

# Proposal for area-wide default 20mph speed limit for Lancaster

## Proposal

It is proposed to adopt an area-wide default speed limit of 20mph in Lancaster, as swiftly as possible, to provide a more attractive and safer environment for walking and cycling and encourage active travel. This will ensure that transport networks in Lancaster support recovery from the Covid-19 emergency and provide a lasting legacy of greener, safer transport. The 20mph limit will cover all roads, including A roads that have previously been excluded.

This proposal can be implemented very quickly as an experimental scheme, following guidance on making [Traffic Regulation Orders \(TROs\) provided by the Department of Transport in response to Covid-19, published 21 April 2020](#) and additional guidance under [Transport Traffic Management Act 2004: network management in response to COVID-19, published 9 May 2020](#).

## Background

The current Covid-19 situation has been recognised by the [Secretary of State](#), in the Transport Traffic Management Act 2004: network management in response to COVID-19, as ‘a once in a generation opportunity to deliver a lasting transformative change in how we make short journeys in our towns and cities’. The government expects local authorities to make ‘significant changes to their road layouts to give more space for cyclists and pedestrians’, states that ‘measures should be taken as swiftly as possible, and in any event within weeks’ and includes adopting 20mph speed limits in built-up areas as a measure to be considered.

This follows immediately after [Decarbonising Transport: Setting the Challenge](#) in March 2020, which calls for bold and ambitious policies and plans to achieve net zero emissions across every single mode of transport by 2050. Accelerating modal shift to public and active transport by encouraging cycling and walking for short journeys is a key part of this strategy, as well as local management of transport solutions to reduce vehicle emissions. Pedestrians and cyclists bring zero-carbon emissions, and vehicle emissions at 20mph are reduced due to less acceleration between braking in urban stop/go driving.

20mph speed limits, in association with other measures such as the widening of footpaths and cycle lanes, installing physical measures separating cyclists and traffic, and designation of minor roads to pay special attention to the needs of walkers and cyclists, can thus both encourage active travel and enable social distancing. The intimidating effects of traffic are reduced by these measures and safety is improved, as a pedestrian struck by a vehicle at 20mph has a significantly reduced chance of serious injury than at 30mph.

Already more than 20 urban authorities in the UK have a policy of setting 20mph as the default for all their streets. Since 2011, Lancashire County Council has implemented a 20mph speed limit on many residential streets and outside schools, with a significant number of 20mph zones created within Lancaster. This was a bold decision, aimed at reducing the county’s toll of road traffic deaths and injuries. An area-wide default of 20mph will now deliver the required space for walkers and cyclists throughout our city, as well as ending the confusing patchwork approach to limits that currently exists; embedding a culture of slower speeds and reducing uncertainty for drivers.

The impact of a 20mph limit on journey times by car is not great, typically adding only one minute to a 15-minute journey. Average speeds in built-up areas tend to be much below 30mph, as has been shown to be the case in Lancaster in the Local Plan Transport Assessment December 2018, prepared on behalf of Lancaster City Council.

## Identification of the scope for the scheme

The area proposed comprises mostly 30mph roads within Lancaster district and includes all key routes into Lancaster for journeys of up to 2 miles. As such, it also includes the areas of severe congestion during normal peak traffic as identified in the Local Plan Transport Assessment December 2018. It encompasses the majority of on-road cycle routes within Lancaster (shown in red) and all recreational routes within as well as entering and leaving the city.

According to the National Travel Survey, in 2017-18 over 40% of urban journeys were under 2 miles – perfectly suited to walking and cycling.

In consideration of implementation, the area proposed minimises the number of points of entry to just 12, using the natural boundaries of canal and railway crossings and the motorway, and has been designed to avoid opportunity for rat runs outside of its boundaries.

The points of entry to the area-wide default speed limit of 20mph, as shown on the map in Annex A, are as follows:

1. A6, between Burrow Road and Bailrigg Lane
2. A588, just South of the road to Stodday
3. A589 Morecambe Road, at railway bridge
4. B5321 Torrisholme Road, at railway bridge
5. Barley Cop Lane, at junction with Folly Lane
6. A6 Slyne Road, between Green Lane and the canal
7. Green Lane, just South of the canal
8. Halton Road, at canal bridge
9. A589 Caton Road, at canal bridge
10. Quernmore Road, at motorway bridge
11. Wyresdale Road, at motorway bridge
12. Blea Tarn Road, at motorway bridge

This proposal is initially focussed on Lancaster, given the high levels of commuting into and out of the city, the need for social distancing space that this requires, and the need to simultaneously address air quality issues caused by vehicle emissions in the city. It would be intended that following a successful experimental scheme in Lancaster that this could be further rolled out across the district in areas such as Morecambe and Carnforth.

Annex A: Map of Proposed area-wide default 20mph speed limit for Lancaster

