
**LARKFIELD - PROPOSED SPEED LIMIT CHANGES TO VARIOUS ROADS IN THE DISTRICT OF
TONBRIDGE & MALLING**

To: **Tonbridge & Malling Joint Transportation Board – 8 March 2021**

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

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Local Electoral Division: **Malling Central**

Summary: This report provides details of the consultation that took place on the proposed reduction in current speed limits to various roads in Larkfield and is being promoted by Trudy Dean (County Member for Malling Central). The report recommends the proposals are taken forward to detailed design and implementation in a phased approach.

For Recommendation

1.0 Introduction and Background

1.1 The objective of the scheme is to encourage driver compliance with lower speeds through Larkfield therefore making the local road network safer for all methods of transport. The proposals see the speed limit lowered to 20mph on 84 roads within Larkfield.

A location plan for this scheme can be found in **Appendix A** of this report and a list of the road names in **Appendix B**.

1.2 The proposed scheme will:

- Reduce the existing posted speed limits on various access roads and local distributor routes in Larkfield, using a combination of repeater signs and roundels/road markings.
- Provide enhanced entry points into the new speed zones with new entry speed limit terminal signs.
- Seek to reduce street clutter by utilising existing signs and posts where possible.

1.3 The drawings used for the consultation (as shown in Appendix A of this report) have been subject to a Road Safety Audit.

2.0 The Consultation

2.1 A consultation with local residents and other stakeholders took place on Friday, 8 January until Monday 1 February 2021.

2.2 At the end of the consultation a total of 132 responses were received 84 (64%) in favour and 48 (36%) objecting. Amongst those supporting the proposal were both East Malling and Larkfield and Ditton Parish Councils, all Ditton and Larkfield Borough Councillors and Tracey Crouch MP.

Of the eighty-four (84) supporting responses received from the consultation, the overall majority support the lower speed limits on the grounds of promoting a safer environment for all road users. Other themes include:

1. Reducing the speed limit will help to lessen the air and noise pollution.
2. Improve quality of life and encourage use of other modes of transport such as cycling.

Of the forty-eight (48) objections it was noted that objections could be filtered into several reasons for objecting. These are as follows.

1. Not all roads need a reduced speed limit.
2. Current speeds are acceptable.
3. The 20mph speed limit will not be adhered to.
4. Lower speed limits will increase congestion.
5. Concern over enforcement of existing speed limits.
6. Concerns about the use of traffic calming such as road humps.

2.3 The objections and an overall response to the objections is given in **Appendix C**. It can be seen that several of those objecting nevertheless supported the speed limit of 20mph in the blue roads.

2.4 In addition to the official KCC consultation, Trudy Dean, County Member for Larkfield has undertaken a separate consultation with a summary of the results given in **Appendix D**. A total of 106 responses were received of which 79 (75%) supported the proposal, and 29 (25%) objected.

3.0 Discussion

3.1 Due to the scale of the scheme and the only available funding via the local County Members Combined Member Grant at present it will only be possible to implement the scheme in a phased approach should the Board recommend progressing with the detailed design, costing and implementation.

- 3.2 The blue routes only need minimal signing and lining to provide a 20mph limit as existing speeds are within the acceptable range for a 20mph limit.
- 3.3 The red routes require additional measures over and above signing and lining to bring speeds down which are at present beyond the funding available although there may be some localised areas that could have a reduced speed limit with minimal engineering due to the geometry and width of the road and activity taking place along the route.

Corporate Implications

4.0 Financial and VAT

- 4.1 Following confirmation of a recommendation by the Joint Transportation Board, the extents of a potential scheme will be designed and costed with the intention that it is funded using the local County Members Combined Member Grant.

5.0 Legal

All works will be within the Highway for which Kent County Council is responsible.

6.0 Corporate

None.

7.0 Recommendation(s)

- 7.1 The board approves the proposals are taken forward to detailed design and implementation. This will be in a phased approach and the extent of the reduced speed limit will be dependent upon available funding. Any proposals for traffic calming features on red routes, apart from signage and road markings, should be subject to further consultation.

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Appendices

- Appendix A – Plan of proposed 20mph limit, Larkfield.
- Appendix B – List of roads included in proposed 20mph limit.
- Appendix C - The objections and an overall response to the objections.
- Appendix D – Summary of Independent consultation undertaken by Trudy Dean – County Member for Malling Central