

Report to	Lead Member for Transport and Environment
Date	5 September 2005
By	Director of Transport and Environment
Title of Report	A272 between Pellingbridge and North Chailey : Petition requesting a 40mph speed limit and double white lines
Purpose of Report	To consider a petition requesting the provision of double white lines and the reduction of the speed limit on the A272

RECOMMENDATION - to advise the petitioners that this location does not meet the national criteria for the provision of double white lines, nor does it satisfy the County Council's current policy for the implementation of a 40mph speed limit. The implementation of a limit will be reconsidered when the County Council's policy on the setting of speed limits is reviewed.

1. Financial Appraisal

1.1 There are no financial implications at this stage in respect of the recommendations detailed in this report.

2. Supporting Information

2.1 At the County Council meeting on 8 October 2004 Councillor Stroude presented a petition to the Chairman requesting improvements on the A272.

2.2 A copy of the petition is available in the Members' Room. Standing Orders provide that where the Chairman considers it appropriate, petitions are considered by the relevant Committee or Lead Member and that a spokesperson for the petitioners be invited to address the Committee. The Chairman has referred this petition to the Lead Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment.

3. Comments / Appraisal

Double White Line System

3.1 There is a nationally agreed procedure for assessing a route for the provision of a double white line system which considers the speed of traffic, forward visibility and road width. It is important that the marking is not used where the appropriate criteria are not satisfied, otherwise it will be brought into disrepute and eventually lose the respect of drivers. The A272 between Pellingbridge and North Chailey has been assessed against the criteria and does not meet the national requirements. Under these circumstances, it may be possible to provide a double white line system in exceptional circumstances, such as where there is a poor crash record associated with overtaking, subject to the agreement of Sussex Police.

3.2 Sussex Police records show that there has only been one serious crash involving overtaking on this section of the A272 in the last three years and this would not justify an exception in this case. In addition, Sussex Police have been consulted and they would not support the provision of a double white line system on this length of road.

Speed Limit

3.3 The existing 40mph speed limit on the A272 at North Chailey was included within a recent countywide review of all 40 mph speed limits to consider if it could be reduced to 30 mph or if it should be extended. The results of this assessment were reported to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment in September 2004 and a list of sites was approved for further detailed investigation and implementation.

3.4 The review did not recommend any changes to the existing terminal point of the speed limit as this is located to reflect the built-up area of the village. The principal reason why a lower speed limit between the end of the existing 40mph limit and Pellingbridge cannot be supported under current policy is the low level of development fronting the road. This is a key determinant in setting speed limits as, for a limit to be effective, it needs to reflect appropriately the environment that it passes through.

3.5 Revised national guidelines for the setting of local speed limits are due to be issued by the Government in the Autumn. These are likely to recommend to authorities the wider introduction of lower speed limits in villages and on the link roads between communities, such as this section of the A272, but only where vehicle speeds can be reduced to appropriate levels using supporting engineering measures where necessary.

3.6 The County Council plans to consider revisions to its current speed limit policy in the light of the new guidelines and this section of the A272 can then be re-evaluated if appropriate. However, sites will continue to be prioritised for implementation based on their most recent crash history in order to maximise the impact of the available funding on improving road safety across the county.

4. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendation

4.1 The road does not meet the current national guidelines for the provision of a double white line system and, with a relatively good crash record, Sussex Police would not support an exception in this case. The recent review of speed limits did not recommend any changes to the existing 40mph limit on the A272. However, with the anticipated publication of new guidelines on the setting of speed limits in Autumn 2005, this matter will be reviewed once the County Council has had an opportunity to consider any appropriate changes to its policy on the setting of speed limits.

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Local Member: Councillor Stroude

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Lead Member Report – 6 September 2004 - Local Speed Limit Review Phase 2.