

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

MAIDSTONE JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

10 JULY 2019

REFERENCE FROM MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

PETITION – IMPLEMENTATION OF A 20 MPH SPEED LIMIT ACROSS FANT

At the meeting of the Borough Council held on 10 April 2019, Councillor Paul Harper presented a petition in the following terms:

We support the implementation of a 20mph speed limit across Fant in the roads bounded by Tonbridge Road and the River Medway. We believe that this will make our environment safer for all residents and people who travel through our communities.

In presenting the petition, Councillor Harper said that:

- The petition was self-explanatory. Discussions had been taking place within the Council about 20 mph speed limits in residential areas for a long time. The petition had grown out of the frustrations of the residents of Fant about the need for action. It was hoped that the petition would help the Council to press for 20 mph speed limits in residential areas in the discussions at the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board.
- The arguments in terms of safety for the elderly, children and people with disabilities were well known, but most casualties were motorists in areas where traffic travelled too fast on unsuitable roads.
- Fant also suffered from rat running, and residents believed that a 20 mph speed limit would discourage rat running from Glebe Lane to the gyratory system in the town centre. Only nine roads led into Fant. It was a well-defined community and one which was eminently suited to introducing this type of speed control, so perhaps the Council might want to look at Fant as a 20 mph speed area pilot study.

A factual briefing note prepared by the Officers with input from KCC Highways was circulated to assist Members in the discussion on the petition (copy attached as Appendix A).

During the discussion, Members made a number of points, including:

- Strongly support the petition, but this is not just about Fant. There are many other areas in the Borough including a number of rural village centres which could benefit from 20 mph speed limits. A wider debate is

required as the petition raises issues across the Borough, including High Street, North and East Wards and parts of Staplehurst, Headcorn, Harrietsham and Lenham.

- In Fant there is nowhere to park so 20 mph speed limits and parking issues need to be looked at in parallel. As part of the Local Plan review, consideration should be given to ways to solve parking problems in urban areas.
- There are many wards where similar petitions might be forthcoming so the scope of any review should be opened up to enable other areas to contribute. A speed survey has already been undertaken in Staplehurst and some serious speed incidents were recorded. Fant residents should consider undertaking a survey to support their case.
- The 30 mph speed limit in residential areas should be reduced to 20 mph but should be enforceable and accompanied by some form of traffic calming infrastructure.
- Most cars are very inefficient when travelling at 20 mph so if 20 mph zones were to be rolled out over a wider area there could be an impact on air pollution. Speed limits need to be enforced and traffic calming measures should be provided to reduce traffic speeds.
- Traffic calming is required to make the lower speed limit self-enforcing. Lower speed limits reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries so action is required now.
- In terms of traffic calming infrastructure, other methods such as chicanes would be better than speed humps.
- There are many country roads in the Borough which could benefit from 20 mph speed limits, but an effective enforcement regime is required.
- Consideration should be given to ways to change speed behaviour, but in addition to education and publicity other speed reduction measures are required.
- The support of Kent County Council and the Police is required for 20 mph speed limits and schemes need to be enforceable. 20mph limits are most appropriate for roads where average speeds are already low.
- Traffic calming measures are required in Buckland Hill which is used by huge numbers of children during the morning and afternoon school rush hours.
- Members should lobby for speed limiter technology in cars.

- Driving at lower speeds is less efficient, produces more pollution and increases respiratory problems.
- There is a need to work with Kent County Council regarding the implementation of 20mph speed limits on residential roads across the Borough. Slowing down traffic speeds to 20 mph reduces fatalities and improves quality of life. Innovative solutions are needed to reduce traffic speed and tackle parking problems.

The petition and the points raised during the discussion were referred to the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board for consideration.

RECOMMENDED: That the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board consider the petition relating to the implementation of a 20mph speed limit across Fant in conjunction with the 20 mph policy review report at agenda item 13.