



Compass Bus owner Chris Chatfield is concerned about 20mph proposals

# Buses could be withdrawn over 20mph proposal

A BUS operator has threatened to withdraw services in the town if contentious plans for 20mph speed limits are introduced.

Chris Chatfield, whose company Compass Travel run five routes in the town, said time added on to journeys as a result of the proposals could see him left with no choice but to consider stopping or altering current services.

A West Sussex County Council steering group is currently designing the £50,000 public consultation on the plans, which could see most of the town's residential roads limited to 20mph.

Mr Chatfield said: "If 20mph limits come in on our routes we will look at withdrawing buses from them.

"Most of our routes will be affected somewhere, so we would have to consider withdrawing from sections that have 20mph on them.

"The sections which would have 20mph are where a lot of people live, which is where the buses need to go."

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In practice, Mr Chatfield believes 20mph zones would add an average of four extra minutes to journey times.

He said: "You can't catch up on those extra minutes anywhere and it would mean introducing 65 or 70 minute frequency services, which nobody wants."

Mr Chatfield also criticised the potential cost, arguing the consultation costs alone could pay to reinstate Sunday bus services for several years.

He said: "As a bus operator, that money would enable us to reinstate Sunday services.

"It would cost around £10,000 a-year so it would go a long way. Surely that's a better use of the money?"

He added: "I hope common sense prevails."

Stagecoach South managing director Andrew Dyer said the plans were in early stages and the company would be making full

representations during the consultation process.

He argued the 'devil was in the detail' and the issue would be analysed on a 'route by route' basis.

He said: "I think in general, we are very cautious about 20mph limits and have concerns because there is the potential to slow down bus routes.

"There are a number of roads in Worthing which are already exempt under the proposals so I think the devil is in the detail and we will be waiting to look in detail at each of our bus routes, to see how they are affected."

Mr Dyer said he remained concerned at the types of traffic calming measures used, such as speed bumps, which make bus journeys uncomfortable.

He said: "I think we will be encouraging the council to replace these with more bus friendly traffic calming, as they can be very uncomfortable to drivers and customers."