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#20mphconf
20mph visions

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“Society”

Danny Dorling, Professor of Geography, School of Geography and the Environment of the University of Oxford

Visions of a future decade as 20mph becomes the norm

20’s Plenty is one of the few campaigns that has resulted in an actual improvement in peoples’ wellbeing and life chances in the UK in the last decade

Twitter: #20mphconf
Research by the UK Transport Research Laboratory has shown that every 1mph reduction in average urban speeds can result in a 6 per cent fall in the number of casualties. It’s also been shown that you are seven times more likely to survive if you are hit by a car driving at 20mph than if you are hit at 30mph. If a child suddenly steps in front of a car, you are much less likely to seriously injure or kill them if you keep to a 20mph limit.

We'd all like our roads to be safer, with cleaner, less polluted air.

Communities across the county are choosing to bring their local speed in built up areas down to 20mph.

See how your community can reduce to 20 mph [oxfordshire.gov.uk/20mph](https://oxfordshire.gov.uk/20mph)

#20MPH #SaferPaceSaferPlace pic.twitter.com/EMxH5j64ae

14/02/2022, 07:39

https://service.oxfordshire.gov.uk/20mphrequest
Request a 20mph restriction

Before you start the request

☐ I represent the town or parish council for the area which requesting the 20mph restriction

☐ This request is supported by the town or parish council and the county council elected member.

☐ The area affected by the request has an existing speed limit no greater than 40mph.

☐ The area includes such features as homes, shops, businesses, schools, walking and cycling routes. It may be an area where more active travel is being promoted, where air quality could be improved or is designated as a quiet lane.

☐ The proposal is within the extents of the built-up environment of the village or town where vulnerable road users and vehicles mix in a frequent and planned manner (except where strong evidence exists that higher speeds are safe)?

Twitter: #20mphconf
20mph will help the best-off people in particular, to be more courteous.

https://twitter.com/Charlie_Hicks_/status/1570355513522810882

https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/personalandhouseholdfinances/expenditure/datasets/percentageofhouseholdswithcarsbyincomegrouptenureandhouseholdcompositionuktabellea47
The backlash is decreasing

Those who once targeted 20mph campaigns, now more often target cyclists or low traffic neighborhood schemes (0 mph for cars!).

A backlash was predicted in 2013. We are now approaching its tenth anniversary. This was when the RAC put out the following statement on one of its blogs (when blogging was fairly new...)

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“There’s also an environmental cost. According to the Highways Agency’s figures, at 30mph average CO2 emissions for vehicles (including 10% Heavy Goods Vehicles) stands at 188g/km, whereas at 20mph this rises to 221g/km. This is usually due to motorists driving in a lower gear than they normally would.

As CO2 output is linked to fuel consumption, it could thus hurt your motoring outgoings by driving at a slower speed.

There’s no denying a collision at 20mph is less damaging to humans and your vehicle than a crash at 30, but the argument is the number of incidents will increase. If we keep awareness levels behind the wheel high, can it be as effective as reducing the speed limit?”
Prepare for the backlash against 20mph madness

Voters in Kent, Surrey and Wales won't like radically reduced speed limits. Only Kent politicians have listened so far

IAIN DALE

9 August 2022 • 7:00am

https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2022/08/09/prepare-backlash-against-20mph-madness/
A rather wonderful thing happened in Tonbridge in Kent a few months ago. The county council had been given £1.6 million to introduce traffic safety measures. In its infinite wisdom, it decided to use some of this money to extend an existing 20mph limit.

No, that’s not the wonderful thing that happened. In the public consultation that was held at the end of 2021, it was clear that a huge majority of Tonbridge citizens wanted to abandon the scheme. The wonderful thing was that the local council actually took notice, and almost overnight the 20mph signs disappeared – or at least some of them did. Road safety campaigners were aghast. “This decision will cost lives,” they shrieked.

I know from the multiple speed awareness courses I have been on (yes, I am a bad person) that, if you reduce a speed limit, fewer people are likely to be injured or killed. However, taken to its extreme, this is an argument for cutting speed limits to 10mph or even 5mph. Have you ever tried driving at 10mph? It’s almost impossible to do it for any length of time. And in many cars it’s not that easy to drive at 20mph.

I got two speeding tickets driving along the Embankment in London for doing 22mph and 24mph. Was I causing any danger? No I was not. Laws only work when they enjoy the consent of the public. 

Twitter: #20mphconf
People understand the need for speed limits. I’m not some wide-eyed libertarian who doesn’t believe in regulating driving, but there’s little point in introducing such restrictions when drivers ignore them and pedestrians can’t predict how fast a driver will be driving.

It’s fine to put lower speed limits outside schools or old people’s homes, or even on busy shopping streets where people cross the road more often, but to impose them on a dual carriageway or main A-road is the transport equivalent of political correctness gone mad. I know transport planners have a job to do, but to constantly kow-tow to the anti-car brigade, as many local authorities have been doing without even consulting the public, is not just infuriating, it is counter-productive.

Still, however, 20mph zones are spreading. The Welsh government is abolishing 30mph limits and replacing them with 20mph zones. Surrey County Council is planning to introduce 20mph limits on some formerly 60mph rural roads.

There has been no public debate about this and precious little formal consultation, no doubt because they saw what happened in places such as Tonbridge. Local politicians in Surrey and national politicians in Wales will rue the day they introduced this mad policy.
Most motorists are careful and considerate and already drive slowly when the conditions dictate.

Selfish and immature ones don't, and the new 20 mph law will make it easier for them to be punished more severely.

Mr Dale is most famous for attacking a protester in a fit of anger, impatience and intolerance, a tantrum which earned him a police caution.

I dread to think about how he behaves on our roads.

He freely admits he has little respect for speed limits.
Cat Arwood • AUGUST 9, 2022

I desperately want this. We live on a single track rural lane down which many idiots think they can do 60. Seems people are no longer capable of judgement, so signs it is. I hope.

DF Duggan • AUGUST 9, 2022

A 20mph makes my journey to work a real pain, and it feels bizarre and unnecessary at the times I travel. But then I saw a teenager get hit by a Land Rover I was cursing for obeying the limit, and he got up and walked away (sort of).
Barrie Newton  ·  AUGUST 9, 2022

Many of the posts seem to indicate that the prime purpose of 20 mph limits is to protect jaywalkers, and the ridiculous demonstration video they use at driving awareness courses supports this view.

A little more attention to the behaviour of pedestrians might be in order.

Another thought:

When schoolchildren commonly played football and hockey and the like, they naturally became adept at judging relative velocity. That seems to have gone.
The debate is moving on to other issues, but can LTN learn from the 20mph experience?

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/09/low-traffic-neighbourhoods-report-london-ltn-schemes
It recommends that councils try to reach out better to communities ahead of future projects and seek to depoliticise the issue, with one idea being to use a different term from LTN, one not associated with the wave of schemes introduced in 2020, such as “healthy neighbourhoods” or “quiet neighbourhoods”.

The report only covers London, but has lessons for other areas given that the capital has seen the bulk of recent LTNs implemented, as well as much of the political controversy about their impact.

Data collated from 10 schemes in the report found that inside their boundaries, cycle use rose by between 31% and 172%, while car traffic fell by between 22% and 76%. There was also strong evidence they reduced road casualties.

One frequent criticism of LTNs is that they simply push car use to the periphery, to busier main roads. The study found some evidence of rising cycling numbers outside the LTNs, while car use also mainly fell slightly, although one area saw a 7% increase.

Twitter: #20mphconf
How cycling and car traffic changed in London areas where low traffic neighbourhood schemes were introduced

- Change in car traffic inside LTN
- Change in car traffic on peripheral roads
- Change in cycling inside LTN
- Change in cycling outside LTN

Guardian graphic. Source: Centre for London. Note: This data was compiled in January 2022 and has not been updated since. These are average changes and vary from street to street. No cycling data for peripheral roads was available in Newham.
'LTNs have divided city’s rich and poor'

New Pre-Prep Classrooms
Coming September 2022
cokethorpe.org/pre-prep

Josie Procter @JosieProc · 4h
Slow hand clap to the person who set the Howard Street and Barnet bollards on fire last night. Bollards have melted to road and road is impassable in a car unless you wish to wreck your chassis. #LTN
Most variation is in the green bars (opposition). There is less variation in the blue bars (support).
To begin to sum up

What is perhaps most surprising is that there has been success at all – given where the UK now sits in the international league table on libertarian economic and social policy.

Twitter: #20mphconf
The Tories are now the most economically right-wing major party in the developed world

Economic left-right position of all notable political parties in developed and emerging market countries

Circle size indicates vote share in last election

*Showing 275 parties that achieved at least 5% of vote in recent elections in 61 countries
Sources: Chapel Hill Expert Survey; Global Party Survey; FT research
FT graphic: John Burn-Murdoch / @burnmurdoch
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John Burn-Murdoch (2022) The Tories have become unmoored from the British people, The Financial Times, September 30th: https://ft.com/content/d5f1d564-8c08-4711-b11d-9c6c7759f2b8
I think we can be optimistic

But while there are still children and adults who are put at greater risk, simply because their local councilors are lax – there will be a job to be done.

We need policy which is:

Fair, Green, and Good.

Not Fast, Fast, and Fast.

https://www.unlockingsustainablecities.org/car-free.html