

20MPH SPEED LIMIT POLICY CRITERIA

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Suffolk County Council (the Council) supports in principle the introduction of 20mph speed limits and zones where appropriate to do so.
- 1.2 This policy sets out the background to such limits and the criteria that the Council will use to consider whether to introduce such limits and how potential schemes would be prioritised across the county.
- 1.3 The number of schemes which will be introduced will depend on what funding is made available which may vary over time and is not the subject of consideration in this policy.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Department for Transport has asked local Highway Authorities to consider introducing more 20mph limits and zones over time in urban areas and built up village streets that are primarily residential.
- 2.2 20mph zones and limits are now relatively wide-spread with more than 2,000 schemes in operation in England. The majority of these are 20mph zones. 20mph zones require traffic calming measures (which can be a range of road features, including but not restricted to, road narrowing or humps) or repeater speed limit signing and/or roundel road markings at regular intervals, so that no point within a zone is more than 50m from such a feature. In addition, the beginning and end of a zone is indicated by a terminal sign. Zones usually cover a number of roads. 20mph limits are signed with terminal and repeater signs (minimum of one repeater but dependent on the length of the limit), and do not require traffic calming. 20mph limits are similar to other local speed limits and normally apply to individual or small numbers of roads but are increasingly being applied to larger areas.
- 2.3 There is clear evidence of the effect of reducing traffic speeds on the reduction of collisions and casualties, as collision frequency is lower at lower speeds; and where collisions do occur, there is a lower risk of fatal injury at lower speeds. Research shows that on urban roads with low average traffic speeds any 1 mph reduction in average speed can reduce the collision frequency by around 6%. There is also clear evidence confirming the greater chance of survival of pedestrians in collisions at lower speeds.

2.4 Important benefits of 20 mph schemes include quality of life and community benefits, and encouragement of healthier and more sustainable transport modes such as walking and cycling. There may also be environmental benefits as, generally, driving more slowly at a steady pace will save fuel and reduce pollution, unless an unnecessarily low gear is used. Walking and cycling can make a very positive contribution to improving health and tackling obesity, improving accessibility and tackling congestion, and reducing carbon emissions and improving local environment.

3.0 Threshold Criteria for Initial Consideration of Potential Schemes

3.1 The Council will evaluate schemes against this methodology on a location by location basis.

3.2 Unless in exceptional circumstances, locations will not be considered for 20mph schemes where any of the following apply:

1. they are on A or B class roads;
2. they have existing mean speeds above 30 mph;
3. there is no significant community support as assessed by the local County Councillor.

In assessing community support, Councillors should review the views of District, Town and Parish Councils and give weight to petitions and local residents' views.

3.3 Locations will then only be considered for 20 mph limits or zones if two out of three of the following criteria are met:

1. current mean speeds are at or below 24 mph;
2. there is a depth of residential development and evidence of pedestrian and cyclist movements within the area;
3. there is a record of injury accidents (based on police accident data) within the area within the last five years.

3.4 Locations within conservation areas and other areas of high visual amenity will not normally be considered suitable for sign only 20mph limits unless there will be minimal adverse visual impact. In these areas any 20mph restrictions will normally be through 20mph zones.

4.0 Criteria for Prioritisation of Schemes

- 4.1 Assuming a potential scheme meets the requirements at Section 3 there is a need for a mechanism to prioritise these for consideration to be funded from budgets that may be available from the Council.
- 4.2 If opportunities exist to fully fund 20mph schemes from external sources, councillor locality budgets or as part of a wider project that has already been funded then any 20 mph scheme need only to meet the requirements of Section 3. If such funding is available only to part fund a 20mph scheme then this will not affect the prioritisation for any other available county council funding for 20mph schemes.
- 4.3 The Council aims to ensure that any 20mph schemes have the maximum benefit for the affected communities. The promotion of healthier lifestyles, sustainability benefits, improvements to the social interaction and economic wellbeing of an area are important considerations alongside reduction of accidents or traffic speeds. With these factors in mind a Priority Criteria Matrix incorporating these factors will be used to prioritise schemes using a scoring and weighting mechanism. A copy of the matrix is shown in Annex A.
- 4.4 It is recognised that the matrix scoring relies on both objective and subjective judgements. In order to introduce fairness and importantly consistency in judgement, evaluations will be undertaken by a standing group of officers in consultation with a councillor panel.
- 4.5 For each priority criterion, the score allocated will be multiplied by the weighting against that criterion to give a weighted score. The total priority score for the proposal will be the total of the weighted scores. The higher the total score, the higher the priority. For example:

Criterion	Score Given	Weighting	Weighted Score
Injury accident Record	9	5	45
Conservation Area	5	2	10
Cycling and pedestrian levels which encourage healthy life styles	9	5	45
Deprived areas.	2	3	6
Police support	10	2	20
TOTAL			126

ANNEX A

PRIORITY CRITERIA MATRIX FOR 20 MPH LIMIT

Criterion	Definition	Low Score (0-3)	Mid Score (4-7)	High Score (8-10)	Weighting (1-5)
Injury accident record	Relevant fatal or Injury accidents recorded by the Police within the area	No accident records over 5 years	1-3 accidents recorded over 5 years	4+ accidents recorded over 5 years	5
Conservation Area	Designated Conservation Area by the Local Planning Authority	No designated area with little architectural or historic interest	Not designated but with some architectural and historic interest	Designated Conservation Area	2
Cycling and pedestrian levels which encourage healthy life styles	Estimate of current and potential levels of cycling and pedestrian levels particularly crossing roads	Little evidence of cycling and pedestrian use or the potential for increased levels. No opportunities to promote cycling and walking for leisure or tourism use or to schools or local amenities.	Some evidence of cycling and pedestrian use and potential for increased levels. Some opportunities to promote because of proximity of tourist offering, schools and local amenities.	High levels of cycling and pedestrian use and good potential for increasing. Likely to be centres of population or tourist areas with amenities, schools or employment centres accessible by walking and cycling.	5

Criterion	Definition	Low Score (0-3)	Mid Score (4-7)	High Score (8-10)	Weighting (1-5)
Deprived areas.	Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). National Ranking (2010) by Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) (from Suffolk Observatory Website). IMD includes a range of economic, social and housing indicators into a single score for one area.	25,000+	10,000-25,000	0 to 10,000	3
Police support	The formal view on the Police on any scheme.	Objection or little support.	Some support but possibly with reservations.	Strong unreserved support.	2

Clarification for scoring matrix

- (1) When considering the conservation criterion the Conservation Area should be a significant part of the overall area under review. For this criterion, widths of footways should be a consideration in the scoring within the relevant band.
- (2) Officers will provide available factual evidence of the levels of pedestrian and cyclist use where available. This will include data on local school travel plans and implementation, local cycling strategies and Sustrans routes.
- (3) The Deprived Areas criterion is based on Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) which are used for the collection and publication of small area statistics and are more uniform in size and nature than electoral wards or divisions.