

# Edinburgh to become the first 20mph city



The council plans to roll out a 20mph limit on all residential streets and most shopping streets across the city from later this year, although due to budgetary constraints it may take as long as three years to introduce it across the capital.

The cost of changing the street signs could mean a delay in the rollout unless The Scottish Government can be persuaded to change the law to make the whole city a 20 mph zone, meaning that signage would only be required on some of the streets.

The scheme has been in planning since 2013 and the successful pilot scheme in South Edinburgh has led to the proposal that all residential streets will be 20mph zones from late 2015 onwards. This will be discussed at next week's Transport Committee when it is believed it will be passed without objection.

A full consultation was undertaken with residents and other stakeholders such as Lothian Buses who were asked to determine what impact the speed restriction might have on their timetable. The input from Lothian Buses has clearly been influential in determining where the new speed limit is to be introduced, although around 50% of residential streets are already subject to the lower speeds. The council has visited other cities such as Bristol where the introduction of lower limits has led to fewer serious accidents.

The main idea is that it will make Edinburgh a safer place for all road users including pedestrians and cyclists. Lower speeds mean that even if there is an accident the injury caused is usually less serious, but there ought to be a decrease in congestion and noise levels from traffic.

The council have devised an interactive map which will allow you to check whether your street is included in the proposal and you can find that [here](#) but it is also reproduced below for you to play with.

The Transport Convener Lesley Hinds was pleasantly surprised by the number of responses to the council consultation process. She is positive that the move will mean a change of culture among the city's drivers with reduced speeds meaning that the whole city becomes safer.

Some streets are being included because of accident rates, but some are included because of public pressure, although every community council in the city supports the move.



While the council would like to be able to say that **all** residential streets in Edinburgh are 20mph zones meaning that only the exceptions would have to be signed, this cannot yet be the case, even though it would save a great deal of expenditure on signage. Such a move would require government approval and discussions with the Scottish Government are ongoing.

If approved next week then the roll out will be discussed at the March committee and the timetable will then be confirmed, but Councillor Hinds wants it to be done as quickly as possible.

As well as signage some physical measures such as chicanes and street bumps might be used, although these would be a last resort or used where there is no real alternative.

Councillor Lesley Hinds, Transport Convener, said: "We were absolutely delighted with the huge response to our consultation in the autumn and it's great to be moving on to the stage of finalising exactly which streets will become

20mph, provided the necessary Traffic Regulation Orders are secured.

“Edinburgh is taking a very bold step in introducing slower speeds for so much of its roads and we’re aware that other cities in Scotland are watching our example keenly.

“There’s obviously a lot of work to be done to raise public awareness between now and the first new limits coming into effect. It’s undoubtedly a culture change for the whole city but we’re very encouraged by the overwhelmingly positive response we’ve seen to the pilot project in South Edinburgh. Support for 20mph limits was already high before the pilot began but it increased even more once people tried out the slower speeds in practice.”

Green councillors have warmly welcomed proposals to extend 20mph zones to many more Edinburgh streets but say it should go further over time.

Green transport spokesperson Cllr Nigel Bagshaw said:

“This is a good day for safer streets, reduced congestion and pollution; and efforts to promote cities for walkers and cyclists. However, we need to see it as step one in a process which makes 20mph the norm in all city streets, with only very limited exceptions. That would be simpler to understand for drivers and easier to enforce.

“We need not just 20mph streets but a 20mph city”

John Lauder, National Director of Sustrans Scotland, said:

“It is fantastic to see Edinburgh Council rolling out 20mph speed limits across more and more streets in the capital. Sustrans wants to see increasing numbers of people choosing to travel actively on an everyday basis, whether on foot or by bike, and we think that reducing traffic speeds is a key way to helping achieve this.

“Many other towns and cities across Scotland will no doubt be watching Edinburgh closely as implementation of the new 20mph network gets under way. Hopefully they will like what they see and learn from Edinburgh’s experience.”

So what will happen if you don’t stick to the speed limit? Will there be police on every corner?

The Transport Convener confirmed that the police will take action against anyone observed speeding in the city. She explained that enforcement of the speed limits is included in the service level agreement agreed with Police Scotland last year. She said:- “There is no point in having these speed limits without enforcement.”

A Police Scotland spokesperson said: “The responsibility for setting speed limits rests with the local authority.

“Whenever we receive reports or witness anyone disregarding these limits we take appropriate action.”

The council’s Transport & Environment Committee will meet next Tuesday to discuss the proposals which is one of the key priorities in the Council’s Local Transport Strategy 2014-19 and is one of the Capital Coalition’s pledges.

In case you have any further questions the council has a handy FAQ :

<http://www.theedinburghreporter.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/FAQs.pdf>