

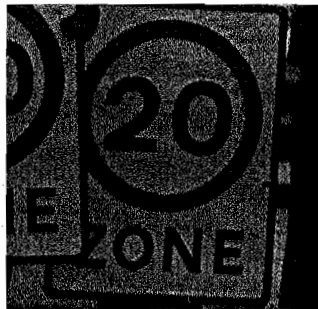
Norwich approves plan for 20mph limits across residential streets

20mph speed limits could be introduced across residential streets in Norwich after councillors endorsed the idea last week.

The Norwich highways agency joint committee agreed in principle a proposal that a blanket 20mph, based primarily on signage, should be introduced across all unclassified residential roads in the city. The cost of the initiative is estimated at £300,000.

The proposal was put forward to the committee by Green party city councillor Rupert Read. The committee only has four voting members, two Conservative councillors from the county council and Green and Labour representatives from the city council. The Conservatives abstained on the vote, allowing the proposal to proceed.

Officers had actually recommended that the plan be rejected. Norwich's head of transportation and landscape Andy Watt said a city-wide 'signed only' 20mph speed "would not be feasible".



20mph: doubts about whether signs will be enough

Speed limits alone were unlikely to reduce speeds to 20mph and he predicted that widespread traffic calming would therefore be needed, which could take many years to introduce. Other initiatives could offer greater value for money, he said.

Watt added that pilots of signed-only 20mph speed limits in Norfolk had shown that compliance was poor and that there were subsequently significant demands for enforcement and engineered traffic calming to be

implemented. Norfolk Constabulary would have "major concerns if asked to enforce 20mph speed limits where steps had not been taken to make them self-enforcing".

Read disputed many of these arguments and said officers had failed to present a cost-benefit analysis of a 20mph signed-only strategy. Even a small reduction in speed could bring down casu-

alties and encourage more walking and cycling, he said. He added that the signed limits could be complemented by other measures such as flashing signs, traffic calming and police enforcement in particular problem areas.

Read told *LTT* that he wanted the council to follow in the footsteps of Portsmouth, which is already implementing its 20mph 'signed only' limits (*LTT* 22 Feb).

Lorries to get access to bus lanes

Norwich's highways agency joint committee has approved plans to open up inbound bus lanes on the Newmarket Road to goods vehicles using the Norwich Freight Consolidation Centre at Snettinton, close to the A11.

The committee's two Conservative county councillors (who hold the casting vote) overruled opposition to the proposal from the city's Labour and Green councillors. HGVs will also be able to use the bus/loading only route through

Castle Meadow/Red Lion Street in the city centre.

The proposals, which are opposed by cycle groups, will be introduced via a 12-month experimental Traffic Regulation Order. The consolidation centre, part of the EU CIVITAS ('Cleaner and better transport in cities') project, currently has only 2-3 deliveries into Norwich every week but the city council estimates this could rise to five a day if the centre proves successful.

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