

**Strategic Planning,
Sustainability & Transportation
Committee**

08 March 2016

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

Yes

Scope and costs required to implement 20 mph speed limits within the Borough of Maidstone

Final Decision-Maker	Strategic Planning Sustainability & Transportation Committee
Lead Head of Service	Rob Jarman: Head of Planning & Development
Lead Officer and Report Author	Steve Clarke: Principal Planning Officer Spatial Policy
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That Councillors note this report and request officers to undertake/commission further work with the aim of more clearly identifying the potential extent and precise costs of 20mph scheme(s) that have been assessed against the adopted County Council policy, and that this be presented to a future meeting of this Committee
2. That Councillors agree in the first instance that the Maidstone Urban Area, the five Rural Service Centres and the five Larger Villages be considered as suitable potential scheme areas.

This report relates to the following corporate priorities:

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all – Reducing vehicle speeds can have beneficial effect on health levels and road safety

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Strategic Planning, Sustainability & Transportation Committee	08 March 2016

Scope and costs required to implement 20 mph speed limits within the Borough of Maidstone

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Full Council considered the following motion at its meeting held on 9 December 2015

'This Council notes:

- Speed limits on Britain's residential roads are 60% higher than comparable European nations;
- More than half of all road accidents occur on roads with 30 mph limits;
- Reducing speed limits on residential roads has been found to lower the incidence of accidents and the number of fatalities and serious accidents that result from them;
- The significant contribution a 20 mph limit could make to improving Maidstone's air quality;
- New Department of Transport guidelines making it easier for local authorities to adopt a 20 mph default speed limit on residential roads; and
- The significant support shown for 20 mph limits in recent surveys of local residents.

This Council therefore resolves to:

Use all appropriate avenues to press the County Council to reconsider its existing policies on speed limits and to support a Borough-wide 20 mph speed limit on residential roads.'

1.2 Following debate of the motion at the meeting, Council resolved as follows;

'This Council notes:

- Speed limits on Britain's residential roads are 60% higher than comparable European nations;
- More than half of all road accidents occur on roads with 30 mph limits;
- Reducing speed limits on residential roads has been found to lower the incidence of accidents and the number of fatalities and serious accidents that result from them;
- The significant contribution a 20 mph limit could make to improving Maidstone's air quality;
- New Department of Transport guidelines making it easier for local authorities to adopt a 20 mph default speed limit on residential roads; and
- The significant support shown for 20 mph limits in recent surveys of local residents.

This Council therefore resolves to:

Request that the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee review all the available evidence; consider the implementation

of 20 mph speed limits within the Borough of Maidstone; and refer the findings to the Cabinet Member at Kent County Council.'

- 1.3 The Strategic Planning, Sustainability & Transportation Committee met on 13 January 2016 and as part of the agenda considered the reference from Full Council in relation to 20mph speed limits and resolved as follows:

'That the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee noted the reference from Council regarding a Motion for 20 mph speed limits and requested that officers present a report to the Committee at a later meeting showing the scope and costs required to implement 20 mph speed limits within the Borough of Maidstone.'

- 1.4 This report therefore seeks to outline the scope of required work and potential costs to implement 20mph speed limits within the Borough of Maidstone.

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 There are a growing number of areas that are implementing or considering implementation of 20mph measures around the country. As a result of this, the Department for Transport (DfT) issued new Circular advice in 2013 (DfT Circular 01/2013: Setting Local Speed Limits.)¹ This provides guidance to be used by English traffic authorities for setting local speed limits on single and dual carriageway roads in both urban and rural areas.
- 2.2 Paragraph 12 of the Circular identifies that one of the key priorities for action is for traffic authorities to consider the introduction of more 20 mph limits and zones in residential areas to ensure greater safety for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 2.3 This is clarified in Section 6.1 which states that 20 mph limits and zones can be introduced on "residential streets in cities, towns and villages, particularly where the streets are being used by people on foot and on bicycles, there is community support and the characteristics of the street are suitable".
- 2.4 However, the guidance goes on to note that "general compliance needs to be achievable without an excessive reliance on enforcement". It is very clear that there should be no expectation on the Police to provide additional enforcement beyond their routine activities.
- 2.5 There is a difference between 20 mph limits, typically covering individual or small numbers of streets and requiring signs only, and 20 mph zones, typically covering larger areas and requiring both signs and markings.
- 2.6 Originally, 20 mph zones required traffic calming such as road humps/chicanes, but the DfT relaxed this requirement in 2011 in order to

¹https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/63975/circular-01-2013.pdf

reduce costs for traffic authorities, and to avoid the opposition which physical measures can attract (e.g. potential concerns regarding damage to vehicles and increased emergency services response times).

- 2.7 DfT Circular 01/2013 notes the clear evidence of the effect which reducing traffic speeds has on the number of collisions and casualties. There is a lower risk of fatal injury at lower speeds. Research shows that on urban roads with low average traffic speeds any 1 mph reduction in average speed can reduce the collision frequency by around 6%.
- 2.8 The campaign group '20's Plenty for Us'² is leading a national campaign for the introduction of a 20mph limit on all residential streets. It argues that more than half of road deaths and serious injuries occur on roads with 30 mph limits and that Britain has the highest percentage of pedestrian road fatalities in Europe at 22.5%.
- 2.9 The benefits of 20 mph schemes include quality of life and community benefits, and encouragement of healthier and more sustainable transport modes such as walking and cycling. These active travel modes can make a very positive contribution to improving health and tackling obesity, improving accessibility and tackling congestion, and reducing carbon emissions with a consequent impact on air quality and improving the local environment.
- 2.10 To-date, some 55 communities in Scotland and England have introduced wide-area 20mph limits in residential areas. By far the majority of these areas are densely populated major urban areas and are predominantly administered by unitary authorities.
- 2.11 It is clear from the communities that have taken the decision to introduce wide-area 20mph limits that there are significant benefits in accident and casualty reduction, although actual evidence of significant levels of overall traffic speed reduction is less clear, given that in most cases schemes are only signed areas.
- 2.12 There are currently stretches of some 44 roads in the Borough that are subject to 20 mph limits including the recently added sections of Roseacre Lane/Yeoman Lane in Bearsted. (See Appendix 1 for the list). I am not aware of any specific monitoring that has been undertaken on these roads however.
- 2.13 Councillors should clearly be aware however, in relation to Maidstone, given that it is not the Highway Authority, the introduction of a 20mph scheme in any form would need to be undertaken in conjunction with and with the support of Kent County Council which is the Highway Authority.
- 2.14 Kent County Council adopted a revised policy on 20mph limits in October 2013 following consideration by the Environment, Highways and Waste Cabinet Committee on 3 October 2013.³ The relevant minute of the meeting

²<http://www.20splenty.org/>

³ <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/mgAi.aspx?ID=26617>

and the updated policy are attached at respectively, appendices 2 and 3 to this report.

- 2.15 Kent County Council's policy approach can be summarised as follows:
- a) implement 20mph schemes where there was clear justification in terms of achieving casualty reduction as part of the on-going programme of Casualty Reduction Schemes;
 - b) identify locations for 20mph schemes which would assist with delivering targets set out in Kent's Joint Health Wellbeing Strategy; and
 - c) enable any schemes that could not be justified in terms of road safety or public health benefits but were locally important to be funded via the local County Councillors Member Highway Fund. All schemes must meet implementation criteria as set out in DfT Circular 01/2013.
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3 AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 There are a number of options open to Councillors.
- 3.2 The first option is to do nothing. This would be however, appear to be contrary to the resolution of Full Council set out earlier in the report. In addition, to do nothing would also be in direct contrast to the growing evidence base that the introduction of such measures can have significant benefits for the community as a whole.
- 3.3 Option Two. A Borough-wide 20mph zone could be introduced on all roads except trunk roads, which are the responsibility of Highways England.
- 3.4 Option 3: A more limited and targeted approach linking the implementation of 20mph zones to residential areas (where there is support from the majority of residents) and/or areas of high pedestrian circulation such as Maidstone Town Centre (High Street/Middle Row are already 20mph) could also be taken.
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4 PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 If the imposition of a 20mph scheme is to be pursued within the Borough, Option 3 is the preferred option. This would enable a more focussed approach in specific areas where the greatest benefits could potentially accrue rather than a blanket Borough-wide 20mph zone.
- 4.2 Costings of such schemes are difficult to quantify and of course will vary depending on the location and complexity of schemes. Costings (albeit from 2013) are set out in paragraphs 11.3 to 11.5 of the attached KCC report at Appendix 3. For Councillors' ease of reference they are reproduced below:

11.3 The cost of any 20mph scheme will vary due to the location and objectives of the scheme. It is estimated that the typical capital cost of a 1km length of 20mph speed limit (signing only) is £1,400 and a 1km length of 20mph zone (including traffic calming) is £60,000. The capital cost is made up of the installation of the signs, posts and associated traffic calming measures. There are revenue costs associated with any scheme that will

need to be considered which include the Traffic Regulation Orders, design, consultation, engagement, marketing, monitoring, on-going maintenance of infrastructure and enforcement.

11.4 As every scheme is unique in terms of locality issues it is very difficult to give a robust cost estimate as to how much it would be to implement a blanket 20mph limit or zone across Kent. However, a crude estimate based on the costs quoted above and the assumption that they would only apply to unclassified urban roads, the capital costs of a blanket limit across Kent could be around £3.4m. For a blanket zone across Kent (with calming measures) the capital cost could be over £146m. Assuming a typical scheme design fee of 15%, the initial revenue costs could be £510k for a limit and £22m for a zone. No estimate has been made for the on-going maintenance or monitoring of any blanket scheme and the additional enforcement costs to Kent Police.

11.5 These figures are likely to be an overestimate and would probably be spread over a number of years, but they do give an indication of the approximate overall quantum of funding required if Members were minded to adopt a blanket 20mph policy. If the new policy was adopted costs would continue to be borne by existing CRM, MHF and general highways maintenance funding streams and from KCC's Public Health budget.

- 4.3 The key figures to draw out of the above are;
- Speed limit (signing only) £1400 per 1km
 - Speed Zone (including traffic calming measures) £60K per 1km
- The above indicative costings were based on information gathered from the website of the campaign group '20s Plenty for Us'⁴

The costings also do not include design fees, maintenance or monitoring or the costs of the necessary Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs).

- 4.4 A signing only scheme for appropriate roads in the Borough is likely to be in the region of £1million or more.
- 4.5 It would be necessary to seek to provide justification for such a scheme in accordance with the County Council's adopted policy criteria for such schemes.
- 4.6 However, the evidence for the benefits of reduced traffic speeds in terms of improved road safety is clear. In response, the introduction of 20mph schemes covering residential and shopping areas has become increasingly widespread amongst English traffic authorities.
- 4.7 Implementation of 20mph schemes is not only justified in terms of improving road safety but also in terms of health, social and environmental benefits. This is clearly reflected in the revised KCC adopted policy.

⁴ <http://www.20splentyforus.org.uk/index.htm>

- 4.8 The greatest impact in reducing traffic speeds is delivered by 20 mph zones featuring traffic calming, achieving a reduction in speeds of about 9mph on average⁵.
- 4.9 However, the majority of new schemes introduced are now signed only 20 mph limits. These are much cheaper to implement and can avoid the opposition which physical traffic calming measures can attract, but generally lead to much smaller reductions in traffic speeds (about 1 mph on average). Some reduction in the number of collisions and severity of casualties has nevertheless been recorded in recent case studies of 20 mph limits.
- 4.10 Given competing priorities, it is likely that the resources available for Police enforcement of any 20 mph schemes introduced in Maidstone would be limited. To be effective, such schemes would need to be generally self-enforcing. Twenty mph limits are therefore unsuited to streets where average traffic speeds are high (i.e. mean speeds above 24mph) and where pedestrian/cyclist movements are low (with little potential to increase). This does not of course mean that such measures cannot be introduced.
- 4.11 With regards to area wide schemes, Kent County Council is looking at a number of new ones to assist with public health targets but these are in design and no detailed costs are available as yet.
- 4.12 I am also aware that within Tunbridge Wells Borough there is a working group which is looking at the issue of 20mph limits and that County Council Officers have recommended that they should look to get funding to commission a report to look at more detailed/realistic costings for their Borough.
- 4.13 Given the current uncertainty regarding the extent and, in particular, costs involved in taking a 20mph scheme forward, Councillors may consider that further work on feasibility and funding should be undertaken to establish which areas might comply with the adopted Kent County Council policy to ensure there is a robust case for the implementation of a 20mph scheme before it is presented to the County Council.
- 4.14 I would recommend that Councillors agree that the Maidstone Urban Area, the five Rural Service Centres and the larger villages as initial and distinct projects, for which the required justification, detail and more realistic costings could be worked-up on a phased basis given that firstly settlements in the Borough are dispersed and secondly that resource constraints are likely to mean that any scheme would not be implemented in one go.
- 4.15 It is recommended therefore that
- 1: That Councillors note this report and request officers to undertake/commission further work with the aim of more clearly identifying the potential extent and precise costs of 20mph scheme(s) that have been assessed against the adopted County Council policy, and that this be presented to a future meeting of this Committee;

⁵ http://www.20splentyforus.org.uk/UsefulReports/20mph_Steer_Davies_Gleave.pdf

- 2: That Councillors agree in the first instance that the Maidstone Urban Area, the five Rural Service Centres and the five Larger Villages be considered as suitable potential scheme areas.

5 NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 5.1 If Councillors agree the recommendations, it will be necessary for further work to be undertaken/commissioned to identify more precisely the costs and achievability of implementing 20mph schemes that have been assessed in accordance with Kent County Council adopted policy on residential roads within, in the first instance, the areas of the Borough included in recommendation two.

6 CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	The introduction of 20 mph scheme(s) within the Borough could result in positive health and road safety benefits keeping Maidstone an attractive place to live.	Rob Jarman Head of Planning & Development
Risk Management	No specific implications arise	Rob Jarman Head of Planning & Development
Financial	The commissioning of any additional work from external consultants will have an impact on existing budgets requiring additional spend	Rob Jarman Head of Planning & Development and Head of Finance & Resources
Staffing	Specialist consultants may be required to undertake the further study work	Rob Jarman Head of Planning & Development
Legal	No specific implications arise from the report.	Kate Jardine Team Leader (Planning) Mid Kent Legal Services
Equality Impact Needs Assessment	A reduction in speed limits would benefit all sections of the community	Ann Collier Policy & Information

		Manager
Environmental/Sustainable Development	A reduction in speed limits would be likely to result in air quality benefits	Rob Jarman Head of Planning & Development
Community Safety	A reduction in speed limits would be likely to result in improvements in road safety	Rob Jarman Head of Planning & Development
Human Rights Act	N/A	Rob Jarman Head of Planning & Development
Procurement	Specialist consultant advice may be required. Any consultant(s) would be appointed in accordance with the Council's procurement procedures	Rob Jarman Head of Planning & Development and Head of Finance & Resources
Asset Management	N/A	Rob Jarman Head of Planning & Development

7 REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix 1: List of existing 20 mph roads in the Borough
- Appendix 2: Extract from the minutes of the Kent County Council Environment, Highways and Waste Cabinet Committee 03 October 2013.
- Appendix 3: Updated Policy for 20mph limits and zones on Kent County Council's roads.

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS