

# ***Police and Road Danger – Part of the solution or part of the problem?***



## **Police reluctance to enforce speed limits causes unnecessary death and injury on our roads.**

20's Plenty for Us have frequently found police forces reluctant to enforce 20 mph speed limits. Guidance from ACPO (Association of Chief Police Officers) has consistently failed to acknowledge the development and benefits from town-wide, or Total 20 mph speed limits for residential roads.

In almost every local authority implementing wide area 20 mph limits, local councillors have had to fight police apathy towards enforcement. Police apparently view enforcement as an imposition, rather than an opportunity to play a responsible role in enforcing what communities see as a civilised speed limit to reduce danger, protect human life and improve our streets. Eventually they do agree to enforcement, but their initial lack of respect for community wishes slows down the whole implementation process.

ACPO claim that 20 mph limits should be self enforcing and not need their involvement. Whilst this may be true of physically calmed zones, the far more cost effective modern approach of area-wide 20 mph limits without physical calming, excluding major roads<sup>i</sup>, relies on community behaviour change rather than physical constraint. And light touch enforcement can hugely improve driver compliance.

In fact, when a local authority implements a Total 20 scheme, police need only enforce speeds on the same roads they did when they were 30 mph. The number of drivers and roads is the same. Department for Transport guidance recommends routine enforcement saying *"To achieve compliance there should be no expectation on the police to provide additional enforcement beyond their routine activity, unless this has been explicitly agreed."*

This lack of support when communities are asking local authorities to endorse lower speed limits, is at best ill-advised and at worst results in the police being culpable for casualties at higher rates and severities than needed.

It is local elected Councillors, who, through democratic debate, are responsible for setting local speeds. Police have a duty to enforce and should not be permitted to dictate to communities which speed limits should be implemented. Police objections are often a budget ploy to win resources, power or another bargaining trade.

20 mph limits on residential roads has high levels of community support. The police should be working with communities and councils to make those streets safer, quieter and more secure. We therefore urge the police to take a far more constructive role in supporting the introduction of such measures and subsequently providing the "light touch" enforcement that can make such a difference.

**If the police are not "part of the solution" to reducing speed and therefore our high child, pedestrian and cycling mortality and injury on urban and residential roads, then clearly they are "part of the problem".**

**Feedback** We welcome your response on this press release. We provide more information on our site [www.20splentyforus.org.uk](http://www.20splentyforus.org.uk) and can provide advice on technical issues.

**20's Plenty For Us campaigns for a 20mph default speed limit in residential streets without physical calming.**

<sup>i</sup> Fact Sheet on how 20 mph limits are 7 times more cost effective than 20 mph zones. <http://tinyurl.com/total20value-pdf>