

**Committee: Planning, Highways and Transport**

**Date: 1 August 2023**

**Title: Application for 20 MPH Speed restrictions.**

**Purpose of Report**

For Members to consider for applying for 20 MPH speed restrictions in Ilminster.

**Recommendation:**

Members to note the report and consider whether thought should be given to applying for a 20MPH restriction throughout Ilminster or for other areas.

**Report:**

1. An email was received in July from Somerset Council informing the Town Council that Somerset Council Members had recently been invited to a meeting with regards to the idea of villages, towns and residential areas being designated as 20MPH zones. The contents of the email are detailed below.

**2. Community Funded 20mph Speed Limits**

*a. As you may have been made aware, Councillors were recently invited to attend a briefing outlining Somerset Councils position on 20mph speed limits, aligning to the manifesto commitment to 'work with communities to make 20mph speed limits the norm outside schools, in residential areas, our city, town and village centres'.*

*b. As an authority we want to support communities who wish to fund the design and implementation of a 20mph speed limit. It is estimated that the cost would be in the region of £15,000. You will be required to pay a £500 non-refundable application fee which will cover an initial assessment including up to 2 no week-long speed data readings. Note, at our discretion we may be required to collect data from more than 2no locations to determine the suitability. These will be charged at £200 per location and will be included in the final cost of the scheme.*

*c. For information, the Department for Transport guidance on the setting of local speed limits are clear in that speed limits should be evidence led, self-explaining and seek to reinforce people's assessment of what is a safe speed to travel. They should encourage self-compliance and should be seen by drivers as a maximum rather than a target speed.*

*d. Research has shown that a change in speed limit signs alone has very little effect on actual vehicle speeds and that the speed of vehicles is moderated by the surrounding environment rather than the posted speed limit. Where motorists do not understand the reasoning behind the implementation of a speed limit, a high level of non-compliance is likely to occur, and indeed this may lead to disrespect of speed limits elsewhere.*

e. *The key factors that need to be considered when reviewing a speed limit is history of collisions; road geometry and engineering; road function; compositions of road users; existing traffic speeds; and road environment.*

f. *In specific reference to 20mph speed limits, the minimum length of speed limit is 600m (300m in exceptional circumstances) and **mean speeds must be below 24mph**. If mean speeds are higher than the intervention level, traffic calming measures will be required to reduce speeds to this level. Note, in larger communities it may be that only smaller areas are feasible, for example a housing estate or ward whereby it wouldn't impact on the strategic network.*

g. *It is also worth considering the environmental impact on the 'street scene', having the necessary highway signage, such as terminal and repeater signs, and road markings installed within the village.*

h. *We are currently welcoming expressions of interest so please complete the accompanying application form by the end of August 2023 and return to this email account along with confirmation that the application fee has been paid. We will then carry out the initial assessment and advise you as to whether you will to be added to the register for progression, with the expectation that these schemes will be delivered in 2024. If your community is not ready to submit an application this year, we will look to open the window for expressions of interest again this time next year.*

3. In a recent clerk's meeting with Somerset Council a representative of Somerset Council with responsibility for Road Safety made it known that the department has £200,000 for Road Safety Schemes throughout the whole of the Somerset Council. This is why they are looking for the Parish and Town Councils to fund the schemes.
4. There was some consternation from a number of clerks who felt that asking for up to £15,000 for a scheme, when the parish income was less than £10,000 per year was wholly inappropriate.
5. It would cost therefore the Town Council £15,000 to extend the 20MPH limit on East Street from where it is now and relocated to the Junction at the top of the road. This would then only happen if the data supported the need for it.
6. Likewise a similar restriction for Whaites Drive could be applied for and this would then cost a further £15,000. None of these costs have been provided for in the budget.
7. The clerk did ask about the possibility that there would be an automatic requirement for all new housing developments to have a 20MPH speed limit introduced onto the estate. This was met initially with a concern that they would not have the funds for the signs and road markings!
8. It was pointed out that the onus on this should be placed with the developers to satisfy the requirement during the construction period. This was parried with a

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statement that this would be something the Planning Authorities would need to deal with.

9. It is suggested that Members may wish to consider locations for the future where they wish to see the introduction of 20MPH in which case they may wish to allocate in the budget for 2024-2025 funds to cover some of these applications.
10. They can then submit the areas they wish to see benefit from the scheme to officers who will bring the information to a further meeting of the PHT Committee.

**Mark Tredwin**  
**Town Clerk**  
**July 2023**