

QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL – 3 FEBRUARY 2021

(a) Question from Gez Kinsella to Councillor S A Spencer – Cabinet Member – Highways, Transport and Infrastructure

Last year [a study by public health academics](#) from leading UK universities found that the 20mph zones they looked at were ‘associated with a reduction in the number and severity of collisions and casualties’. In summer this year the government announcement on [emergency active travel funding](#), of which DCC has received over £2 million, recommended a number of measures which the government suggested needed “a step-change in their roll-out...to maintain a green recovery.” These included reducing the speed limits to 20mph to “provide a more attractive and safer environment for walking and cycling.” Given the growing body of evidence of the benefits and clear guidance from the government in support of 20mph speed limits, why is DCC continuing to refuse to reduce speed limits to 20mph in areas where there is clear public support for such measures?

(b) Question from Hilary Hart to Councillor S A Spencer – Cabinet Member – Highways, Transport and Infrastructure

Every member of this Council will be taking preventive measures to protect themselves against the Covid-19 virus. Additionally, they will welcome their prevention vaccination. Speed can and does kill, as does Covid, so please will the individual Council members answer the following questions: Why does DCC still pursue the dangerous and out-dated policy of reducing speed limits only when a determined multiple of ‘fatalities’ has occurred? Why is DCC not promoting and encouraging 20 mph life protection actions against road fatalities and casualties (as with Covid), rather than as a result of these avoidable tragedies, many of which involve the most vulnerable in society? (DCC policy on 20mph limits states that “We have a policy of introducing 20mph speed limits and zones sparingly, with casualty reduction being a priority for the selection of such schemes.

(c) Question from Lisa Hopkinson to Councillor S A Spencer – Cabinet Member – Highways, Transport and Infrastructure

Many parts of Derbyshire have high levels of air pollution, including deadly fine particulates PM2.5 for which there is no safe threshold. Children are especially vulnerable. Department for Transport guidance states, “Generally, driving more slowly at a steady pace saves fuel and carbon dioxide emissions”. Because 20mph limits are normal in Bristol it is estimated that 42 litres of fuel are saved annually by each driver there. That’s a £50 per year saving in running costs per vehicle. Electric cars also contribute to PM2.5 through road, brake and tyre wear, and 20mph limits reduce these toxins too. As high vehicle speeds are the

greatest deterrent to walking and cycling, wide area 20mph speed limits are proven to encourage some drivers to switch to cleaner travel modes, further improving public health. Because a top priority of Derbyshire's Council Plan is 'resilient, healthy and safe communities' please can this council state when 20mph limits will be implemented across all residential areas to improve public health and air quality as has been agreed for 21million people in other parts of the UK?

(d) Question from Alastair Meikle to Councillor S A Spencer – Cabinet Member – Highways, Transport and Infrastructure

When will Derbyshire County Council adopt default 20mph speed limits to reduce casualties and to encourage active travel? 20mph should be the standard speed limit for streets where people live. Rather than just reacting when casualty numbers dictate 20mph should be the standard speed limit for streets where people live. A study into 20 mph zones in London found that casualties fell by an average of 42%. Lower speed limits are linked with increased levels of cycling and walking.

(e) Question from Peter O'Brien to Councillor S A Spencer – Cabinet Member – Highways, Transport and Infrastructure

The County Council has been awarded £1,684,350 Active Travel funding by the Government for new cycling and walking initiatives, including low traffic neighbourhoods and pedestrian improvements. Can you tell me if it has been determined where this funding will be utilised (and if so by whom the decision was made), when it is intended to publish the plan for consulting with communities in Derbyshire on the development of schemes to benefit from this funding, and whether proposals for the introduction of 20 mph speed limits which enable roads and streets to be more safely shared between pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles will be considered for inclusion?

(f) Question from Charlotte Farrell to Councillor S A Spencer – Cabinet Member – Highways, Transport and Infrastructure

Duty of care, equalities act and disability legislation require councils to protect vulnerable people. Despite Covid deaths, this county has an ageing demographic with rising numbers disabled by hearing loss, sight impairments, mental health issues, dementia, who use walking aids such as sticks or wheelchairs or who are unstable on their feet and vulnerable to a fall. About a half of all adults have some disability by age 65 years old. Falls account for one in nine ambulance call outs. Older people fear road injury as their reactions to avoid a hazard are slower and drivers cannot tell by looking who is disabled and who is not.

Research says the most effective prevention intervention for vulnerable road users is to make 20mph the normal road speed limit. What is the timescale for making 20mph normal for the ageing and vulnerable in our county? http://www.20splenty.org/invisible_disability.

(g) Question from Trevor Page to Councillor S A Spencer, Cabinet Member – Highways, Transport and Infrastructure

Does the Council agree with the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents when they state:

20mph limits are not just a road safety measure. Therefore, when assessing their value and effectiveness, it is important to consider increases in walking and cycling and improvements in quality of life indicators, such as health improvements, community cohesion and better air quality, as well as reductions in vehicle speeds and road crashes and casualties.

(h) Question from Diane Fletcher to Councillor S A Spencer, Cabinet Member – Highways, Transport and Infrastructure

Derbyshire County Council in its Health and Wellbeing strategy cites five priorities, the **first two** of which are:

- 1. To enable people in Derbyshire to live healthy lives**
- 2. Work to lower levels of air pollution**

At the same time NICE (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence) gives its own guidance on healthy living and air pollution. NICE recommends planning for walking and cycling¹ as essential to promote healthy living and, alongside this notes the importance of **traffic speed**. Studies estimate that reducing speed limits on residential roads to 20 mph is likely to result in a 26% reduction in pedestrian casualties of all ages. In its guidelines on Air Pollution² NICE advocates reducing speed to **20 mph to promote healthy living** as the reduced speed across an extended zone will avoid rapid acceleration and decelerations, lower vehicle emissions and reduce both fuel costs and air pollution.

So will the Council explain why, in order to achieve its own Health and Wellbeing priorities, it is not following NICE guidance and implementing a 20s plenty limit in urban and village developments across the county?

¹<https://www.ciht.org.uk/knowledge-resource-centre/resources/streets-and-transport-in-the-urban-environment/>

²<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng70/chapter/Recommendations#smooth-driving-and-speed-reduction>

**(i) Question from Philip Taylor to Councillor S A Spencer,
Cabinet Member – Highways, Transport and Infrastructure**

I am a wheelchair user. Does the council recognise that manipulating a wheelchair in villages such as Bamford in the High Peak, where I live, where very often pavements do not exist or are too narrow to use properly, is particularly dangerous. I am often forced into the road where it puts me and others like me, at severe risk of being hit and that the impact of that collision would be that much more severe at 30 mph than 20 mph and that severe injuries themselves cost the county significantly in terms of social care provision. Will it therefore say when it intends to implement 20 mph in all residential areas.