

December 2021

Dear Parish and Town Councillors

20mph Where People Are

I am writing to ask you for your support for a proposal for East Sussex County Council (ESCC) to set 20mph as the normal speed limit, and 30mph as the exception, in residential streets and in town and village centres – in other words in those places where people live, work, learn and play.

Traffic speed impacts the safety and quality of life for all East Sussex residents. Current ESCC policy has made it very difficult to seek speed limit reduction on a case-by-case basis, stating: 'For a speed limit to be effective, and as far as possible self-regulating, **it must appear reasonable to a driver** and adequately reflect the environment through which the road passes.'

Yet the past few decades have seen remarkable changes to what is perceived as reasonable. Smoking in indoor public spaces, not wearing seatbelts, drink driving are just some examples of what was once deemed reasonable.

This same type of sea change is happening on 'reasonable' speeds, with 20mph increasingly seen as a reasonable default speed in areas with people.

Sadly, ESCC also has a very specific reading of the requirements for engineering improvements alongside signage if vehicles travel above a particular speed (24mph on average). This creates a catch-22 situation for many parish councils, whereby they pay large amounts for speed surveys or consultations, only to be told that the required traffic calming measures for reducing speeds are too prohibitive.

We have proof that standardisation of speed reduction over a wide area – with signage alone plus education – is often more effective and simplifies implementation; it also increases compliance.

Reduction to 20mph has been shown to:

- **Reduce casualties** – casualties fall by 5% for every 1mph of speed reduction; 20mph schemes typically lead to 20% fewer casualties overall (UK Department of Transport).
[\[http://www.20splenty.org/20mph_casualty_reduction.\]](http://www.20splenty.org/20mph_casualty_reduction.)
The most common cause for any type of accident is driver's reaction error. Going 20mph rather than 30mph is proven to improve reaction times as well as lessen impact. This lessens fatalities – there are 7-10 times fewer fatalities at 20mph than 30mph.
- **Reduce greenhouse gases and air/noise pollution** – 20mph leads to a 25% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and 50% reduction in noise pollution.
[\[https://www.20splenty.org/new_research_on_emissions\]](https://www.20splenty.org/new_research_on_emissions).
By overlooking this, ESCC is running counter to their own Climate Emergency Action Plan, which states it will: 'review ESCC's policies, strategies, programmes, projects and practice to align with the climate emergency'; and that: 'Policy should provide clear and stable direction and a simple set of rules that supports corporate climate change mitigation and adaptation.'
- **Improve wellbeing** – 20mph leads to active travel increases by at least 20%, rising over time.
https://www.20splenty.org/20mph_limits_encourage_walking_and_cycling
When roads are safer, we see more community cohesion – people walk and cycle more, and we have a safer community for vulnerable users, including the elderly, children and those with disabilities. Social isolation, anxiety and obesity decreases, mental and physical health increase. Improved community cohesion leads to a healthier, more robust town or village, with thriving schools, community centres, pubs, businesses, post offices and shops. 20mph encourages people to cycle to work. See link:
<https://cyclingindustry.news/traffic-speeds-cycling-to-work-study/>
- **Cost effective** – 20mph signage and rollout costs approximately £3-5 per person. This is an incredibly small amount when placed against the costs of vehicle accidents themselves, not just to the driver but to society as a whole, for ambulance, police, hospital, clean up and damages. Wide-area 20mph

limits are also seven times more cost effective per mph speed reduction than isolated zones with physical calming.

[https://www.20splenty.org/20mph_limits_vs_isolated_20mph_zones]

- **Popular** – people from across all demographics want this (70% popularity with 10% unsure) <http://20splenty.org/why20mph>. Phil Jones, Cabinet Member for Transport in Camden said: “20mph is the most popular decision I ever made”.

Over 26 million people in the UK live in a community with a default speed limit of 20mph. This includes the whole of Wales, Lancashire, Cheshire West and Chester, and (soon) in Scotland, Cornwall and Oxfordshire. A speed limit of 20mph/30kph is recognised as international best practice wherever people and motor vehicles mix.

Putting 20mph in place typically costs under 1% of what it costs a given area each year for road traffic accidents and for the impacts of physical inactivity.

http://www.20splenty.org/casualty_and_physical_inactivity_costs

A parish council that supports this proposal can better serve its residents. It can help compel ESCC to deliver significant improvements to wellbeing, to the climate and to a community’s overall health while making huge financial savings – savings that accrue year on year.

Thank you for reading this letter, but please also take the time to watch a very clear and concise [7-minute video](#).

Please support this motion and join forces across East Sussex to deliver road speeds that our communities need.

Please also advise us if your parish council has given support to 20mph in any form.

Yours sincerely

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Please use the draft motion below and adapt it for your Parish/Town Council. Don't forget you normally have to get a motion into the Parish/Town Clerk at least 10 days before the meeting which will consider it.

Suggested Motion

[Your Parish or Town council name]:

- 1) Supports the *20's Plenty for East Sussex* campaign;**
- 2) Calls on East Sussex County Council to implement 20mph in [your place]; and**
- 3) Will write to East Sussex County Council to request that the County:**
 - a) makes 20mph the default speed limit on streets throughout Hampshire in places where people live, work, shop, play or learn, leaving 30mph as the exception on those roads, where full consideration of the needs of vulnerable road users allows a higher limit; and**
 - b) allocates a ring-fenced amount from public health, sustainability and transport budgets to enable 20mph to be implemented county-wide within 5 years.**