

December 2025

Any scheme that looks to reduce motor vehicle speeds to 20 mph is to be welcomed for the reasons the Council gives in its Information Pack. But reducing speeds is only half the story.

To maximise its potential to reduce deaths and serious injuries a road safety scheme must reduce vehicle speeds **and** journeys taken. A scheme that introduces measures to reduce vehicle speeds should lead to a fall in the number of deaths and serious injuries but not by as much as a similar scheme that also includes measures to reduce the number of vehicle journeys made – less journeys should mean less accidents.

The Council's Sustainable Transport Strategy includes a commitment to rebalancing street priorities to give more space to support cycling. A good start to this is to reduce the number of motor vehicles on relevant roads: the more people who cycle, the less accidents there will be. Installing modal filters and point closures are two effective ways of reducing traffic through an area. So, we think at this point the Council should only be putting forward schemes that will reduce vehicle speeds and journeys undertaken.

Most of the roads covered by this proposal are residential streets. Some are rat runs. We think the Council should look again at the scheme with a view to installing anti rat run measures to reduce through traffic so that the use of these roads is largely restricted to local residents.

The accident data on CrashMap shows that, of the roads included in the scheme the most accidents occur on New Wanstead, Hermon Hill, Chigwell Road and Wanstead High Street. CrashMap. Therefore, these roads ought to be the focus of the scheme.

The issue with Wanstead High Street is will be congestion rather than speed – there is not enough room for all the traffic it carries. We think that cyclists can be removed from the road. Because the pavement is very wide and in places so is the road, we think that there is scope to introduce a cycle track along the High Street to separate cyclists from motorists and reduce the risk of accidents involving cyclists. We think it would also encourage local residents to cycle to the High Street which will help to reducing traffic volumes and so accidents.

This leaves New Wanstead Hermon Hill, and Chigwell Road where the proposal is to install speed cushions. We think this is inadequate.

These three roads lie on commuting route for cyclists. Respondents to the Council's recent consultation on its draft Sustainable Transport Strategy highlighted Hermon Hill and New Wanstead as being and feeling unsafe for cyclists, one saying 'This road is really unsafe to cycle on. It needs a segregated cycle lane to allow access from Leytonstone all the way to South Woodford without being close passed by every single speeding car.' We think the respondent has a point.

These three roads are examples of what the Council's Sustainable Transport Strategy call "connector roads": roads characterized as having high "vehicular movement and being less people friendly." LTN 1/20, the Government's guidance on cycle infrastructure classifies these roads, because of the traffic volumes, as roads that should have at least lightly segregated cycle tracks (Aldersbrook Road has these), if not stepped or fully kerbed cycle tracks – even with a speed limit of 20 mph (LTN1/20 Figure 4.1 p 33). So, this is what the council should be proposing.

We are sceptical about the ability of speed cushions to reduce traffic speeds along these roads – too many modern motor vehicles can straddle speed cushions. And there are other issues too.

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As drivers approach a speed cushion, they always look to straddle the cushion and will change their line if necessary. This leads to drivers close passing cyclists with the risk that the motorist hits the cyclist or causes the cyclist to fall off. LTN 1/20, the current Government guidance on cycle infrastructure has the following to say about speed cushions.

‘7.6.8 Speed cushions are a form of road hump and are therefore subject to The Highways (Road Hump) Regulations 1999. The dimensions allow wide tracked vehicles such as buses, ambulances and HGVs to straddle them. Cushions are not a preferred form of traffic calming on cycle routes because they constrain the ability of cyclists to choose their preferred position in the carriageway and are particularly hazardous to riders of three wheeled cycles.’

(LTN 1/20 7.6.8 p82)

Our experience of the speed cushions on Aldersbrook Road leads us to think that the installation of cushions along New Wanstead, Hermon Hill and Chigwell Road might make these roads feel and be, less, rather than more, safe.

Other respondents reported dangers caused illegally parked cars which force cyclists out into the carriageway. This problem, which is an enforcement problem, should not be overlooked. In this situation installing speed cushions, which constrain a cyclist's ability to pick the right line, may make this problem of avoiding illegally parked cars worse rather than better. Cycle tracks however would put an end to this problem.