

NOTICE OF MOTION: AREA-WIDE DEFAULT 20MPH SPEED LIMIT FOR LANCASTER

To be proposed by Cllr Stubbins and seconded by Cllrs Dant, Dowding, Frea and Young.

“Full Council Notes that:

- 1. In the light of the current Covid-19 situation, local authorities including Lancashire County Council have been asked by Government to act swiftly to reallocate road space to encourage cycling and walking and to enable social distancing*
- 2. Specifically, the Transport Traffic Management Act 2004: network management in response to COVID-19, published 9 May 2020 requires local authorities to make ‘significant changes to their road layouts to give more space for cyclists and pedestrians’ and includes adopting 20mph speed limits in built up areas as a measure to be considered.*
- 3. The Secretary of State for Transport has made available a £2billion fund and fast tracked statutory guidance that would enable Lancashire County Council to change the regulation of sections of its road system quickly.*
- 4. The Covid-19 crisis has led to a significant reduction in the volume of traffic through and around the City of Lancaster. The effect has been to produce a noticeable improvement in air quality and on many roads a more pleasant environment for pedestrians and cyclists.*
- 5. With reduced motor traffic however, there has also been higher speeds than usual seen on the A6 and it has been widely reported that the number of speeding drivers caught by traffic police has risen sharply. Cyclist fatalities since 23 March have been revealed to be running at more than double the average for the time of year, with 14 cyclists in Great Britain and one in Northern Ireland losing their lives in road traffic incidents in the month that followed lockdown.*
- 6. The A6 through Lancaster is constantly near the top of the table for serious accidents, according to the Road Safety Foundation, and monitoring of data every year from 2014 to 2019 has shown a consistent high level of killed or seriously injured cyclists to maintain that position.*
- 7. The improvements in safety for pedestrians and cyclists of reducing motor vehicle speeds from 30mph to 20mph, in terms of risk of serious injury, is widely accepted. Already more than 20 urban authorities in the UK have a policy of setting 20mph as the default for all their streets. Since 2011, Lancashire County Council has implemented a 20mph speed limit on many residential streets and outside schools, with a significant number of 20 mph zones created within Lancaster, however A roads have previously been excluded.*
- 8. A consistent level of support for 20mph limits has been shown by the British Social Attitudes Survey, who further point to evidence that support for 20mph limits increases after they have been implemented.*
- 9. Evidence of the impact of 20mph Speed Limits produced for the Scottish Government shows that (i) on urban streets in the UK, a 1mph reduction in vehicle speeds typically produces a 5% reduction in collisions (ii) that the profile of car speeds on roads with a 20mph speed limit and roads with a 30mph limit are quite different, e.g. 49% of cars using roads with a 20mph speed limit in free flow conditions travel at 24mph or less, compared with 12% of cars using roads with a 30mph limit; (iii) that City-wide 20mph speed limits generally reduce road collision casualties, although some smaller schemes have not reduced casualty numbers, (iv) that the imposition of 20mph speed limits on roads previously subject to a 30mph limit can produce small increases in modal share for walking and cycling and (v) that 20mph speed limits generally have no significant impact on journey times*
- 10. According to the National Travel Survey, in 2017-18 over 40% of urban journeys were under 2 miles – perfectly suited to walking and cycling, which corresponds with the occurrence of*

severe congestion in Lancaster being in the city centre and the key radial approaches of up to 2 miles in both peak periods, as reported in the Local Plan Transport Assessment December 2018.

11. This latest government advice follows immediately after Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge in March 2020, which calls for bold and ambitious policies and plans to achieve net zero emissions across every single mode of transport by 2050. Accelerating modal shift to public and active transport and local management of transport solutions to reduce vehicle emissions are key parts of this strategy,
12. An Air Quality Management Area was declared in central Lancaster in 2007, due primarily to exhaust emissions from road traffic, with pollution levels well above air quality objective levels at certain positions around the gyratory system. Reduced speeds in the city centre could help traffic to flow smoothly at peak times, reducing acceleration, deceleration, and braking, all of which have been shown to increase air pollution.
13. A potential scope for an area wide 20mph speed limit in Lancaster has been already been provided to Lancashire County Council. This defines limits which include all of the gyratory and the key radial approaches of up to 2 miles. In consideration of implementation, the area minimises the number of points of entry to just 12, using the natural boundaries of canal and railway crossings and the motorway, and was designed to avoid opportunity for rat runs outside of its boundaries.

Full Council Believes that:

1. There is clear evidence that reducing speeds where vulnerable road users and vehicles mix is vital to reduce road traffic deaths and injuries, as well as having a beneficial impact on air quality and climate change.
2. The A6 through Lancaster consistently records a high level of killed or seriously injured cyclists and therefore the focus on reducing speeds must be on a 20mph default which includes these A roads.
3. The adoption of an area wide 20mph speed limit, together with giving more space to cyclists and pedestrians, will help to enable social distancing, prevent the overwhelming of public transport in Lancaster and make for a safer and more pleasant environment for pedestrians and cyclists.
4. A 20mph speed limit in Lancaster City will also discourage drivers from simply passing through the City to somewhere else, will show local car drivers that cycling is as quick and will encourage more people to walk and cycle around the City. An area wide speed limit also presents a significant opportunity for marketing Lancaster as a destination that is a safe place for walking and cycling across the city.
5. Consideration should also be given to how the urban centres of Heysham, Morecambe and Carnforth, as well as rural locations, could also benefit from reduced speed limits. This resolution does not preclude schemes also being requested in these areas.
6. Lancashire County Council has previously shown leadership as an early adapter of the 20mph road safety strategy on residential streets. It should now respond positively to the challenges and opportunities of the current Covid-19 situation.

Full Council Resolves that:

1. Lancaster City Council calls on Lancashire County Council, through its Leader and Officers, to introduce an area wide 20mph speed limit in Lancaster which includes the A roads through the centre of our city.
2. The CEO write to the Leader of Lancashire County Council and Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport to urge them to act swiftly and to offer them any support that is needed.

3. *City Council officer time is made available to give the necessary technical support to County officers in identifying the details of the scope and boundaries of the 20 mph area, to include the gyratory system and the A roads through the centre of our city.”*

OFFICER BRIEFING NOTE

City Council Officers have recently raised the issue of the introduction of a proposed 20mph speed limit with the local highway authority, Lancashire County Council. The County Council is responsible for managing the highway network under the Traffic Management Act 2004 and, as a consequence of this duty, it is they that will assess the potential for any proposed changes to the road network, including any possible changes to the speed limit.

MONITORING OFFICER COMMENTS

The Monitoring Officer has been consulted and has no comments.

SECTION 151 OFFICER COMMENTS

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no comments.