

South of the Borough Neighbourhood Committee - 29 June 2021

20mph Consultation

Report by Matthew Hill, Assistant Director Highways, Transport and Regulatory Services

Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainable Transport: Councillor Stephanie Archer

Purpose of Report

To comment on the results of the various streams of engagement undertaken on proposals to introduce 20mph speed limits in all residential roads across the borough, and the officers recommended proposals

Recommendation(s)

The Committee is asked to RESOLVE that:

1. To note the results of the consultation.
2. To seek the views of residents in certain other roads with a view to introducing a 20 mph limit where specific safety issues would be addressed by so doing.
3. To introduce a 20mph speed limit on roads that cross over from South of the Borough to Surbiton, if the Surbiton neighbourhood committee agrees at committee to introduce a neighbourhood-wide 20mph speed limit on residential roads, which includes Red Lion Road and Herne Road.

Benefits to the Community:

It is considered that the proposals will make our roads safer, reduce the number and severity of road casualties caused by excessive speed, and make our roads easier to use and attractive for our residents. It is anticipated that this will help reduce air pollution and encourage more people to travel by sustainable active travel modes

Key Points

- A. It is noted that the consultation results being reported on here were from January/February 2020, and appropriate reports had been prepared for the Council's Committee cycle in March 2020, to allow consideration of the data and feedback. Unfortunately, it was not possible to report to those Committee meetings, due to the outbreak of the COVID 19 pandemic. This report is now reviewing the results of that consultation, and Appendix A provides an analysis of the consultation results along with conclusions and recommendations on the way forward.
- B. The Borough's key Transport Strategy, the Local Implementation Plan 3 (LIP3), and the Corporate Plan are aligned in terms of focussing on consulting on the introduction of 20mph speed limits to improve safety and traffic flow. It is important to consider at this stage that the majority of the Borough's collisions occur on the main road network, and often at junctions where people are leaving/or joining that network.

- C. The project has considered what is meant by residential roads and what is meant by main roads, as to all intents and purposes both are A and B roads which have a high level of residential properties, but serve an important function from a network perspective. As such, a fuller consideration needs to be given to these roads and the impacts of changes to any speed limit. It is clearer to think about roads on the main road network vs roads which make up the local networks
- D. The Mayor's Transport Strategy (MTS) and Transport for London (TfL) Healthy Streets and Vision Zero approach to road safety, both also offer a strong direction with lowering speeds identified as one of the most important things that we can do to make our streets safer.
- E. The Administration included within their manifesto a pledge to engage on a Borough wide 20mph speed limit scheme for all residential roads.

Context

1. The Royal Borough of Kingston (RBK) is committed to tackle the problem of road casualties caused by speeding traffic, making our roads safer, more liveable and attractive for our residents, improving the air we breathe, and providing environments where local businesses can thrive.
2. As part of this strategy, we are considering the introduction of a 20mph speed limit on all roads within our Borough, with the exception of private roads and those under TfL's control.
3. Such a scheme is part of a broader strategy currently being embraced by many councils across London, in light of the innovative and forward-looking vision set out by the Mayor of London and TfL.
4. The "[Healthy Streets](#)" approach represents a cornerstone of this vision, and was developed to inform decision-making to encourage more active and sustainable travel for everyone, i.e. walking, cycling and public transport use. The Healthy Streets strategy document provides 10 useful evidence-based indicators of what makes our streets more socially and economically vibrant and attractive as well as environmentally sustainable, where people can live active, healthy lives.
5. The earlier Citizens' Assembly focussed specifically on Air Quality, and the report to the Environment and Sustainable Transport (EAST) Committee on 11 February 2020 identified a number of recommendations, which are listed below. This report also included a number of actions under each point, some of which align naturally with this project in terms of providing infrastructure and encouraging positive behaviour.
 - Remove pollutants within school boundaries;
 - Prioritise changes to planning rules and enforcement to place indoor and outdoor air quality as the highest priority;
 - Plan to urgently invest in greener and accessible transport and infrastructure for all;
 - Increase residents' awareness of air pollution and encourage positive behaviour change;

- Accelerate the transition to sustainable vehicles.
6. It has been identified that a large proportion of car journeys in RBK are less than three miles, and many of these journeys might be replaced with more active and sustainable forms of travel, such as walking and cycling, which are known to improve health, reduce emissions and make our streets more pleasant places. In order to offer people the incentive to use active and sustainable modes for such journeys it is necessary to create the right environment for them to feel comfortable to do so. It is considered that proposals to introduce 20mph speed limits on residential roads across the Borough will do this and assist in making the streets safer.
 7. The LIP3 was written to reflect the aims and objectives identified in RBK's key existing and emerging policy and strategy documents, and also London wide and national policy guidance. RBK's key policy documents include the existing and emerging Corporate and Local Plans. The LIP3 includes nine MTS outcomes which it will be measured against, and Outcome 1 states that London/Kingston streets will be healthy and more Londoners will travel actively with Borough objectives to deliver 20mph schemes across the Borough on residential roads, and to create an environment that encourages a higher level of walking and cycling trips.
 8. Significant steps have been taken in creating an environment that particularly encourages cycling, as well as walking, through the delivery of the 'Go Cycle' programme, by reconfiguring roads and constructing new cycleways and footways, widening the options from which residents can choose to travel in the Borough. It is also recognised that further routes and links need to be provided so that people can access the infrastructure more easily.
 9. It was identified that as RBK's population grows the transport network needs to evolve, and improvements have to be made now so it can safely carry an extra 1,500 additional people every year, and has the capacity to efficiently accommodate 30% more people by 2050.
 10. A review of the Borough collision records was also undertaken which, perhaps unsurprisingly, identified that the majority of the collisions on our network occur along the busiest roads. It is not suggested that all of those collisions will be speed related, but it is considered that the severity and cause of some of them would be affected positively by a reduction in traffic speeds.
 11. The Borough generally performs well in terms of road safety in Greater London, with one of the lowest levels of road collisions and casualties. Whilst there are now no major collision 'hotspots' in the Borough on Council managed roads, collisions and perceived danger are still a cause for significant concern and the Council will continue to take a proactive approach to ensure that RBK remains one of the safest boroughs in London.

Proposal and Options

12. Appendix A provides the details of the proposals considered in the January/February 2020 consultation, and also outlines the other forms of engagement that were undertaken at the time. It includes the officer assessment and recommendations on the options available for the next steps.

Officer Commentary and Recommendations

13. During the consultation on the Borough's 'Let's Talk' portal, officers have received responses that indicate generally whether respondents are 'for or against' the proposals, but it is not simply a case of looking at those numbers to determine a course of action. Other forms of engagement included feedback through a dedicated 20mph email address; hand written form where some residents were not able to complete the survey on-line and also direct responses received from Chessington Community College.
14. There are other factors to consider as part of the wider road safety picture and in terms of creating the right environment in our residential areas to encourage and allow walking and cycling to flourish. With the implementation of any change of speed limit, it is not expected that all drivers will drive at or below the posted limits, and highway designs will always make an allowance for this, as, unfortunately, there are people on the road network who will often drive above the posted limits.
15. To provide some context, it is highlighted that 48% of the Borough roads are already covered with 20mph limits, with a large proportion of Kingston Town (70%) already covered, and of the other neighbourhoods Maldens and Coombe is 44% covered, Surbiton 26% covered and South of the Borough has 36% of its roads covered.
16. The analysis of the consultation responses, in conjunction with other streams of feedback and information, have been considered in detail in the Appendix A Consultation report.
17. As well as the various engagement streams feedback was also received through Social Media, and the analysis of the feedback from the various social media streams is set out below:
Facebook Total comments: 70; For: 6, Against: 32, Neutral: 19 Differing opinion dependent on other factors: 13.
Twitter Total comments: 44; For: 26, Against: 11, Neutral: 6, Differing opinion dependent on other factors: 1
18. It can be seen from Appendix A that the results of the consultation are inconclusive when considered on a general basis and across the whole Borough, and whilst there are some elements which show positive support, there are also those where there is negative feedback. It can also be seen that in response to the Borough wide consultation, 11% of the responses were submitted by those who work, study or visit the Borough - or from people where we could not determine their location. In this case it is not possible to attribute those results to any specific neighbourhood, but they are provided for completeness.
19. Appendix B includes a summary of the consultation results from each of the four neighbourhoods, as well as results from either outside of the Borough, or from those people where we could not determine their addresses.
20. The results for South of the Borough Neighbourhood indicate that overall those who responded there were more disagreeing, 126 replies, with 65 agreeing, with a further 37 responses neither agreeing or disagreeing the measures. As reported above, of the South of the Borough Neighbourhood roads only 36% already have a 20mph speed limit in place, but with the lack of support the recommendation is for no neighbourhood action at this time, other than to

support Surbiton Neighbourhood to deliver a scheme where there are roads which span the neighbourhood boundary..

21. Other important feedback received is as set out below. Feedback has been received from colleagues at the Police, who have advised as follows: 'The Metropolitan Police Service is committed to making the roads even safer and reducing the numbers of people killed and seriously injured. Speed enforcement is expensive; it is both time and resource intensive and competes with other important policing issues of equal public concern.'
22. Enforcement is mainly reactive and should not be seen as a preventative measure to achieve vehicle speeds. This will be achieved by public support and compliance by the majority. The DfT's circulars 9/99, 01/2013 state that to achieve compliance there should be no expectation on the police to provide additional enforcement beyond routine activity unless agreed. Pre-planned targeted enforcement of 20mph speed limits will be intelligence led. It will only be carried out in exceptional circumstances; where the speed limit is legally and clearly signed, looks and feels like a 20 mph limit and there is a collision problem and/or a particular risk to vulnerable road users and evidence of persistent high harm speeding motorists.
23. The advice from the DfT is clear: that 20 mph Limits and Zones should be made to be self-enforcing. If it does not look like, or feel like, a 20mph limit then there will be large scale offending, and routine prosecution will be seen as inappropriate and unfair. It is for local authorities to appropriately sign and, if necessary, engineer a limit, leaving the police to target the persistent and deliberate offenders, together achieving the very highest level of compliance and safety for road users.
24. The Police Safer Neighbourhood Transport (SNT) team have also provided feedback highlighting Community Road Watch, which is a road safety partnership scheme run by TfL, the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and the City of London Police (CoLP) and managed locally by officers on Safer Transport Teams, with the aim to reduce speeding in residential areas.
25. The scheme gives local residents the opportunity to work with their local SNT and use speed detection equipment to identify speeding vehicles in their communities. Warning letters will be issued where appropriate, and the information can help to inform the future activity of local police teams.
26. Colleagues at TfL Buses and Vision Zero were approached and have responded as follows. TfL Buses replied 'Following consultation with the Bus Client Team, there is expected to be a neutral impact from the scheme on buses during the peak period. This was determined by reviewing current bus journey time information. Some off-peak journey times may increase slightly in length, but following consideration of existing average bus speeds this is not expected to be significant, even at night. Some impact during construction will be mitigated by holding reserve buses on standby, in the event that they are required to maintain frequency.' The Vision Zero team replied 'We support the proposed lower speed limits and we are committed to Vision Zero and see the proposals as a step towards the achievement of this. We will consider how we can support the reduction of speeds in Kingston on the roads we manage, particularly on the service roads.'

Other headings

Legislation

27. In 1999, legislation was changed by the Road Traffic Regulation Act (Amendment) Order 1999, which gave Highway Authorities more flexibility, so that they no longer had to apply to the Department for Transport (DfT) for permission to introduce a 20mph speed limit. The updated legislation made two distinct types of 20mph speed limit possible:
 - 20mph limits, which consist of just a speed limit change to 20mph which is indicated by the speed limit (and repeater) signs, and
 - 20mph zones, which were designed to be “self-enforcing” due to the traffic calming measures that were introduced along with the change in the speed limit.
28. The DfT suggest that 20mph speed limits are appropriate for roads where average speeds are already low (below 24mph) or, where traffic speeds can be lowered to similar levels through the introduction of traffic calming measures. Ultimately, the Local Authority is responsible for deciding which of these is the most appropriate.
29. The guidance is set out in DfT Circular 01/2013, which encourages traffic authorities to consider the introduction of more 20mph limits and zones, over time, in urban areas and built up village streets that are primarily residential to ensure greater safety for cyclists and pedestrians. The guidance also sets out that the purpose of 20mph areas is to create conditions in which drivers naturally drive at around 20mph, as a result of traffic calming measures or the general nature of the location.

Timescale

30. The consultation was carried out in January/February 2020, and that is now being followed up with a consultation report going to each of the four Neighbourhood Committees in the June 2021 cycle of meetings. There are no timescale impacts at present as the recommendation is for no further action at this time..

Financial Context

31. The Council is operating in an increasingly challenging financial environment. Kingston faced a number of financial challenges in the medium to longer term - even before the COVID-19 outbreak, which has further added to these challenges. The economic and financial consequences of the pandemic, growing demand for services, and limited government grant funding make it difficult to find adequate funds to meet the Borough's needs.
32. The future of local government finance faces a significant level of uncertainty. The impact of the Fair Funding Review and a future review of business rates is currently unknown, and the lasting effects of COVID-19 on our residents, local businesses and the Council itself remain uncertain.
33. Despite these challenges the Council has a drive and commitment to ensure it is doing the best for residents and communities

Financial and Resource Implications

34. There are no current financial implications as there are no actions arising from the report.

Legal Implications

35. Under section 159 of the GLA Act 1999, financial assistance provided by TfL must be for a purpose which, in TfL's opinion, is conducive to the provision of safe, integrated, efficient and economic transport facilities or services to, from or within Greater London.
36. As no TMO proposals are being recommended there are no further legal implications to consider.

Risk Assessment

37. No risk assessment is needed as no proposals are recommended.

Equalities Analysis

38. There is no need for any EqlA assessment.

Health Implications

39. There are no health implications as no scheme is being proposed.

Road Network Implications

40. There are no network implications as no scheme is being proposed.

Sustainability Implications

41. There are no sustainability implications as no scheme is being proposed.

Background papers

None other than those referred to in this report.

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Annex A - Consultation Analysis detail (to follow as late material)

Annex B - Summary of all Neighbourhood results