

Suburbs to trial 20mph zones

'Residential 20' to be rolled out

BY WESLEY ROCK

STANMORE, Highcliffe and Winnall could be the testing grounds for radical changes to city speed limits in Winchester.

Hampshire County Council has earmarked £200,000 to trial 20mph limits in residential areas across the county.

A further £150,000, specifically for Winchester, has been secured from the local sustainable transport fund, and will be available from April next year.

The 'Residential 20' programme is expected to receive approval from executive member for environment and transport, Mel Kendal, on September 11, when the chosen neighbourhoods will be announced.

In an April report, council chiefs recommended that five residential areas should be selected from across the county.

Cllr Brian Collin, who has been a vocal supporter of the proposals, pushed for Winchester Town Forum funds for trials in more neighbourhoods.

He said: "It's not only for safety that we want this. It will feel safer and it will be a more pleasant environment to be in too."

City council portfolio holder for transport, Victoria Weston, has welcomed the plans.

She said: "People want to see lower speed limits and they want to see more spaces in the city where they can move around safely."

"Speeding is always a top priority when speaking to residents."

Cllr Weston noted that support from the communities themselves was vital to the project, a sentiment echoed by Cllr Kendal.

He said: "Given that speed enforcement of 20mph limits is likely to be a low priority for the police, its success will depend on local residents."

A 20mph limit has long been favoured by council bosses, but recent changes by the department for trans-

port (DfT) mean schemes can now be implemented with less red tape.

David Chafe, secretary of the North Stanmore Residents' Association, said: "It's definitely a good idea, because I live in The Valley (in Stanmore) and we have excessive speeds from 4x4s and motorbikes."

"I do think it needs to be enforceable, but if it goes down to 20mph and one or two cases are proven against people breaking that, it would make people think twice."

Some organisations question the effectiveness of 20mph limits, though.

Eric Bridgstock, of Independent Road Safety Research, said: "Virtually all accidents, not just road accidents, result from a combination of a hazardous condition (for example fog, a tired or drunk-driver) and a triggering event (such as misjudgement or failure to look)."

"A vehicle exceeding 20mph is not a hazard, nor is it a triggering event."

"A moving vehicle is a hazard, but a 20mph limit does not remove that hazard and, since typical average reductions in 20mph areas are about 1mph, a 20mph limit does little to mitigate it."

But the Rev Mike Gardner, of St Lukes Church in Stanmore, is in favour of the move.

He said: "I think lowering speed limits would be an excellent idea."

"It's been a long time coming and I think a lot of people in Stanmore feel that way."

"And if it would mean the removal of the sleeping policemen on Stanmore Lane, then even better."

wesley.rock@hampshirechronicle.co.uk

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EDITORIAL COMMENT

Drivers must make these zones a success

STATISTICS show that a child hit by a car at 40mph is more than likely not to survive. But at 20mph, the reverse is true.

That's just one reason why plans by the county council to introduce selected 20mph zones have been welcomed.

Hampshire County Council has earmarked £200,000 to trial 20mph limits in residential areas, and a further £150,000 — specifically for Winchester — has been secured from the local sustainable transport fund.

Whilst welcoming the move, the success of this initiative will be entirely down to motorists. Hard-pressed police will no doubt view it as a low priority. Let's hope drivers act responsibly and help make our residential roads safer places to be.

● TOO many villages have seen the gradual disappearance of traditional amenities like post offices, schools and pubs over the years. Now an enterprising Easton publican is to start up a shop in the car park of her pub.

The wooden structure may resemble a giant Wendy House, but will have power and water supplies, and sell locally-sourced and produced fare for villagers.

With the nearest shop some three or four miles away, the venture is bound to be popular. We wish Karen Wells much success. No doubt other villages will be keeping a close eye on how it goes.

WHO'S WHO

Managing director Stewart Dunn

Editor Keith Redbourn

Chief reporter Andrew Napier

EDITORIAL CONTACTS

ONLINE: hampshirechronicle.co.uk

E-MAIL: news@hampshirechronicle.co.uk

NEWSDESK: 01962 860836

SPORTSDESK: 02380 424 777 or

e-mail sport@hampshirechronicle.co.uk

POST: Hampshire Chronicle,
5 Upper Brook Street,
Winchester SO23 8AL.

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