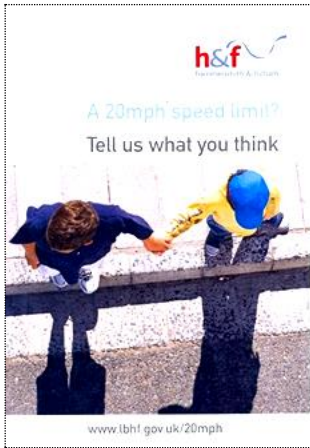




Road Sense



Er, but please don't think too hard...?

A glossy booklet is being sent out to residents of LB Hammersmith & Fulham (LBHF, H&F). Relying on suggestive imagery and language, it aims to soft-soap readers into rubber-stamping a decision to proceed with a borough-wide 20mph zone.

This leaflet is being produced to inject more balance into the debate.

"The lower, safer limit...would reduce pollution from cars". Bit of a try-on? LBHF's Open Report of 9 June 2015 - 'Borough-Wide 20mph Speed Limit' says (p3) that available evidence suggests "a negligible change"!!!!

"three children a month are injured by a car in H&F".. Let's treat the real causes - absolutely no evidence is given as to the vehicle speed, or other factors e.g. whether they were preoccupied with headphones or felt that they could just step out without any concern for danger (including whether they could cause a pile-up that injured other people).

"If you are hit by a car going at 30mph, your injuries are eight times more likely to be fatal than if the car is going at 20mph." This holds in the extreme case where a pedestrian is suicidally stupid enough to dash out where they are hit at point blank range! Modern cars have power assisted brakes that will rapidly reduce their speed, so normally impact will be at a lot less than 30mph.

Road safety policy should not have a confused aim of seeing road users hit at a lower speed – it should focus on not having them hit at any speed!

"Calmer roads would bring communities together by enabling neighbours and their children to get to know one another better." What a try-on! Beats me how people have happily managed to get to know their neighbours when the limit has been 30mph over the years!!!

"Making our children and all of us healthier...the lower, safer speed limit would encourage people to walk or cycle rather than drive."

Some questionable assumptions - slower isn't necessarily safer. It's bit of a try-on to suggest that streets will automatically be safer at 20mph given the likely non-compliance shown by other places, or reduced alertness in a borough-wide 20mph zone.

Cycling in the borough has increased in spite of a '10% rise in collisions since 2010' mentioned in the booklet. It might be encouraged more by dealing with *factors other than speed* that are dominant in accident statistics.

★ Reader comment in the Standard, 12.3.15, from 'JJJ'

"As a cyclist these slow speed limits drive me crazy. It's now more dangerous to cycle, as most cyclists travel at around 25mph, so you have to filter on the inside or overtake on the outside. Either that or slow down and never get any exercise, which defeats the point of cycling."

If it's meant to help cyclists it's actually doing the opposite. If you do want to save cyclist lives then something easy to do would be to ask drivers to use their indicators when turning. About a third of drivers don't seem to bother and carve up unsuspecting cyclists when they turn left or right.

30mph is fine but how about 3 points for failing to indicate? It's more dangerous than speeding."

LBHF's online Open Report 'Borough-Wide 20mph Speed Limit' mentions increased participation in walking and cycling result in lower obesity, improvements to mental health... but that's true of practically any exercise!

If the main objective is to encourage cycling and walking, should LBHF (by its own logic) be calling for bus travel concessions to be removed from those with a weight problem so they can 'be encouraged' to walk or cycle instead? Should only car users be picked on?

Driving and obesity are unconnected (and only linked by the confused, like some in central government) – driving exercises the brain and burns a few calories, obesity is mainly due to a poorly regulated diet. Driving can also contribute to a feeling of well-being.

"Cutting delays... car accidents cause congestion, fewer accidents would mean fewer delays." Much of the time, borough traffic crawls - 20mph limits would have no effect. But where 30mph is possible (e.g. Sundays) they would unnecessarily *cause* delays. LB Merton's experience shows having fewer accidents is not guaranteed.

"Making our neighbourhoods more pleasant" The booklet has a form with a hint towards 'traffic calming' measures such as speed humps.

Speed humps can make life less pleasant for drivers who suspensions and tyres they damage (bad for road safety!) The London Ambulance Service has come out against them because of the jarring effect on patients being carried. In wet and dark conditions, they can be very dangerous to motorcyclists.

Let's revisit LBHF's Transport, Environment and Residents Services Select Committee reports pack, 6.9.11

"Members noted that there had been a shift in perception of speed cushions in recent years. Whilst they were cheap to install, their impact on larger vehicles was limited and they were liable to cause damage to cars and discomfort to drivers as well as encourage erratic driving which increased emissions and was potentially detrimental to road safety. TfL guidance suggested that all other options should be considered before authorities considered the potential use of vertical deflections measures such as road humps and speed cushions."

... It was noted that there was, on average, one insurance claim a year for vibration damage from householders as a consequence of humps placed outside their properties"

"at slower speeds, drivers have more time to react." Even if average speed drops 1mph, the extra time is minimal? In 2011, the Standard published evidence that wide-area 20mph zones actually make drivers *less* alert to danger.



✦ Transport consultant Francis King observed that compliance with Bath's new 20mph speed limits was almost zero – as he predicted.

(Local Transport Today, 21.2.14)

"When... limits were introduced, injuries from car accidents dropped by 20-80%." Many drivers associate 20mph streets with 'traffic calming' measures like speed humps that can damage their vehicle and take another route. In LB Merton, 20mph trials saw a spread of results, with some speeds going down but accidents going up.

Interesting that after the national speed limit of 20mph was removed in 1931, accidents also went down in the following year.

✦ Reader comment in the Standard, 12.3.15, from 'nickithompson'

"Bristol has had a 20 mph limit for some time, and I must say how terrifying it is to stick to this speed, with cyclists passing on both the near, and off side."

✦ Norfolk's director of environment, transport and development, Mike Jackson, stated: *"Within Norfolk at present, the commitment of funds to the implementation of 'blanket' 20 mph schemes would not offer good value for money compared to other measures to reduce casualties."* He added: *"The council should continue to prioritise schemes that target reductions in killed and serious injuries and should not divert resources to area-wide 20 mph speed restrictions..."*

(Local Transport Today, 4.10.13):

✦ Authorities as diverse as LB Barnet, Kensington & Chelsea, Westminster, Worthing, Kirklees, Gateshead and Scotland have also come out against 20mph limits.



Some authorities like Bristol and Ealing (and LBHF) have brought in 20mph limits in cul-de-sacs and short stretches of road where it would be difficult to do any real speed!

✦ Mary Creagh [briefly Labour's shadow transport secretary] said that villages, towns and cities across the country should have 20mph limits so that children could "roam wild",

She praised LB Islington's 20mph zone for 40 fewer deaths' – but accidents dropped as drivers flouted the limit! On 156 of the 158 roads covered by the 20mph scheme, the average motorist drove above it. Average speeds on nearly 100 roads stayed up or increased. The wide-area 20mph zone cost taxpayers £500,000!



EDUCATION, EDUCATION...? COMMON SENSE BADLY NEEDED

At the open meeting at Hammersmith Town Hall on 9 June, one member of the public moaned "You can't stop children dashing out..."

But you can. It's called *education*, and parents will be breaking the law if they don't keep their children under control or teach them right from wrong.

Nobody says "You can't stop children taking sweets from strangers, or beating up their classmates"?

Nobody calls for trains to be limited to 2mph to make it easier for trespassers if they stray onto the track?



THINK ABOUT IT...

To say 'No', just click on the graphic left (in PDF) or visit <https://lbhf.citizenspace.com/environment-leisure-and-resident-services/20mph-speed-limit/consultation>

✦ Some people claim LB Hounslow wants a borough-wide 20 zone. The news article hinting this *specifically* points to the council website, which talks only of going ahead with 20mph limits outside primary schools!

In 2014, the elected Labour Party manifesto committed just to '20mph outside schools'.

✦ In LBHF, claims that 20mph limits were in the Labour Party manifesto (2014 elections) wear thin. The PDF manifesto's time stamp was just 20 May – less than 48 hours before polling day, and well after postal votes were issued!

I didn't see any early pledges online before that, or come to think of it, receive ANY election leaflet from Labour in my ward.

✦ In Worthing, 69% said NO to a 20mph zone in the consultation – the local bus company was against.



✦ In LBHF, does the 'implementation cost' estimated at £500,000 tell the full story? Monitoring and maintenance? The cost of speed humps (and any compensation for damage) for which *you would be paying*? Estimates for humps in Worthing were c.£1m.

✦ Labour Shadow Roads Minister Richard Burden responded to his local authority (Birmingham)'s consultation, calling for **proper safety assessments in context to determine how best to make roads safer**. He felt 20mph zones were not a 'silver bullet' for improving road safety. "The goal of Birmingham's road safety strategy should be to build and manage safer roads and save lives, **not to reduce speeds as an end point in itself.**"



✦ This campaign is supported by the



a strictly non-party political road safety group. To donate to the ABD, visit www.abd.org.uk/about/donation.htm

PLEASE CIRCULATE FREELY

Webpage: www.fairdealforthemotorist.org.uk/saferhandf.htm

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