

PROPOSED 20MPH SPEED LIMIT – SAFFRON WALDEN TOWN CENTRE

A formal consultation was carried out between the 25 November 2021 and the 17 December 2021

	Comment	Response
Objection 1	<p>I wish to register my strong objection to the proposed introduction of a 20 mph speed limit on several roads in Saffron Walden, which I believe to be wrong and unnecessary, and I fail to see how it would “create a strong, inclusive and sustainable economy”.</p> <p>Firstly - In recent years more and more houses have been built on several sites around the town, resulting in greatly increased levels of local traffic. If this traffic is restricted to 20 mph it will take an unreasonable time for locals to travel through the town, with several larger vehicles having to crawl along in low gear and therefore emitting higher levels of pollution.</p> <p>Secondly - It will result in increased numbers of road signs, of which there are already too many spoiling the appearance of a once lovely old market town.</p> <p>Thirdly - Some of the restrictions are not necessary. You can't really do more than 20mph anyway on some of the roads listed e.g. Butcher Row, Market Hill and Place, New Road etc.</p> <p>Fourthly - You say it is to improve the pedestrian environment, yet no-one wants to give up their car and will continue to drive anyway. If it is introduced and there is ever a random speed check, you can bet that almost all those caught ‘speeding’ would be the same local residents who you say show a ‘strong local desire’ to make these limits permanent.</p> <p>Finally - How many accidents have been caused in the last several years by people driving to a 30 mph limit through the town? Hardly any.</p> <p>As for Farmadine, where I have lived for more than twenty years, rather than introduce a pointless speed limit you should do something about the parking and paint some yellow lines, as the road is used daily as a free car park for those who work in town, and the volume of traffic is often such that it would severely limit the ability of an emergency vehicle e.g. a fire engine, to reach some properties.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The roads which are proposed to be included in the 20mph limit are already indicating means speeds around 20mph so the proposal will not slow traffic down further than what they are already doing. • Where possible the signage will be installed on street light columns and existing street furniture. To minimise sign clutter. • The inclusion of all of the roads (even the minor ones) is to ensure consistency with the speed limit, otherwise it would be necessary to install 30mph signage for these elements thus increasing the street clutter. • Lower speeds provide pedestrians with a heightened sense of safety. Although it is unlikely to deter motorists from driving into town it might make pedestrians feel safer about walking around the town centre. • There are no speed related injury collisions recorded for the town centre area. • Essex Highways is not the authority for parking restrictions, and these would need to be requested via the North Essex Parking Partnership but with the support of the County Member.

<p>Objection 2</p>	<p>I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposal and would like to explain why. I do this as a resident of Saffron Walden for the last 24 years both as a car driver and as a frequent pedestrian through the town.</p> <p>My main concern is that this reduction in speed limit is simply not needed on most of the roads that are being described. I do accept that in the roads leading to and from the Market Square, there is a strong case to be made for limiting traffic although I very much doubt that speed on these narrow short roads is an issue.</p> <p>On most of the other roads, I think a change of speed limit is not warranted. For instance, on Gold Street speed is limited by the narrowness of the road and the right-angle bend at the top of the street. On Abbey Lane, speed is limited both by the narrowness of the road and the destinations that are reached from the lane. On Castle Street, speed is limited by the narrowness of the road, a chicane in the road, and the nearness of parked vehicles both to the left and right of the road. On Common hill, there are two large speed bumps which slow traffic very significantly. These are examples and I believe a reduction in speed limit is simply not needed and not warranted.</p> <p>I think the issue of reduction of speed limit completely misunderstands the issues of traffic flow and movement within the town. In my view there are two much more serious issues that need to be addressed. Overall, the issue is not that speed needs to be reduced but the opposite, to be increased!</p> <p>Firstly the biggest single issue the town faces is of congestion through the town centre and the resulting impact on air quality and pollution. At peak times, progress through the town can be very slow and I do not believe the phasing of traffic lights helps. For instance at the traffic lights at the junction of Thaxted Road with Radwinter Road etc, the phasing seems to have been changed and is now slower than it used to be. I realise that the issue of congestion in the town centre is difficult to resolve but more needs to be done to improve matters.</p> <p>Secondly, the second biggest issue that the town faces is of congestion along especially Ashdon Road but also Radwinter Road. Congestion is an</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The roads which are proposed to be included in the 20mph limit are already indicating means speeds around 20mph so the proposal will not slow traffic down further than what they are already doing. • The inclusion of all of the roads (even the minor ones) is to ensure consistency with the speed limit, otherwise it would be necessary to install 30mph signage for these elements thus increasing the street clutter. • 20mph limits are not uncommon in town centre areas now and the presence of the signals and narrow roads in Saffron Walden means that the town centre is naturally travelling at lower speeds so this is just formalising an existing arrangement. • As the mean speeds in the town are naturally around the 20mph mark and have been subject to a temporary 20mph limit since the start of the covid measures, it is not considered the making this a permanent speed limit will have a detrimental effect. • Requests relating to other parts of the town would need to be filtered through the County Councillor. The 20mph speed limit is just intended as a measure for the town centre so it is not a scheme which is looking at other issues in other parts of the town.
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	<p>issue both during the rush hour and during school starts and finishes but also even during the day.</p> <p>There are several solutions to this problem that come to mind. While some of these are undoubtedly expensive to implement (such as making the very wide pavement more narrow) there are also options which are much lower in cost. For instance, if Ashdon Road was to be made one way (in an easterly direction), that would greatly reduce the size of the problem. Perhaps this is also a solution on Radwinter Road (for traffic to flow in a westerly direction).</p> <p>Fundamentally, I believe the issue of speed limits is a distraction and completely unnecessary at this point. There are other more serious traffic issues that need to be addressed first.</p>	
Objection 3	<p>The main issue in Saffron Walden Town Centre is congestion and its associated pollution arguably due to the large number of new developments approved over the last few years, I fail to see how a 20mph will do anything other than exacerbate this situation, due to the weight of traffic in Saffron Walden's narrow streets excess speed is rarely an issue, it seems to me that that you are proposing the implementation of a solution for entirely the wrong problem.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 20mph limit is simply formalising an arrangement which has been in place since covid restrictions were introduced. Many motorists will have become used to the roads being 20mph so it would be counterproductive to now tell people they can drive faster. Town Centre areas are where higher pedestrian footfall is seen so formalising the 20 supports this movement.
Objection 4	<p>Most of the roads you have indicated you cannot get up to 30 MPH. So I would like to leave the speed limits as they are. None of the roads you have indicated them have any major issues with accidents and a-lot of the time traffic is very slow in all these areas. So no.... Resort back to 30 mph please.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 20mph limit is simply formalising an arrangement which has been in place since covid restrictions were introduced. Many motorists will have become used to the roads being 20mph so it would be counterproductive to now tell people they can drive faster. • The inclusion of all of the roads (even the minor ones) is to ensure consistency with the speed limit, otherwise it would be necessary to install 30mph signage for these elements thus increasing the street clutter.
Objection 5	<p>I Whilst improvements in safety and traffic flow are laudable I do not believe that the extension in particular achieves these goals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety statistics is the primary reason why 20mph limits are progressed in Essex, however this proposal relates to formalising the 20mph limit

	<p>Much of Saffron Walden daily life now revolves around deliveries and indeed collections which are carried out by vehicles. Delivery slots are limited and existing times between drop offs are already stretching the logistics of the delivery companies and this situation is not going to change and neither will it be improved by further speed restrictions.</p> <p>Furthermore 20mph speed limits in other areas of the country are only implemented where there is a clear safety imperative with heavy mixing of pedestrians and vehicles. There is no case for these circumstances on the proposed extensions.</p> <p>However what I would ask you to consider is that South Road which contains two primary schools is currently excluded from any extension, and here the case for safety is indeed stronger.</p> <p>I would appreciate if Essex Highways could provide evidence i.e. fact based analysis on the roads currently impacted that this has indeed led to any of the expected improvements.</p>	<p>which has been in place for almost 2 years since the start of the covid restrictions which would be counterproductive to remove.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Essex policy for 20mph limits is for the mean speeds to be under 24mph so all of the roads proposed fit these criteria. • South Road was not included as the main focus of the 20mph was to keep it within the vicinity of the town centre
<p>Objection 6</p>	<p>The reduction to 20 mph in Saffron Walden is a very bad idea for the town. It will slow up traffic in the town and people who come to Saffron Walden will shop elsewhere thereby reducing business in the town. It is also very unlikely that drivers will keep to the reduced speed limit.</p> <p>The town needs to encourage business and this proposal will be very bad for the town. I live in the centre of Saffron Walden and want the town to prosper and this will set it back.</p> <p>I most strongly object to this proposal.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The roads which are proposed to be included in the 20mph limit are already indicating means speeds around 20mph so the proposal will not slow traffic down further than what they are already doing.
<p>Objection 7</p>	<p>It would be better idea to have a 20mph limit across the whole of Saffron Walden.</p> <p>There is no need to be travelling at higher speeds from the moment vehicles enter via any of the 7 roads that come into the area.</p> <p>This proposal seeks to turn a bad temporary measure into a bad permanent one, and to extend its reach!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 20mph speed limit should only be introduced where the mean speeds are at or under 24mph so that they are self-enforcing. The Essex Police view also is that they will prioritise supporting 20mph limits which will have a proven casualty reduction element.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A town wide 20mph limit is highly unlikely to be adhered to which leads to a sense of frustration and scenarios of overtaking.
Objection 8	<p>Personally I don't think it's needed. The high street for example when cars can go 30mph the pavements are wide and there is no danger to pedestrians.</p> <p>The only area where they could be at risk is the market square which the majority of time isn't open to cars at the moment. which in and of itself is a big frustration to people in the town who need to pop in to the centre quickly and to the store owners who are loosing out on this quick custom. I would suggest reopening the market square obviously other then market days and ensure there is a reduced speed limit in the market square.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 20mph limit is simply formalising an arrangement which has been in place since covid restrictions were introduced. Many motorists will have become used to the roads being 20mph so it would be counterproductive to now tell people they can drive faster.
Objection 9	<p>I would like to register my objection to your proposal to introduce 20 MPH Speed Limits in Saffron Walden town centre. I have two reasons for this:</p> <p>1) In my opinion the current 30 MPH limits are perfectly reasonable. These 30 MPH limits have been in place for many years and were presumably considered safe when first imposed by your predecessors. Sure, reducing them to 20 MPH is going to reduce the degree of injury when a collision occurs - anyone can see that. But by the same logic, reducing them to 10 MPH (no wait, how about 5 MPH?) is going to be even safer. My point is that this is all about where we choose to draw the line. I think most people would agree that 10 MPH or 5 MPH is taking things "too far." I personally think that 20 MPH is also taking things too far, especially for through roads such as High Street, George Street, Hill Street, Audley Road, etc. I am not aware of the current 30 MPH limit on these roads making them particularly hazardous. Hence I feel that 30 MPH is a fair and reasonable speed limit for these roads. Reducing these limits to 20 MPH, in my opinion, just inconveniences and penalises the majority of careful, law-abiding drivers by increasing their journey and commute times. Now of course there are the inevitable idiots who race along these roads ignoring the current 30 MPH speed limits. I suggest reducing the limits to 20 MPH is not going to deter these individuals who will continue to race down these roads regardless. Hence I suggest you put the money you will otherwise be paying on 20 MPH signage towards one or more speed cameras or other ways of ensuring the current 30 MPH limits are enforced.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 20mph limit is simply formalising an arrangement which has been in place since covid restrictions were introduced. Many motorists will have become used to the roads being 20mph so it would be counterproductive to now tell people they can drive faster. • As the mean speeds in the town are naturally around the 20mph mark and have been subject to a temporary 20mph limit since the start of the covid measures, it is not considered that making this a permanent speed limit will have a detrimental effect.

	<p>2) It is my understanding that the fuel economy of a petrol or diesel vehicle increases in high gears.</p> <p>The reduction of speed limits to 20MPH will cause many drivers of petrol or diesel vehicles to have to change down to a lower gear. This will make their cars less fuel efficient and hence more polluting. So by decreasing these limits to 20MPH you will be increasing pollution in the town</p>	
Objection 10	<p>I write to express my opinion that the Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) providing 20mph speed limits on some roads in Saffron Walden for the period of the Coronavirus pandemic should be allowed to expire on 26th January as planned.</p> <p>I also wish to express my strong belief that there should not be any modifications to the existing permanent 30mph speed limits on any roads within Saffron Walden. I believe that any Speed limits below 30mph would produce little, if any, improvement in road safety figures and serve only to significantly increase ground level pollution in the areas affected.</p> <p>I live in one of the roads that is on your "hit list" for speed limit reductions and very seldom observe traffic moving at excess speeds. I would certainly NOT wish to find traffic travelling in inappropriately low gears.</p> <p>Can Essex Highways produce the results of any studies that have been carried out to indicate what affect the 20mph speed limits proposed would have on pollution levels in the town?. If so, could you please forward copies to me - or ensure that they are published in the local press.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The roads which are proposed to be included in the 20mph limit are already indicating means speeds around 20mph so the proposal will not slow traffic down further than what they are already doing. • Lower speeds provide pedestrians with a heightened sense of safety. Although it is unlikely to deter motorists from driving into town it might make pedestrians feel safer about walking around the town centre.
Objection 11	<p>It is a daft idea because:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is already too much traffic through the centre of town - to slow it down would increase the pollution which is bad anyway. Better for traffic to get through Saffron Walden quicker rather than slower. 2. What we really needs is either a bypass OR stop building on the wrong side of town. <p>Get a grip and look at the bigger picture not the short term.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The roads which are proposed to be included in the 20mph limit are already indicating means speeds around 20mph so the proposal will not slow traffic down further than what they are already doing. • Requests relating to other parts of the town would need to be filtered through the County Councillor. The 20mph speed limit is just intended as a measure for the town centre so it is not a scheme which is looking at other issues in other parts of the town.

<p>Objection 12 (Confederation of Passenger Transport)</p>	<p>Elsewhere when 20mph zones have been considered under the auspices of SGH, these have specifically excluded main thoroughfares, which are also bus routes. In this regard, I would suggest that 20mph restrictions should be reconsidered. Whilst it is unlikely that buses (during the daytime at least) will have the chance to often exceed 20mph on these roads, it would be preferable for them not to be penalised outside of these times. The cumulative effect of 20mph zones scattered along the lengths of bus routes is negatively impacting on running times – when these cumulative delays reach a certain level, there may be a requirement for additional resources to be employed, in terms of additional buses and drivers – to maintain the existing levels of service – this in turn affects the commercial viability of the services, many of which are borderline at present due to the lower passenger numbers at present. This would place a greater expectation on ECC in terms of the provision of budget to replace these services. The more likely outcome is that service frequencies get reduced, which is completely contra to ECC’s Bus Service Improvement Plan. Such measures are often cited as suitable as they reduce the differential between a journey time undertaken by car to that of a cycle – in doing so however this unreasonably also impacts on bus services. It must be remembered that not everyone can or wishes cycle/walk – and certainly many trip lengths preclude this. Increasing journey times of buses lessens our ability to entice people out of cars – and thus is contra to both local and central government strategies and policies. We run the risk of unreasonably impacting the elderly, infirm, disabled and generally less mobile by affecting their ability to travel in such a way.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In light of the speed survey data many of the roads which proposed to be included within the 20mph speed limit were already indicating mean speeds of around 20mph when the roads had a 30mph speed limit by virtue of street lighting. Therefore, the risk that the new speed limit will be exceeded is considered low, subsequently so too is the subsequent impact on bus running times.
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