

LEAD MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

DECISIONS made by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment, Councillor Claire Dowling, on 23 September 2024 at Committee Room, County Hall, Lewes

Councillor Bowdler spoke on item 4 (see minute 21)

Councillors Cross, Fox, Hollidge and Standley spoke on item 5 (see minute 22)

Councillors Daniel and Hilton spoke on item 6 (see minute 23)

17. DECISIONS MADE BY THE LEAD CABINET MEMBER ON 15 JULY 2024

17.1 The Lead Member approved as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2024.

18. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

18.1 Councillor Hollidge declared a personal interest as the Chair of the Place Scrutiny Committee's Speed Limit Policy Review Board. He did not consider this to be prejudicial.

19. URGENT ITEMS

19.1 There were none.

20. REPORTS

20.1 Reports referred to in the minutes below are contained in the minute book.

21. PETITION FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A PEDESTRIAN CROSSING ON THE B2096 BATTLE ROAD OUTSIDE PUNNETTS TOWN COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

21.1 The Lead Member considered a report by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport.

DECISIONS

21.2 The Lead Member RESOLVED to advise petitioners that:

(1) A potential scheme to provide a formal pedestrian crossing facility outside of Punnetts Town Community Primary School has been assessed through the approved High Level Sift process but has not met the necessary benchmark score to be considered for detailed appraisal and possible inclusion for funding within the Capital Programme;

(2) Whilst the provision of a formal pedestrian crossing facility outside of Punnetts Town Community Primary School is not a priority for funding by the County Council at this time, the County Council could support a potential scheme if an external source of funding is identified; and

(3) The County Council will continue to assist the school and local community with recruitment for the vacant School Crossing Patrol post and will provide full training, uniform and equipment to a successful applicant.

REASONS

21.3 The County Council has a limited amount of funding to develop local transport improvements and needs to ensure that resources are allocated to those schemes which will be of the greatest benefit to local communities.

21.4 A scheme to provide a pedestrian crossing facility on the B2096 Battle Road outside of Punnetts Town Community Primary School has not met the necessary benchmark score to be considered for detailed appraisal and possible inclusion for funding within the Capital Programme.

21.5 Although the request for a pedestrian crossing facility outside of the school is not currently a priority for funding for the County Council, if an external source of funding is identified, the County Council could support a scheme to install a pedestrian crossing facility outside of the school.

21.6 Whilst it is the responsibility of individual schools to recruit to vacant school crossing patrol positions, the Road Safety Team continues to assist the school with the recruitment for this position. Successful applicants will be provided with full training, uniform and equipment.

22. PETITION TO REDUCE THE SPEED LIMIT ON WELLBROOK HILL TO 40 MILES PER HOUR TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF ROAD USERS AND PEDESTRIANS

22.1 The Lead Member considered a report by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport.

22.2 Councillor Joel Marlow, the Lead Petitioner for the petition calling on the County Council to reduce the speed limit on Wellbrook Hill to 40 miles per hour to ensure the safety of road users and pedestrians spoke to highlight the danger of high speeds to residents and vulnerable road users, the increased use of Wellbrook Hill due to development in the area and the wishes of petitioners that a lower speed limit be implemented swiftly if identified to be taken forward as part of the Speed Management Programme.

DECISIONS

22.3 The Lead Member RESOLVED to advise petitioners that:

(1) As part of the 3-year Speed Management Programme on A and B-class roads, the A267 Wellbrook Hill will be assessed for a lower speed limit; and

(2) If a lower speed limit is appropriate and the site is identified as a priority, it will be progressed as part of this programme. The prioritisation process will be undertaken during Autumn 2024 and once completed a list of the selected sites will be added to the Road Safety section of the County Council website.

REASONS

22.4 Funding of £500,000 from the Capital Programme has been allocated to the Road Safety Team to develop and implement a Speed Management Programme. As part of the programme, a driven assessment has been completed to identify lengths of the A and B-class road network that would possibly benefit from a reduced speed limit. The Road Safety Team are currently assessing the findings from this analysis alongside speed data and new in-vehicle telematics.

22.5 The request for a 40mph speed limit on the on the A267 Wellbrook Hill will be assessed as part of the Speed Management Programme. If a lower speed limit is appropriate and the site is identified as a priority, it will be progressed as part of this programme. The prioritisation process will be undertaken during Autumn 2024 and once completed, a list of the selected sites will be added to the Road Safety section of the County Council website.

23. HASTINGS TOWN CENTRE PUBLIC REALM AND GREEN CONNECTIONS - UPDATE

23.1 The Lead Member considered a report by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport.

DECISIONS

23.2 The Lead Member RESOLVED to:

(1) Note the consultation outcomes of the stakeholder and public consultation as set out in the 15 July 2024 report;

(2) Note the outcome of further discussions with Hastings Borough Council following the Lead Member's decision on the 15 July 2024 to defer the decisions regarding Hastings Town Centre Public Realm and Green Connections; and

(3) Approve incorporating two-way bus and cycle movement in Harold Place and Havelock Road into the revised scheme scope and progress to detailed design, including considering further opportunities for planting and sustainable urban drainage into the scheme, and construction.

REASONS

23.3 The Hastings Town Centre Public Realm and Green Connections project funded through the Hastings Town Deal represents an enormous opportunity to support the ease of movements between the rail station, town centre and seafront via the Havelock Road and Harold Place corridor and improve the town's public realm. The County Council, as delivery partner, entered into a grant agreement with Hastings Borough Council, as the accountable body for the funding, to receive £9,754,458 of Towns Deal monies towards the project.

23.4 Consultation on the project proposals were undertaken between January and March 2024. Following the consultation outcomes, including the concerns regarding the detrimental impact on bus operations in the town centre, the preferred recommended scheme to retain two-way movements on Harold Place and Havelock Road was presented at the Lead Member's decision-making meeting on 15 July 2024.

23.5 Following the Lead Member's decision to defer consideration of the consultation outcomes and next steps, further positive and constructive discussions between parties stated in section 2 of the report have taken place and have demonstrated that wider town centre initiatives will not be dependent on the progression of the Hastings Town Centre Public Realm and Green Connections project. The risks to project delivery and funding do however remain significant and the pause to the project to allow time for further discussions has resulted in the need to re-procure design consultants and seek a Project Change Request via Hastings Borough Council and Government.