

20mph limits across the borough - FAQs

Why is the Royal Borough of Greenwich proposing a borough-wide 20mph speed limit?

We want to make our streets safer, healthier and more pleasant places for everyone.

Reducing the speed limit to 20mph on most council-managed roads is intended to:

- reduce the number and severity of road traffic collisions
- make walking, wheeling and cycling feel safer
- improve neighbourhoods for residents
- encourage more active travel
- support the council's ambitions to create safer, more sustainable streets.

72% of the borough's roads already have 20mph speed limits. Expanding this approach boroughwide makes it easier for drivers to understand and follow.

Will this improve road safety?

Lower vehicle speeds reduce both the likelihood of collisions occurring and the severity of injuries if they do occur.

Reducing speeds provides drivers with more time to react and generally improves safety for pedestrians, cyclists and other road users.

Who benefits from 20mph speed limits?

In short, everyone.

[Over 75%](#) of those killed or seriously injured in our borough over the past decade were pedestrians, cyclists or motorcyclists, meaning those groups would benefit from a decreased likelihood of collisions.

However, car users also account for just under half of all injuries on the roads of Greenwich during the same period. And, as well as making it safer for them, drivers will benefit from a clearer, more consistent approach to vehicle speeds across the borough. Research also shows that traffic flows better at 20mph, so this can lead to smoother and safer journeys for everyone.

What's the difference between driving at 20mph and driving at 30mph?

First and foremost, if a person is hit by a vehicle travelling at 20mph, they are [five times less likely to be fatally injured](#) than if hit by one at 30mph.

In the last 10 years, there have been [over 7,000 road traffic accidents](#) in our borough alone, including over 900 killed or seriously injured (KSI.) Around 77% of all accidents in Royal Greenwich happened on roads with speed limits of 30mph or above.

With injuries classified as 'slight' [estimated to cost tens of thousands](#) after accounting for emergency services, insurance, legal costs and other expenses, even a modest reduction in accidents on roads with existing speed limits of 30mph would represent a significant saving to UK taxpayers and could save lives in our borough.

Which roads are included?

The proposal applies to most roads managed by the Royal Borough of Greenwich, the vast majority of which already have 20mph speed limits.

Some roads, including Transport for London (TfL) roads such as the A2, A206, A102 and other strategic routes, are not included because they are managed by TfL rather than the council.

Why isn't every road included?

We can only change speed limits on roads for which it we're the highway authority.

TfL is responsible for the borough's Red Routes and principal roads. Any changes to those roads would need to be considered separately by TfL. Other private roads, not maintained by Royal Greenwich, will not be amended.

Will this increase my journey times?

Where there is an impact, research suggests that most journeys are only [around one minute longer on average](#), while helping to improve safety for everyone.

Journey times in urban areas are generally determined by junctions, pedestrian crossings, traffic signals and congestion rather than the posted speed limit.

In many cases, reducing the speed limit to 20mph has little or no noticeable effect on journey times.

Do 20mph speed limits lead to more traffic?

Traffic in urban areas is dictated by junctions, crossings and lights more than the speed of travel.

In fact, [some studies](#) have indicated that 20mph speeds can actually improve the flow of traffic due to reduced braking distances, increased capacity at junctions and shifts towards walking or cycling.

Will drivers actually travel at 20mph?

Many drivers already travel close to 20mph in residential streets because of parked vehicles, junctions and traffic conditions.

We'd expect average speeds to reduce over time as drivers become familiar with the new and more consistent speed limits right across the borough.

Will there be speed humps or other traffic calming?

Not as part of this proposal.

The proposal primarily introduces new speed limit signs and road markings.

We'll continue to monitor roads and may consider additional engineering measures in specific locations if evidence shows they are needed.

How will the new speed limits be enforced?

The Metropolitan Police are responsible for enforcing speed limits.

We may also monitor vehicle speeds after implementation to understand how the new limits are performing and whether additional supporting measures or changes on street are required.

Will 20mph damage my vehicle?

No, modern vehicles are designed to operate safely and efficiently at 20mph.

Driving smoothly in an appropriate gear will not damage your engine or gearbox.

Will this affect buses?

Bus routes will continue to operate as normal.

Evidence from other areas suggests that overall bus journey times are generally influenced more by passenger boarding, junctions and traffic than by changes to speed limits.

Will this improve air quality?

The primary purpose of the proposal is to improve road safety.

Any wider environmental benefits, such as encouraging more walking and cycling, may also contribute to improved [local air quality over time](#) due to reduced particulate emissions from tyres and brake wear.

Is this a formal consultation?

Yes, this is a statutory consultation on a proposed Traffic Management Order (TMO).

We're inviting comments, objections and representations from residents, businesses and stakeholders before deciding whether to introduce the proposed speed limits.

All comments received before the closing date will be carefully considered before a decision is made.

Has a decision already been made?

No final decision has been made.

The purpose of this consultation is to invite comments and objections before the council considers whether to implement the proposals.

How can I comment?

You can submit your comments using the contact details below:

Traffic Team, Floor 3, The Woolwich Centre,

35 Wellington Street, London SE18 6HQ or email to traffic.team@royalgreenwich.gov.uk (quoting reference T9/26).

You may also respond by email or post using the details provided in the Notice of Proposal and consultation documents.

Please ensure your comments are received before the consultation closes.

What happens after the consultation closes?

Once the consultation has ended:

- all comments and objections will be reviewed
- officers will prepare a report summarising the consultation responses
- recommendations will be presented to the Council's decision-maker
- a decision will be made on whether to proceed, amend or not implement the proposals.

When would the new speed limits come into effect?

If approved, we'd expect the new speed limits to be introduced later this year following completion of the statutory process and installation of the required signs and road markings.