

Report from the 20s Plenty for Faversham Working Group 28 November 2016

The Working Group has been examining how to best implement a 20mph speed limit throughout all residential streets in Faversham.

1. Background and local context

Faversham is a truly special place, as well as being beautiful and historic it is much loved. It benefits from a strong and active community of residents, who are connected to each other and their local environment. They are passionate about what happens in the town and many work tirelessly to make it the best it can be.

Faversham is also a place where people choose to live, and for this reason it has attracted significant housing development. However the very qualities that make it attractive to developers, its compact size, its sense of community and its 'walkability' are also threatened by this new development. 2,000 new dwellings are planned for Faversham bringing with them more vehicles, more congestion, more pollution. Ospringle St/the A2 already suffers pollution levels above legally acceptable limits and is a designated Air Quality Management Area.

Faversham needs to be a 20mph town because driving at 20mph is part of an infrastructure that is good for health, good for congestion and good for the economy. Faversham is a 20 minute walking town, the time it takes to walk across it and we want to keep it that way. More walking and cycling must be delivered as a safer and healthier alternative to vehicle use, to enhance well-being and strengthen our town centre. Without an infrastructure that supports this shift, we face the very real crisis of gridlock and the certain escalation of life- threatening pollution.

Faversham is largely residential but experiences high volumes of traffic (including significant numbers of commercial vehicles and HGVs). Many of its pavements are narrow, so residents walk uncomfortably close to fast-moving traffic. Topography and rows of parked cars obscure sight lines, making visibility difficult for both motorists and pedestrians. Several alleyways provide short-cuts to health centres, green spaces, schools, nurseries and the town centre but they are cleaved by busy roads that are difficult and dangerous to cross. There are very few pedestrian crossings. There are two secondary schools and three primary schools in town but not a single one has traffic calming measures, slower speed signs, pedestrian crossings or crossing assistants.

2. Consultation

The 20s Plenty Campaign in Faversham began by asking fellow residents how they felt about roads here. Many people mentioned the speed of local traffic and identified key spots where they felt unsafe. They were aware that two people had been killed on zebra crossings and said they currently drive short distances rather than walk.

During the Faversham Transport Weekend in May of this year, we consulted just over 100 residents and asked them to place red dots on the map, to indicate places where they felt unsafe walking or cycling or where cars went too fast. The map was then circulated on social media, where many more residents continued to comment.

The map identifies 478 places where people felt unsafe in Faversham. These problems are clearly not confined to one area, **they are everywhere**. Within this, some very clear ‘hot spots’ emerged, where people felt particularly unsafe crossing roads or are aware of speeding. Unless people live right in the centre of Faversham they would need to cross at least one of these roads to get into town safely. The survey also showed overwhelming support for a 20mph speed limit throughout Faversham.

The map survey provided valuable social engagement, a key part of making any 20mph scheme work. We found that residents were keen to talk about their experiences and learn about the benefits of 20mph limits.

We know what the killed and serious injury statistics are for Faversham and we know they are rising for vulnerable road users¹ but this research also gives us key information that those statistics can't:

- it tells us about the roads residents avoid
 - the places they won't cross
 - the journeys they won't make
- It tells us how these issues affect their everyday lives

“Nelson Street. I live there with my 5 year old.... the amount of times we've stepped out of the front door to go to school in the morning and a car has come flying up the road way too fast”

“Walking along the London Road. It's the quickest way to Ethelbert School from my home but it feels far too scary. All it would take is a moment of lapsed concentration to come off the road onto the path... I tend to avoid this way.”

“Crossing between the rec and Simply Fresh. Cars never seem to stop at the crossing and I've nearly been hit a few times in the evening, despite being extra careful.”

“Exactly. I don't like crossing with my oldest daughter.”

3. Technical Appraisal

The working group instructed Andrew Saffrey of Phil Jones Associates to carry out an independent, technical appraisal of the feasibility of a 20mph zone encompassing the whole town of Faversham. Andrew is a highways and traffic engineer with previous experience at Sunderland City Council, London Borough of Harrow, and London Borough of Waltham Forest. He has also worked on the implementation of the borough-wide 20mph zone in Waltham Forest.

His report cost £500 and was paid for out of the Swale Borough Councillors Localism fund. It sets out five key principles in developing a strategy for 20mph in Faversham: the first two of these we have already begun.

- a. **Understanding Local Context**
- b. **Gaining Social Proof and Consent through Social Engagement and Education**
- c. **Creating a Transition Buffer from Higher to Lower speed roads**
- d. **Creating Self-Enforcing Mechanisms / Natural Traffic Calming to aid compliance**
- e. **Ongoing Monitoring and Targeted Action**

These are all key in delivering a 20mph scheme that works for Faversham.

4. Why 20mph for Faversham now

As we have already said, new development set for sites on all four sides of the town will bring almost 2,000 new dwellings and with them more vehicles, more congestion, more pollution. Outdoor air pollution is responsible for 20 times more early deaths than the number of people killed on our roads. That's 50,000 early deaths and £27bn in costs every year.² Heart attacks, strokes, lung and bladder cancers,³ low birth weight,⁴ cognitive impairment in children⁵ and earlier onset of dementia,⁶ are all linked to pollution. This is being hailed as the biggest public health crisis of our time. On November 2nd the High Court ruled for the second time that the government is not doing enough to combat the national air pollution crisis.⁷ They are ignoring many measures that could help and placing too much weight on costs.

75% of the particulate emissions that vehicles produce come from their tyres and brakes, and erosion of the road surface,⁸ so driving an electric car won't help. Driving at 20mph significantly reduces congestion, traffic merges more easily at 20mph than at 30mph but it also reduces particulates and NOx emissions.⁹ Better still is driving less, which means, when possible, walking or cycling. 20mph limits have been proven to deliver a modal shift to walking and cycling.

The message is clear, 20's plenty and 30's dirty.

More than 25% of the UK population now live in boroughs that are or are about to become 20mph.

The majority of the largest 40 UK authorities have a 20mph policy¹⁰

- City of London and 80% of inner London boroughs,
- Edinburgh,
- Bristol,
- Brighton,
- the centres of Glasgow and Belfast.

In October the entire council of the Isle of Wight voted in favour of making all of the Isle of Wight a 20mph zone.¹¹

20mph schemes are proving to be very popular:

The most recent British Social Attitudes Survey found that 73% say 20's plenty for residential roads.¹² In February of this year, the Interim findings of the Department for Transport commissioned Atkins Report, show that they are more popular after implementation: 51% of residents supporting prior, rising to 75% after implementation and 66% of drivers also say the new limits were a good idea.¹³

5. Funding

The cost to implement a 20mph default limit across all residential roads in Faversham as been estimated at between £35 and £60K. We need more information and support, to help us access this funding and apply it effectively.

In October, Tunbridge Wells received approval for a 20mph zone covering 50 roads and their Kent County councillor Peter Oakford, is spearheading the £40,000 plan following demand from householders and residents' groups. £20,000 came from Mr Oakford's community grant, £15,000 from Kent County Council and £5,000 from Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.

Kent County Council's Local Transport Plan 4 states:¹⁴

"Investment in transport networks is essential for unlocking development sites, relieving congestion, improving safety and enabling a shift to more sustainable modes of travel.../...We will also work to ensure that all the schemes proposed deliver beneficial outcomes for all users, especially the most vulnerable."

The Kent County Council Growth without Gridlock transport plan states:¹⁵

"we will continue to develop our County in a sustainable way, which minimises the effect of pollution and climate change on the environment."

The scheme we are proposing today is working entirely within these aims.

6. The way forward

Today we are asking for a commitment to:

1. A 20mph limit across the whole of Faversham to include required signage, social engagement and self-enforcing traffic calming.
2. Fund-raising to meet the expected cost of 60K
3. A town-wide consultation.
4. Ongoing monitoring to identify where compliance is achieved and where further work may be required.
5. The working group's ongoing involvement in the implementation process
6. Support of an independent consultant with experience of devising 20mph schemes that deliver.

- ¹ www.crashmap.co.uk
- ² <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmselect/cmenvfru/479/479.pdf>
- ³ <http://www.cancer.org/cancer/news/world-health-organization-outdoor-air-pollution-causes-cancer>
- ⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/apr/28/air-pollution-causes-low-birth-weight-beijing-study-shows>
- ⁵ <http://journals.plos.org/plosmedicine/article?id=10.1371/journal.pmed.1001792>
- ⁶ <https://www.alzinfo.org/articles/air-pollution-raise-dementia-risk/>
- ⁷ <http://www.airqualitynews.com/2016/11/02/high-court-rules-defra-air-quality-plan/>
- ⁸ <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmselect/cmenvfru/479/479.pdf>
- ⁹ http://www.20splenty.org/emission_reductions
- ¹⁰ http://www.20splenty.org/20mph_places
- ¹¹ <http://www.20splenty.org/isleofwight>
- ¹² https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/481877/british-social-attitudes-survey-2014.pdf
- ¹³ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roadsafety/research/rsrr/theme4/interimeval20mphspeedlimits.pdf>
- ¹⁴ http://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0008/5939/local-transport-plan.pdf
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