

20 MPH Compliance Funding

Introduction

In November 2024 the committee agreed to apply its earmarked reserve to activities and interventions that would encourage and support vehicle users in observing the 20mph speed limit. This reflected the fact that the reserve had originally been set up to meet the costs of implementing the 20mph scheme and that the main criticism of the scheme by the public is that drivers are not observing the speed limit.

At its January 2025 meeting it then endorsed a set of proposals aimed at encouraging compliance which could be put forward to KCC for potential implementation. Progress in moving forward with this has been delayed because it has been unclear what if any active travel funding KCC would make available for project work in Faversham in the next couple of years.

Feedback from Recent Meeting with KCC

However, the Vice Chair and the Town Council Office Manager met with Daniel Cannon Skeet, the Swale Highways Manager and Jennie Watson, the East Kent Highways Community Engagement Manager on 13 November, to discuss moving the project forward.

Key points from the discussion and the dialogue we have had with KCC since are:

- That East Kent Highways don't have any capacity to take on additional work this financial year and that there is no funding in this year's budget for the maintenance of 20mph roundels and the 20mph yellow and red painted gateways.
- That they will only do work that they deem appropriate – so for example they won't undertake work related to extending the 20mph scheme along Ospringe Street because they don't think the evidence of need is there and they won't agree to additional roundels on Briton Road and Roman Road because their evidence is that average speeds are under 20mph on these roads already.
- The data evidence following the introduction of a fresh roundel in Athelstan Road is that it has contributed to a significant reduction in vehicle speeds.
- There is still core Highways funding available for dropped kerbs if the Town Council want to put forwards proposals.
- They are planning a review of the 20mph scheme next year and from their point of view there would be a logic in delaying any changes to the scheme until after this happens.
- There could still be a logic in utilising any active travel reserve the Town Council has to support initiatives by the KCC Active Travel team.

Current Project Progress

The one delivery area for the 20mph compliance Fund where we have made progress so far is the consultation work we have committed to in the Athelstan Road and Cambridge Road areas. All residents have received letters encouraging them to take part in the consultations which can be returned as paper responses or responded to using the Town Council's Commonplace site, with a closing date of 5 January. The next stage will be for responses to be analysed and recommendations on next steps to be generated.

Funding from Active Travel England.

The report which came to the last meeting of the Swale JTB identified that funding had been awarded as follows under AT5 for the coming year:

- Development of Faversham North-South route with junction improvements - £50,000.
- An additional sum of £70,000 to complete any further changes needed to support the Faversham east/west walking route.

The report also identified that in future years the Faversham north-south route and specifically one or two junctions or crossing improvements are likely to be put forward for construction funds following the completion of the ATF5 work on this project.

Following these announcements KCC officers have asked to meet with The Chair, Vice Chair, Town Clerk and KCC Member on 11 February to discuss next steps in implementing their plans.

This is very positive news and suggests that we are in a strong position to gain further improvements for pedestrians walking around the town in the next 18 months. However our previous experience with both the implementation of the 20 mph scheme and the East West Route improvements has been that we will have to apply some town council resource to inform the public about proposed changes and to make sure we win the public argument about the benefit of changes.

Recommendations

On the basis of this update it is recommended that the committee agree to do the following:

1. Finalise a list of locations for new roundels which can be put forward to KCC for approval and if agreed be funded through the 20mph Compliance Fund.
2. Finalise a list of locations for dropped kerbs which can be put forward to KCC for direct funding.

3. Produce a final report on the Athelstan Road and Cambridge Road consultations and to use 20mph Compliance Funding to support any further consultation or traffic order submissions which are recommended.
4. Hold any 20mph Compliance Funds remaining to support community engagement and publicity activities related to KCC plans for a North South Walking Route.