

Community Funded 20mph speed limits

Below is a copy of an email from Somerset Council on the Community Funded 20mph speed limits.

“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’.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.”