

**Report to:** Lead Cabinet Member for Communities and Safety

**Date of meeting:** 26 July 2018

**By:** Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

**Title:** Petition to support traffic measures in Burwash

**Purpose:** To consider whether traffic measures to assist vulnerable road users in Burwash would be a priority for the County Council.

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

- (1) The footway is not wide enough to allow for strong and substantial bollard protection to be installed for the houses on the southern stretch of the pinch point;
  - (2) The introduction of a 20mph speed limit through the village, chicanes at either end of the village and the provision of pedestrian crossings in the village would not be a priority for the County Council at the present time;
  - (3) The County Council would not seek to restrict the movement of HGV's using the A265 through Burwash;
  - (4) It is not appropriate for signs to be installed to warn generally of pedestrians and elderly people using the footways and crossing the road in the village or for signs to be erected to inform drivers not to drive on the footway;
  - (5) The proposed double yellow lines will help to reduce conflict at the pinch point reducing the likelihood of larger vehicles mounting the footway on the southern side of the road;
  - (6) The County Council would have no objection in principle for more bus stops in safe places but these would need to be promoted by the bus operators(s) and the costs would need to be met from an external source or considered through a Community Match application; and
  - (7) Burwash Parish Council could consider a Feasibility Study at a cost of £500 to explore some of the options presented in the petition as the A265 through the village is not a current priority for the County Council.
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## **1 Background Information**

1.1 At the County Council meeting on 15 May 2018, Councillor Barnes presented a petition to the Chairman from concerned residents in Burwash about the amount and speed of traffic using the A265 through the village, and in particular the increased number of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) using the road. Their concerns are for the safety of pedestrians when vehicles mount the footway on the southern side of the High Street at the pinch point, the noise and pollution levels from the increased number of HGVs travelling through the village, the lack of pedestrian crossing facilities and the state of the road surface through the village. They wish for the measures below to be considered in Burwash:

- Strong and substantial bollard protection for the vulnerable houses on the southern stretch of the pinch point.
- 20mph speed limit through the village with signs at each of the 4 village boundaries and throughout the village.
- Increased signage stating that the road is unsuitable for HGV's, setting out which lane has priority at the pinch points, informing drivers before the road narrows, pointing out the presence of pedestrians, children, elderly and disabled, thanking drivers for driving carefully, telling drivers not to drive on the pavement, stating that this is a heritage village.

- Two pelican crossings, one between the village hall and the Catholic Church and one near the school.
- Double yellow lines on both sides of the pinch point in order to re-introduce the fact and reinforce the expectation that this is a two lane village road.
- More bus stops in safe places.

1.2 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 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 Burwash village is located on the A265 which serves as an important east/west distributor route linking the A21 Trunk Road with the A267. The village has a 30mph speed limit with regular 30mph repeater signs through the village and 30mph road roundels painted on the carriageway on the eastern and western approaches and in the village centre. A vehicle activated sign has been provided at both ends of the village near the start of the 30mph speed limit to reinforce the speed limit to drivers. At the western approach to the village there is a 40mph speed limit which covers the less developed part of the road. The local primary school is located on School Hill with a school crossing patrol funded by the County Council operating on the A265 to the east of School Hill. School warning signs have been provided either side of the crossing point on the A265 with the sign to the east of the school being supplemented with flashing lights. School warning signs are also provided either side of the school entrance on School Hill. A selection of photographs at Appendix 1 show the current situation in Burwash Village.

2.2 Crash data supplied by Sussex Police shows that there have been two slight injury crashes recorded in the latest available three year period (up to 31 March 2018) within the extent of the 30mph speed limit on the A265 through the village. One of these crashes was due to a poor turning manoeuvre at Spring Lane and the other was a result of an HGV and coach mirrors colliding close to Shrub Lane. The causation factors recorded were unlikely to have been influenced by engineering or traffic management measures. The locations of these incidents can be found at Appendix 2. There was a further slight injury crash on Shrub Lane as indicated on Appendix 2, but this is outside the A265 area considered in this report.

2.3 The County Council has a limited amount of funding to develop local transport improvements and it needs to ensure that the resources are targeted to those schemes which will be of greatest benefit to our local communities. In order to help prioritise the numerous requests for improvements that are received, a process was developed to determine which schemes should be funded through the Integrated Transport programme. The requests for a potential scheme to introduce puffin crossings (pelican crossings are no longer implemented), a 20mph speed limit, traffic calming features and the introduction of chicanes at the outer edges of the High Street in Burwash have been assessed to determine whether they might be a priority for future consideration. None of these requests achieved the benchmark score to enable them to be taken forward at the present time. This is partly because the A265 through Burwash has a good safety record and the limited resources must be channelled to those sites with a more significant crash record.

2.4 In recognizing that not all schemes that are requested can be delivered using the resources of the County Council, but understanding that they may be of importance to the local community, a Community Match Initiative was developed. This provides local communities with the opportunity to take forward schemes and if Burwash Parish Council feel that supporting these schemes to try and influence traffic conditions in the village is a priority for them, the process can be explained in more detail, setting out their responsibilities and the level of funding that would be required.

2.5 Repairs to several areas of the A265 High Street were carried out in April including potholes. The A265/Burwash High Street has been identified for future resurfacing works which have been scheduled for September 2018.

2.6 Air quality is an issue for the District Council and concerns raised about pollution levels through the village should be pursued by the Parish Council with the responsible authority.

2.7 It will not be possible to install bollards to prevent vehicles from mounting the footway on the southern side of the road as the bollards would permanently reduce the available width obstructing prams and wheelchairs and make it difficult for these types of users to be able to use the footway.

2.8 Whilst the desire of the local community for a 20mph speed limit and chicanes at the outer edges of the High Street is understood, these may not be the most appropriate measures for the village. 20mph speed limits with signs alone will only lead to small reductions in speeds and they are therefore most appropriate in areas where the average speed of traffic is already at or below 24mph. In some cases, this is simply formalising what is already happening and could be seen as an inappropriate use of our limited resources. If a 20mph speed limit is being considered on a road where average speeds are higher than 24mph, traffic calming features would need to be introduced to ensure speeds are brought down so that the limit can be self-enforcing. The type of speed reducing measures that would be required would have to be appropriate for an 'A' class road.

2.9 The introduction of speed humps would not be acceptable as they would have a detrimental effect on the response times of the emergency services and are rarely supported on bus routes. There is also a requirement for speed humps to be illuminated to an appropriate standard so drivers are able to see the humps during the hours of darkness and there would be concerns for local residents about additional noise and vibration that would be caused by vehicles passing over the humps.

2.10 The introduction of priority workings and/or chicanes would not be supported if they had an unacceptable impact on the free flow of traffic using an 'A' class road. These types of measures may also increase the amount of pollution as stopping and starting vehicles create more than free following traffic. Each of the priority workings/chicanes would prevent parking over a significant length of the road either side of the treated area.

2.11 A pedestrian crossing facility in the High Street was considered a number of years ago but following meetings with the Parish Council at the time, it was not pursued due to the loss of parking that would be required to install the zig-zag markings and the concerns raised in respect to the installation of the required street lighting that would be out of keeping with the village.

2.12 In respect of signing the road as unsuitable for HGVs, a weight or width restriction on the High Street would divert larger vehicles away from the A265 onto other, less suitable, local roads. It is the deliberate policy of the County Council to allow HGV's to disperse over the 'A' and 'B' class network, rather than concentrating them onto selected roads. The A265 serves as an important east/west distributor route and it is important that it remains available for all classes of traffic. The latest available data indicates that only 2.68 percent of the total number of vehicles using the A265 are HGVs, which is similar or lower than other 'A' class roads in the County.

2.13 School warning signs have been provided on the A265 High Street, where the school crossing patrol operates, and on School Hill where the school is located. In addition, the village nameplates on the eastbound and westbound approaches on the A265 were improved a couple of years ago, following consultation with Burwash Parish Council, to incorporate the historic & tourist facilities in the village.

2.14 Pedestrians in road warning signs would generally only be provided where there are no footways and a high concentration of pedestrians are walking in the carriageway. Similarly, elderly people warning signs would be considered where there is a high concentration of elderly/frail people crossing the road in the vicinity of a nursing home. It would not be appropriate to install pedestrian/elderly people warning signs to warn generally of pedestrians using the footways and crossing the road, as a driver will expect this in a village environment. It is an offence to drive on a footway, however, the signing regulations do not permit the use of signs to inform drivers of this general legal requirement.

2.15 The County Council has previously consulted on changes to the parking restrictions in Burwash, including with the Parish Council, and these are shown in Appendix 3. They will be implemented at the same time as the resurfacing work to avoid duplicating work and minimizing the disturbance to the travelling public and local community. The proposals include restricting parking to a shorter length of the High Street which will reduce the pinch point (the location of which is shown in Appendix 4) that is created by the present parking arrangements. This will help to reduce conflict at the pinch point, reducing the likelihood of larger vehicles mounting the footway on the southern side of the road whilst maintaining the traffic calming effect that parked vehicles provide. The shorter pinch point will also help to reduce the likelihood of vehicles having to reverse due to opposing vehicles going around the parked cars.

2.16 The County Council has agreed with the Parish Council that we will not be re-introducing the centre line between a point near The Bear Pub and School Lane after the resurfacing work is carried out. Removing the centre line for limited lengths through the centre of a village can slightly reduce the average speed of traffic due to the uncertainty it presents to drivers.

2.17 The County Council would have no objection in principle to additional bus stops along the High Street but these would need to be promoted by the bus operator(s). Consideration of additional stops would be based on the number of passengers that would use the facility and their effect on the existing timetable. If the bus stops are to be suitable for all types of user, they would need to have high level kerbs and bus stop clearway markings to help make them suitable for passengers with mobility restrictions. Bus stop clearways prohibit parking over a 19m to 34m length of road depending on the ease of access to and from the running lane.

### **3 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations**

3.1 It is recommended that the Lead Member for Communities and Safety agrees that the installation of bollards, pedestrian crossings, lorry signing, a 20mph speed limit, traffic calming measures, chicanes and the provision of new bus stops are not presently a priority for funding from the County Council's budget. However, appropriate improvements could be considered should an alternative source of funding become available or if an application through Community Match was successful.

3.2 In order to determine what measures could be suitable in the village prior to a Community Match application, it is suggested that the Parish Council commissions a Feasibility Study at a cost of £500. This will help to identify possible improvements for further discussions and provide the Parish Council with an estimate of what they might cost to assist in their budget considerations.

RUPERT CLUBB  
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LOCAL MEMBERS  
Councillor John Barnes

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS  
None