

Report to: Lead Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment
Date of meeting: 16 October 2017
By: Director of Communities, Economy and Transport
Title: Ghyll Road Traffic Calming Proposals, Heathfield
Purpose: To consider the results of the consultation on traffic calming proposals along Ghyll Road, Heathfield

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Lead Member is recommended to:

- (1) Note the results of the public consultation; and**
 - (2) Agree that the proposals for traffic calming along Ghyll Road as set out in this report should be taken forward to construction as part of the 2018/19 Capital Programme for Local Transport Improvements; and**
 - (3) Agree to explore the feasibility of providing additional traffic calming features in Sheepsetting Lane with a view to include these measures in the scheme.**
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1. Background

1.1 In 2008 East Sussex County Council introduced a traffic management scheme along Sheepsetting Lane, Tilsmore Road and Mill Road, Heathfield to encourage slower vehicle speeds and to improve road safety. At the time, Ghyll Road was also identified for a potential future traffic management scheme to address concerns about vehicle speeds in the vicinity of Ghyll Bridge but the scheme was not progressed. Recent traffic speed surveys in Ghyll Road show that drivers are not complying with the 30 mph speed limit. In the vicinity of the bridge near Old Ghyll Road junction average speeds have been recorded at 30 mph and 34 mph for northbound and southbound traffic respectively whilst the 85th percentile speeds have been recorded at 35 mph and 40 mph for northbound and southbound traffic respectively.

1.2 The section of Ghyll Road between Leeves Way and Swaines Way has previously been assessed and identified as a potential site for traffic calming measures. It was ranked third on the priority list of sites warranting further assessment in 2010/11. At the time there was only sufficient funding available to progress the further assessment of the first two sites on the list and, as a consequence, a scheme for Ghyll Road was not developed.

1.3 In May 2011 a petition from residents was received requesting the introduction of speed reducing features and parking improvements in Ghyll Road. This was considered at the Lead Member decision making meeting in July 2011 at which a recommendation was approved for the County Council to consider this request as part of their scheme prioritisation process to see if a project can be included in a future year's Capital Programme for Local Transport Improvements. A scheme to address the speed problem in Ghyll Road in the vicinity of Ghyll Bridge was initially included in the 2013/14 Capital Programme for Local Transport Improvements to develop to a preliminary design. However, through the design process for this scheme, the safety audit identified a number of concerns about the high approach speeds to the first of the proposed traffic calming features. It has therefore been necessary to explore a number of alternative scheme options to overcome these concerns that has resulted in the expansion of the scheme to cover the whole of Ghyll Road. In developing this design, we have engaged with the community through a local residents' working group.

1.4 A comprehensive traffic calming scheme has now been developed which extends the length of Ghyll Road between the existing priority working build-out north of Tilsmore Road and the junction of Ghyll Road and the B2203 (Theobalds Green) to the south. The scheme extent is detailed in Appendix 1.

1.5 The features that have been proposed comprise a series of speed cushions (17 sets in total) along the length of Ghyll Road and two raised tables; at the junction with Geers Wood and at the

existing toucan crossing to the north of Treetops Way junction.

2. Comments / Appraisal

2.1 The public consultation exercise was held between Monday 12 June 2017 and Friday 7 July 2017. Approximately 1,000 letters with accompanying plans and a questionnaire were sent out to local residents and businesses in streets in and around the affected area. In order to publicise the consultation a press release was issued to the local newspaper and East Sussex Highways also used social media, such as Facebook and Twitter. Details of the consultation were sent to the Local Members of East Sussex County Council, Wealden District Council and Heathfield and Waldron Parish Council as well as other key stakeholder groups.

2.2 Two drop-in sessions were held at Heathfield Community Centre, in Sheepsetting Lane, on Wednesday 21 June from 5pm to 8pm and Saturday 1 July from 10am to 1pm at which residents had the opportunity to discuss the proposals in more detail. The consultation feedback form was also available at the drop-in sessions and on the County Council's website. Copies of the consultation material together with a copy of the feedback form are included in Appendices 2 and 3 respectively.

2.3 A total of 319 questionnaires were completed with 204 of these returned by post and 115 being completed online. The analysis and summary of all the comments received are set out in Appendix 4. A document containing a transcript of all of the comments made on the consultation feedback forms is available in the Members Room.

2.4 The results of the public consultation showed that 82% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that speeding is an issue on Ghyll Road and 15% either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that speeding is an issue (3% either had no opinion or did not know). The consultation results showed that 73% of respondents either supported or strongly supported the introduction of traffic calming measures along Ghyll Road and 23% either opposed or strongly opposed the proposed scheme. Of the total responses received from the consultation exercise 42 responses came from residents along Ghyll Road. Of these, 95% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that speeding is an issue on Ghyll Road with 5% either disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that speeding is an issue on Ghyll Road. 85% of these residents either supported or strongly supported the proposed introduction of traffic calming on Ghyll Road with 7.5% either opposing or strongly opposing the proposals for traffic calming.

2.5 The majority of comments received were concerns about the number and the type of traffic calming features being proposed. Respondents raised concerns that the proposed scheme would lead to increased driver discomfort, noise and air pollution and an increased risk to wear and tear on individuals' vehicles. In developing the scheme the County Council has endeavoured to minimise the number of proposed traffic calming features. In order to ensure traffic speeds are maintained below the signed 30 mph speed limit it has been necessary to provide a mixture of vertical traffic calming features such as speed cushions and raised tables at regular intervals (between 60m and 70m) along the whole length of Ghyll Road. This approach is designed to promote appropriate vehicle speeds with drivers encouraged to adopt a steady style of driving.

2.6 A number of respondents made requests to extend the scheme to include other roads such as Sheepsetting Lane, Mill Road, Station Road, Pook Reed Lane and Old Station Road. The primary objective of this scheme is to address traffic speeds along Ghyll Road and these additional requests for traffic calming features will be considered in line with the County Council's scheme prioritisation process on their own merit. However, given that there are traffic calming features in part of Sheepsetting Lane it would be appropriate, at this time, to consider additional features along the short section between the Cross in Hand Primary School and the A267 to enhance the existing traffic management scheme. In view of this, should the traffic calming scheme in Ghyll Road proceed, the County Council will explore the viability of extending the scheme to include additional calming features along this section of Sheepsetting Lane and consult with local residents accordingly on these proposals.

2.7 Of the feedback received from the key stakeholders groups, East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service were concerned that the proposed calming features may impact their emergency response times. However they also acknowledged that there is currently a risk to local residents through

speeding vehicles on Ghyll Road so advised that they will not be opposed to the implementation of the project which aims to improve road safety in this area.

2.8 The estimated construction cost of the traffic calming proposals as presented during the consultation exercise is £150,000. Funding for this will be provided from the County Council's 2018/19 Capital Programme for Local Transport Improvements.

3 Conclusion and Reason for Recommendation

3.1 There have been requests from local residents over a number of years for the extension of the existing Tilsmore traffic management scheme into Ghyll Road as traffic speed surveys have shown that drivers are not complying with the current 30 mph speed limit. Whilst the scheme initially sort to address the speed problem in Ghyll Road in the vicinity of Ghyll Bridge, through the design process, the safety audit identified a number of concerns about the high approach speeds to the first of the proposed traffic calming features. This has resulted in exploring a number of alternative scheme options that has made it been necessary to extend the scheme over the whole length of Ghyll Road.

3.2 The results of the public consultation showed significant support for the proposed traffic calming scheme. It is therefore recommended that the Lead Member for Transport and Environment agrees that the detailed design work be progressed to enable the notices to be advertised and subject to the outcome of this consultation and any necessary minor amendments, that the traffic calming measures be implemented in next year's Capital Programme for Local Transport Improvements.

3.3 It is also recommended that the detailed design work should include the additional traffic calming measures in Sheepsetting Lane between Cross in Hand Primary School and the A267 as an extension to the existing traffic management scheme if they are considered technically viable and acceptable to the residents of Sheepsetting Lane.

RUPERT CLUBB

Director of Transport and Environment

Contact Officer: James Vaks & Chris Tree

Tel. No. 07342 998531 & 01273 482247

Email: james.vaks@eastsussexhighways.com & chris.tree@eastsussex.gov.uk

LOCAL MEMBERS

All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Transcript of responses