

REPORT OF THE LEAD MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

The Lead Member for Transport and Environment met on 21 June 2021. Attendances:-

Councillor Claire Dowling (Lead Member)

Councillors Godfrey Daniel, Johnny Denis, Kathryn Field, Stephen Holt, Wendy Maples, Stephen Shing Colin Swansborough, and Georgia Taylor

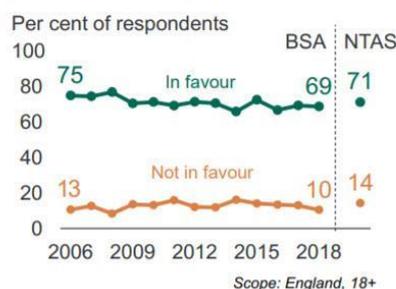
1 Notice of Motion – 20mph speed limits

1.1 The following Notice of Motion was submitted by Councillor Osborne, and seconded by Councillor Field:

Residents want the freedom to choose how they travel. 20mph on our streets brings that choice. People, particularly the elderly, fear the intimidation from high speeds on residential streets and in town and village centres.

20mph is normal. In the UK, 21 million people (or 1 in 3 of the population) live in places where their council has decided that a blanket 30mph doesn't suit most streets. Adopting a default speed of 20mph with appropriate exceptions makes their streets better places to live, work, shop and learn.

Speed limits of 20mph in residential streets



20mph is popular. Seven out of 10 people consistently say they support 20mph speed limits in residential streets. Once installed, 20mph schemes become even more popular and are never removed.

20mph is Government policy. The UK recently signed the Stockholm Declaration² with 130 other nations, agreeing on a default 20mph limit wherever cyclists and pedestrians mix with motor vehicles. As part of its COVID response in 2020³, the Government stated “20mph speed limits are being more widely adopted as an appropriate speed limit for residential roads, and many through streets in built-up areas...reducing the speed limit can provide a more attractive and safer environment for walking and cycling”.

20mph helps the older generation. 20mph is popular because it makes our streets safer, greener and fairer, especially for those with limited sight, hearing or mobility whether due to age or disability.

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20mph is cost-effective. As well as bringing down casualties, 20mph places have seen a rise of 20% in walking and cycling. No other intervention brings such a favourable cost benefit ratio.

20mph is enforceable. A large majority of people want 20mph enforced. Over the past 3 years, Avon & Somerset Police issued 1,300 speeding notices monthly on 20mph streets.

The residents of East Sussex have a right to the benefits that a 20mph limit in residential areas would bring, namely;

- *Fewer casualties. Lowering urban and residential speed limits to 20 mph have been found to decrease child pedestrian accidents by up to 70% (Transport Research Laboratory). Brighton & Hove City Council's research found a reduction of 12% in all casualties (and 20% in the number of those killed and seriously injured) between the annual average of the preceding 3 years and the first year of operation of the 20mph. <http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/parking-and-travel/travel-transport-and-road-safety/safer-streets-better-places>*
- *Where speeds are reduced to 20mph through traffic calming, casualties fall by around two-fifths. The definitive study of the impact of these is the TfL commissioned study by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine in 2009 entitled 20 mph Zones and Road Safety in London [<http://content.tfl.gov.uk/20-mph-zones-and-road-safety-in-london.pdf2>].*
- *Depending on age, survivability at 20mph vs 30mph is about 7-10 times higher and stopping distances are halved (12m vs 23m or 3 vs 6 car lengths). We all, as drivers or pedestrians, favour near misses to being hit.*
- *Helps those with Invisible disabilities gain social equality. Not all disabilities are clearly visible. Drivers simply can't tell if someone at a roadside has mental health, sight or hearing issues, or limited physical abilities. 20mph limits are the safe speed wherever people mix with motor traffic. 20mph upholds duty of care and rights in the Equalities Act.*
- *Pollution, Climate Change and Air Quality - When 30 km/h (18.5 mph) zones were introduced in Germany, car drivers on average changed gear 12% less often, braked 14% less often and required 12% less fuel.*
- *Health Improvements - Reduced local emissions, improved air quality and increased likelihood of a shift to active modes of transport like walking or cycling. Slowing speeds from 30mph to 20 mph has been shown to increase levels of cycling by 12%*
- *Better Quality of Life and Reduced Inequalities - Slower speeds benefit large numbers of non-car users, reducing noise and allowing better urban design standards for quality places. Those currently suffering the greatest inequalities tend to live nearer to busy roads and therefore benefit more from 20mph limits. 20 mph reduces health inequalities by extending the life expectancy of disadvantaged people.*
- *Less Congestion. At 20 mph more cars occupy the same road space due shorter gaps between them relative to 30 mph, easing traffic 'flow'. Junctions are more efficient as drivers can merge into shorter gaps. Less risk encourages sustainable travel and public transport.*
- *Easier parking. Fewer unnecessary car trips free up road space and parking*
- *Cleaner air quality especially benefits motorists. They breathe in-car air, which is three times more polluted than at the pavement. Standing traffic, which produces unnecessary fumes, reduces as traffic flow becomes smoother. Less fuel is burnt due to less acceleration and the transfer of some trips away from cars towards walking, cycling and public transport.*
- *Stress reduces as drivers have more time to see and react to hazards. Fewer road rage incidents occur due to more considerate driving styles, including less dangerous overtaking and it is easier to pull out. With casualties down by 22% some drivers will suffer less emotional trauma and anxiety from their part in liability for crashes. Noise also*

reduces.

East Sussex County Council agrees to request the Cabinet to:

“East Sussex County Council agrees to request the Cabinet to set an authority-wide default 20mph speed limit for urban and village roads. This does not mean ‘every road’, but that 20mph speed limits should be the norm and higher limits should be exceptions only where there is evidence that such a higher limit will be safe for pedestrians and cyclists. This is as recommended by the World Health Organisation and was recently committed to by UK government in the 2020 Stockholm Declaration signed by the UK and 129 other global road safety ministers.”

1.2 In line with County Council practice, the matter was referred by the Chairman to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment for consideration to provide information and inform debate on the Motion.

1.3 Central government supports 20mph speed limits where appropriate. National legislation imposes an automatic 30 mph speed limit on roads provided with a system of street lighting (defined as ‘a system of street lighting furnished by means of lamps placed not more than 200 yards [183 metres] apart). This covers most residential and urban roads. These roads are given ‘restricted road’ status and no speed limit reminder signs are required to give effect to the speed limit.

1.4 To introduce a speed limit other than that imposed by restricted road status would require the making of a Traffic Regulation Order and the provision of traffic signs to give continual reminder of that speed limit.

1.5 If central government were to consider lowering the speed limit that applied to restricted roads, the impact would be significant in terms of the resources required to implement it. Highway Authorities would need to assess all areas covered by a system of street lighting to identify higher standard roads that serve as part of the wider strategic network, and roads where average speeds are too high for the limit to be self-enforcing, to judge whether a lower speed limit would be appropriate. Every junction between these higher standard roads and all other residential roads would then need to be signed appropriately, with Traffic Regulations Orders put in place to back those limits that fell outside of the revised restricted roads speed limit. We would also need to assess all 30mph speed limits introduced by Traffic Regulation Order to see if these needed to be changed to ensure consistency across our road network.

1.6 Adopted Policy PS05/02 (which reflects national guidance and best practice) allows for 20 mph speed limits/zones to be considered where they are likely to be self-enforcing. This can be achieved on roads where the mean (average) speed of traffic is below 24 mph. On roads where the mean speeds are higher, appropriate traffic management/calming would need to be introduced (PS05/02 is at Appendix 1). Sussex Police would not support any proposed 20 mph speed limit/zones unless they were likely to be self-enforcing or the appropriate traffic management/calming introduced.

1.7 There are over 1,000 kilometres of ‘residential’ roads in the County (comprised of more than 4,500 individual roads). Although some roads would only require a Traffic Regulation Order and speed limit signs to introduce a 20mph speed limit, many roads would require some additional engineering measures so that average speeds were appropriate for a 20mph speed limit. The types of engineering measures required on these roads would make it very expensive to introduce an authority-wide default 20mph speed limit on all urban and village roads in the County.

1.8 The type and extent of engineering measures that may be required could only be defined following a detailed investigation, design, and consultation process.

1.9 Although the cost of introducing an authority-wide default 20mph speed limit is uncertain, based on the number of residential roads in the County the total cost would be several million pounds.

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1.10 The County Council has a limited amount of funding available to develop local transport improvements. To help us prioritise the numerous scheme requests that we receive, including 20mph speed limits, a scheme prioritisation process has been developed to help us to determine which schemes should be selected for funding from the County Council's capital allocation and potential inclusion in our capital programme of local transport improvements. This process is in alignment with the key objectives of the East Sussex County Council Local Transport Plan 2011 – 2026. The content of the programme is considered by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment on an annual basis.

1.11 The introduction of 20mph speed limits are often well supported by local communities, as they can support greater levels of active travel and help produce an environment which improves health and wellbeing.

1.12 The County Council will continue to support the introduction of 20mph speed limits where these are funded externally or through our community match programme and, where possible, will support and assist local communities and parish councils to implement such schemes.

1.13 The County Council will also, where appropriate, continue to support 20mph speed limit schemes funded externally or, where possible, through our community match programme.

1.14 The County Council does not have the resources to deliver an authority-wide 'default' 20mph speed limit. Where appropriate, requests for 20mph speed limits will continue to be subject to assessment through our scheme prioritisation process, alongside other requests for local transport improvements. This will then be used to prioritise schemes for potential inclusion in the capital programme of local transport improvements.

1.15 The Lead Member for Transport and Environment recommends the County Council to:

✧ (1) reject the Notice of Motion to set an authority-wide default 20mph speed limit for urban and village roads;

(2) note the County Council's speed limit policy is in line with current central government guidance, including our approach to 20 mph speed limits;

(3) note that those urban and village roads that demonstrate a history of personal injury crashes will continue to be identified and appropriate road safety measures introduced, which may include 20mph speed limits, if the scheme is of sufficient priority for funding from the County Council's capital allocation for local transport schemes; and

(4) note that, where appropriate, we will continue to support 20mph speed limit schemes funded externally or, where possible, through our community match programme.

21 June 2021

COUNCILLOR CLAIRE DOWLING
(Lead Member)