

ITEM 15 Wantage

"I'm speaking today in support of the "20 is plenty" scheme in Wantage. Our town has the opportunity to transform its streets, making them more inviting for pedestrians, mobility scooter users, powered wheelchair users, and cyclists. This change will not only be beneficial for these groups but also yield broader advantages for our community.

Let's consider the positive impact that reducing the speed limit can have on our town. According to a government research paper from November 2018, lowering the speed limit creates a perceptible shift in our streets, making them feel friendlier and safer for cyclists and pedestrians. Imagine strolling down the road without the constant worry of speeding cars – it's a step towards a more inclusive and welcoming community.

On the other hand, maintaining the current speed limits may leave our streets less inviting, with a continued risk of accidents and collisions. The evidence from the same government study highlights that reducing speed limits can indeed lead to a decrease in the number of road traffic accidents. This is a compelling reason to move away from the status quo and embrace change.

In early 2022, Wantage Town Council sought the input of our residents through a survey on the "20 is plenty" scheme, and the results are telling. Among the 390 residents who responded, the majority expressed a clear desire for the implementation of "20 is plenty" across our town.

This response from our community indicates a shared vision of making Wantage a safer and more pleasant place to live and travel through. By supporting "20 is plenty," we are collectively moving towards creating an environment where our residents can feel safer and more at ease on our streets.

Failing to heed the wishes of our community may risk alienating those who seek a safer and more welcoming town. We would be moving away from the desires and needs of our residents, potentially jeopardizing our sense of community and shared responsibility.

Personally, I believe it's crucial to encourage a reduction in car use. The potential benefits of the "20 is plenty" scheme are substantial:

An increase in road safety, ensuring our loved ones can walk and cycle without fear.

An uptick in active travel, promoting healthier lifestyles and reducing congestion.

A perception of a more pleasant environment, enhancing our town's overall quality of life.

These advantages far outweigh the downsides, which are minor in comparison—a slight increase in journey time for motorists. When we consider the potential to save lives and create a more vibrant community, this small trade-off seems trivial.

I sincerely hope that you will support and approve the "20 is plenty" scheme this evening. By doing so, we can collectively move towards a safer, more inclusive, and vibrant Wantage that benefits us all.

Thank you."

Thanks Erik Johnson, Chair of Planning

