

REPORT OF THE LEAD CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

The Lead Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment, Councillor M Lock, met on 13 September 2010.

Attendance: Councillor Lock (Lead Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment)

Also present: Councillors Freeman, Healy and Simmons

1. Notice of Motion:

1.1 The Lead Cabinet Member has considered a report by the Director of Transport and Environment concerning a Notice of Motion which was submitted by Councillor Freeman to the Chairman prior to the Council agenda for the meeting on 20 July 2010 being published. The Notice of Motion states: *Given the direction of the Government towards 20mph speed limits and the priority of this Council to reduce the number of killed and seriously injured on the roads, the Cabinet/Lead Member is asked to consider seeking to introduce, where appropriate, 20mph speed limits on all access and exit roads to all schools and play areas in East Sussex by April 2010.* The Chairman agreed that the Notice of Motion should be considered by the Lead Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment prior to it being reported to the Council Meeting on 19 October 2010.

1.2 The number of schools in East Sussex, excluding private schools, is 194. The number of playgrounds is unknown, but allowing for 10 in each Borough or District, that would be a further 50 sites, making a total of 244 locations to be treated. Some of these sites are already within 20mph zones, e.g. Stone Cross (Adur Drive), Kingston village, and the various schools in Peacehaven and Telscombe Cliffs. In other cases some sites will be in such close proximity to one another that a single 20mph zone would cover more than one location. Where schools or playgrounds are situated alongside busy A-class roads it will not be appropriate to introduce a 20mph zone or limit. Taking all these issues into account it is suggested that the number of sites to be treated should be reduced by a factor of 10%, making a total of 220 sites. Allowing an initial estimate of £10,000 per site, the cost of treating 220 sites would be £2.2 million.

1.3 This is a very rough initial estimate; some sites that only require a pair of speed limit signs at each end and the introduction of a Traffic Regulation Order to impose the new limit could cost less than this. However, the majority of sites are likely to require additional engineering measures to bring mean speeds down to levels appropriate for a 20mph limit. Taking the village of Kingston as an example, the scheme recently completed there which was paid for by the Parish Council and introduces a 20mph zone on the approaches to the primary school cost £130,000.

1.4 The crash records held by Sussex Police have been examined in a number of ways to assess the potential casualty savings that could arise from

the introduction of 20mph limits outside schools. First, looking at child pedestrian and cycle casualties between the hours of 8 to 9.30am and 2.45 to 4.45pm (i.e. school arrival and departure times), this shows that over the last three calendar years 2007 to 2009 there has been an average of 6 child pedestrians and 1 child cyclist killed or seriously injured (KSI) each year. However, these figures relate to all roads in East Sussex, and as the proposed 20mph limits would only treat a relatively small area in the vicinity of each school many of these casualties would not have been prevented by the introduction of the measures. Second, the numbers of all road casualties occurring at all times of day within a 250 metre radius of each school or college has been looked at, again for the three years 2007 to 2009. This shows a total of 20 child and 77 adult KSIs in the three years, giving an annual average of 7 and 26 KSIs per year respectively. 1.5 Whilst these figures are not insignificant, it needs to be borne in mind that the requested lower speed limits would not necessarily be the most appropriate solution in all cases. Also, a blanket approach, requiring an expenditure of £2.2 million spread across all school and playground sites would not make best use of our limited resources. In the current financial climate it is more important than ever that the available funding is targeted at those sites where it can have the greatest effect, i.e. the sites which already exhibit a casualty record. The 97 KSI casualties mentioned above have occurred at 69 school sites, and these locations would need to be considered alongside the other high risk sites across the County when assessing our future priorities.

1.6 The recently announced cuts in the 'in-year' grants from central government have had a significant effect on the County Council's ability to deliver new road improvement schemes. Programmes of road safety engineering work covering traffic calming, pedestrian crossings, lower speed limits and local safety schemes have been put on hold for the remainder of the current financial year, 2010/11. Levels of available funding for future years are currently uncertain and the Government's autumn spending review, which should make the situation a little clearer, is awaited. However, even if sufficient funding is made available, which at present seems unlikely, it would not come on stream until April 2011, and there would then not be enough time to develop, consult on and introduce the 220 new speed limit projects outside schools and playgrounds in the 12 month period between then and the target date set in the Notice of Motion of April 2012.

1.7 It is recommended that a more focused approach should be taken, concentrating on those sites where the 97 KSIs have occurred within a 250 metre radius of schools in the last three years. At present a new appraisal framework for the prioritisation of small transport schemes is being developed as part of the County's third Local Transport Plan. Once the new framework has been approved these school and playground sites can be assessed along with other small scale integrated transport and road safety schemes to determine their relative priority.

1.18 At present the County Council does not have the necessary resources to deliver the measures requested in the Notice of Motion within the suggested timeframe, and in any case attempting to treat all school and playground sites, regardless of actual need, would not make the best use of our limited resources. It is instead proposed that a more evidence led approach should be taken, concentrating on those sites where KSI casualties have actually

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occurred, using the appraisal framework for the prioritisation of local transport schemes that is currently being developed as part of the County's third Local Transport Plan.

1.9 The Lead Cabinet Member **recommends** the County Council to advise Councillor Freeman that –

✧ in the present financial climate the County Council does not have the necessary resources to implement schemes at all school and playground sites in the County within the suggested timescale; and

✧ those school and playground sites with a Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI) casualty record will be assessed in due course under the new appraisal framework currently being developed for the prioritization of small transport schemes.

MATTHEW LOCK
Lead Cabinet Member for
Transport and Environment

13 September 2010