

# Frequently Asked Questions

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## **Why are we rolling out 20mph speed limits?**

20mph speed limits encourage more considerate driving, leading to safer streets for all road users, including motorists, cyclists and pedestrians. The lower speeds reduce the risk and severity of road collisions.

Reducing traffic speed helps make people feel more confident about being on their local streets and helps children and elderly people to travel independently and safely. Calmer road speeds also help to make walking and cycling more attractive options, contributing to less traffic congestion, better health, less noise, more social interaction and stronger communities.

## **Where will 20 mph limits be applied?**

20 mph speed limits are proposed for the city centre, main shopping streets, residential areas and areas with high levels of pedestrian and/or cyclist activity. Streets that do not fall within these categories will generally have a speed limit of 30 mph.

## **When are 20 mph limits planned to be introduced?**

It is intended that the rollout of 20 mph speed limits will begin in autumn 2015.

There are several stages to go before then, including:

- the current engagement and consultation which will run until 17 October 2014;
- consideration of revised proposals by our Transport and Environment Committee (T&E Committee) in early 2015;
- subject to approval of these, the legal 'speed limit order' process, with associated opportunities for formal comments and objections;
- consideration by the T&E Committee of any further changes in the light of objections.

The rate at which the rollout will take place is subject to funding availability and further detailed planning, but our current expectation is that it will happen over a period of months rather than years.

## **What was the decision to introduce the 20mph based on?**

There has been a high level of support for 20 mph speed limits amongst Edinburgh residents for a number of years. The 2012 Edinburgh People's Survey suggested a generally very high level of support for extending 20mph speed limits. The highest level of support was for such limits in 'residential' streets, with 75% in favour, 2% opposed, 23% unsure. For busy shopping streets support was 69 % with 4 % opposed and 27 % unsure. For all city centre streets support was 67 % with 5 % opposed and 29 % unsure.

Our decision to implement the new speed limit citywide was outlined in the 2014-2019 Local Transport Strategy. The new limit is proposed to help make the city's streets more

people-friendly, encourage travel on foot and by bike and reduce the risk and severity of road collisions in Edinburgh.

We implemented a pilot scheme in South Edinburgh in March 2012. As part of the evaluation a survey of 1000 local residents was carried in February and March 2013. The results of the survey were very positive, with 79% supportive of the new speed limit and only 4% against it. There was also an increase in people's feelings of safety and in how happy they felt to walk or cycle in the area. The average speed in streets with the new limit fell to 20.9mph, a fall of just under 2mph.

### **What consultation was carried out before the draft proposals were agreed?**

Three options for the extension of 20mph speed limits were included in the consultation on the draft Local Transport Strategy. Of these, Option 1, "All residential streets, shopping areas including the city centre, and to main roads with large numbers of pedestrians (using signs, with limited traffic calming such as road humps where necessary)" had the highest level of support. Over 1000 people and organisations responded to the consultation.

### **Why are some main roads being considered as well as residential roads?**

A high proportion of collisions happen on main roads. In particular, pedestrian and cyclist casualties tend to be concentrated on shopping streets and on other main roads in the city centre and inner suburbs. These are also the roads that are used by the most people and that have the greatest mix of pedestrians, cyclists and motorised vehicles. It is on these main roads that we are proposing a 20mph speed limit. A lower speed limit here can help improve safety and also improve the environment for all road users.

### **Are all roads affected?**

No. It is proposed to leave a significant proportion of the main roads in outer areas of the city at their current speed limit of 30mph or 40mph as outlined on the map showing the draft proposals. See <http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/20zonemap>

### **How does speed influence safety?**

Driving more slowly can prevent injuries and save lives. Research by the UK Transport Research Laboratory has shown that every 1mph reduction in average urban speeds can be expected to result in a 6% fall in the number of casualties.

It has 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.

### **I don't think it's right for my street. What can I do?**

We will be holding a number of meetings and exhibitions to talk to local residents, businesses, drivers, and other road users about their views. Information on these will be placed on the 20mph Consultation page on our website in advance of the meetings. You can find out what stage the process is at in your area and details of future meetings and

exhibitions by contacting the Project Officer on 469 3502 or send your views to [20mph@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:20mph@edinburgh.gov.uk). You can also let us know your views by completing the survey on 20 mph speed limits for Edinburgh which is available on our website and from the Project Officer. The consultation ends on 17 October.

### **Are you prepared to modify your proposals?**

Yes. We are open to considering the pros and cons of 20mph speed limits on the streets that we have initially proposed, and indeed on streets where we have proposed that higher speed limits should stay. We expect to need to modify our current proposals in some streets.

In considering modifications we will be taking account of:

- safety issues and other potential benefits of a 20mph limit
- starting and finishing speed limits in places that will make sense to road users
- avoiding too many or unpredictable changes in speed limit as drivers move around the city
- enforcement issues
- impacts on bus services
- the potential to modify road markings, signs etc at reasonable cost in order to achieve changes in driver behaviour

We will be listening to people's concerns and doing all we can to allay any fears they may have about the proposed introduction of the scheme and the impact on their lives or businesses.

### **Are all vehicles affected?**

If a road has a 20 mph limit on it then this would be the legal speed limit for all vehicles using that road. People on bikes can be prosecuted for dangerous cycling if they are caught going over the speed limit.

### **How much will it cost?**

At present, the scheme is estimated to cost in the region of £2.0 - £2.5 million. A total of £200,000 has been set aside for consultation, legal and design costs in this financial year. In terms of future cost savings the average value of prevention of just one less slight and one less serious injury alone is £200,000. There are significant potential benefits from potential increases in walking and cycling levels, including financial benefits to the NHS resulting from longer life expectancy.

### **How will I know when I am on a road with a 20mph speed limit?**

20 mph road markings and traffic signs are proposed to be installed at the places where the speed limit changes. Smaller '20' repeater signs are proposed to be placed at regular intervals on the side of the road. In some locations we may use 20 mph flashing Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) to remind drivers to keep to the new lower speed limit if required.

The proposed 20 mph speed limit would not generally involve the introduction of any physical traffic calming features such as speed humps at the outset, though these may be required at locations where vehicle speeds or road incidents are excessive.

### **How will it be enforced?**

The Police are supportive of lower speeds across the city and are working with us to achieve this. Enforcement of 20 mph areas forms part of our service level agreement with the Police. As part of this agreement, streets with significant numbers of casualties and areas near schools are likely to be prioritised. As well as police enforcement such as warnings and issuing of speeding tickets, we will be working to change driver behaviour through education, awareness raising and prevention activities.

Other ways of reducing speeds are likely to include marketing campaigns, additional road markings and use of vehicle activated speed signs.

The 20mph pilot area in South Edinburgh has achieved a reduction in average speeds to just above 20mph with a relatively low level of enforcement. Based on speed surveys, additional physical measures to reduce speeds which may include road markings and road humps are now being considered for around 3km of streets out of a total of 40km in the pilot area.

There will be detailed discussions with the Police as we continue to develop the 20 mph proposals.

### **Won't it make driving round Edinburgh take longer?**

Research in other cities, surveys of current speeds, and results of the pilot project in Edinburgh, suggests that journey times will not significantly increase. We would expect changes not exceeding around 25 seconds per mile, probably significantly lower (around 10 seconds per mile has been found in central parts of Bristol where a limit has now been introduced) . We will be carrying out more research on this matter in Edinburgh and will post the results on this website.

### **What affect will it have on the local environment?**

Studies have so far not conclusively proven either a positive or negative effect on emissions: driving at 20 mph causes some emissions to rise slightly and some to fall. Some environmental benefit from the change is expected from helping to unlock the potential for walking or cycling short distances instead of driving.

### **What happens if I break the speed limit?**

The same thing that happens if you drive over 30mph in a 30mph zone. If traffic police are monitoring the street, you will be caught; we hope that people will understand and appreciate the benefits that driving at a lower speed can offer and so will make a positive decision to stick to the new limit.

### **Are other towns and cities doing something similar?**

20 mph speed limits are in force in an increasing number of towns and cities across the UK. Bristol, a city very similar in size to Edinburgh, is currently introducing 20mph limits on a similar scale to that proposed here. Portsmouth and Oxford have citywide 20mph limits on most roads. Several London Boroughs have introduced a 20mph limit on all roads that they control.

### **Do 20 mph speed limits work?**

National evidence has shown that sign-only 20 mph speed limits can help to reduce average speeds and improve safety. Evidence from the pilot scheme in South Edinburgh showed similar results, with average speeds reduced to just over 20mph, and with larger falls in speeds on the roads that had higher average speeds before the limit was introduced. Of 1000 people surveyed in the South Edinburgh pilot area, 79% supported the 20 mph limit, just 4% opposed it.

### **Will it be permanent?**

It is intended that the new speed limit will be permanent. Thorough monitoring will be carried out into the effect of the new limit.

### **Does 20 mph also apply to cyclists?**

Yes. People on bikes can be prosecuted for dangerous cycling if they are caught going over the speed limit.

### **Won't it make driving harder?**

This will be a change and it will take some conscious decision making as a driver to make a difference. It will take some time to become second nature.

In reality we are rarely driving at a consistent speed, particularly in a city where we are constantly accelerating, decelerating and braking to respond to current traffic speeds, traffic lights or junctions, and other road users.

### **What has the reaction been to those areas involved in the pilot scheme?**

The reaction from south central Edinburgh residents where a 20 mph speed limit is in place has been overwhelmingly in favour. 79% are in favour of 20 mph, with only 4% opposed after the pilot was in place.

### **Why are you targeting motorists?**

We are not stopping people from driving, but are trying to balance the needs of drivers with the safety and environment of local residents.

20 mph creates a safer environment for everyone, including motorists. It will not significantly increase journey times and by easing traffic flow, may actually reduce some journey times.

### **Who do I contact if I want to know more?**

You can email [20mph@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:20mph@edinburgh.gov.uk) or contact the Project Officer on 0131 469 3502.

### **Why can't it be rolled out more quickly?**

This proposed change for the city is large and so we need to ensure that we are communicating the proposed change properly. There are also a number of official processes to go through in order to legally change a speed limit. This includes the Speed Limit Order (SLO) process which is expected to take 6 to 9 months to complete after starting in early 2015. This is an important part of the process, allowing people to have a formal say on the proposed scheme.

### **Why are some 30 mph roads being excluded?**

It is proposed that the 20 mph speed limit will apply to many roads. However, we also consider that it makes sense to permit a slightly faster speed on some of the main routes around the city. The roads concerned tend to have fewer local shops, businesses or houses and flats on them, and to have lower numbers of pedestrians and cyclists than main roads in the inner city. These are the roads which we currently propose to keep at 30 mph or 40mph.

### **What are the issues with buses?**

There is a concern that slowing down bus services could lead to an increased need for vehicles and drivers to run existing services. We will be working very closely with bus operators to understand these issues in detail and to come up with solutions to identified problems.

Potential solutions include additional bus priority at some traffic lights to help the buses keep to schedule, or potentially to remove some sections of streets from the proposed 20mph network.