

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

20mph speed limit proposal

What is the aim of the scheme?

The aim of the 20mph proposal is to reduce the risk and severity of accidents. This would provide a safer environment for all road users and would make it easier for people to walk and cycle in the area if they wish to.

Are you planning to roll out a 20mph speed limit throughout Sutton borough?

No, proposed 20mph schemes are local ones which have been designed following feedback from local residents.

Are there any maps or websites where I could see all the roads affected?

The Council agreed the provisional programme of the [proposed 20mph speed limits](#) at the Environment & Sustainable Transport Committee on 12 October 2023. The plan shows the existing roads that are 20mph in the borough and includes areas that are currently proposed to be 20mph - the information was correct as of September 2023.

How have these areas/roads been selected?

The proposals have been developed following feedback from residents and discussions with local councillors.

What will happen if traffic (and speeds) increase on other roads?

Once a scheme has been implemented, it will be monitored using feedback received from residents, along with traffic counts to check the speed and volume of traffic.

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

Large 20mph signs mark the entrance and exit of a 20mph area where the speed limit changes. Along the road there will also be smaller repeater signs and symbols painted on the road surface showing the 20mph speed limit. The signage will be in accordance with the Department for Transport Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions requirements.

How does driving at 20mph improve road safety?

[Research from the Department for Transport](#) shows that even a 1mph reduction resulted in 6% fewer collisions.

This data also shows that where speed limits have been imposed there are fewer accidents and a reduction in the severity of injuries. Comparison of before and after accident data for 72 schemes showed that the average annual accident frequency fell by 60%, and child pedestrian and cyclist accidents fell by 70% and 48% respectively.

[Transport for London \(TfL\) data](#) shows that when a pedestrian is involved in a vehicle accident, the risk of fatal injury is lower the slower the vehicle is travelling. A pedestrian hit by a vehicle at 20mph is around five times less likely to be killed than at 30mph.

In addition, there is less chance of road traffic accidents as a car's stopping distance is reduced from 23 metres (driving at 30mph) compared to 12 metres (driving at 20mph).

How is the scheme being funded?

The scheme is funded by Transport for London (TfL). Funding is available to all London councils via the Local Implementation Plan programme to carry out road safety improvements and therefore it is not funded from residents' council tax.

Is the scheme being used to generate income and discriminate against certain drivers?

Neither Sutton Council nor the Metropolitan Police will receive any revenue from this scheme. The Police are legally able to enforce speed limits and revenue from any fines goes direct to the Central Government.

Who will enforce the new speed limit?

The Metropolitan Police is responsible for enforcing speed limits in London.

Will the scheme reduce traffic speeds?

Many studies of similar schemes, such as the [Atkins report for the Department for Transport](#) in November 2018, have shown a reduction in speeds and we believe that a similar impact would occur in your area. As more areas become 20mph, this will bring a change in driver behaviour where it becomes less acceptable to drive above the 20mph speed limit.

Will the proposal increase pollution, congestion or delays and increase journey times?

Journey times may increase slightly, but this is balanced against the improved traffic flow: reducing the speed limit makes traffic speed more consistent by distributing traffic more evenly across our roads and by reducing the amount of acceleration required to reach the maximum speed.

Reduced congestion, through more even traffic distribution, means lower concentrations of air pollution on affected roads. Reduced acceleration means lower fuel consumption and therefore lower emissions. And reduced braking means a drop in non-exhaust emissions (the wearing down of tyre, brake and road surface).

Will you be monitoring traffic and air pollution in and around the area and will the results be published?

We will be monitoring the traffic speeds and volume in the area and the results will be available on request. We do not routinely put out air quality monitoring equipment for each traffic scheme.

Will the scheme cause rat-running into unsuitable roads?

The roads identified and proposed to be 20mph covers the area so there is no benefit to divert to another road that is also 20mph. Some drivers may choose to avoid the 20mph area and divert to other roads outside the area.

Is the proposal designed to stop rat-running of traffic?

No: Primarily it provides a lower consistent speed limit to improve safety for all road users.

Will the scheme increase the risk for pedestrians as they perceive it safe to cross?

No: the lower the speed, the safer the street. It is easier to cross a road safely with a 20mph speed limit than a 30mph speed limit road.

Will there be more signage in my street?

To make the 20mph speed limit enforceable, we need to install the necessary signage and road markings. However, we have kept the installation of new posts to a minimum by using existing posts and lamp columns where possible.

How long will it take to complete putting up road signs and will the limit be enforceable before all signs have been put up?

Installing road signs and road markings for a 20mph speed limit will take a few days to complete depending on the number of roads included in the scheme. The 20mph speed limit will become enforceable once the traffic order has been made and published, and the signs and road markings are installed.

Why not apply 20mph speed limits to outside schools only?

Introducing a 20mph default speed limit will make children safer from the moment they leave home - it is designed to make streets safer for everyone. Having a speed limit outside schools only will not encourage walking or cycling to school, as it would only protect children near the school.

Why do 20mph speed limits need to apply 24 hours a day?

While the majority of casualties happen during daylight hours, there are a significant number of people injured at night, particularly in the autumn and winter months and at weekends. It is also important that operating hours are clear to avoid any confusion.

Will parking be affected by this proposal?

The scheme will have no impact on parking in your area.

Do physical traffic calming features such as speed cushions, raised platforms and speed tables cause vibration?

There has been lots of research on this, for example, a [Transport Research Laboratory report](#), and it has not found any conclusive evidence that traffic-induced vibrations from traffic calming can cause building damage. However vibrations from traffic calming will carry further through some ground conditions, such as Alluvium which could be a disturbance if properties are in close proximity.

Will this traffic calming proposal cause more congestion?

By generating a consistent flow of vehicles, traffic calming can result in lower and more consistent traffic speeds which in turn helps reduce congestion. Implementing traffic calming can also reduce the volume of traffic choosing to use that road.

Will the traffic calming produce a lot of noise?

Traffic calming features can produce some noise when vehicles are driven over them too fast. However, the reduction in traffic speeds and a smoother driving style can result in a reduction in overall noise level.

Do features such as speed cushions and speed tables cause damage to vehicles?

Vehicles travelling over these features at appropriate speeds should not suffer damage. Studies have been carried out investigating the effect of repeatedly traversing road humps and no damage was seen. The Highway Code tells motorists that when they approach traffic calming features they should reduce their speed, therefore the assumption is that drivers would negotiate these features at an appropriate speed.

Does traffic calming cause higher levels of pollution?

The traffic calming features should encourage a smoother driving style with less acceleration and braking. This should result in reduced emissions.

Does traffic calming improve road safety?

Traffic calming measures have been shown to reduce the frequency of accidents involving pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists [Research from the Department for Transport](#) shows that even a 1mph reduction in speed resulted in 6% less collisions.

Is traffic calming a problem for emergency vehicles?

If the emergency vehicle is on an emergency call, the driver may want to slow down to negotiate the feature and in which case this may increase the response time.

Do speed humps create additional road maintenance costs?

If constructed correctly and to specification a traffic calming feature should form part of the highway and not create a maintenance issue.

Are humps acceptable to bus operators?

The bus operators will be consulted. Usually bus operators have no objection to humps as long as they are constructed to an agreed standard.

Do speed humps reduce traffic speeds?

Speed humps have proved to be effective in reducing traffic speed in many locations across the borough where they have been installed.

Who pays for them?

The scheme is funded by Transport for London (TfL). Funding is available to all London councils via the Local Implementation Plan programme to carry out road safety improvements and therefore it is not funded from council tax revenue.

