



# The Association of British Drivers

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## No 20 Cameras Campaign – Newsletter No. 1

This is the first newsletter to those people who registered interest in our campaign against 20 mph average speed cameras in London. After submitting Freedom of Information Act Requests to a number of London boroughs and to Transport for London (TfL), chasing them endlessly to get the information requested (particularly from TfL who are very consistent in avoiding answering one's questions), and wading through the hundreds of pages of documents that resulted, I can report the following:

1. As reported on our web site (see this page: [www.no20cameras.org/background.html](http://www.no20cameras.org/background.html) for more details) there have been average speed cameras installed on Salter Road, Southwark and Mansfield Road, Camden for some time. These were installed by, and at the expense of the camera suppliers, to enable Type Approval to be obtained and no enforcement action has been implemented. Indeed there are limited signs indicating the presence of these cameras.

To quote from a Southwark Council document: "*Currently two companies, Speed Check Services and RedFusion have achieved Home Office Type Approval for their 20mph speed averaging cameras. Southwark Council is presently working with a company called Pips Technology to try and achieve Home Office Type Approval for their SpeedSpike 20mph averaging camera system. The advantage this system will have over those currently approved will be that they can be mounted on existing lamp columns and don't require gantries.*". Does this mean that the proposed new cameras will be barely noticeable (they are not painted yellow at present for example)?

Note that Speed Check Services produce the SPECS average speed cameras used on Lower Thames Street and Tower Bridge which are at least highly visible. Redfusion also have Type Approval for their average speed cameras and are used on the A13. Both are usable for 20 mph limits.

See [www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmselect/cmtran/505/505we08.htm](http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmselect/cmtran/505/505we08.htm) for the details of the Speedspike cameras supplied to the House of Commons Transport Committee. I have not been able to find any reference to formal Type Approval, as yet, of these cameras for speed limit enforcement.

2. TfL wrote to all London boroughs in April 2009 asking if they wished to be considered for inclusion in further trials (which would include enforcement), presumably on the assumption that Type Approval would be obtained. The following boroughs responded, with suggested roads (although not all of them met the strict criteria set by TfL):

**Brent** – Carlton Vale.

**Camden** – Fitzjohns Avenue (see web site) and Mansfield Road (one of the existing trial sites).

**Croydon** – Imperial Way.

**Hackney** – Stoke Newington Church Street (see below also).

**Islington** – Featherstone Street, and Mallow Street.

**Lambeth** – St Julians Farm Road (see below).

**Merton** – Copse Hill/Ridway/Worple Road/Wimbledon Hill, Durham Road area (which is much too large and does not meet the criteria set).

**Richmond** – Petersham Road.

**Southwark** – Albany Road, Gallery Road, Peckham Rye, Lordship Lane, College Road, South Croxtel Road, Rotherhithe New Road.

**Waltham Forest** – Hale End Road.

Bromley, Ealing, Kingston, Newham, Redbridge, and Wandsworth also seemed to express some interest.

The proposals from four boroughs: Camden, Hackney, Southwark and Waltham Forest were accepted in July 2009 to take part in the further trials. These are likely to use two different camera suppliers.

3. Hackney actually wanted to use 20 mph cameras to enforce the borough-wide 20 mph speed limit that they had already agreed to impose – they saw this as a cheaper option to using signs and road engineering measures to enforce the limit. However as this did not meet the criteria set, they seem to settle on one street – Stoke Newington Church Street.

4. **The cost of these cameras.** According to a letter from one of the staff of TfL, the cost of the SpeedSpike cameras is at least £100k per set. As there needs to be at minimum of two sets (one entry and one exit point), the minimum cost for a short stretch of road is £200,000.

But many roads where these systems might be applied have many more entry and exit points. For example, Fitzjohns Avenue in Camden requires 8 cameras on 4 poles just to cover a relatively short stretch of road (between Lyndhurst Road and Mansfield Gardens). That's probably at least £400,000, which is a very expensive way of tackling excessive speed in a very short length of road.

5. **The nature of the roads.** It is clear that the average speed on many of these roads is currently higher than 20 mph (some have a 30 limit anyway). For example, St Julians Farm Road in Lambeth is reported of having 85 percentile speeds of 32 mph and 30 mph at two separate points. Hale End Road in Waltham Forest is reported as having an 85<sup>th</sup> percentile of 33.6 mph, even though it has a 20 mph speed limit and "psychological traffic calming".

The ABD would argue it is totally inappropriate to reduce the speed limit to 20 mph on these roads, and enforce that with cameras, with no traffic engineering measures to ensure compliance.

Councils did report higher than normal accidents on the roads selected, or referred to some as "rat runs", although most did not seem to have physical traffic calming measures installed (one exception is Fitzjohns Avenue where the rest of the scheme which included "build-outs" and other measures have already been put in).

**6. *What is happening on the proposed trials?*** It is not clear but it seems that for Fitzjohns Avenue, where the council has already approved the scheme and public consultation has been done, they are simply awaiting the funding from TfL and formal Type Approval (it seems that the funding will come from TfL rather than the London Safety Camera Partnership, LSCP, who would run the enforcement).

It seems funding has been delayed but a decision is hoped to be imminent at the date of writing this note. I may learn more as I have a meeting with TfL management lined up for January 10<sup>th</sup> 2011. It is possible that the high cost of these schemes is being viewed with some concern bearing in mind the pressure on TfL budgets of late from cuts in central Government funding.

Note that I have written to Boris Johnson, Mayor of London, and Peter Hendy, Transport Commissioner, suggesting that these trials be abandoned simply because to waste money on such costly and ineffective proposals in the current economic climate is not a good thing to do. If you would like a copy of these letters, please let me know.

If the trials do proceed then we will need to monitor the results, and tackle the individual boroughs.

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