

Proposal to adopt a 20mph scheme

1. History of this scheme

1.1 Public Aspiration

In the preparation period for the LNDP 2016, the public were asked to respond, 'yes' or 'no' to "The speed limit in Lavenham should be 20 miles per hour?" 63% said yes. The response rate to that survey was 64%. In July 2020, the Parish Council proposed a scheme to Suffolk County Council to introduce a 20mph zone to replace the existing 30mph limits. The proposal was sponsored by our County Councillor and supported by our two District Councillors.

1.2 Suffolk County Council Policy (SCC)

The Policy states that 20mph speed limits will not be considered on A or B class roads unless exceptional circumstances are cited and mean measured speeds are 24mph or less. The principal roads in the village are the A1141 and B107. Our proposal noted the unique nature of Lavenham including narrow streets and footways, heavy traffic flows and types, substantial pedestrian traffic and an above average older population.

1.3 Scheme Development

Traffic surveys were conducted by SCC in 4 areas; B1071 Church Street, A1141 High Street, U8154 Prentice Street and C702 Lower Road, between Friday 30th April 2021 and Thursday 6th May 2021. The survey showed traffic speeds were met against the 24mph criteria in 2 areas and 2 were borderline; Lower Road and Church Street.

1.4 SCC Response 1st Version

The County Council Officers agreed that Lavenham was an exceptional case and in October 2021, the first version of a scheme was received. However, this was significantly reduced to exclude the southern stretch of Lower Road, Sudbury Road from the 30mph limit, Melford Road, Bury Road up to the 30mph limit. A length of Brent Eleigh Road along the perimeter of 1st Meadow was included but did not extend as far as the existing 30mph limit.

1.5 Lavenham Parish Council response to 1st Version

The Council and our County Councillor considered the reduced scheme and in particular, other developments within the village that had taken place between conception and receipt of Version 1 from SCC. This principally involved a request to have Bears Lane included in the 20mph zone as a consequence of more traffic movement arising from the Osier View development. Extending the scheme onto Sudbury Road was also requested to take account of pedestrian movements crossing at the junction of Melford Road to access the bus stop. At this point in the journey to achieving a scheme, public opinion was expressed again in the questionnaire for the revised LNDP, this time showing over 80% of respondents wanted a scheme although that survey had a much lower overall response rate.

1.6 SCC 2nd Version

A revised provisional scheme was designed and considered by Council in April 2023. This version was provisional until Suffolk Police and other statutory bodies were consulted. This version extended 20mph to include all of Lower Road, Bears Lane, Meadow Close, Hall Road, Pound Lane, the residential park of Bridge Street Road and other feeder streets. This proposal excluded part of Preston Road. It also included changes to Brent Eleigh Road, with the addition of a phased speed reduction from 60 to 40 to 30 and then 20mph. A 20mph stretch on Sudbury Road beyond the junction with Bridge Street Road was also included. However, at Statutory consultation stage, Suffolk Police objected to both the Brent Eleigh Road and some of the Sudbury Road inclusions. The police provided some speed data to SCC for Sudbury Road, a little to the south of the proposed 20mph proposed limit. The mean traffic

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speeds were shown to be just above 30mph. SCC have advised that we would need to install significant safety engineering works to reduce traffic speed to an acceptable level, and this is outside the scope of the original scheme and would require additional design time, and money. Consequently, this objection has led to Version 3.

1.7 SCC 3rd Version

In Version 3 the previous inclusion of Bridge Street Road is deleted. For Brent Eleigh Road, SCC Officers have now proposed that SLOW markings and dragon's teeth to the 60mph side of the existing 30mph terminal signs are a better option than progressing the 30mph extension as proposed in the 2nd version. A 40mph stretch is now included on Sudbury Road from Brandeston Hall Cottages to the current 30 mph zone.

2. Proposed Way Forward

2.1 Progressive Change

There is little doubt that Version 3 has come a long way from Version 1 but it is still some distance from the original proposal dated 2020 and in particular excludes significant roads where speeding traffic is evident and where a substantial number of our population live. This is particularly in reference to Melford Road and Preston Road. It is also not ideal for Sudbury Road where most residents enter the B1071 from concealed driveways. In these circumstances the Parish Council therefore considers Version 3 to be part of Phase 1 of a programme of traffic management change. Phase 1 includes other measures already in place such as the Water Street Scheme. Further Phases will likely emerge from the work of the Traffic Working Party in the next few years.

2.2 Mitigation Measures

To mitigate excess speeds on some roads excluded from Version 3, the Parish Council will consider other measures such as provision of further Speed Indicator Devices with recordings regularly analysed and/or Community Speedwatch Schemes if residents volunteer their services.

2.3. Next Steps

Suffolk County Council will advertise the scheme and conduct formal public engagement. This will most likely be in written form. Advertisements will be placed in the press and on websites. Dates are as yet unknown. To support this, the Parish Council will convene a public meeting on 30th November 2023 to provide the opportunity for all residents to learn about and discuss with Council and each other, the Version 3 scheme in detail. Drawings of location and types of signage will be placed on the Parish Council website and on the Council Noticeboard.

25th October 2023