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## **Faversham Town wide 20mph limit trial**

**To:** Swale Joint Transportation Board, 6 December 2021

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

**Classification:** Unrestricted

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### **Summary**

This paper provides an update on the Faversham town-wide 20mph limit trial that was funded by the Department for Transport's Emergency Active Travel Fund.

This report is intended to enable discussion and to consider and debate the officer recommendation.

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### **1.0 Background**

- 1.1 Kent County Council (KCC) was awarded £1.6 million from the Department for Transport's (DfT) Emergency Active Travel Fund (EATF) (tranche 1) to invest in walking and cycling initiatives across the County. This was in response to the Covid 19 pandemic and the social distancing restrictions that were in place, which reduced the capacity of public transport and sought to promote more active travel.
- 1.2 Demand for cycling has been growing nationally, with cycling retailers experiencing high demand over the past 18 months. There has been an increasing demand across the County for area wide 20mph schemes. In response to the opportunity that the EATF presented a decision was made, by the KCC Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation, to progress East Kent and West Kent town-wide trials. The project would enable KCC to assess how these schemes work for large scale areas before similar schemes are considered elsewhere. Tonbridge and Faversham were chosen as the trial areas. KCC had been working with Faversham Town Council and a 20mph working group for some time and some progress had already been made with regard to assessing the suitability of key routes to be promoted as 20mph limits.
- 1.3 Due to the 'emergency' nature of the fund, the DfT informed all highway authorities that works must be started within four weeks of providing the funding, and then completed within eight weeks which meant the "go live" date for the trial needed to be in place by 18 September 2020. This was particularly challenging and took place during the height of the pandemic.

- 1.4 The trial was introduced through an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) which can be utilised for 18 months if required. This allows for changes to the highway to be implemented quickly with consultation taking place throughout the trial, whilst the public are experiencing the change. It also means KCC can test the impact and monitor to see how it performs. Another benefit of using an ETRO is that it allows for changes to be made during the trial as long as additional roads are not added, as these would not have been consulted on.
- 1.5 The trial 20mph limit was agreed following discussion with Faversham Town Council who had set up a 20's Plenty Committee and had been working closely with 20's Plenty Faversham since 2015. The limit was defined on the ground using signing and road markings alone. No traffic calming measures such as buildouts or road cushions/humps were installed other than planters at Bysing Wood Road, Whitstable Road and The Mall at the gateway features to the 20mph limit.
- 1.6 The aim of the town-wide 20mph speed limit is to reduce speeds and therefore create a more pleasant environment, one that would encourage and enable safer active travel, this in turn helps to support the sharing of road space with cyclists, especially where dedicated measures cannot be provided due to a lack of available highway land and other constraints. This scheme can support walking and cycling, as part of a range of network improvements which will be confirmed in the forthcoming borough Active Travel Strategy.
- 1.7 Supporting walking and cycling especially for local journeys can also help to improve physical and mental health, reduce traffic congestion, contribute towards improved air quality and compliment ongoing infrastructure upgrades.
- 1.8 The success of the trial was to be determined by analysing several sources of information, which include pre, during and post-trial surveys and other monitoring data:
  - Consultation feedback
  - Attitudinal surveys (face to face questionnaires – approx. 600).
  - Pedestrian counts
  - Cycle counts
  - Average speed levels
  - Crash data (although this needs to be over a longer period, usually 3 years)
- 1.9 It should be noted that the trial has been implemented in an extremely unusual year for collecting and analysing data, compared with previous years due to the pandemic, the restrictions that have been introduced and the implications these have had for travel demand and commuting patterns. In most cases only 8–10 months' worth of data has been collected, the majority through the autumn, winter and spring months which historically do not

encourage take up of walking and cycling in England due to inclement weather. Despite having similar climates some other European countries currently have a higher propensity to cycle year-round and have better networks to support this.

1.10 One of the aims of introducing the Town-wide 20mph speed limit as a trial and assessment methodology used is to learn how best to implement other town wide 20mph locations within Kent.

1.11 A plan of the extent of the 20mph limit can be seen in **Appendix A**. The red outline identifies the extent of the trial area.

## **2.0 The Consultation Report and feedback**

2.1 KCC commissioned Project Centre Ltd (PCL) to analyse the feedback received from the consultation and Agilysis Ltd to undertake an independent review and analysis of all the data being captured. The Agilysis Independent review can be seen in **Appendix B** and the full report by PCL can be seen in Appendix C of the Agilysis report.

2.2 The consultation received 668 responses. The key findings are:

- The majority of consultation respondents agreed with the idea of a town-wide 20mph scheme, with seven out of ten people noting that it will make Faversham safer.
- In addition to improved safety, most people also agreed that the 20mph limits will make Faversham safer (65%), healthier (61%) and cleaner (57%).
- Some who supported the scheme also suggested extending the 20mph limit.
- 37% of respondents objected to the scheme, in comparison to the 63% who were in support. Of those who objected, their concerns included possible impacts on public safety and enforcement issues, as well as some suggestions for the exemption of certain streets which they felt were inappropriate for 20mph.

2.3 13% of respondents said they were against a blanket wide 20mph speed limit with the following roads being mentioned as unsuitable:

- Bysing Wood Road (24 mentions)
- Whitstable road (11 mentions)
- Dark Hill (4 mentions)
- East Street (3 mentions)
- Forbes Road, Newton Road, (2 mentions per road)

2.4 A few streets were mentioned that should be included within the 20mph extents.

- Love Lane (7 mentions)
- Ospringe Street (4 mentions)
- Water Lane (2 mentions)

### **3.0 Additional data analysis**

3.1 KCC commissioned Agilysis Ltd to do an independent analysis of the mixture of qualitative and quantitative data collected and make recommendations. The full report investigates and compares the 2 towns (Faversham and Tonbridge) data. It also looks at other examples of large area 20mph speed limits nationally and their findings and other local emerging strategies and how a lower speed limit may assist in their implementation such as the Active Travel Strategy. The full independent report can be seen in **Appendix B**. A 'Faversham Town only' summary of that report can be seen in **Appendix C**.

### **4.0 Attitudes – Qualitative Survey Data**

4.1 KCC commissioned Lake Market Research to conduct a research and evaluation study to monitor resident response in Faversham via a pre and during trial period face to face survey. The full report can be seen in Appendix H of the Agilysis report.

4.2 Generally, attitudes towards 20mph limits and their impact were positive amongst Faversham respondents to the survey. Support was high in Faversham and agreement with the appropriateness of speed limits increased post-implementation. Faversham residents' reasons for implementing 20mph limits were that they 'increased safety', 'slow down traffic' and are 'better/safer for pedestrians'.

4.3 Overall, there were high levels of agreement that 20mph limits act as a facilitator for safe walking and cycling

4.4 Where there were concerns about 20mph limits, they were that a 'blanket imposition is not welcome', '30mph is adequate' and 'drivers ignore 20mph limits.' Generally, negativity around driving and 20mph limits in Faversham did not increase during the trial, with no change in agreement that 20mph limits are ignored and a substantial decrease in agreement that 20mph limits make journey times 'irritating'.

4.5 The survey included pedestrian, cyclist and driver attitudes. There are positive attitudes that 20mph limits encourage more walking and cycling. This was reinforced by reported and observed behaviour. Over 23% of respondents said that their levels of walking had increased after the 20mph limit was installed and over 22% felt that there was more cycling occurring in

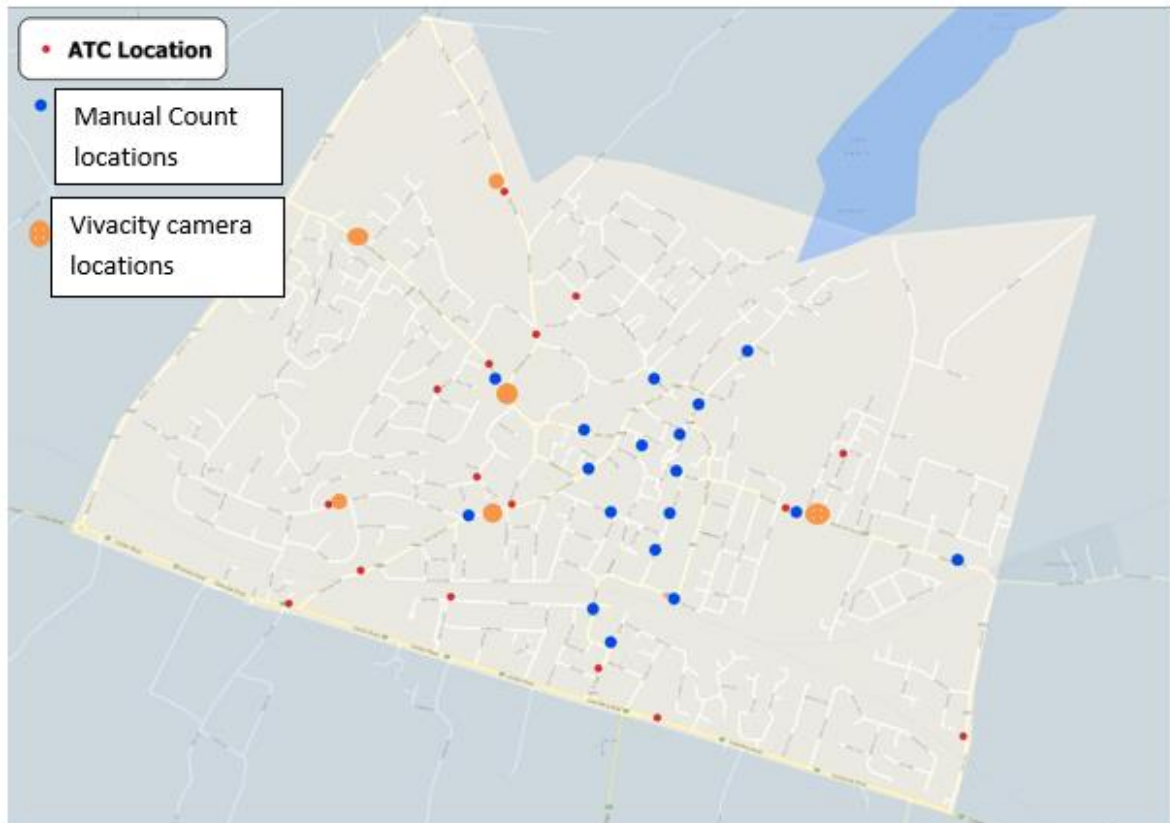
their area. Observed data does not show an increase in cycling in Kent but respondents stated that they were cycling more, and they were noticing more cycling in their towns.

4.6 2% of those surveyed stated there was less walking and cycling occurring in their area.

## 5.0 Speed Data

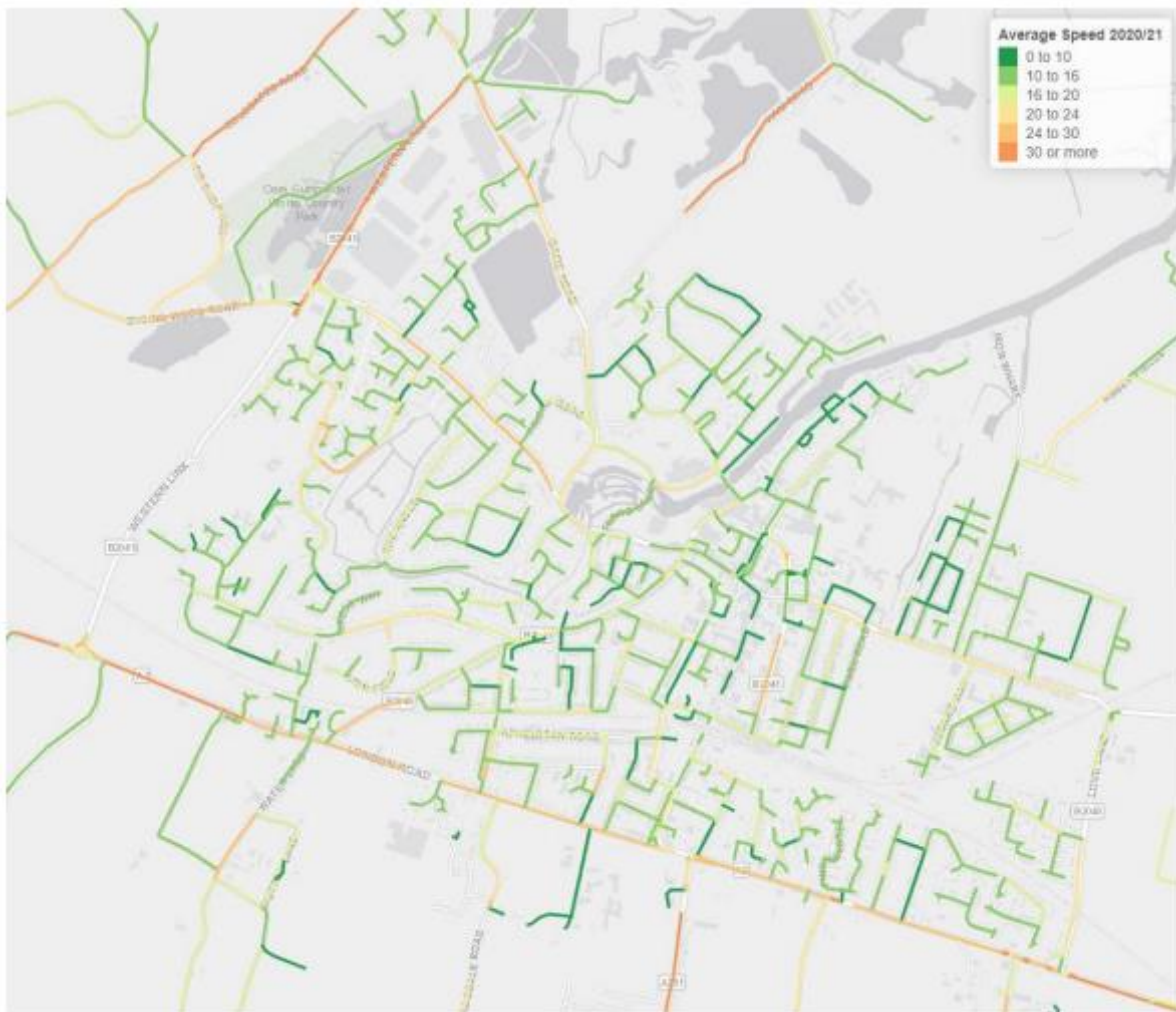
5.1 **Map 1** below shows the locations of the traffic counts (vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists) and speed surveys. The ATC data is collected via loops placed across the road, the Vivacity data is collected via sensors on various street lighting columns and the manual counts by visually counting movements of pedestrians and cyclists.

**Map 1**



5.2 **Map 2** below shows telematic data with average speeds across Faversham between April 2020 and March 2021. Most roads in Faversham had average speeds below 20mph. Very few roads had average speeds above 24mph. Most roads saw reductions up to 5mph between 2019/20 and 2020/21. Some roads saw increases in average speeds although most were less than 5mph and all within roads that already had average speeds below 20mph and have low traffic volumes.

**Map 2**



5.3 The vast majority of roads in Faversham are already below the 24mph threshold for introducing a 20mph limit using signing and road marking alone.

5.4 **Table 1** shows the average speeds both before and after implementation of the 20mph speed limit as well as the observed difference in average speeds. The table shows that all but 2 locations that were surveyed benefitted from speed reductions ranging from 0.6mph to 4.5mph.

- 5.5 KCC's 20mph policy allows for a 20mph speed limit to be introduced where average speeds are up to 28mph but must be accompanied by additional innovative measures such as removal of centre lines, road surface colour changes, use of planters instead of physical buildouts, staggered on street parking etc.
- 5.6 The roads surveyed in July 2021 which had speeds above 20mph previously all experienced decreases in speed, with only Oare Road now above 28mph and only Bysing Wood Road and Lower Road remaining above 24 mph.
- 5.7 Traffic profiles and comparisons of data sources can be seen in Appendix A, B and F of the Agilysis report.

**Table 1**

<b>Location of ATC survey</b>	<b>Sept 2017 Speeds in mph</b>	<b>Jul 21 Speeds in mph</b>	<b>Difference In mph</b>
Athelstan Road *	15.0	20.7	5.6
Bysing Wood Road	27.9	26.3	-1.7
Lower Road	26.0	24.9	-1.1
Oare Road	32.4	29.0	-3.4
Old Gate Road**	15.2	17.6	2.5
Ospringe Road	26.1	23.5	-2.7
Priory Row	18.7	17.5	-1.2
Reedland Crescent	19.8	15.3	-4.5
South Road	23.0	22.4	-0.6
Stonebridge Way	20.0	18.8	-1.3
The Mall	24.0	22.5	-1.5
Westgate Road	17.6	16.5	-1.1
Whitstable Road	22.9	22.2	-0.7

\* Athelstan Road was used as rat run by traffic avoiding A2/A251 road works during July 2021.

\*\* Old Gate Road has low traffic volumes and at the point of survey, fairly straight in road alignment.

## **6.0 Pedestrian and cycle counts – observed**

- 6.1 KCC commissioned PMRS to carry out pedestrian and cycle counts. The full report can be seen in Appendix I in the Agilysis report. Data was gathered from pedestrian and cyclist counts in June 2020, September/October 2020, December 2020 and June/July 2021.
- 6.2 The main findings showed that there were recorded increases in pedestrian flows compared to the pre-trial baseline with Faversham recording a 5% increase between the June 2020 survey and the second survey in

September/October 2020, a 5% decrease between June 2020 and December 2020 and an overall 18% increase between June 2020 and June/July 2021.

- 6.3 Cycling counts over the same periods decreased by 1.8% between the July 2020 survey and June/July 2021.
- 6.4 Cycling counts appear to be more affected by time of year and weather than pedestrian counts.

## 7.0 Recommendations

- 7.1 The recommendation is to retain the full extent of the 20mph limit as per the trial extents.
- 7.2 Overall the extended 20mph limit (trial area) will contribute to improvements in road safety (national statistics show that for every 1mph reduction in speed there is a minimum 5% or more reduction in the accident rate in urban areas<sup>1/2</sup>) and will aid the implementation of Kent's Active Travel Strategy and emerging Vision Zero Strategy. The moderate speed reductions, increased pedestrian confidence and the small but significant self-reported uptake in active travel modes, suggest there is merit in retaining large parts of the limit without any further measures.
- 7.3 There is, however, a need to achieve better compliance with the reduced speed limit on some roads, particularly those that have average speeds over 24mph. Therefore, officers are recommending that investigations take place to see whether additional complimentary measures could be implemented to support this. These may include education, training & publicity and/or potential engineering interventions. It is important to note that KCC has no dedicated funding to proceed with any interventions at this stage.
- 7.4 Appendix G in the Agilysis report provides pre-trial crash map information. The **map 3** below replicates the information and clearly shows the majority of incidents occur on the arterial/main routes into and out of Faversham Town as would be expected due to larger volumes and generally higher speeds than in residential areas. Post-trial crash data is not available at present since analysis of crash data takes place over a minimum 3-year period to see whether a pattern is occurring at specific cluster locations or there are changes in rates and/or severity on routes. A simple analysis of the data would suggest, assuming a minimum 5% reduction in the accident rate per 1.0mph reduction in speed would equate to a 8.5 % reduction in accidents along Bysing Wood Road, 5.5% along Lower Road and 17% along Oare Road.

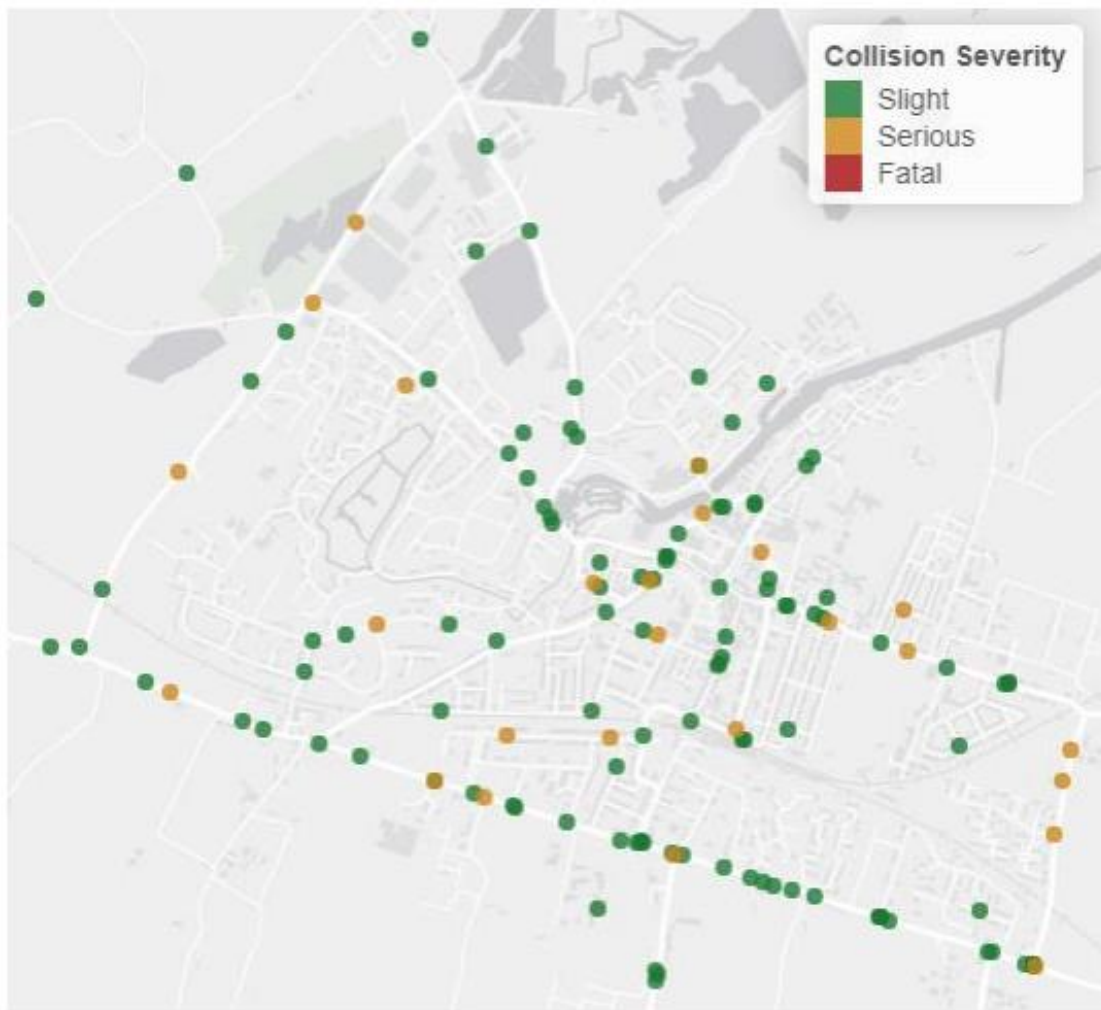
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<sup>1</sup> Finch et al (1994) 'TRL Project Report 58: Speed, Speed Limits and Accidents' URL: <https://trl.co.uk/reports/PR58>

<sup>2</sup> Taylor et al (2002) 'TRL Report 421: The Effects of Drivers Speed on the Frequency of Road Accidents' URL: <https://trl.co.uk/reports/TRL421>



Map 3



Reported Injury Collisions in Faversham (2015-2019)

7.5 In order to achieve better compliance of the 20mph speed limit, it is recommended that the following roads should be further investigated to see if additional engineering or innovative measures could be introduced to achieve better speed compliance.

- Bysing Wood Road – generally a wide, straight distributor road with wide footways and a shared footway/cycleway for much of its length where people and vehicles mix regularly.
- Lower Road – generally a wide distributor road with footways either side where people and vehicles mix regularly
- Oare Road – a mixed rural/urban/industrial road varying in width but with significant development being progressed. There are areas where pedestrian and vehicles do not mix but for consistency of a town wide 20mph limit it would make sense to include Oare Road.
- Newton Road – although not included within the ATC survey sites, local knowledge suggests that this road should also be included as it has a high number of pedestrians crossing it.

7.6 To support the existing and any future engineering measures proposed as well as contribute to positively changing behaviours in the longer term, a targeted behavioural change campaign is recommended which will aim to raise awareness, increase knowledge and positively influence intended behaviours. This is designed to promote the benefits of lower speeds to all road users and how a 20mph speed limit supports our collective progress towards Kent's Active Travel and Vision Zero Strategies and Faversham's emerging Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

Contact Officer:	Jamie Watson, Programme Manager, Schemes Planning and Delivery Team, Kent County Council 03000 418181
Reporting to:	Tim Read, Head of Transportation, Kent County Council 03000 418181

## **Appendices**

*Appendix A - Plan of extent of town-wide 20mph trial area*

*Appendix B – Independent Evaluation and Review of 20mph Trials in Kent*

*Appendix C – Independent Evaluation and Review of 20mph Trials Faversham Summary*