



Edinburgh: A Whole City Approach

July 2016

The City of Edinburgh Council aims to have a city wide 20 mph speed limit area in place by February 2018, with the first phase having gone live on 31 July 2016. This will cover all residential streets, main shopping streets, city centre streets and streets with high levels of pedestrian and cycling activity.





Background

The issue of 20mph was flagged up in the Council's Local Transport Strategy 2007-2012. This recognised that vehicle speed is the single most important factor in the severity of road accidents. It noted that in seeking to achieve 'Vision Zero' (working towards a road system where no-one is killed in a road traffic accident), 20mph should be the typical speed limit on roads where motor vehicles are most likely to hit pedestrians and cyclists.

This was reiterated in the 2014-19 Transport Strategy, with a key initiative the implementation of a city wide 20 mph scheme. Alongside this, the Council's Active Travel Action Plan saw 20 mph areas as an important factor in encouraging an increase in walking and cycling to meet both health and environmental objectives. The introduction of 20 mph areas was also a key objective in the 2010 Road Safety Plan for Edinburgh, which was developed on a partnership basis.

What happened




South Central Plot

The introduction of 20 mph areas was first trialled in the South Central area of Edinburgh to gauge the impact of introducing a more widespread 20 mph limit, build the case for the roll out of 20 mph areas, and get community and political support.

There was extensive community and partner involvement in the roll out of the trial. A range of partners were involved in agreeing the boundaries to the proposed 20 mph trial area, including Lothian Buses, parents and school staff in the area's primary schools, community councils, residents associations, and local walking and cycling groups.

During November and December 2010 over 17,000 households and businesses in the area were sent leaflets outlining the proposals. Residents could reply via a prepaid tear off postcard, giving their level of support for, or opposition to, the proposals with space provided for comments.



In addition there were public exhibitions, events and meetings about the proposal as well as workshops with key stakeholders.

This consultation showed that 76% of residents supported the proposals, and on the back of this support the scheme was introduced. A further period of consultation followed the publication of the Traffic Regulation Order and this allowed slight amendments to be made to the proposals following community comments.

The scheme was launched in March 2012.

To track the impact of the scheme a door-to-door survey of 1,000 households was undertaken before and after implementation.

The main benefits of the pilot were seen as:

- safety for children walking about the area
- safety for children to play in the street
- better conditions for walking, less traffic incidents, and
- better cycling conditions.

Analysis of the survey results showed:

- The overall level of support for the 20mph speed limit increased from 68% before to 79% after, while the proportion of respondents strongly supporting the 20mph speed limit increased significantly from 14% before to 37% after.
- The proportion of children (all school ages) walking to school increased marginally from 63% to 65%.
- The proportion of older primary school children allowed to play unsupervised outside their home, on the pavement, or in the street rose from 31% to 66%.
- The majority of residents felt their street was safe for walking and cycling.
- Respondents considered traffic speeds in the local area as safer for both walking and cycling.
- The proportion of children of all ages cycling to school increased from 4% to 12%, with particular increases amongst older primary school age children cycling to school (from 3% to 22%).



City Wide Roll Out


Following the successful pilot, a citywide approach, based on a 6-stage programme of implementation was agreed. It should be noted however, that political support for this approach varied with some Councillors preferring a more targeted approach.

The Edinburgh approach, which began with citywide consultation from June to October 2014, was planned at a strategic level, with staff dedicated to the project from transport, community involvement and communications.

Three Objectives were set for the scheme – Improve Road Safety, Encourage Active Travel, Create a Better Environment.

At the outset, the Council consulted a cross section of 5000 residents on attitudes to speed and 20 mph through the Edinburgh People's Survey. This showed that 76% of respondents were in favour of 20mph limits in residential streets. For busy shopping streets support was 69% and for all city centre streets support was 67%.

Focus groups were brought together to develop and test receptiveness to campaign messages and to understand perceptions and attitudes towards the implementation of the 20mph network. Interestingly, it was found that the focus groups identified most with the road safety objective and least with the active travel objective. This was then used to tailor the messaging, which went out about the scheme.




The Council engaged So-mo, a social innovation and community engagement company, to undertake training on the use of a 20mph toolkit and to provide social media support to encourage compliance and behaviour change. So-mo also has experience of working with other local authorities including Liverpool, Bristol and Birmingham to support their engagement programmes.

The Transport Forum was used as a means of gaining partner involvement in, and agreement to, the scheme. Criteria for selecting potential 20mph streets were agreed in outline by the Council's Transport and Environment committee and then fine-tuned by a sub-group of its Transport Forum, including representatives from a range of interested groups. Input from key stakeholder organisations, including Lothian Buses was also important in shaping the final network. The role of the Transport Forum was important as it showed that 20mph was not just a Council scheme, but a partner approach.

As well as ensuring that the messaging and communications were appropriate and effective, Edinburgh also focused on community involvement and information.

The citywide communications campaign began following approval of the 20mph network for public consultation. The campaign uses a range of methodologies and will continue until the final phase is in place. A dedicated webpage was set up on the Council website giving information on the proposed scheme, dates on which phases would be implemented, how to take part in the consultation, and information on the benefits of 20 mph. This webpage is updated as the scheme progresses and is widely accessed. Neighbourhood Partnerships, which are the major way the Council delivers services and works with communities across the city, were used to spread knowledge of the consultation and encourage residents to take part. Questionnaires were available on line and in paper at a range of venues. The questionnaire allowed people to state their overall view, highlight what they liked about the scheme, what streets were problematical, and where the scheme got the balance right. E-flyers were sent to targeted organisations and businesses, and community meetings were held where again people were able to comment on the overall scheme, what streets were problematical, what streets should be included and where the scheme got the balance right. In addition Council officers attended a range of community events, to get the message out that the 20 mph scheme was coming and to get involvement in the consultation.

Social media was a major tool in the communication campaign. This enabled the Council to reach a wide audience, both to tell them that 20 mph was coming, to sell the positive reasons for 20 mph, and to encourage residents to take part in the consultation. Social media enabled the Council to answer criticisms of 20 mph quickly and to reach a wide audience. Social media also allowed a ripple effect of communication, as people liked and shared the information.



Each phase of the implementation has been accompanied by local awareness-raising campaigns designed to help familiarise different road users with the scheme. The campaigns have provided an opportunity to promote road safety, active travel, better places and compliance with the new speed limits. Communication has typically been via radio, media promotion, outdoor advertising, bus advertising, digital adverts, leaflets, posters, selfie boards, information packs and community events.

Engaging parents through schools was an important part of the campaign. This enabled the Council to get to a range of potential supporters of the scheme. There was a schools competition to design a mascot for the scheme – the Reducer – which was then used at photo shoots, in publicity and at community events.

Edinburgh spent considerable time on getting the messaging right about the scheme. In response to feedback, road safety measures have featured prominently in the initial phases of the 20mph campaign.

Feedback from the public consultation showed over 60 % support for the introduction of the scheme. The consultation and engagement programme also allowed the Council to amend the scheme in response to community concerns. For instance the local community identified that Lower Granton Road a narrow road with buildings fronting onto road should be included in the 20 mph scheme.

Alongside community engagement, the Council focused on partner involvement through the establishment of a Communications Steering Group. This was important to the Council as a scheme which could be portrayed as a partnership approach, rather than purely a Council scheme, was seen as being more likely to succeed. Partners, including NHS Lothian, Living Streets, Police Scotland, Spokes and Neighbourhood Partnerships are working with the Council to deliver the communications strategy. An approach to enforcement has been developed with Police Scotland.

Monitoring of the 20mph Scheme will be carried out before, during and one year after implementation. Monitoring to assess traffic speeds, road casualties and public perceptions are included in the programme. Public perception covers whether people feel safer, children are more likely to walk or cycle to school, whether there is a better environment, cycling rates and whether communications are appropriate and effective.



Lessons learned

The Edinburgh experience has a number of lessons which can be applied to 20 mph schemes of various sizes:

- Taking time to plan engagement and communication – both are important.
- Being clear about the overall message and ensuring that it targets the issues which people respond to.
- Ensure that messaging deals with soft issues as well as hard issues.
- Being able to use positive personal stories and community support to counter negative messaging.
- Get community leaders on board to show support for proposals as this then shows wider community support. Edinburgh found it can be difficult to achieve unanimous support from local groups due to differing views within the groups. Sufficient staff from a range of backgrounds (technical, communication and engagement) and resources to cover all aspects of communication and engagement.
- Political support is vital.



This case study forms part of the Lower Speed Communities Project, which has been funded through the Scottish Government's Road Safety Framework.

For further information about how to promote walking in Scotland, or to find out more about the Lower Speed Communities Project, please contact Living Streets Scotland at:

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