

To: Sevenoaks Joint Transportation Board
By: 20mph Working Group
Date: 20th March 2024
Subject: Sevenoaks Townwide 20mph speed limit
Classification: For Decision

Recommendation: Members of the Board to consider and make a recommendation to:

- a) reduce the extent of the scheme to reflect the findings of the consultation and ensure compliance by removing Mount Harry/Hitchen Hatch Road, St Botolph's Road, and the northern section of the A225 from the Vine to the Bat and Ball junction.; or
- b) proceed with the scheme as designed.

Summary: This report updates Members of the Board on the Townwide 20mph Consultation and the JTB Working Group meeting held to review the results of the Town Council Consultation

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Kent County Council conducted a consultation on a Townwide 20mph scheme at the request of Cllr Streatfield, funded through his Combined Member Grant in September 2022. There have been several additional representations at subsequent JTB meetings with regards to the detail of the proposal and some mixed feedback in relation to the timing for this and the roads incorporated, particularly due to the other active travel schemes proposed in the vicinity that are progressing at pace.
- 1.2 At the 8 June 2023 JTB it was recommended that "a new Member Working Group be setup with KCC and SDC Officer support to develop a Consultation Plan for the LCWIP which incorporates the Town 20mph limit." A Member Working Group was duly established, with Cllrs Chard, Clayton, Perry Cole, Haslam, Purves, Roy and Streatfeild as members. A report on the progress of the Member Working Group was provided to the September 2023 JTB meeting, introduced by the Chairman and informed the Board that the Town Council intended to launch a second consultation in October 2023 with guidance from KCC.
- 1.3 The Member Working Group has worked collaboratively to support Sevenoaks Town Council in running an additional public consultation to look in detail at the level of support for a 20mph Townwide scheme, albeit to a lesser extent than the previous proposal. Revised plans were created in response to the initial public consultation mentioned. An update on the progress of the Working Group was provided to the November 2023 JTB meeting to report that following the initial Group meeting, the wording of the consultation and its contents was agreed by the Working Group.

2. Consultation Process

2.1 Sevenoaks Town Council conducted a townwide public survey over the course of a six-week consultation period to gather the thoughts and feelings of Sevenoaks residents. The consultation was launched and took place between 1st November and 14th December 2023. A copy of Sevenoaks Town Council's quarterly magazine, the Town Crier, contained the consultation questions approved by KCC Officers and members of the JTB Working Group and was delivered to all homes in the town and circulated locally within the community. Sevenoaks Town Council was responsible for the design of the document and the promotion, and collection of the consultation responses.

2.2 The following questions were asked:

- Q.1 Do you support 20mph limits in residential roads and roads in close proximity to schools?
- Q.2 Do you support the proposal for a 20mph limit for most of central Sevenoaks including schools? (map provided)
- Q.3 Are there any roads in the proposal you would like to see left out?

A copy of the Town Crier's questionnaire is attached (Appendix A).

3. Consultation Results

3.1 Sevenoaks Town Council commissioned, Lake Market Research, who provided the analysis for the previous consultation sponsored by Cllr Streatfield. The Council hoped that this would demonstrate confidence in the independence of the analysis. A full copy of the Lake Market analysis is attached at Appendix B. To enable the Working Group to look at any detail in the consultation responses, a full data set was requested for use by the Working Group only with all personal data redacted to ensure compliance with GDPR.

3.2 A total of 2,542 valid consultation responses were received, 2,279 via the online survey and 263 via the paper survey, of all responses, 92 responses were invalid.

The key consultation results are set out below:

Q.1 Do you support 20mph limits in residential roads and roads in close proximity to schools?

Two thirds (66%) of all respondents indicated they support 20mph limits on these road types and 34% indicated they did not support 20mph limits on these road types.

When filtering results amongst respondents who live in Sevenoaks Town only, the proportion who support 20mph limits in residential roads and roads in close proximity to schools increases to 74%.

Q.2 Do you support the proposal for a 20mph limit for most of central Sevenoaks including schools?

Respondents were also asked to indicate whether they support 20mph limits for most of central Sevenoaks with the assistance of the map provided (page two of the Town Crier).

Just over half (53%) of all respondents indicated they support 20mph limits for most of central Sevenoaks and 47% indicated they did not support 20mph limits for most of central Sevenoaks.

When filtering results amongst respondents who live in Sevenoaks Town only, the proportion who support a 20mph limit for most of central Sevenoaks, including schools increases to 61%.

It is important to note that the full data set indicated that a number of respondents (78) who supported Question 2, also indicated that they would like one or more roads removing from the scheme at Question 3. In other words, these respondents do not unequivocally support the scheme as per the roads shown on the scheme map for Question 2. Taking this into account, this reduces the support for Question 2 to 49%.

NB: *STC is unable to confirm whether or not those 78 views were all from valid responses.*

Q.3 Are there any roads in the proposal you would like to see left out?

There were 1,100 responses to this question. A summary showing the breakdown of responses is set out below:

262 respondents asked for all roads to be removed.

333 respondents asked for no roads to be removed.

253 respondents asked for changes to the scheme.

A full breakdown of responses to Question 3 is provided in the Lake Market research at Appendix B.

4 Working Group Review

- 4.1 The Working Group met on Friday 23rd February 2024 to review the findings of the consultation and to agree a position in advance of the March JTB meeting. There was unanimous agreement that the consultation results demonstrated a general desire for 20mph limits around schools and nearby residential roads, as evidenced by the majority support for Question 1. There were mixed views from the Working Group about whether the full extents of the proposal should be progressed, or some roads taken out.
- 4.2 The inclusion of the entire length of the A225 through the town (from Sevenoaks School to the Bat & Ball junction) was discussed. By way of compromise, and to ensure the scheme did not become fragmented, it was suggested that the northern section of the A225 from the Vine (Dartford Road and St John's Hill), a wide section of the A225 with generous pavements considered inappropriate for a 20mph limit was removed from the scheme. These two roads featured regularly on the list of roads respondents wanted excluded from the scheme. KCC Officers agreed this section may struggle with compliance, but its removal could potentially have a negative impact on compliance of side roads and where pedestrians and cyclists travel and cross where 20mph could be safer.
- 4.3 In order to justify including the whole length of the A225 in the proposed scheme, KCC Officers were asked to provide data on traffic collisions involving pedestrians and cyclists where traffic speed is a factor and a Walking Route Map to review whether this included Dartford Road and St John's Hill.

- 4.4 The inclusion of other roads in the scheme considered to be either non-compliant or inappropriate were then discussed. Members were reminded that when the scheme was originally designed it was assumed that traffic calming measures would be used to bring down speeds where necessary. Sevenoaks Town Council has made it clear that the revised scheme in the consultation will not include traffic calming and is to be a signed and lined scheme only. Officers pointed out that it was important to note that signed only 20mph speed limits may only reduce speeds by 2-3mph, sometimes more, so inclusion of roads that see faster speeds may result in a 20mph speed limit that is not fully compliant.
- 4.5 KCC Officers informed the Group that it would be necessary to review traffic speed data and consider the issue of compliance.
- 4.6 The Group agreed that the following roads, which were part of the original TRO consultation, would be included in any recommendation taken forward: Highlands Avenue, Ash Platt Road, and Pinewood Avenue.

5 Traffic Speeds, Collision Data & Walking Routes Map

- 5.1 Average speed data provided by KCC Officers (Appendix C). The upper threshold for a 20mph limit without formal traffic calming is 24mph. Although the KCC policy does facilitate the introduction of 20mph where speeds are between 24-28mph with some informal features, such as parking changes, new crossing points or other measures. It is the case that some roads in the scheme are within this threshold and may struggle to be compliant. Of note, are the speeds for Mount Harry Road at 30.7mph in both directions. Speed data is not available for the long wide stretch of St John's Hill or Dartford Road; the data for Dartford Road was captured at the Vine. Whilst there is no data for St Botolph's Road, speeds are likely to be high due to the generous width of the road.
- 5.2 Pedestrian and cycling collision data (3 years) provided by KCC Officers (Appendix D). The collision data for pedestrians and cyclists provided shows two slight incidents and one serious incident and only one collision where speed was a contributing factor on the northern stretch of the A225.
- 5.3 Walking Routes Map provided by KCC Officers (Appendix E). The Walking Route Map provided confirms that neither Dartford Road nor St John's Hill have been identified as walking routes.

6 Conclusions

- 6.1 Sevenoaks Town Council is of the opinion that the introduction of additional areas of 20mph is essential to the town's current and future road safety, protection of the environment and the community's well-being. It is also complementary to other proposals, including those for new cycle routes in the future and the Aim M4 in the Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Plan which supports additional 20mph in residential areas and around schools.
- 6.2 There was unanimous agreement that the results demonstrated a general desire for 20mph limits around schools and nearby residential roads, as evidenced by the clear support by the majority of respondents to Question 1.

- 6.3 To best reflect this outcome and the majority view of respondents who supported Question 1, it was felt by some Members that the extent of the scheme would need to be refined. Members supporting this view proposed the extent of the scheme be reduced to respect the findings of the consultation and ensure compliance by removing Mount Harry/Hitchen Hatch Road, St Botolph's Road, and the northern section of the A225 from the Vine to the Bat and Ball junction.
- 6.4 With the proposed amendments the scheme would best represent the majority of respondents (66%) who supported the first question in the consultation. It is further felt by these Members that it would not be appropriate for the JTB to ignore clear support for one option and to set aside significant objections (around 50%) for a less popular option.
- 6.5 Sevenoaks Town Council representatives believe there has been considerable consultation relating to the original and refined plans for a 20mph scheme in Sevenoaks town. Whilst there may still be a need for some minor refinements to the scheme, the JTB is requested to accept the public's response as being positive and move forward with the scheme as designed.
- 6.6 To reflect the wishes of both Sevenoaks Town Council Members and the remaining Members of the Group, the JTB is asked to consider the two options, as consulted upon or a reduced scheme as set out below:
- a) Reduce the extent of the scheme to reflect the findings of the consultation and ensure compliance by removing Mount Harry/Hitchen Hatch Road, St Botolph's Road, and the northern section of the A225 from the Vine to the Bat and Ball junction.
 - b) Proceed with the scheme as designed.

7. Legal

- 7.1 The current Traffic Regulation Orders (as advertised for the previous consultation) are valid for 24 months which will run out in September 2024. This means that if the scheme is progressed there is no need to repeat the legal TRO advertising exercise as any scheme would be within the limits of the previous legal process.

8. Finance

- 8.1 Sevenoaks Town Council has Resolved as part of its Community Investment Plan 2023 to fund the implementation of any resulting 20mph signage scheme estimated at £130,000 and a zebra crossing at Dartford Road estimated at £25,000 as approved for delivery via this consultation process.

APPENDICES

- A) Sevenoaks Town Council's 20mph Town Crier (including questionnaire)
- B) Lake Market Research Report on Sevenoaks Town Council 20mph Consultation
- C) KCC Average Speed Data (ATC's)
- D) KCC Collision Data for Pedestrian and Cyclists only
- E) KCC Walking Routes Map

