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Independent Evaluation and Review of 20mph Trials – Faversham Summary

Provided to Kent County Council

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SUMMARY OF FAVERSHAM 20MPH TRIAL

This report summarises the findings of an independent review and evaluation of two experimental traffic orders (ETOs) implemented as two separate town-wide 20 mph trials in Kent, with this summary focusing on **Faversham specifically**. The full report sets out the analysis of the trials in Faversham and Tonbridge in detail.

Speed reduction plays a key role in a number of policy areas, and it is therefore important to determine if these trials have been effective in achieving their aims. Speed has a direct influence on the likelihood, and severity, of road collisions occurring. Nilsson's 'Power Model' "shows that a 1% increase in average speed results in approximately a 2% increase in injury crash frequency, a 3% increase in severe crash frequency, and a 4% increase in fatal crash frequency" (International Transport Forum, 2018, p. 5). Therefore, reducing speed by a few miles an hour can greatly reduce the likelihood and severity of road collisions. In addition to increasing actual risk, inappropriate speeds can influence road users' perceptions of risk, reducing their likelihood to engage in active travel modes, as cyclists and pedestrians are more vulnerable in the event of a collision.

Kent's Vision Zero Strategy uses a Safe System approach to strive to have no road fatalities or life changing injuries on its roads by 2050. Furthermore, it seeks to encourage walking and cycling as the safe and easy choice. A fundamental element of the international best practice of the Safe System is 'Safe Speeds'. A 2020 YouGov survey of Kent residents found that the perception of safety was a key influence on the likelihood to use active travel modes, with 56% feeling that traffic is too fast to cycle on the roads. Kent's road safety strategy emphasises community engagement to address concerns and improve safety and quality of life.

Both Faversham and Tonbridge are developing their Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs). Faversham see 20mph limits as one component of a longer-term plan to enable more walking and cycling.

Achieving speed reductions is therefore a central pillar of these strategies, with this report setting out findings from the trials and providing recommendations for future actions.

Both qualitative and quantitative data have been used to understand the impact of the introduction of 20mph limits in these two towns. These sources are:

- Behavioural surveys comprising the outputs of c. 600 face to face surveys with questionnaires (1,800 respondents in total)
- Pre-existing research studies and historic case studies.
- Consultation evidence received by KCC between 31st July 2020 and 3rd March 2021 on the experimental traffic orders for both trial areas
- Road user counts and vehicle speed measurements from automatic traffic counters
- Road user counts and vehicle speed measurements from Vivacity Artificial Intelligence sensors
- In-vehicle telematics data (highways network speed) from Ordnance Survey

The town-wide 20mph limits implemented in Faversham were part of plans to increase walking and cycling and was delivered in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, where rapid solutions were required to encourage social distancing when travelling and active travel schemes were being funded and promoted. The scheme relied on interventions including road markings, signs, gateways, and awareness campaigns to inform road users of the new limit. The previously planned physical interventions in support of 20mph were not made.

Kent County Council completed formal consultations on the trials with residents. Online consultations were conducted between July 2020 and March 2021, with responses from 668 individuals for the Faversham consultation. The outcomes were favourable for Faversham, with 63% of resident respondents in favour of the 20mph town-wide limits.

Compliance with the new speed limit was good in Faversham. In July 2021, five of Faversham's thirteen sites (38%) had average speeds below 20mph, and 10 of 13 (77%) had average speeds below 24mph (based on traffic count data). There was a 4.1% reduction in average speed (0.9mph).

Figure 1 - Average speeds in Faversham (April 2020 - March 2021)

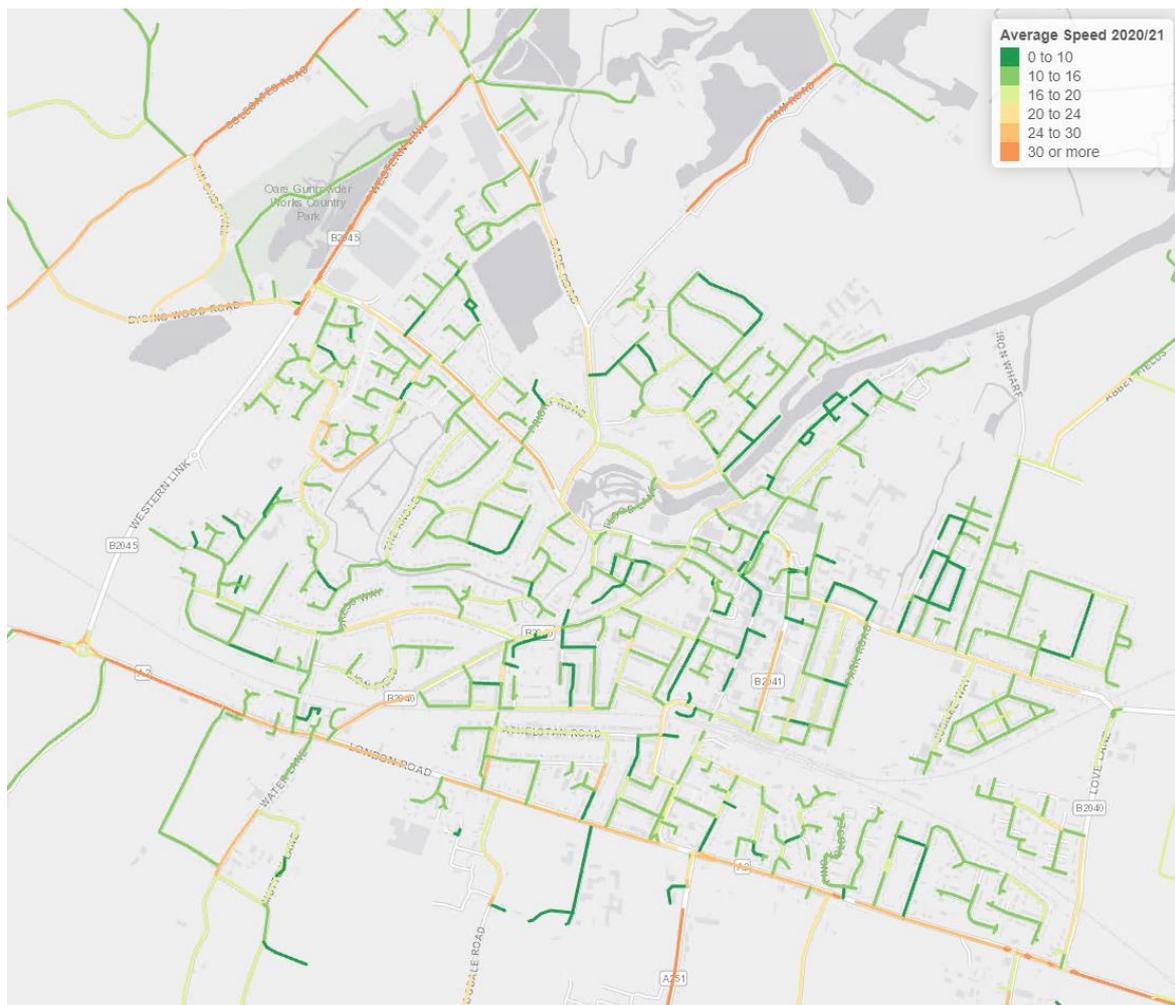


Figure 1 shows telematic data for the whole of Faversham, with the majority of roads achieving average speeds of less than 16mph. Most roads in Faversham saw

reductions of up to 5mph. It should be noted that telematics data tends to show lower speeds as it is measured over a stretch of road, rather than an individual location. Furthermore, it is an average over a year, rather than a week. Both data sources show generally low speeds in Faversham.

Generally, attitudes towards 20mph limits and their impact were positive amongst Faversham respondents to the consultation. 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.'

Where there were concerns about 20mph limits, they were that a 'blanket imposition is not welcome', '30mph is adequate' and 'drivers ignore 20mph limits.' This last concern was reinforced by a 5% reduction post-implementation in agreement that 'most drivers obey speed limits.' Generally, negativity around driving and 20mph limits in Faversham did not increase post-trial, with no change in agreement that 20mph limits are ignored and a substantial decrease in agreement that 20mph limits make journey times irritating. There was an increase that 20mph limits are frustrating for drivers, though. However, agreement that it is acceptable to always drive to the set speed limit of an area increased, showing the large majority of respondents believe it is acceptable to comply with speed limits. In Faversham, three-quarters of respondents, pre and post, agreed that 20mph limits make it more acceptable to drive at lower speeds.

These positive attitudes towards walking and cycling were reinforced by reported and observed behaviour. Over 10% of respondents said that their levels of walking and cycling had increased after the 20mph limits were installed and over 20% felt that there was more walking and cycling occurring in their area. There were also increases in pedestrian counts in the town.

Faversham has a history of a '20's Plenty' campaign, which has laid the foundation of a behavioural shift and support through community involvement and campaign messaging in the years prior to implementation. The previous engagement work will have influenced the high levels of support and good compliance with the 20mph limits.

The full report details the individual speed data for each road, allowing Kent County Council and Faversham Town Council to review each site and to determine if additional measures are required to encourage compliance with 20mph (or if limits should return to 30mph).

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The 20mph zone will contribute to the strategic road safety and active travel objectives set out locally but consideration is required as to how to improve acceptability and compliance in specific locations. The speed reductions, coupled with small but significant self-reported uptake in active travel modes, suggest there is merit in retaining limits where compliance was achieved and assessing roads where the average speed is above 24mph.
- In Faversham, concerns regarding cycling infrastructure need to be addressed in ongoing consultation with the community.

- Enforcement remains an important issue for residents post implementation. Authorities, in conjunction with the Police, should focus on 'compliance benefit messaging' as oppose to punitive enforcement. This shifts the narrative so as to generate public support through changing individual mindsets. Addressing driver behaviour is key to cultivating safe environments for active travel modes. A lack of driver consideration for other roads users is one of the issues where the limits reviewed here have not reduced people's concerns significantly.
- Shared responsibility is a key imperative within the Safe System philosophy adopted within Kent's Vision Zero Strategy. Communication to work with road users and increase that sense of responsibility could be key to increasing acceptance of 20mph zones.
- To keep alignment with the authorities' wishes for the zones to be self-enforced, compliance messaging should be produced which articulates the evidence presented here that 20mph (signed only) zones can have a positive effect on average speeds and active travel.
- Longer-term commitment, sustained public engagement, articulated messaging through a tailored marketing mix, and the maintenance of intergrated policy approaches towards 20mph signed only zones are all more likely to yield success moving forward with the schemes in other towns. These actions are thought to have been significant in achieving public support in Faversham.



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