

### DEPUTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A period of not more than fifteen minutes shall be allowed at each ordinary meeting for the hearing of deputations from members of the public. Each deputation may be heard for a maximum of five minutes following which the Cabinet Member may speak in response. The deputation will be thanked for attending and its subject matter noted.

**(a) Deputation concerning citywide 20mph speed limits – Mr Chris Murgatroyd (Spokesperson)**

This deputation is to urge you to accept the main recommendation in the 20mph Scrutiny Panel's recent report – to introduce a policy of reducing speed limits on roads primarily for residential use and on those roads with a high number of vulnerable users.

Your decision on 16 September did not accept this main recommendation, only that new limits might be set outside schools, and on roads where speeds are already 24mph or less. You also agreed that traffic calming can be considered on other streets, on a case-by-case basis, subject to funding.

We are very concerned that your failure to accept the Panel's main recommendation will lead to confusion and unfairness – and unnecessary cost at a time of massive pressure on public spending. Our concerns relate particularly to the east of Goldsmid Ward where we live: the members of this deputation have already collected hundreds of signatures for petitions in support of 20mph limits and zones in this part of the City in the recent past.

The east of Goldsmid Ward is a vibrant place, with a network of residential roads and many vulnerable road users – families and single people, the old and the very young. At the heart of its south-east corner are St Ann's Well Gardens and Davigdor and Somerhill schools. These two schools combined will have more than 800 pupils next year. There is a short 250m strip of 20mph limit immediately outside the schools but that is all. This means that the network of roads around the schools and the park remains busy and risky for children and other users alike – all coming from many different roads across the Ward.

If your decision on 16 September is implemented, the result is that neighbouring roads in Goldsmid Ward may end up with different speed limits. Motorists would not instinctively know what limit applies where and this may put all road users at risk.

There is another way to do things which will meet the needs of residents and vulnerable users, as well as motorists. This alternative approach would see the Council accepting the Panel's main recommendation in full, designating the relevant residential and vulnerable areas quickly, and putting new 20mph signs on all these roads as soon as possible. It would also include the strategy for traffic calming over time where it is really needed, as the Panel recommends – not all at once, but on an incremental basis.

This alternative approach – policy first, signs second, traffic calming third if at all – is clear and consistent. It is easy to understand and will be easy to navigate. It is also fair and transparent – treating all residential roads in the same way, giving all residents and vulnerable users the same clear benefits.

The reason given on 16 September for not taking this approach was that it would “cost millions”. Accepting the main recommendation in itself would cost nothing – just committing to the principle of 20mph limits. Putting up signs in all eligible streets would cost something of course, but maybe tens of thousands if done properly – certainly not millions. Investing in priority traffic calming over time would cost more, but it would be incremental and sequenced according to available budgets. And it would anyway cost only a fraction of what would be saved in fewer accidents – even a slight injury can cost thousands to deal with, a serious injury costs significantly more.

What about enforceability? The police do a difficult job and are rightly concerned about scarce resources being stretched, especially in the current economic climate. So they do not support new 20mph limits which are not self-enforcing. But this doesn’t mean they oppose lower speed limits, just that they will not routinely enforce all of them. The police currently can’t possibly deal with every driver who exceeds a 30mph limit, so how much worse-off in practice would communities be?

These concerns about enforceability must also be balanced against the provisions in the guidance which actively encourage 20mph limits. And the guidance certainly does not prevent new 20mph limits on roads with average speeds higher than 24mph either, where traffic calming is part of the strategy – as the Panel has already recommended for Brighton & Hove on an incremental basis. Many councils in the country have already taken this approach to 20mph limits in residential streets – notably Oxford last year, and parts of London.

To sum up, then: the decision on 16 September reflects a selective reading of the Panel’s report, and a narrow and restrictive interpretation of the relevant national guidance. It will generate confusion and potentially dangerous situations with different speed limits on neighbouring residential streets. The situation in the east of Goldsmid Ward, with its residential streets and high numbers of vulnerable users, illustrates these problems very clearly.

It is not too late to reverse the decision of 16 September, to accept the main recommendation in the report in respect of all residential areas and vulnerable users, and to move to a clear and consistent, fair and transparent approach in line with the relevant guidance.

We urge you to change your decision of 16 September and accept the Panel’s main recommendation in full.

Chris Murgatroyd  
Lucy Faithful  
Jane Bartlett  
Antony Hewines  
William Shaw