy will ultimately be around £10 million and will take 10 -15 years to complete. This compares with a potential cost of £600k to £1 million for implementing a default 20 mph speed limit. Even if one uses the £1.6 million cost of the Islington scheme as a more realistic benchmark, this is still a substantial saving. This could also be achieved in around two years.
- 6.3 The Panel believes that the introduction of a default 20 mph speed limit has the potential to lead to a long term change in the behaviour of drivers. A default limit simplifies the issue of speed limits and makes expectations clearer. Over time, drivers will become more familiar with the lower speed limit. In addition to driving in streets with such limits, many will also live in streets with 20 mph limits and therefore be aware of their potential benefits. The ultimate aim should be to make speeding as socially unacceptable as drink driving.
- 6.4 In respect of enforcement, the Panel notes that the 30 mph speed limit is generally not enforced rigorously by the Police due to the resource implications of this. In such circumstances, it would be unrealistic to expect any great level of enforcement of a 20 mph speed limit. However, it may increase the likelihood of motorists being prosecuted for lower speeds than is currently the case e.g. for speeds of 33 – 34 mph in areas with a 20 mph speed limit as opposed to 40 mph where there is a 30 mph speed limit. Where persistent problems do occur, ward panels can make the issue a priority for their Police Safer Neighbourhood team. Physical calming measures can be considered as a last resort in areas where problems prove to be difficult to resolve.
- 6.5 There is clear evidence from Islington and Portsmouth that residents are likely to be favourable to the introduction of a default 20 mph speed limit. In addition, there have been very few if no complaints from Islington residents since its introduction. The Panel is nevertheless of the view that the introduction of any scheme should be accompanied by widespread consultation and a publicity campaign. The Council itself can play a key role in promoting compliance through leading by example. This could be done by ensuring that Council vehicles and, where possible, those of contractors observe the lower speed limit. In addition, Council vehicles and those of staff could be used to publicise the speed limits through, for example, bumper stickers.

- 6.6 The Panel is of the view that all side roads should be included in the Haringey scheme. It was noted that much of the costs associated with implementing the scheme in Islington came from roads that were *not* included as it is necessary to install signs in all places where there is a change of speed limit. There will nevertheless still be a need for some signs to be located in areas within the areas where the 20 mph speed limit applies.
- 6.7 The Panel is of the view that the Council should work with Transport for London to also set up a pilot 20 mph speed limit in a town centre. This should be subject to monitoring and evaluation and, if successful, extended to suitable other town centres.
- 6.8 The risks associated from the introduction of a default 20 mph speed limit would appear to be relatively small. The experience from both Islington and Portsmouth has been that the schemes have been well supported and have not lead to any major problems. The main risks associated with such a scheme would seem to be that it might be ineffectual and raise unrealistic expectations. However, a realistic approach to the likely outcomes may assist in reducing the potential for this.
- 6.9 The Panel notes that the body of evidence on the effectiveness of 20 mph speed limits is still fairly limited. It is therefore of the view that any Haringey scheme should be carefully monitored and evaluated so that progress can be mapped and the borough can contribute to the body of evidence on the issue. In addition, it could also be used to identify any problems that may arise where further action may be need to be considered, such as the installation of physical calming measures.

Recommendations:

- That the Council undertake a borough wide consultation process on the proposal to establish a default borough wide 20 mph speed limit for all side roads and the establishment, in consultation with TfL, of a pilot 20 mph speed limit in a suitable town centre.
- That such a scheme be financed with the use of appropriate LIP funding.
- That a comprehensive publicity and promotional campaign be developed for the scheme to encourage compliance.
- That Council vehicles and those of contractors be specifically required to comply with the new speed limit.
- That such a scheme be subject to monitoring and evaluation.
- That where persistent problems are identified that are not possible to resolve, officers work with local residents to identify creative and cost effective solutions such as psychological traffic calming.

Appendix A

Participants in the review:

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PC Matin Young, North East Area Traffic Police.

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Paul Bumstead, West Green Residents Association.

Chris Barker. Sustainable Haringey Network, Haringey Living Streets and Haringey Federation of Residents Associations

Jennifer Bell, Hawthorn Road Residents Association

Debora Lucarelli, Hawthorn Road Residents Association

David Rennie, Crescent Road Residents Association

Adam Coffman, Haringey Cycling Campaign

John MacBryde, Kingsley Place Residents Association and Bus Watch West Haringey

Appendix B

Documents referred to in the preparation of this review report:

Interim Evaluation of the Implementation of 20 mph Speed Limits in Portsmouth
Final Report – Atkins (September 2010)

Interim Evaluation of the Implementation of 20 mph Speed Limits in Portsmouth –
Summary Report

Braking point; 20mph speed limits in London - London Assembly Transport Committee
(April 2009)

Introduction of 20mph Speed Limits – Report to Colchester Borough Council Policy
Development and Review Panel, 1 September 2010

Introduction Of 20mph Zones - Report of Regeneration And Employment Review
Committee, Islington Council, March 2011

Report of the 20 mph Speed Limits/Zones Scrutiny Panel, Brighton and Hove City Council,
May 2010

Roads; Speed Limits – House of Commons Standard Note (11 October 2011)



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