

20's Plenty For Us - Press Release

20's Plenty For Us presents evidence to Transport Committee on Road Safety

20's Plenty



Where People Live

20's Plenty For Us calls for a major re-think of road safety strategy to take into account the needs of vulnerable road users in its evidence to the Transport Committee. The main points were :-

In the UK parents consistently cite the high speeds of vehicles and the volume of traffic as the reasons why they do not allow their children to walk or cycle to school. At the same time public opinion is recognising that we are creating roads designed and operated for motorists first, rather than equitably for all users. It is our vulnerable road users who are "hardest hit" by urban and residential vehicle speeds which are 60% higher than those in Northern Europe. Whilst our pedestrians account for 21% of all road fatalities in the UK, in the Netherlands it is just 9.4%. A road fatality in the UK is more likely to be a pedestrian than in any of our West European neighbours.

For an equitable use of our roads and streets as shared public spaces it is imperative that we create a safe environment that recognises the vulnerability of pedestrians and cyclists.

There is clear evidence that the public is very much in favour of a 20 mph speed limit on residential roads. Portsmouth is the first city to implement such a scheme on an authority wide basis. In doing so it initiated a "community-wide" debate linking road safety to restraint and equitable use of its roads.

If we are to move to a society that is less dependent upon the motor car (and its inevitable use of oil for energy) then it is imperative that we maximise the opportunity for people to walk or cycle instead. In reality this will not happen unless a major shift road safety is made in support of vulnerable road users. 20's Plenty For Us believe that the following should be key factors in that initiative :-

- 20 mph as the default speed limit for all residential roads.
- Implementation of "strict liability" in road traffic injury cases.
- Traffic authorities to embrace the use of cycling and walking in day to day operations.
- Traffic Authorities to design-in direct and safe cycle and walking facilities on all new road schemes.
- Random and covert use of speed checks for enforcement of 20 mph speed limits
- Driving bans should not be reduced by consideration of offenders use of car for employment

Together with public debate, these reforms will bring the UK into line with best practice in Europe and provide the foundation for a society whereby road safety will be increased for all rather than only those who drive cars. Everyone should have the freedom to choose a method of transport without fear that the road laws or use of roads put them at greater risk because of their vulnerability.

Such a change will considerably enhance the country's ability to face the transport challenges which are expected in the next decade. Regardless of the predictions for "peak oil" or "global warming" we need a more flexible transport policy that enables modal choice and shift without increased danger to those making that shift.

There is evidence of an increasing awareness by the public to such issues. Strong leadership, an honest recognition of these issues and firm action to change the way we use our roads and streets is now required.

The full evidence will be available once published by the Transport Committee

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

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