

Maidstone Joint Transportation Board

6 April
2022



Process for Requests for 20mph Schemes

Decision Making Authority	Kent County Council
Lead Director	Phil Lightowler, Director of Highways, Transportation & Waste
Lead Head of Service	Tim Read, Head of Transportation
Lead Officer and Report Author	Jennie Watson – Project Manager Ryan Shiel – Programme Manager, Schemes Planning and Delivery Team
Wards and County Divisions affected	Various
Which Member(s) requested this report?	Committee

This report makes the following recommendations:

This report sets out Kent County Council's process for 20mph requests and is For Information only

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Maidstone Joint Transportation Board	6 April 2022

Process for Requests for 20mph Schemes

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 This report has been requested by the Chair of the Joint Transportation Board.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 The purpose of the report is to provide guidance on the process for 20mph requests.

3. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

3.1 Kent County Council's (KCC) approach to implementing 20mph schemes was established in 2013 and was reviewed in May 2019 to reflect current learning and best practice.

3.2 It is also based on the 2013 Department for Transport (DfT) Circular 'Setting Local Speed Limits'. This follows the core principle that the existing road environment is key to the setting of appropriate speed limits.

3.3 In 2013, DfT revised the guidelines (DfT Circular 01/2013) and stated authorities could set 20mph speed limits in areas where local needs and conditions suggested the current speed limit was too high.

3.4 There are a number of options to take into account when considering a 20mph speed restrictions including:

- 20mph speed limit zones
- 20mph limits
- Variable and part time 20mph limits

3.5 **20mph limits** are areas where the speed limit has been reduced to 20mph but there are no physical measures to reduce vehicle speeds within the area. Drivers are alerted to the speed limit with 20mph speed limit repeater signs. 20mph speed limits are the most appropriate for roads where average speeds are already low and below 24mph.

3.6 **20mph zones** use traffic calming measures such as chicanes, speed humps, road narrowings and traffic islands to reduce the adverse impact of motor vehicles in built up areas and to ensure that vehicles slow down to speeds below the limit. This means that the speed limit zone becomes "self-enforcing".

3.7 **Variable and part time 20mph limits** are sometimes used outside schools and in areas where there is high pedestrian activity at certain times during the day. Variable speed limits are generally highlighted through use of flashing interactive signs which indicate when the variable speed limit is in force.

3.8 The following is a summary of the Government's guidance on the implementation of 20mph schemes:

- Successful 20mph limits and zones should be self-enforcing.
- Self-enforcement can be achieved either, by the existing road conditions or using measures such as signing or traffic calming to attain mean/average speeds compliant with the speed limit. Measured speed data is used to demonstrate if self-enforcement is possible / achievable for each site.
- To achieve compliance there should be no expectation on the Police providing additional enforcement unless explicitly agreed.
- The full range of alternative options should be considered before introducing 20mph schemes:
- Zones should not include roads where motor vehicle movement is the primary function, such as on motorways and classified A – roads.
- While the Government has reduced the traffic calming requirements in zones they must be self-enforcing and include at least one physical traffic calming feature such as a road hump or build out.
- 20mph limits are generally only recommended where existing mean/average speeds are already below 24mph. This is because speeds do not generally reduce more than a few miles per hour for a sign and line along schemes.

3.9 Consultation and engagement with local communities and other stakeholders, including the emergency services, is of vital importance and Kent County Council would strongly recommend that informal consultations are carried out with local residents to ensure community support before any formal consultation or detailed investigation into new 20mph requests are carried out.

3.10 Kent County Council consider requests on a case-to-case basis, the whole road environment and context will be assessed in relation to our Vision Zero and Active Travel Strategies and other related strategies.

3.11 Requests also need to be tested against local opinion, as objections are often revealed when schemes progress to implementation.

3.12 Site requirements to consider are:

- Physical traffic calming measures have to be carefully considered against the needs of the public transport services and emergency services as well as high flows of HGVs, especially on A or B classified roads.
- Traffic speed surveys will need to be carried out to identify current traffic speeds and to enable the assessment and potential design of traffic calming measures if required. If average (mean) speeds are at or below 24mph signing and road markings alone will be suitable. If average speeds are between 24mph and 28mph then other innovative

measures should be applied to assist in reducing speeds. This could involve some innovative approaches such as on-street parking creation/relocation, removal of centre lines where applicable, provision of planters (to be owned and maintained by the scheme sponsor), coloured surfacing, virtual traffic calming road markings etc. If average speeds are above 28mph then more significant physical traffic calming measures would be required such as speed cushions or build-outs and these are not always appropriate.

- Most physical traffic calming measures need to be lit at night and so 20mph zones are usually in areas with street lighting.
- No point within a 20mph zone should be more than 50 metres from a traffic calming feature. This can be a natural feature such as a tight bend or an installed measure such as a cushion / hump.
- All speed limit changes require a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). The TRO process involves a legal order to be written and formally advertised, within this process a public consultation must be carried out with all statutory consultees including residents who may be directly affected by the proposals.
- The TRO process takes approximately 3-6 months and must be completed before any changes to speed limits/weight limits/parking restrictions can be implemented. During the consultation process if there are sufficient valid objections, a report may need to be presented to the JTB and Kent County Council may decide not to proceed with the proposed speed limit.
- There needs to be suitable locations to install the speed limit signage on all entry points into any speed limit / zone to make the speed limit legal and enforceable.

4.0 20mph schemes across Kent

4.1 Two town wide 20mph trial schemes were implemented in Kent in 2020-21 for Faversham and Tonbridge. These schemes were fully funded through the DfT emergency active travel fund (EATF) budget. This budget was allocated to councils in the wake of the first covid lockdown to encourage more walking and cycling and increased social distancing. The outcomes of the two 20mph trials are detailed in the bullet points below:

Faversham

- During consultation 668 replied to the consultation process of which 63% of resident respondents were in favour of the 20mph town-wide limits
- The average ATC speed reduction was 0.9mph after the 20mph was implemented with 2 roads experiencing a speed increase
- 4.1% reduction in overall speed with an increase in vehicles travelling below 24mph and some roads with average speeds below 20mph
- A quarter of Faversham residents said that there was more aggressive driving since the implementation of the 20mph trial.

- Overall, the scheme has been considered a success and all roads within the trial have now been permanently made 20mph. The Faversham scheme had strong support from all political levels and was promoted by the Faversham 20's plenty group for some years prior to the trial schemes implementation which is one of the reasons why it was so successful.
- The full Faversham 20mph JTB report can be viewed on the Swale Borough Council website or by using the following link: <https://services.swale.gov.uk/meetings/documents/s21502/Swale%20JTB%20report%20Dec%202021%20Townwide%2020mph%20trial%20final.pdf>

Tonbridge

- During consultation 1,123 replied to the consultation process of which 26% of resident respondents were in favour of the 20mph town-wide limits
- The average ATC speed reduction was 3mph after the 20mph was implemented
- 10.3% reduction in overall speed. No sites showed average speeds below 20mph and only 33% showed speeds between 20 and 24mph
- Half of Tonbridge residents said that there was more aggressive driving since the implementation of the 20mph trial.
- Many roads within the scheme have now been made permanently 20mph, however there are some roads including some classified A and B roads which have now been returned to their previous speed limits. In some cases, this was due to increased speeds, but also due to public opinion during the trial. There was far less early engagement and promotion of the Tonbridge scheme than there was in Faversham, which is further evidence that detailed engagement before implementing 20mph schemes is key to their success.
- The full Tonbridge 20mph JTB report can be viewed on the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council website or by using the following link: <https://democracy.tmbc.gov.uk/documents/s57742/Report%20of%20Head%20of%20Transportation%20Kent%20County%20Council.pdf>

20mph Petition - Bower Mount Road, Maidstone

- In January 2022, a petition was presented to the Board concerning 20mph schemes, as outlined below:

'I hereby petition Kent County Council to introduce a default 20mph speed limit in Bower Mount Road and its surrounding roads including Cornwallis Rd, Oakwood Rd and all other residential roads in Maidstone'

- Following the petition's presentation, the Board resolved to send the petition to the relevant Cabinet Member. The response is outlined at Appendix A to the report and is aligned with the contents of this report regarding the pursuit of 20mph schemes.

5.0 Process for requests

- 5.1 Step 1 - The promotor will need to contact Kent County Council, Schemes Planning and Delivery Team, with the extents of the proposed 20mph speed limit, detailing the support currently given to the scheme and any informal consultation carried out to date.
- 5.2 Step 2 - KCC Officers will assess the location and appraise against a list of local factors such as whether it will help vulnerable road users around community centres, doctors' surgeries, nursing homes, schools and shops.
- 5.3 Step 3 - speed and traffic count data will be necessary to assess the measures that may be required in order to implement a compliant and safe speed limit. KCC can arrange the surveys on behalf of the promotor although there will most likely be a cost associated with this.
- 5.4 Step 4 - If the mean speeds and road environment favours a 20mph scheme and there is support from the local community and other stakeholders, a Traffic Regulation Order will be advertised. Kent County Council do not have designated funds to deliver 20mph schemes. The promotor must ensure that funding is available to deliver the scheme. This includes the cost of a traffic survey, which has to be carried out before officers can determine if a speed limit can be safely implemented, and what type of 20mph limit/zone would be suitable. If a speed limit change is possible and funding is secured, then advertising of the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) and the design and delivery process can commence. The TRO process costs in the region of £2,000-£4,000, this is separate from any physical build and construction costs. There is no guarantee that at consultation the proposals will be successful, in which case the TRO process may result in abortive costs. This is why the early engagement and informal consultation by the scheme promotor(s) is so vital.
- 5.5 Step 5 - KCC consult with Kent Police in relation to the setting of appropriate speed limits. Kent Police will not support 20mph speed limits unless the average speed of vehicles is 24mph or less but are supportive of appropriate 20mph schemes where a high level of compliance is expected.
- 5.6 Step 6 - Following successful consultation outcomes, discussions with the scheme promotor, and once funding is received the speed limit change can be delivered/installed on site.

6 REPORT APPENDICES

Appendix A – Response to Petition for 20mph, Bower Mount Road Maidstone – presented at the January 2022 meeting of the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

N/A