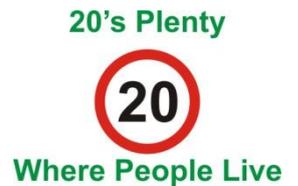


ACPO, 20's Plenty for Us and 20mph Limits

20's Plenty for Us Briefing Sheet, January 2012

On 10th January 2012, Rod King, Founder and Campaign Director of 20's Plenty for Us had a meeting with 2 representatives from the Association of Chief Police Officers who are involved with both the lead officer for Road Policing in ACPO and also act as police representatives to DfT, and other government bodies.



This report of that meeting was written by Rod King and approved by the police officers concerned.

I must say that it was a very positive meeting. I stressed that my role was not to lobby for 20mph speed limits with ACPO but more to pass on the experience which I and other campaigners have in working within communities to gain Total 20 policy implementation.

The officers were surprised and pleased to find that our campaign was very different from what had been portrayed by others who oppose our campaign. They were pleased to find that our policy was not that "all roads" should have 20mph limits and respected the fact that we campaigned for a default 20mph limit with exceptions determined by the Traffic Authority. Of course some opponents portray us all as anti-motoring lobbyists who won't be satisfied until we have 10mph speed limits on all roads. To find that our "horns" did not exist was a pleasant surprise.

In fact there was a large degree of agreement between us in both the principles and benefits of 20mph speed limits in residential and shopping areas, and where there were high cycling and pedestrian use. Where we both agreed was that Total 20 implementations would not work well if they were only "signs on sticks" and that it required local authorities to use a wide range of interventions to gain community acceptance and ownership so that the vast majority could value and respect compliance with the limits. We discussed the need to bring in a wide range of agencies, including traffic, health, education, sustainability, police and other services and that having identified the community benefits of lower speeds then all needed to provide and pool input and resources towards maximising community ownership, understanding and compliance.

It was clear that what ACPO and the police fear most is a "minimalist" approach to lower speeds which simply sees the traffic authority publishing the Traffic Regulation Orders, putting up the signs and then saying that its over to the police to sort out compliance and to blame them if it does not work. Enforcing offences committed by motorists who are unaware of the limit loses public support for the police and the limits.

It is fear of this which together with some confusion over exactly what is ACPO guidance which has led to many police forces getting the message across early that they do not support 20mph limits. It was accepted that ACPO guidance is open to misinterpretation and, just like we have experienced with DfT guidance, can often get distorted and used as a means for avoiding events which you fear rather than embracing interventions which could benefit from your support.

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**20's Plenty For Us campaigns for a
20mph default speed limit in residential
streets without physical calming.
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The officers emphasised that ACPO supports in principle 20mph speed limits for appropriate residential areas so long as it is obvious and clear for all drivers, but recognises that for compliance to be maximised then a wide range of agencies need to take responsibility for aiding that compliance rather than it becoming a burden solely on the police. That whilst it is accepted that the small minority of law breakers will need the stick of enforcement by the police, that the vast majority of responsible drivers also need the carrot of encouragement, education, explanation, benefits and ownership which goes with a well thought out and wide-agency intervention. Of course these are the exact characteristics which we campaign for and far from simply wanting lower speed limits we want to build a community commitment to sharing roads in a more equitable manner, based upon understanding and recognition of the wide community benefits. In fact our objective of the best way to implement "Total 20" is exactly what the police see as the best way as well. Their fears for simple signage alone with dubious levels of compliance would also match our fears for simple signage alone with dubious levels of speed reduction.

Whilst we may say to local authorities that these are necessary steps to maximise compliance and without such steps failure may result, from a police perspective they would see that such a failure could give them the financial burden of seeking compliance on an on-going basis.

Agreed principles which came from the meeting were :-

- That 20mph speed limits for residential streets and those with high levels vulnerable road users across an authority (Total 20) were beneficial to communities and the police.
- That Total 20 should include local Traffic Authority decisions to make appropriate exceptions.
- That Total 20 needed wide agency support, commitment and involvement for it to be transformed into a community commitment to lower speeds and to maximise compliance
- That the police should take supportive and pro-active role in Total 20 implementations which have those necessary wide-agency involvements with suitable warning to visiting motorists and should be prepared to provide appropriate enforcement in support of maximising compliance levels.
- On particular streets where levels of compliance may turn out to below acceptable levels then all agencies should work together at additional work which may increase that compliance. This may include extra signage, education, road markings as well as police enforcement.
- That 20mph speed limits need to be clearly signed with suitable engineering, which could amount from anything from a roundel painted on the road to traffic calming measure depending on the appropriate level of intervention.
- That ACPO recognise that the vast majority of the public will not wish to break the law and therefore clear road signs and measures should be in place to give the public every chance to comply.

It was suggested and agreed that ACPO did require to clarify its guidance so that it focuses on a model for best practice implementation in a manner which sees the police and all other agencies playing a full role in supporting and implementing authority-wide default 20mph limit schemes. I understand that this will be progressed in the weeks to come, especially in view of the large numbers of local authorities looking positively at Total 20 schemes for their communities.

We will, of course, update you with developments as they arise.

Rod King – Campaign Director

26th January 2012

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