

**Report to:** Lead Cabinet Member for Communities and Safety  
**Date of meeting:** 20 July 2017  
**By:** Director of Communities, Economy and Transport  
**Title:** Petition for increased traffic calming measures in Priory Street and Southover High Street, Lewes  
**Purpose:** To consider the need for additional traffic calming measures in Priory Street and Southover High Street

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**RECOMMENDATIONS:** The Lead Member is recommended to advise the petitioners that:

- (1) The current 20mph zone and associated traffic calming has been shown to be effective at restraining vehicle speeds;
  - (2) The removal of the cobbled features that form part of the zone is likely to result in increased vehicle speeds unless alternative features are implemented;
  - (3) Amendments to the current traffic calming scheme are not a priority for the County Council at the present time;
  - (4) The provision of upright 20mph repeater signs is not appropriate within a designated 20mph zone; and
  - (5) Lewes District Council do not support the provision of 20mph roundels painted within the Conservation Area
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## 1. Background Information.

1.1 At the County Council meeting on 21 March 2017 Councillor O’Keeffe presented a petition to the Chairman from residents of Priory Street and Southover High Street, Lewes stating:

*“We the undersigned call for additional measures to reduce traffic speeds on Priory Street and Southover High Street to the speed limit of 20mph in order to help reduce traffic noise and pollution and make walking here a more pleasant and safer experience. This should include 20mph signs painted on the carriageway”*

And

*“In the interests of road safety, we (the undersigned) support any traffic calming efforts by ESCC in Priory Street”*

A covering statement also requested consideration of three specific areas:

- *“Increased road signage to remind motorists that they are travelling in a 20mph speed limit”*
- *“Removal of the cobbled areas, which only lead to increased noise levels for residents and have absolutely no impact upon speeding motorists”*
- *“The high volumes of traffic using these streets has led to increased concerns for the hundreds of pedestrians, particularly school children and students from Western Road Primary, Priory School and South Downs College”*

In addition, two emails have been received from the local Headteachers at Southover CE Primary School and Priory School in support of the petition.

1.2 A copy of the petition and all correspondence received 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 a spokesperson for the petitioners is invited to address the Committee. The Chairman has referred this petition to the Lead Member for Communities and Safety.

## 2. Supporting Information

2.1 Priory Street and Southover High Street (location plan attached as Appendix 1) are included in an area wide 20mph zone which was introduced in the early 1990’s. The zone includes a number of features such as raised tables (raised section of road with a ramp on both sides), cobbled surfacing and mini-roundabouts designed to restrain vehicle speeds. The two roads are included in a designated

Conservation Area and the design and implementation of any highway scheme needs to be sensitive to the special character of this part of Lewes.

2.2 Speed surveys were conducted in two locations on Southover High Street in March 2013 (results attached as Appendix 2) and these demonstrated that mean vehicle speeds were well within the expected ranges for a 20mph zone. Whilst it is some time since these surveys were undertaken it is unlikely that vehicle speeds have risen significantly. In addition, Sussex Police records show that there have been no road traffic casualties recorded on either Priory Street or Southover High Street in the three years to April 2017. With low vehicle speeds and an excellent casualty record, changes to the existing traffic calming arrangements would not be identified as a priority for the County Council at the present time.

2.3 Legislation sets out the requirements for signing in a 20mph zone and additional upright repeater signs cannot be provided. The legislation does permit the provision of painted roundels on the road surface to be provided. Lewes District Council have been consulted on the provision of 20mph roundels and they have advised that these would be detrimental to the character of the Conservation area. As the zone is operating well, and respecting their view, the provision of roundels is not considered appropriate.

2.4 The cobbled areas form part of the overall traffic calming scheme that supports the lower speed limit. Although residents consider that they have little impact they are an important feature in changing the visual character of the road for drivers so that they understand the need for lower speeds. Simply removing the cobbled areas and replacing them with a standard tarmac surface would be detrimental to the impact of the traffic calming scheme and would not be considered.

2.5 The comments about the high volumes of traffic using these streets are noted but could only be verified by the collection of additional data allowing comparisons to be made with the 2013 survey results. As improvements in this area have not been identified as a priority for further investigation by the County Council, any new survey would need to be funded by the community as part of a study into overall possible improvements. It is suggested, however, that the disruption on the railway network, including the regular movements of rail replacement buses along these two roads, may have contributed to this potential increase in traffic

### **3. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendation**

3.1 The existing 20mph zone and associated traffic calming scheme does restrain vehicle speeds to the appropriate levels and both roads have a good safety record. As the existing scheme is effective, changes to the features within the scheme would not be a priority for funding from the County Council's budget. In addition, the provision of additional road markings within the Conservation area are not supported by Lewes District Council.

RUPERT CLUBB

Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Contact Officer: Ian Johnson

Tel No: 01273 482944

Email: [ian.johnson@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:ian.johnson@eastsussex.gov.uk)

#### LOCAL MEMBERS

Councillor O'Keeffe

#### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None