

# 20's Plenty For Us - Press Release

## **AA spreads mis-information on effect of 20 mph speed limits on CO<sup>2</sup> emissions**

20's Plenty



Where People Live

The recently publicised report from the AA claiming that 20 mph speed limits increases pollution is laughable for both its shallow basis for testing and its failing to understand the wider environmental reasons for, and benefits of lower speeds.

The report suggested that rogue drivers who accelerate between speed bumps will emit up to 46% more CO<sup>2</sup>. Rather than condemning this illegal and fuel wasting practice, the AA claims that this questions the environmental benefits of lower speeds.

It also reports that when travelling at a constant 20 mph in 3<sup>rd</sup> gear a car uses 10% more fuel (and emissions) than a constant 30 mph in 4<sup>th</sup> gear. Had they done the 20 mph test in 4<sup>th</sup> gear they would have found very little difference.

The AA also misses the point that high vehicle speeds are the greatest deterrent to people walking and cycling instead of using the car. In Hilden, Germany, the percentage of in-town trips made by bicycle increased to 23% since the introduction of an 18.6 mph speed limit in all residential roads. Britain's default speed limit of 30 mph is 60% higher than that throughout most Northern European towns where far more citizens enjoy the opportunity to walk and cycle in greater safety. At the same time UK pedestrians form a greater percentage of road fatalities (21%)<sup>1</sup> than any other EU country.

The increase in CO<sup>2</sup> emissions caused by "rogue" drivers and their anti-social behaviour is insignificant compared to the huge saving in emissions from reducing speeds and enabling people to switch from cars to cycling and walking.

The latest government guidelines on urban speed limits enable the implementation of 20 mph speed limits without physical calming. The AA report is therefore both misleading and irrelevant.

Rod King of 20' Plenty For Us said:-

***"This report seems to be a knee-jerk reaction to the increasing demand for 20 mph on residential roads not only from communities but also drivers. The AA report is not credible and fails to take into account the environmental benefits of modal shift which comes from lower speeds."***

20's Plenty For Us campaigns for Local Authorities to implement 20 mph as a default speed limit in all residential areas.

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<sup>1</sup> European Road Safety Observatory – Traffic Safety Basic Facts 2006 – Pedestrians, Table 3