

Committee	Lead Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment
Date	5 December 2005
Report By	Director of Transport and Environment
Title of Report	A265 Burwash to Burwash Weald - Petition requesting a speed limit
Purpose of Report	To consider a petition requesting the introduction of a speed limit on the A265 between Burwash and Burwash Weald

RECOMMENDATION

To advise the petitioners that the stretch of road between Burwash and Burwash Weald does not meet the County Council's current policy for the implementation of a speed limit. The implementation of a limit will be re-considered when the County Council's policy on the setting of speed limits is reviewed.

1. Financial Appraisal

1.1 There are no specific 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 11th October 2005 Councillor Livings, on behalf of Councillor Barnes, presented a petition to the Chairman requesting a speed limit be introduced on the A265 between Burwash and Burwash Weald.

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

3.1 The A265 is a major east/west distributor road which links the A21 Trunk Road at Hurst Green with the A267 at Heathfield. The village of Burwash is subject to a 30mph speed limit with a 40mph buffer speed limit on the western approach to the village.

3.3 To the west of Burwash are the hamlets of Burwash Weald and Burwash Common, which are subject to a 50mph speed limit. These limits have been set in line with County Council policy, and appear to be generally well respected by drivers.

3.4 The principal reason why a speed limit could not be considered at the present time is the very 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. In the absence of the appropriate environmental restraints, a speed limit would only produce the desired lowering of vehicle speeds if it were supported by other traffic management features.

3.5 There is also a real concern that if the existing speed limits are linked up with a new limit, which does not fully meet the criteria requirements, the effectiveness of these two existing speed limits will be diluted and may rapidly fall into disrepute.

3.6 The County Council is continually working towards providing safer roads for all road users and the communities through which they pass. In respect of the A265, the crash rate is well below the national average for this type of road.

3.7 Revised national guidelines for the setting of local speed limits are due to be issued by the government very soon. These are likely to recommend to authorities the wider introduction of lower speed limits in villages and on the link roads between communities but, only where vehicle speeds can be reduced to appropriate levels using, where necessary, supporting engineering measures.

3.8 The County Council plans to consider revisions to its current speed limit policy in light of the new guidelines and this section of the A265 will 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 for improving road safety across the county.

4. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendation

4.1 This stretch of road does not satisfy the County Council's current policy for the implementation of a speed limit between Burwash and Burwash Weald/Common. However, with the anticipated publication of new guidelines, this matter will be reviewed once the County Council has had the opportunity to consider any appropriate changes to its policy on the setting of speed limits.

BOB WILKINS
Director of Transport and Environment
25 November 2005
LMTE 5 December-Burwash Petition

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None.