

Consultation on 20mph in Central Birmingham Birmingham Friends of the Earth response

Birmingham Friends of the Earth are responding to this consultation, both as an environmental campaigning organisation, who have long campaigned for safer streets and 20mph limits, as well as an organisation based near the area under consideration in this consultation.

Birmingham Friends of the Earth are thoroughly in favour of the large scale conversion of the city centre's streets to 20mph. This will help make these streets safer, more attractive, less noisy, and less polluted. It will also encourage greater levels of walking and cycling. Overall we feel the city centre plans are good, and probably better than the proposals for other areas in terms of the consistent number of roads that are being made 20mph. We also offering some more detailed comments about the specific areas:

Hockley

It seems inconsistent to retain the short sections of Newham Hill, Frederick Street and Warstone Lane at 30mph, requiring more signage for side streets on the ends of all the surrounding streets. The Jewellery Quarter centre will be 20mph, therefore it would be more sensible to complete these small lengths as 20mph too. We feel this is also the case for Great Hampton Row and Unett Street, which should be 20mph for the same reasons. These would create complete 20mph areas rather than small inconsistent exceptions which will cause confusion.

Highgate

The part of Alcester Street to the South West of Bradford Street seems an odd exclusion from the 20mph area, again requiring more signage for side streets on the ends of all the surrounding streets. We also feel that the block encompassing Alcester Street, Warwick Street, Clyde Street, Warner Street, Green Street, Chapel House Street & Stone Yard should be made 20mph as this area is becoming more residential, with the Abacus Building being a major residential development. This would also lend a better environment to the Connaught Square development when this goes ahead.

Bull Ring

Gibb Street would seem an odd exclusion from 20mph as it is already pedestrianised, and in fact should really be a 10mph road. We believe the 30mph section of Smallbrook Queensway should be changed to 20mph, as otherwise this would again require more signage for side streets on the ends of all the surrounding streets. As all the streets that lead from Smallbrook Queensway will be 20mph, it would seem sensible to make this 20mph also.

We disagree with the conversion of James Watt Queensway to 30mph. This street leads to other 20mph so again there seems no sense or benefit to change it to 30mph. The conversion of James Watt Queensway was originally done to break the 'concrete collar' and differentiate this former section of ring road from the retained 'loop' portion of the A38. We believe it should remain as 20mph. Furthermore, there is a wide and very well used pedestrian crossing over this street linking Corporation Street to Aston University. Raising the speed limit to 30mph would make this important crossing more dangerous, and would undermine the good work that has already happened in this location.

We also unsure why the streets near Millennium Point such as Fox Street and Grosvenor Street are remaining at 30mph. People will be crossing these roads around Millennium Point and Eastside Park so they should also be reduced.

Ladywood & Lee Bank

We believe it would be appropriate change Sheepcote and Essington Streets to 20mph as they are lined with residential properties. Brunswick Street and Brunswick Square are part of a shared surface area, so if Sheepcote Street was to become 20mph, then these should also become 20mph. Furthermore if Sheepcote becomes 20mph then St Vincent Street and Summer Hill Street should also be reduced to 20mph.

In Summary

A few more roads need to be designated as 20mph for consistency, and to not undermine the proposals and previous good work on safer streets. However overall the proposals are good, and we look forward to their implementation, hopefully with the changes we have suggested.