

UK NOISE ASSOCIATION MANIFESTO

PAPER 4:

ROADS AND TRAFFIC

8% of people in the UK extremely disturbed by traffic noise; 55% bothered to some extent (1).

But with the right measures in place, annoyance caused by traffic noise could be cut by 70% (2):

1. Lower speeds – 20mph to be the norm in built-up areas; reduced limits on ‘A’ roads and motorways

Cutting the urban speed limit from 30mph to 20mph will reduce traffic noise. 20mph limits are now commonplace in built-up areas across the UK, including all built-up up roads in Wales. Cutting the motorway speed limit from 70mph to 60 mph could cut noise by more than 25% (3).

2. Quieter Road Surfaces

The use of quieter road surfaces could halve the noise from traffic. Quieter road surfaces like porous asphalt cost more than traditional road surfaces but are 3-10 times more cost-effective than mitigation measures such as home insulation or the construction of noise barriers (4).

3. Noise Barriers

These can be expensive but are essential at noise hot spots.

4. Noise Cameras

Extend the experiment where noise cameras can identify and track the vehicle. Fine offenders. Outlaw ‘boom’ cars and motorcycles.

5. Electric Vehicles

Electric vehicles will cut noise. There are caveats. First, tyre noise will still be present, meaning electric vehicles will only cut car noise up to speeds of about 35mph; above that tyre noise dominates. Second, it is uncertain how much noise will be added to electric vehicles – and the tone of it - so people can hear them coming. But, even with these caveats, electric vehicles will cut noise levels in built-up areas quite noticeably.

6. Traffic Reduction

Traffic volumes affect noise. 200 vehicles passing in one hour sound half as loud as 2000. So volumes need to fall fairly significantly to have a noticeable effect. But a cut in traffic even by a small amount could improve noise levels by reducing the overall number of noise events. However speed reduction is crucial. Traffic noise will not fall automatically with a drop in vehicles numbers if it simply allows the remaining traffic to speed up.

7. Rule out Low Traffic Neighbourhoods

Low traffic Neighbourhoods can cut noise and traffic levels within the LTN but usually by increasing them on the surrounding roads which can be busy main roads that are often the noisiest. The focus should be on cutting noise on those roads; not the already quieter roads.

(1). file:///C:/Users/Dell/Downloads/12378_SummaryReportV1.0.pdf

(2). den Boer and Schrotten, 2007

(3). Speed and Road Traffic Noise, Paige Mitchell, UK Noise Association, 2009

(4). The Danish Road Noise Strategy, Danish Environmental Protection Agency, 2003