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Dear Councillor Kendall,

Although I cannot be sure, much of your email to me reads as if it is a "form letter" (a standard response sent to many people) with perhaps with the odd item specific to me edited in. Perhaps that is why it **fails to address any of the serious points I raised** in my email to all Councillors before the decision was made, including that **properly compared, most categories of casualties rose rather than fell in Portsmouth** in the first two years - their claims of "encouraging signs" were based on cherry-picking the numbers they liked, and ignoring those they did not.

I have finally received (today as it happens) accident and casualty data for years 3 and 4 of Portsmouth's 20mph area, years for which the planned formal report was (oddly, in my view) abandoned. Over the next week or so I will analyse this further data and assemble detailed comparisons of what happened in Portsmouth with what happened elsewhere - as I did two years ago for the first 2 years.) **I will copy all Hampshire Councillors the results**, whatever they turn out to be. For the moment I attach my comparison of the first two years.

I note your emphasis not on accident and casualty reduction but on "*helping to reduce the negative impact of motorised vehicles within residential areas such as noise and vibration together with the threat and intimidation*" - which surely begs the question (if your results follow the adverse patterns of Portsmouth's first two years) of **how many additional casualties you are prepared to tolerate** in the interest of reducing these rather less tangible effects. To put it bluntly, **how much lower does noise level have to be for residents to justify (say) one extra broken leg? And what is the trade-off between feeling safer and actually being at greater risk?**

I see that you will be "*encouraging residents within the pilot scheme areas to take ownership for the new limits*". As (I like to think) a practical engineer rather than a PR man, I am not at all sure what "**take ownership**" means in this context though if (as your mention of **Community Speed Watch** suggests) you anticipate residents - and perhaps schoolchildren and Boy Scouts - standing on pavements waving speed guns at vehicles passing within a few feet of them, even at 20mph, and quite possibly causing more accidents than they could ever prevent, I have to tell you that I am not in the least impressed. Nor am I in the least interested in being lectured about speed and safety by a child who was not born when I started by intensive studying of them. All that children of that age (and far too many older people for that matter) know is the propaganda to which they have been subjected. They would no know, for instance, of the Continental studies showing that lower speed limits lead to complacency, lack of attention and higher accident rates.

With reference to the total of the **400,000** expenditure you identify - about 60% of what Portsmouth spent to increase accident rates - I note that you make no mention of the **estimates of benefit/cost ratios** that should surely must have prepared before the scheme is implemented. **Are you able to refer me to those figures**, or better, whatever overall planning documents exist? Please treat this as a formal **Freedom of Information** request if necessary.

Incidentally, have only recently become aware of the various advice sheets, including advice to local authorities, provided by 20's Plenty's web site. I very much hope that you have not been misled by the nonsense that much of that advice and many of those claims represent, but over the next week or two I will put together a comprehensive rebuttal of much of it, and post it on my own web site at <http://www.fightbackwithfacts.com/20s-plenty-nonsense/>

Again on the **question of value for money** - which I raised in some detail in my letter in the Hampshire Chronicle last week but which you have ignored:-

Having run my own electronics business for thirty years, spending considerable sums of my own money in the expectation of recovering it and more, and having spent thousands of hours campaigning on road safety issues over the last 12 years (including proving the DfT wrong by a factor of 50 not once but twice) I have been struck by the extraordinary way in which **people in public service** (and I emphasise "public service" because I have never seen the same in private companies) and indeed **academics** (in this context, just as much in public service) all-too-frequently assess cost-effectiveness of any project purely as return over investment, in isolation from comparable cost effectiveness of alternative ways of spending the same money.

I gave one stark example in my Chronicle letter - **mops, buckets and disinfectant in hospitals**. I wonder - do your planning documents give the slightest attention to what benefit to taxpayers your planned £400,000 expenditure on 20mph limits might achieve elsewhere - perhaps in hospital, where (for example and as we read very recently) **10,000 people die every year as a result of malnutrition, dehydration and failure of monitoring of their condition?**

Of course I recognise that Governments operate by allocating cash to different departments to spend in their respective areas of responsibility, and it may well be that your Council has no mandate, even if it had compared benefit/cost ratios, to drop this ludicrous (and all-too-probably, dangerous) 20mph scheme and send the money to local hospitals instead. But I can assure you that not only I, but every practical engineer I know who has spent time reviewing road safety policies and spending, would agree with me not only that **your Council has not the remotest chance of obtaining benefits greater than the 400,000 you are planning to spend, but also that spending that same money on any one of a wide range of real projects to help real people with real needs would be far more cost effective than any known road safety policy.** Including in particular, speed cameras, arguably the least cost effective road safety policy ever devised. Incidentally, Hampshire Police recently confirmed to me that they have no way of knowing what the effects of cameras are, due to the wide range of other factors which affect the numbers.

There is an old saying "*Pick the low-lying fruit first*". When 1,800 people die in this country every day (10% of those needlessly in hospitals) and even 10 or 12 commit suicide compared to the 6 who die on the roads, that seems to be another basic principle gone by the board.

Sincerely

Idris Francis

Reminder - Freedom of Information Request for the planning documents, minutes etc related to your 20mph scheme.

