

Committee	Lead Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment
Date	26 July 2010
Report By	Director of Transport and Environment
Title of Report	Petition Calling for the introduction of a 20mph speed limit throughout Lewes
Purpose of Report	To consider the response to a petition calling for the introduction of a 20mph speed limit throughout Lewes.

RECOMMENDATION: The Lead Member is recommended to advise the petitioners that:

- (1.) the request for the introduction of a 20mph speed limit covering a large part of the town including the main arterial routes does not meet the national or local criteria governing the introduction of such limits;**
 - (2.) although it would be technically feasible to introduce a 20mph limit in a limited area of the town, the limited potential benefits in terms of any speed reduction or accident savings do not justify the use of County Council's increasingly limited financial resources at this time; and**
 - (3.) the County Council would be willing to consider the promotion of a 20mph limit in the town centre area or residential areas of the town should external sources of funding be identified.**
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1. Financial Appraisal

1.1 No provision has been made in the 2010/11 capital programme for the introduction of a 20mph speed limit. The scheme is on the indicative list of schemes for potential funding as part of future year's capital programme agreed by the Lead Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment on 22 March 2010. The estimated cost of the introduction of a 20mph limit in the town centre area of Lewes is £5,000. Given the recent announcements from the Government about the potential cuts in the amount of funding that will be available in future years for local transport improvements and the limited benefits that a 20mph limit is likely to deliver, any expenditure from the County Council's increasing limited financial resources cannot be justified at this time.

2. Supporting Information

2.1 At the County Council meeting on 30 March 2010 Councillor St. Pierre presented a petition to the Chairman containing more than 1500 signatures, calling on the Council "to introduce a 20mph limit throughout the town of Lewes". A copy of the petition and supporting documentation is available in the Members' room. A copy of the covering statement for the petition is contained in Appendix A. Standing Orders provide that where the Chairman considers it appropriate, petitions are considered by the relevant Committee or Lead Member and that a spokesperson for the petitioners be invited to address the Committee. The Chairman has referred this petition to the Lead Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment.

3. Comments / Appraisal

3.1 There are two main ways in which 20mph can be introduced; either as a signed area wide 20mph limit without any speed reducing features, or as a 20mph zone, including self enforcing traffic calming measures. More information about the options for implementing 20mph speed limits, the

criteria that need to be met to enable their introduction, an assessment of their effectiveness and the work that has been undertaken to date on the possible introduction of a 20mph limit in an area of Lewes, is set out in Appendix B.

3.2 The specifics of the 20mph limit scheme proposed by Living Streets in their petition consists of the introduction six gateway features on roads leading into the centre of Lewes, each with a traffic calming measure in place. Thereafter, in the remainder of the area it would consist of signing alone and roundels in the road. However, the specifics of this proposal would not meet the criteria governing the introduction of 20mph schemes set out in Appendix B in the following ways:

- it would result in the introduction of a 20mph limit on main traffic routes into the town where speeds are currently greater than 24mph without the self enforcing speed reduction measures in place at the required intervals. This would mean that the scheme would require additional enforcement resources from the Police who would therefore be unlikely to support its introduction;
- the relatively low level of casualties in the town means that the introduction of the scheme could not be justified as a casualty reduction measure.

3.3 Following the receipt of the petition from Living Streets, the Friends of Lewes wrote to the County Council supporting the call for a 20mph limit in the residential areas of Lewes but with the speed on the approach roads being retained at 30mph. A copy of their letter is set out in Appendix C.

3.4 Investigative work has been undertaken on the possible introduction of a 20mph signed speed limit, without self enforcing measures, in the core area of the town centre. Further details about this work are set out in Appendix B. There may be other residential areas of the town, off main through routes, where average speeds may be less than 24mph and where it would be technically feasible to introduced signed speed limits. However, given the limited speed and casualty reduction benefits that would be delivered by either a town centre scheme or a scheme covering a residential area of the town, even a relatively modest level of capital expenditure can not be justified at this time from the increasingly limited County Council resources. However, the County Council would consider promoting a 20mph scheme in an area of Lewes in the event that funding from an external source could be identified. Any 20mph speed limit would be likely to generate objections from those opposed to the introduction of additional signage in the town.

4. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendation

4.1 There are clear national and local criteria governing the introduction of 20mph speed limits. The proposal from Living Streets does not meet these criteria in a number of ways. It would be technically feasible to introduce a 20mph limit in the town centre area or the residential areas of the town where average speeds are 24mph or less but given the limited benefits that such schemes are likely to deliver, the County Council would only consider promoting such schemes in the event that external sources of funding could be identified.

RUPERT CLUBB
Director of Transport and Environment

Contact Officer: Alan Cook Tel No. 01273 482263

Local Members: Councillor O'Keeffe and Councillor St Pierre

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: None

Appendix B - Background information on the introduction of 20mph speed limits.

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this Appendix is to set out the ways in which 20mph speed limits can be introduced, the current national and local requirements relating to the introduction of 20mph limits, provide an assessment of their effectiveness and the investigative work that has been undertaken to date on the possible introduction of further 20mph limits in Lewes.

2. National and local policy guidance governing the introduction of 20mph speed limits

2.1 Under current national regulations and local policy guidance, there are currently two ways in which 20mph speed limits can be introduced:

- as 20mph limits – on roads where average speeds are 24mph or less, which are then signed with entry and exit signs and regular repeaters at points throughout the area.
- as 20mph zones – introduced on roads where average speeds are greater than 24mph. The zone is signed with entry and exit signs with traffic calming features introduced at 100m intervals to ensure that the zone is effectively self enforcing with average speeds being kept at 24mph or less.

2.2 In accordance with national guidance, signed only speed limits without calming features will only be introduced on roads where average speeds are 24mph or less. This is because if they were introduced on roads where the average speeds were greater than this in the absence of traffic calming features the limit would be unlikely to be self enforcing.

2.3 The other general criteria that need to be met in addition to the requirements about average speed are set out in policy PS4/30 (as amended). The policy states that 20mph zones and limits will only be pursued where:

- there would be casualty reduction benefits, particularly involving vulnerable road users;
- the lower limit would form part of an area wide traffic calming scheme a safe route to school or a town centre traffic management scheme; and
- the lower limit would be effectively self enforcing and would not require an unreasonable level of enforcement by the police.

2.4 Guidance from the Department for Transport is clear that neither 20mph limits nor 20mph zones should be implemented on roads with a strategic function or on main traffic routes where there are likely to be higher volumes of through traffic and larger vehicles¹.

3. Review of impact of 20mph limits and zones.

3.1 A considerable amount of research has been undertaken on the impact of 20mph limit and zones. This has demonstrated that the implementation of signed 20 mph limit without calming features only resulted in a 1 mph reduction in average speed². By contrast, the introduction of 20mph zones across the country has generally resulted in reductions of 9mph³ in average speeds.

4. Work on the possible introduction of a 20mph speed limit in Lewes

¹ Traffic Advisory Leaflet 09/99 (*20 mph Speed Limits and Zones*) (DETR 1999a)

² Update of guidance on setting local speed limits, Department for Transport,(2009).

³ London Road Safety Unit: Safety Research Report No. 2, Transport for London (2003)

4.1 In 1995 the County Council introduced a 20mph zone in the Southover area of Lewes. The scheme included a variety of calming measures and materials appropriate for use in a conservation area and cost £500,000 to implement. The scheme subsequently won an award from the Civic Trust.

4.2 In 2006 the Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee set up a Project Board which undertook a review of setting local speed limits in urban East Sussex. One of the recommendations coming out of the review was that:

“The County Council should develop a pilot 20mph zone that enables some of the alternative ideas, both resident self help and minimal engineering approaches, to be developed and evaluated. The outcome could be used as a shop window of ideas and good practice for use across the county. Areas for consideration as a pilot should include Lewes, various urban seafronts, Heathfield and Crowborough”.

4.3 Following the Scrutiny Report, the possible introduction of advisory “20’s plenty” signs in Lewes was investigated. This is a non regulatory sign which at the time was being trialled in Scotland. The proposal was to use the “20’s plenty” sign as a platform to trial the alternative approaches recommended in the Scrutiny Review. However, following consultation with the Department for Transport, the Government Office for the South East (GOSE) rejected the County Council’s request to use this sign, questioning its effectiveness. This decision from GOSE removed the possibility of a pilot project to trial the alternative approaches recommended by the Scrutiny Committee.

4.4 Traffic speeds were measured at a number of locations in the core of the town centre in August 2007 (19 sites in all). The results of these surveys demonstrated that average speeds on the roads in the town centre were below 24mph. Traffic speeds were also measured at three locations in the outer part of Lewes. The average speeds recorded at these three locations were greater than 24mph.

4.5 One of the objectives of the area wide speed limit introduced in Portsmouth was to address an identified accident problem. Records show that there have been few personal injury accidents in Lewes. In the three year period between May 2007 to April 2010 inclusive, 25 recorded injury crashes occurred within the area where the average speeds were recorded as being at or below 24mph. An analysis of the factors that contributed towards these reveals that none of them involved vehicles travelling in excess of the speed limit and in only one case was the fact that the vehicle travelling too fast for conditions (but not necessarily in excess of the speed limit) identified as a contributory factor. Given the small reduction in speeds that is likely to result from the introduction of a 20 mph limit, the introduction of a 20mph in the central area of Lewes could not be justified as an accident reduction measure.

4.6 On the basis of the results of the speed surveys undertaken in Lewes town centre, a 20mph limit could be introduced in the core of the town as the average speed is below 24mph. There may be other residential areas of the town, off main through routes, where average speeds may be less than 24mph and where it would be technically feasible to introduce signed speed limits. It is estimated that a signed only speed limit could be introduced in the town centre at a cost of £5,000. The introduction of a 20mph limit would involve the introduction of additional signage into the town centre conservation area. Even though many of 20mph repeater signs would be on existing street furniture, their introduction would be likely to generate objections especially in view of the limited speed reduction benefits that the scheme would be likely to deliver.

Friends of Lewes

the Lewes Civic Society



Rupert Clubb Esq
Director of Transport and Environment
East Sussex County Council
St Anne's Crescent
LEWES

29 March 2010

Dear Rupert

20 mph in LEWES

Doubtless you are aware that over 5 years ago this Society asked the County Council to consider the imposition of a 20mph zone in Lewes and later that year the then lead Member agreed to such a scheme being introduced in the central area of the town. In our periodic discussions with County Council officers, most recently with James Harris and Dale Foden on 29 September 2009, we have enquired about progress towards implementing this decision and been given a number of reasons why it hasn't yet taken place.

In view of the publicity which Living Streets are having about having a 20mph zone for the whole of the town a motion was put forward at this Society's AGM last week that we should support it. However, following discussion, an amended motion was agreed by the majority present that supports the call for a 20mph zone in the residential areas of Lewes but that the speed on the various approach roads should be 30mph.

I thought you should be aware of this decision and would be glad to know when we might see some progress on this issue which, as I mentioned above, was first raised with the County Council over 5 years ago.

Yours sincerely
Robert Cheesman

Robert Cheesman



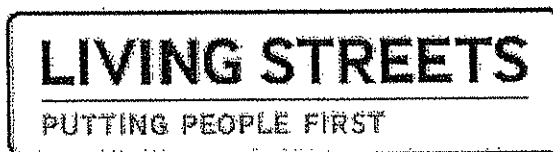
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Registered Charity No 258756

Web Site: www.friends-of-lewes.org.uk

PRESIDENT: ~~Peter Motte~~ *Myrtila Stewart - Robert GBE CUM*





20mph for Lewes Petition

Lewes Living Streets

The Petition reads:

We, the undersigned, call for a 20mph speed limit throughout the residential areas of Lewes.

Please do not sign this petition if you have already signed elsewhere.

Our total Petition contains more than 1500 signatures which, due to our committed desire to avoid duplicates, contains the above advice on each page of the Petition.

We seek a 20mph speed limit throughout the town of Lewes.

A map enclosed with the Petition shows the six Gateways needed to implement this scheme. We envisage each Gateway signed with a traffic calming measure in place, in keeping with Department for Transport advice.

Thereafter we look for signage alone and roundels in the road to complete this scheme, again following DfT advice.

We think this scheme offers the most economical option for East Sussex County Council to introduce a 20mph speed limit in Lewes.

We believe that this unified scheme presents a cogent, compelling and practical case for implementing a 20mph limit, and could usefully be used elsewhere.

We respectfully request that East Sussex County Council examine the merits of our proposal, taking account of our evidence of public support for it.

The address for correspondence is:

Lewes Living Streets
Town Hall Offices
The Town Hall
High Street
Lewes
East Sussex BN7 2QS