
PROPOSED 20 MPH SPEED LIMIT – VARIOUS ROADS, OTFORD, SEVENOAKS

To: **Sevenoaks Joint Transportation Board – 9 March 2021**

By: **Tim Read, Head of Transportation, Kent County Council**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Electoral division: **Sevenoaks North & Darent Valley**

Summary: This report provides details of the consultation that took place for the proposed 20 mph speed limit on various roads in Otford and which is being promoted by Otford Parish Council.

1.0 Introduction and proposal

1.1 The objective of the scheme is to help support road safety and safer routes to schools in Otford Village by encouraging driver compliance with a 20 mph speed limit on sections of the following roads:

Table 1: Proposed 20 mph – Roads and extents

Road	Extents of proposed 20 mph
High Street	For its entire length
Pilgrims Way East	From a point 20 metres east of its junction with Shoreham Road to its junction with Beechy Lees Road
Row Dow	From its junction with Pilgrims Way East for a distance of 267 metres in a north easterly direction
Sevenoaks Road	From its junction with High Street to a point 20 metres south of the roundabout
Station Road	From its junction with High Street to its junction with Colets Orchard

1.2 A location plan detailing the proposed 20 mph speed limit can be found in Appendix A of this report.

1.3 The proposed scheme will:

- reduce the speed limit to 20 mph using a combination of upright repeater signs and roundel road markings
- entry points to the proposed 20 mph speed limit will also be highlighted by measures such as new terminal signs, coloured road surfacing and village gateway features

2.0 Consultation & Traffic Regulation Order

- 2.1 A formal traffic regulation order consultation with local residents and other stakeholders took place from Friday 13 November until Monday 7 December 2020.
- 2.2 At the end of the consultation, a total of 76 responses were received. 67 (88%) were in support of the proposed 20 mph speed limit, with 9 (12%) objecting.
- 2.3 The majority of respondents were in favour of the proposals for the following reasons:
- improved safety for non-motorised & vulnerable road users such as pedestrians & cyclists
 - enhanced quality of life for residents
 - collision reduction
 - easier access for school children and elderly people
 - promotion and encouragement of active travel such as walking and cycling
- 2.4 The reasons given for being against the proposed 20 mph speed limit can be summarised as follows:
- existing 30 mph speed limit is appropriate
 - concern that a lower speed limit will lead to an increase in congestion
 - general lack of speed limit enforcement
 - concern that a lower speed limit will make it harder for drivers to negotiate past cyclists
 - advisory 20 mph speed limit during school drop-off and pick-up times more appropriate

Each objection and the scheme promoter's response can be found in the following table:

Table 2: Objections and scheme promoter response

Objection 1	Scheme promoter response
<p>I strongly object to the reduction in speed for these areas to 20mph for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No evidence of major accidents or injuries caused as a result of cars travelling at 30mph through these areas has been provided publicly as part of this review, therefore no justification to deviate from a normal 30mph urban speed limit. - Pilgrims Way is a country lane and not a built-up urban area. Drivers are responsible for adhering to the highway code, they do not need to be restricted to 20mph here - Traffic through these areas at peak times can often be very slow, with significant back up down Pilgrims Way. Decreasing the speed limit will increase the time it takes to travel through Pilgrims Way and Otford at peak times. - Additional pedestrian or zebra crossings should be installed instead if pedestrians accessing the schools cannot cross safely or improved signage. - c.95% of traffic through these areas during a 24/7 period will be outside of the school start/close times when children are coming and going. Why should all road users outside of these times be forced to slow to 20mph, even if travelling late at night or early morning for example. It is unnecessary. 	<p>"The research undertaken for the Otford Traffic Management Report (www.otfordpc.kentparishes.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Traffic-Management-Study-Final-Report.pdf) identified the following in response to the comments you have raised:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) a) Section 2 (p.3) of this report summaries the history of accidents in Otford. The pattern of accidents identified has not altered since the report was written in 2018. The Parish Clerk, and the Police, continue to receive regular reports of pedestrian related traffic incidents, particularly residents (including small children) being hit by the wing mirrors of passing vehicles. b) Section 4 (p.9) of this report provides the research behind the decision to recommend a 20mph limit for some roads in Otford. The improvements to road safety and improved outcomes in collisions as well as other benefits are set out in the report. c) The traffic speed surveys carried out for the Parish Council in 2019 show that average vehicle speeds were in excess of the current speed limit with average speeds recorded at around 37/38mph in some roads. <p>2) Pilgrims Way East, where there have been two recent serious traffic incidents, is in the heart of the village and only a short distance away from the centre of the village. Residents along this road increasingly complain that it is too dangerous to walk or cycle to local amenities and are driving instead increasing the number of unnecessary short car journeys being undertaken by many residents who feel it is no longer safe to walk.</p> <p>3) Research and mathematical modelling show that optimal speeds for maximum urban traffic show that 20mph is more efficient than 30mph (www.20splenty.org/20mph_limits_save_time_and_improve_traffic_flow).</p> <p>4) As demonstrated above, road safety issues are not constrained to crossing the busy roads in Otford, pedestrians feel unsafe walking along our narrow pavements, or where there are no pavements. As already</p>

	mentioned, pedestrians are regularly being hit by passing vehicles. 5) Road safety issues are relevant to all road users at all times of the day and night, not just during school the school runs."
Objection 2	Scheme promoter response
<p>The stated reasons provide no evidence that there is a potential safety improvement, nor what or how much the proposed actions will improve the situation. Looking at the road traffic accidents in the area over the past 21 years on https://bit.ly/2S8IZVL, the risks do not seem to cluster in the identified areas, and where there are increased areas of risk, better junction layout would seem to be more appropriate, than using such blanket approaches.</p> <p>The proposed speed changes will also introduce new dangers to cyclists on some of these roads where, instead of being rapidly overtaken by vehicles, they will be forced to coexist for long distances with powered vehicles that are constrained to go slower than the cyclists can comfortably travel. The ensuing anger and confusion is likely to endanger some of the pedestrians that the proposed change is intended to make safer.</p>	<p>"The research undertaken for the Otford Traffic Management Report (www.otfordpc.kentparishes.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Traffic-Management-Study-Final-Report.pdf) identified the following in response to the comments you have raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Section 4 (p.9) of this report provides the research behind the decision to recommend a 20mph limit for some roads in the village (to include the village primary school on the High Street) and the benefits. The research is supported by all the major road safety organisations including the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA). - The Traffic Consultants appointed by the Parish Council explored all road safety options, including junction layouts, for the village alongside KCC Highways. The current options are the only options for available for the village. This is due to many technical reasons, average traffic speeds, as well as topographical issues. - There is no evidence to support the theory that 20mph limits increases road safety risks to cyclists. Sustrans UK (the charity for walking and cycling states that, 'a cyclist involved in a collision with a car travelling at 20mph had a 2.5% chance of a fatal injury, compared to a 20% chance if the car was travelling at 30mph.[23]. There was also, less chance of collisions when cars travelled at lower speeds, as they had more time to react to cyclists and take action to avoid collisions; there has been a 60% reduction in injury collisions in 250 existing 20 mph zones monitored'.
Objection 3	Scheme promoter response
<p>No evidence given that the current 30mph speed limit poses any danger. No alternative proposals put to improve safety and traffic flow.</p> <p>As we know, Department for Transport (DfT) data has shown that 80% of drivers ignore 20mph speed limits, so this is a waste of time and effort.</p>	<p>"The research undertaken for the Otford Traffic Management Report (www.otfordpc.kentparishes.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Traffic-Management-Study-Final-Report.pdf) identified the following in response to the comments you have raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Section 2 (p.3) of this report summaries the history of accidents in Otford. The pattern of accidents identified has not altered since the

And for those who will observe it, just a further slow creep towards a slower less efficient road network. A 20mph stretch of A-road is ludicrous.

But as always in these responses, the support of a few local residents and residents groups will be considered enough to justify it.

Where are your plans to cut journey times for road users?
Why not concentrate on road widening and further restricting parking along these roads to keep traffic flowing?

report was written in 2018. The Parish Clerk, and the Police, receive regular reports of pedestrian related traffic incidents, particularly residents (including small children) being hit by the wing mirrors of passing vehicles.

- The traffic speed surveys carried out for the Parish Council in 2019 showed that average vehicle speeds were in excess of the current speed limit with average speeds recorded at around 37/38mph and 40mph on Shoreham Road.

- The Traffic Consultants appointed by the Parish Council explored all road safety options for the village alongside KCC Highways. The current options are the only options available for the village. This is due to many technical reasons, average traffic speeds, as well as topographical issues.

- The DfT data states that 81% of cars travelling on roads with a 20mph limit travelled at 29mph or below, compared with 49% of vehicles on roads with a 30mph limit.

- Research and mathematical modelling show that optimal speeds for maximum urban traffic flow that 20mph is more efficient than 30mph (www.20splenty.org/20mph_limits_save_time_and_improve_traffic_flow).

- The 20mph limit is only planned for a section of A-road in the centre of the village to improve pedestrian road safety, there is no evidence to suggest that where speed limits have been reduced from 30mph to 20mph in an urban environment that this results in a less efficient road network.

- The current traffic plans are based on an extensive public consultation exercise which included a Traffic Management Questionnaire covering speed limits and traffic calming. This was completed by over half of Otford residents and showed significant support for slowing traffic speeds in the village with 87% agreeing that slowing traffic speed would be beneficial and 78% of those believing that 20mph is the appropriate speed for some areas of the proposed zone (results at: www.otfordpc.kentparishes.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Public-Consultation-Results-final-V2-1.pdf).

- As demonstrated above, the traffic calming plans will have a negligible impact on journey times. Part of the wider traffic management plans

	include new parking restrictions for Station Road and the High Street. "
Objection 4	Scheme promoter response
<p>Too many roads now have an irrationally low speed limit.</p> <p>Only people that already obey the rules and drive sensibly will drive at the reduced 20mph --- The people who cause the problems by driving at high speed and generally like a madman will continue to do so --- Making this whole exercise worthless.</p> <p>I've seen no evidence to show a 20mph limit has improved the accident rate for any roads.</p>	<p>"The research undertaken for the Otford Traffic Management Report (www.otfordpc.kentparishes.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Traffic-Management-Study-Final-Report.pdf) identified the following in response to the comments you have raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The aim of the Otford Traffic Calming scheme is to introduce 20mph limits where appropriate in the centre of the village to improve road safety. - Research shows that 20mph limits do make a difference: DfT data shows 81% of cars travelling on roads with a 20mph limit travelled at 29mph or below, compared with 49% of vehicles on roads with a 30mph limit. Speeding penalties where drivers are more than 20mph over the speed limit increase considerably which is another factor to be taken into account with regards to compliance. - Section 4 (p.9) of the above report provides the research to show that 20mph limits reduce both the number of accidents and severity of collisions as well as other the benefits. The research is supported by all the major road safety organisations including the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA).
Objection 5	Scheme promoter response
<p>I'm quite puzzled that there are suggestions to reduce the speed in Otford. It's never been a problem as far as I'm aware. Reducing the speed and putting in extra roundabouts will cause chaos during busy times</p>	<p>"The current traffic plans are based on an extensive public consultation exercise which included a Traffic Management Questionnaire covering speed limits and traffic calming. This was completed by over half of Otford residents and showed significant support for slowing traffic speeds in the village with 87% agreeing that slowing traffic speed would be beneficial and 78% of those believing that 20mph is the appropriate speed for some areas of the proposed zone (results at: www.otfordpc.kentparishes.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Public-Consultation-Results-final-V2-1.pdf).</p> <p>Due to technical difficulties the proposed mini-roundabouts were removed from the scheme. The proposed traffic calming scheme is designed to improve traffic flow and reduce local traffic.</p>

Objection 6	Scheme promoter response
<p>As the road currently stands there is better ways to increase pedestrian safety especially on Row Dow & Pilgrims Way E.</p> <p>Signage to dissuade lorries from using both roads would go a long way to easing congestion.</p> <p>A proper left & right lane for the exit of Pilgrims Way E on to Shoreham Road to prevent traffic build up during peak usage.</p> <p>A footpath that extends for the duration of Pilgrims Way E so as to provide somewhere safe for pedestrians to walk.</p> <p>Simply changing the speed limit will do nothing to increase pedestrian & public safety along those roads. This seems like a cheap cop-out and due to lack of camera's/police presence will not be enforced at all.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Traffic Consultants appointed by the Parish Council have explored all road safety options possible or appropriate for the village alongside KCC Highways. The current options are the only options for available for the village. This is due to many technical reasons, average traffic speeds, as well as topographical issues. - New HGV signage is being reviewed for Pilgrims Way East and Row Dow. The Parish Council Traffic Group is also working with neighbouring villages to see what else can be done. - During the Traffic Study for Otford the junction of Pilgrims Way East and Shoreham Road was looked at extensively to see if it could be widened. Unfortunately, due to the buried BT fibre optic cable and insufficient public land this was not possible, we agree this would have been an excellent improvement. - An extension to the footway on Pilgrims Way East is being explored by the Traffic Group. - Research, supported by all the major road safety organisations, show that 20mph limits improve road safety and encourage more walking and cycling (www.rospa.com/rospaweb/docs/advice-services/road-safety/drivers/20-mph-zone-factsheet.pdf).
Objection 7	Scheme promoter response
<p>It is becoming increasingly difficult to drive safely whilst navigating the increasing number of cyclists using the road from Eynsford to Sevenoaks. By reducing the speed limit to 20mph how can cars successfully and safely manoeuvre around and between these cyclists? I fear there will be accidents arising as a result of this move to reduce the speed limit to 20mph and therefore object to this.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is no evidence to support the theory that 20mph limits increases road safety risks to cyclists. Sustrans UK (the charity for walking and cycling states that, 'a cyclist involved in a collision with a car travelling at 20mph had a 2.5% chance of a fatal injury, compared to a 20% chance if the car was travelling at 30mph.[23]. There was also, less chance of collisions when cars travelled at lower speeds, as they had more time to react to cyclists and take action to avoid collisions; there has been a 60% reduction in injury collisions in 250 existing 20 mph zones monitored'.

Objection 8	Scheme promoter response
<p>I do not feel it's is needed on a permanent basis. I believe speed restrictions need to be in place around school time but outside of this no. Flashing notification lights with a reduced speed limit during school times would be more than adequate for the high street. Due to the park cars on the high street you can rarely do more than 30mph along there during the day. This is the same with the pilgrims way, due to the narrowness of the road and number of lorries and large vans using this road you rarely get above 30mph so reducing it to 20mph seems silly.</p>	<p>"The research undertaken for the Otford Traffic Management Report (www.otfordpc.kentparishes.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Traffic-Management-Study-Final-Report.pdf) identified the following in response to the comments you have raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pedestrian related traffic incidents involve all road users and are not restricted to the school run. The Parish Clerk, and the Kent Police, receive regular reports of pedestrian related incidents in many roads in Otford outside of school hours. - Section 4 (p.9) of this report provides the research behind the decision to recommend a 20mph limit for some roads in the village (to include the village primary school on the High Street) and the benefits. The research is supported by all the major road safety organisations including the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA). - As described in the traffic report, the decision to move to 20mph limits concerned the appropriate traffic speed for each road. The major road safety organisations no longer consider the 30mph limit the appropriate speed where vehicles and pedestrians mx.
Objection 9	Scheme promoter response
<p>I travel this route daily and have a good perspective of the issues.</p> <p>Pilgrims Way East is typically very congested at peak times due to the St Michaels traffic being gridlocked on Row Dow. Speed does not seem to be the critical risk factor. Resolving the lack of footpath on the proposed stretch of Pilgrims Way East would be a much better investment and allow people to walk to school safely. This would also support wider environmental goals. I know a number of families who only drive because there is no footpath.</p> <p>Changing the limit from 30 to 20 around Station Road will have minimal effect given that people do not adhere to the current limit. Enforcement of current limit with fixed (average?) speed cameras would be more effective. A pedestrian crossing to the</p>	<p>"The Otford Traffic Management Group is exploring the possibility of a footpath on Pilgrims Way East. Even if this were possible, the path would be quite narrow and our research, and the many letters from residents, show that where pavements are narrow slower speeds are required. Average speeds on the High Street for example are below 30mph, yet we still have a significant number of pedestrians being hit, as you mention. This is why the major road safety organisations no longer consider a 30mph limit appropriate where pedestrians and vehicles mix. A footpath with a reduced speed limit would be the best outcome.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Station Road 20mph limit will only cover the lower section from Colets Orchard, for the compliance reasons you mention. To ensure greater compliance with 20mph limits on the High Street and Pilgrims Way East traffic calming measures have been introduced, such as speed tables, road narrowing etc, to enforce the new speed limit. - The Traffic Group looked into widening pavements throughout the

school opposite the station appears necessary given the number of people struggling to cross the road there.

One of the biggest complaints on High Street seems to be pedestrians being hit by wing mirrors of cars driving close the pavement. Speed is not the issue here but extremely narrow pavements in areas with high pedestrian flow in both directions with parents needing to hold young children's hands means those pavements are simply not suitable. It would be better to understand how the pavements could adjusted to make the pedestrian journey safer. I would be supportive of a speed reduction on High Street alongside that, but without other measures it will ultimately be a waste of time and money. Again, I have never seen any traffic enforcement activity here."

village, unfortunately due to our narrow roads and a lack of space, this is not possible. Reducing the speed limit to 20mph, combined with the traffic calming measures, will slow traffic speeds and increase awareness of pedestrians and control of vehicles.

- Speed cameras were again looked into by the Traffic Group and are not possible for Otford.

I do hope that now you are aware of the traffic calming measures to support the 20mph limits that you may now support the traffic plans.

3.0 Corporate Implications

3.1 Financial and VAT

The proposed 20 mph speed limit is to be funded by Otford Parish Council and delivered via the Section 278 process should the scheme be supported.

3.2 Legal

All works will be within the publicly maintainable highway for which Kent County Council is responsible.

3.3 Corporate

None.

4.0 Recommendation

4.1 That the Joint Transportation Board recommends implementation of the proposed 20 mph speed limit as advertised.

Contact Officer:	Paul Leary, Schemes Programme Manager, Kent County Council, 03000 418181
Reporting to:	Tim Read, Head of Transportation, Kent County Council, 03000 418181

Appendices

Appendix A – Location plan of proposed 20 mph speed limit.

Background Papers

None.

Appendix A – Location plan of proposed 20 mph speed limit

