

For 14 September 2021 at 7.00 pm

Council Chamber, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks

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Sevenoaks Joint Transportation Board

Supplementary Agenda

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4. Request for 20 mph speed limit in central Sevenoaks	(Pages 1 - 2)	

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Make our streets safer and more active: central Sevenoaks 20mph zone

The proposal

This document sets out a proposal which would improve the lives of so many people in our town - and all without any downsides, or losers.

The proposal is to introduce 20mph speed limits in central Sevenoaks from the town centre north up to (but not including) the A25. This area of just 1.5 square miles has 10,000 residents, numerous workplaces and countless amenities - including the main town centre, several satellite shopping areas, the main railway station and no fewer than 12 schools.

It's densely packed and heavily walked, exactly the kind of area where 20 zones give the most benefit.

We need that benefit: in the last decade 221 people have been injured in the proposed 20 zone, on streets that still have 30 limits.

Wide benefits

20 limits would radically improve this safety record, and realise many other benefits besides:

- **safety improves massively:** with an effective 20 limit
 - injury collisions reduce by 50%
 - serious injuries reduce by up to 90%per OECD studies 2018.
- because it's much safer, **active travel increases:** walking and, particularly, cycling, with strong health improvements for the population. Proposals for safe cycling infrastructure from Amherst to Trinity schools and Otford to Sevenoaks High Street need these 20mph limits to realise their potential
- the **air quality improves:** slower speeds, smoother driving, less acceleration and less braking all mean less fuel burnt and less brake and tyre wear polluting the air
- increasingly recognised as harmful to health, **noise disturbance reduces dramatically** with slower top speeds
- **congestion reduces** as well: slower, smoother driving takes up less road space per vehicle. Traffic becomes less stop-start, flows better and the roads can process higher volumes at peak times.

No downsides

All these benefits come with basically no downsides: per a DfT-led study 2018, journey times barely change, up just 3-5% in new 20 zones on average.

For a 5 minute journey across the zone, that equates to between 9 and 15 seconds - an increase so small that, as the study said, most drivers wouldn't even notice it.

Quick, easy, cheap, popular

The proposal is quick, easy and cheap to implement (with many new 20 zones paying back within a year and so saving money, per KCC website).

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It fits with national and local policy (GearChange, net zero, vision zero 2050, the NDP)

It has very strong local support – seven local schools, eight local residents associations and 1,700 signatories are actively backing this.

Summary and status

In summary, the proposal has very important benefits, no downsides, is really popular, fits with policy and actually saves money. Sometimes Council decisions are difficult: surely not here. There's simply no reason not to do this.

The petition was first received at June's JTB, and awaits a response from KCC Highways. In the three months since, there have been several accidents in Sevenoaks town, including sadly one pedestrian fatality. This underlines the urgency of implementing this proposal.