

Report to: Lead Cabinet Member for Communities and Safety

Date of meeting: 23 July 2019

By: Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Title: Petition to reduce the speed limit to 40mph on the A259 Seaford to Newhaven enforced by speed cameras.

Purpose: To consider whether a 40mph speed limit would be a priority for the County Council or meets the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership (SSRP) criteria for speed cameras.

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

- (1) A 40mph speed limit on the A259 between Seaford and Newhaven is not presently a priority for the County Council;
 - (2) The location does not meet the SSRP criteria for speed cameras; and
 - (3) The Strategic Economic Infrastructure Team has recently commissioned consultants to carry out a feasibility study of possible improvements at the junctions of Bishopstone Road, Marine Parade and Hill Rise.
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1 Background Information

1.1 At the County Council meeting on 26 March 2019, Councillor Osborne presented a petition to the Chairman of the Council "to reduce the speed limit on this dangerous stretch of road to 40mph enforced by speed cameras, this will add less than one minute to journey times but save lives and prevent congestion". A Location Plan is included in Appendix 1.

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 The A259 is a primary coastal route that runs between the County boundary at Telscombe Cliffs and Pevensey Roundabout where it becomes trunk road and part of the Strategic Road Network. In December 2018, it was identified as part of the Government's Major Road Network of economically important local authority maintained A class roads which sits between the Strategic Road Network, managed by Highways England, and the local network managed by the County Council as highway authority. The Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) flow on the section between Newhaven and Seaford is approximately 24,800 vehicles.

2.2 Local Speed Limit Policy (PS05/02) indicates that 40mph speed limits are appropriate in areas with frontage access indicating to drivers the need to reduce speed with mean vehicle speeds below 42mph. A copy of Policy PS05/02 is included in Appendix 2.

2.3 It is recognised nationally that the majority of drivers travel at the speed they consider to be safe for the conditions of the road based on their assessment of the local environment. A number of speed surveys have been carried out on the A259 between Newhaven and Seaford and the results are included as Appendix 3. The results of the most recent surveys indicate mean speeds of between 42 mph and 47 mph westbound and 45 mph and 48 mph eastbound. This, combined with a lack of development fronting the road, indicates that a 40mph speed limit on this part of the A259 would be very poorly complied with unless engineering measures were introduced to reduce the speed of traffic in accordance with a lower speed limit

2.4 The use of speed cameras is controlled by the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership (SSRP). There is strict national guidance on the use of cameras that ensures they are only used to improve road safety and are not seen as a means of raising additional revenue. The SSRP has assessed the location and it does not meet the necessary criteria for speed cameras. It would not be appropriate to introduce a speed limit that is too low for the environment with speed cameras to enforce the limit and this is also the view of the Police.

2.5 A 50mph speed limit was introduced on part of the A259 on 6 March 2017. The extent of the speed limit was carefully considered with Sussex Police prior to it being introduced. It was agreed to start the limit approximately 400 metres to the northwest of Bishopstone Road as it is on this part of the road that the set back properties become visible to drivers. It also meant that Bishopstone Road, Marine Road and Hill Rise junctions were included in the extent of the 50mph speed limit which is shown in Appendix 3.

2.6 A speed survey carried out on the Buckle bypass before the 50mph speed limit was introduced recorded the mean speed to be 47mph westbound and 52mph eastbound with 85th percentile speeds (the speed not exceeded by 85% of traffic) of 54mph westbound and 59mph eastbound. Introducing a 50mph speed limit on this part of the A259 offered the most opportunity to reduce speeds and the post surveys carried out in the same location recorded mean speeds of 45mph westbound and 48mph eastbound with 85th percentile speeds of 51mph westbound and 54mph eastbound, an average reduction of 3.5mph. The speed survey results are shown in Appendix 3.

2.7 If the 50mph speed limit had been extended further to the west, along the more rural part of the A259, there were concerns that the limit would be posted above the speed adopted by most drivers on this section of road, as the survey near Tidemills recorded mean speeds of 42mph westbound and 45mph eastbound. In our experience, introducing a 50mph speed limit on more rural roads can increase the average speed of traffic if it is posted above the original mean speed.

2.8 The personal injury crash (PIC) data supplied by Sussex Police indicates that there has been one fatal, five serious and 13 slight personal injury crashes on the A259 between Newhaven and Seaford in the latest 3 years. A plan showing the location and severity of the injury crashes is included as Appendix 4.

2.9 All of the A and B class roads in the County have recently been assessed as part of our Speed Management Programme to identify the lengths where the killed and serious injury (KSI) crash rate is above the County average. The KSI crashes on the A259 between Newhaven and Seaford equates to 7.1 KSI crashes per 100 million vehicle kilometres, which is below the County average of 8.9 KSI crashes per 100 million vehicle kilometres, the threshold being used to prioritise our Speed Management Programme.

2.10 The PIC rate of the A259 between Newhaven and Seaford for the latest available 3 year period is 22.6 PIC's per 100 million vehicle kilometres. This is below the 35 PIC's per 100 million vehicle kilometres threshold recommended by the Department for Transport for investigating whether a lower speed limit would be appropriate on rural A or B class roads.

2.11 We are aware that there are many places where pedestrians cross the road on this part of the A259. The Traffic and Safety Team are therefore presently in the process of amending the positioning of the 'pedestrian in road' warning signs to more accurately reflect these crossing movements.

2.12 Our Strategic Economic Infrastructure Team has recently commissioned East Sussex Highways to undertake a feasibility report to look at some of the possible options for the Hill Rise, Marine Road and Bishopstone Road junctions. At the present time, the outcome of the Feasibility Report is still not known but the outcomes of the report and a proposed way forward will be reported to a future decision making meeting of the Lead Member for Transport and Environment.

3 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 For the reasons set out in this report it is recommended that the Lead Member for Communities and Safety advises the petitioners that the introduction of a 40mph speed limit on the A259 between Newhaven and Seaford is not a priority for the County Council, nor would it be appropriate to enforce a lower speed limit with cameras.

3.2 It is also recommended that the petitioners are advised that a longer 50mph speed limit on the A259 is not appropriate.

3.3 The recently commissioned feasibility report will consider the options available for improvements to the identified junctions that would have wider benefits for the area.

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LOCAL MEMBER: Councillor Sarah Osborne

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: The petition