

Living Streets is the national charity that stands up for pedestrians. With our supporters we work to create safe, attractive and enjoyable streets, where people want to walk.

## ***London Borough of Lewisham – Sustainable Development Select Committee***

### **Modern Roads Review**

**January 2015**

#### **About Living Streets**

Living Streets is the national charity that stands up for pedestrians. With our supporters we work to create safe, attractive and enjoyable streets, where people want to walk. We work with professionals and politicians to make sure every community can enjoy vibrant streets and public spaces.

The history of Living Streets demonstrates the strength of our agenda. As well as working to influence policy on a national and local level, we also carry out a range of practical work to train professionals in good street design, and enable local communities to improve their own neighbourhoods. We run high profile campaigns such as Walk to School and Walking Works, to encourage people to increase their walking levels and realise our vision for safe, attractive and enjoyable streets across the UK. We recently established a Living Streets local group in Lewisham.

We would like to thank the London Borough of Lewisham for asking Living Streets to submit comments about the opportunity that 20mph speed limits offer as part of their Modern Roads Review.

#### **Submission by Living Streets**

Living Streets strongly supports an area-wide 20 mph limit in Lewisham including all residential streets and main roads where people live, work and shop.

Streets are where we live, play, work, and socialise – they should be safe, attractive and enjoyable places for everyone. We believe that 20 mph is the single biggest measure that will reduce road danger and improve the walking environment on Lewisham's streets.

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In 2013 there were 64 fatal or serious road casualties and 187 pedestrian casualties in Lewisham. By slowing vehicle speeds, road danger is significantly reduced. A pedestrian struck at 20 mph has a 97% chance of survival whilst this falls to 80% at 30 mph and 50% at 35 mph. In some places, the introduction of a 20 mph zone has been shown to reduce child pedestrian deaths by up to 70%<sup>1</sup>.

Reducing traffic speed and density makes our streets and public places more pleasant to be. It instantly becomes easier to cross the road, less noisy and a more sociable environment to linger. It is also easier for pedestrians and cyclists to enjoy the same direct and safe routes for their journeys as motorists. By adopting this 'level playing field' approach to speed limits, local authorities can encourage pedestrians to take to their streets.

20 mph limits are also associated with higher levels of walking. Research into the impact of 20mph zones<sup>2</sup> has found that levels of walking and cycling rose significantly when vehicle speeds are reduced. For example, research of 20 mph speed limits in Bristol in 2009 identified a mean 23% increase in levels of walking.

There are also clear financial benefits to 20 mph. In 2010, the estimated cost to the economy of collisions in Britain was around £15 billion. Conversely, area-wide 20 mph limits are low cost and high benefit. For example, Portsmouth converted 1,200 streets in the city to 20 mph for a cost of just over half a million pounds<sup>3</sup>.

We recommend changing the default speed limit across whole areas, in order to make the quickest and most cost-effective strides towards 20 mph across Lewisham. Implementing 20 mph in a piecemeal zonal approach is both time consuming and expensive, particularly considering the current economic climate.

20 mph speed limits are already happening throughout London. Islington, Southwark, Camden, the City of London, Hackney, Lambeth and Croydon have or are planning borough-wide 20 mph speed limits including on borough controlled main roads where people live, work and shop.

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<sup>1</sup> Living Streets (2011) 20mph Policy Briefing - 20mph brings streets to life

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.panh.ch/hepaeurope/materials/HEPA%20Walking%20and%20Cycling%20Strategy%20.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Living Streets (2011) 20mph Policy Briefing - 20mph brings streets to life

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As well as residential streets, the implementation of 20 mph limits on main roads in Lewisham (particularly high streets and busy town centres) will be essential to making the borough a safer and more pleasant place to walk. Current DfT Speed Limit Guidance recommends highway authorities consider main roads when implementing 20 mph limits where there are significant levels of pedestrians and cyclists.

The Mayor is introducing 20 mph speed limits on parts of the TLRN and the recent Mayor of London's Roads Task Force report<sup>4</sup> recommended 20 mph limits on all 'local streets', 'high streets', 'high roads' and 'city streets'. The recently published TfL Pedestrian Safety Action Plan<sup>5</sup> commits to supporting more boroughs to introduce 20 mph limits.

We thank you once again for inviting us to make this submission.

Tom Platt  
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<sup>4</sup> The Roads Task Force Report (2013), published by TfL

<sup>5</sup> TfL (2014) Pedestrian Safety Action Plan