
Tonbridge Town wide 20mph zone

To: Tonbridge Joint Transportation Board, 21 September 2020

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

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary

This paper provides an update on the DfT's Emergency Active Travel Fund relating specifically to the Tonbridge Town wide 20mph limit.

This report is for information only.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 On 9 May 2020 the Secretary of State for Transport announced that the Government would be providing funding to enable Local Highway Authorities to implement Active Travel schemes to make roadspace safer and more accommodating for pedestrians and cyclists as the UK emerges from lockdown. The funding announcement on 27 May indicated that Kent could be allocated a total of up to £8.1million.
- 1.2 On 28 May, KCC officers were advised this funding would be allocated in two 'tranches' and would require the submission of a pro-forma. DfT also advised all Authorities that they must submit a proforma for the first tranche (£1.6m for KCC) within 6 working days by Friday 5 June. Only upon the success of this bid would the tranche 1 funds be allocated.
- 1.3 On Friday 26 June the DfT advised that KCC had been successful in our submission and were to receive the full £1.6m of funding with the objectives of the fund; to facilitate active travel in light of the pandemic and to 'lock in' the benefits of the increased active travel we have seen.
- 1.4 DfT informed KCC that works must be started within 4 weeks and then completed within 8 weeks (18 September).

2.0 The Report

- 2.1 KCC Officers needed to respond very quickly to this allocation, to ensure compliance and strengthen our position regarding the opportunities for the remaining £6.4million. With the DfT requirements in mind Tonbridge was

chosen as a trial town-wide 20mph scheme as it had long been an aspiration for KCC Members and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council Councillors representing Tonbridge Town.

- 2.2 There are studies that show 20mph schemes encourage healthier transport choices such as walking and cycling, and they increase levels of walking and cycling by about a fifth. The County Council is also anticipating more people will be travelling to work and to school by bike or on foot so is hopeful the change will make this safer and easier for the people of Tonbridge.
- 2.3 The scheme is being introduced through an Experimental Traffic Order initially for 6 months but can be extended to 18 months if required. This allows for changes to the highway to be implemented quickly and consulted on 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.
- 2.4 The consultation started on 31 July 2020 and will run until 1 February 2021. The consultation can be viewed at: www.kent.gov.uk/tonbridge20mph. On completion of the trial period a decision will be made on whether to make the trial permanent. This decision will be informed via feedback on the consultation as well as monitoring changes in behaviour, pedestrian and cycle counts and comparisons with pre/post average speeds. Crash collision data takes typically 3 years before any pre/post patterns can be determined.
- 2.5 Implementation of the scheme will focus on road signs, gateways and lining. Signs alone have little power to influence positive behaviour change. Without the knowledge of why the 20mph limit has been introduced, there will be minimal acceptance and compliance. This is achieved by raising awareness, increasing knowledge and influencing positive behaviour change. Therefore, engaging and consistent communication is key to achieving a positive outcome for this scheme.
- 2.6 A communications campaign will take place with the objective to raise awareness, educate, engage with the community and encourage behaviour change. This will be measured by attitudinal surveys (pre, mid and post implementation) and the monitoring of numbers of people walking and cycling via counts pre and post implementation.
- 2.7 The key message will focus on creating a healthier, safer, cleaner town for everyone with the branding shown in appendix A – newsletter (delivered 24, 25 and 26 August town wide), believed to be an important element that will help contribute to the success of the scheme. This branding is to be used for future town-wide 20mph schemes, but in particular Faversham which is the other town-wide 20mph limit being trialled in tranche 1 of the DfT Active Travel Fund.
- 2.8 The implementation of the trial started mid-August and is due to be completed by 18 September.

3.0 Recommendation(s)

3.1 The Joint Transportation Board is asked to note the content of the report.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Branding - copy of newsletter