Report to:	**Lead Member for Transport and Environment**
Date of meeting:	**15 February 2021**
By:	**Director of Communities, Economy and Transport**
Title:	**Notice of Motion: Safety on the A259**
Purpose:	**To consider a Notice of Motion from Councillors Lambert and Grover requesting:** • **a study is undertaken and proposals developed to improve road safety for car users, cyclists and pedestrians at all junctions with the A259 in Seaford;** • **lower speed limits are imposed and enforced on the approaches to Seaford;** • **safer crossing points are provided at key points on the A259 including at the Bishopstone junctions.**

RECOMMENDATION:

The Lead Member is asked to endorse and recommended that the County Council does not support the three elements of the Notice of Motion, as set out in paragraph 1.1 under '*East Sussex County Council agrees to request the Cabinet to*' for the reasons set out in Section 3 of the report.

1 Background Information

1.1. The following Notice of Motion has been submitted by Councillor Lambert, and seconded by Councillor Grover:

"Members will be aware of the two accidents in two days that closed the A259 in Seaford at the junction with Marine Parade. Statistically, the roads in East Sussex are among the highest in the country for killed and seriously injured people. Seaford is the biggest town in Lewes district and is continuing to grow.

East Sussex County Council agrees to request the Cabinet to:

- *undertake a proper survey of the whole town, not just the Buckle by-pass, with particular focus on all the junctions with the A259, to identify the areas of greatest risk to both car users, cyclists and pedestrians, and to come up with some concrete proposals to enhance road safety. The County Council is already undertaking a review of the A259 from Seaford to Brighton in terms of congestion and the safety of both car users, pedestrians and cyclists should be part of that;*
- *impose lower speed limits on the approaches to Seaford and to work with partners to ensure these are enforced;*
- *provide safe pedestrian crossings at key points of the A259 including at the Bishopstone junctions."*

1.2. In line with County Council practice, the matter has been referred by the Chairman to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment for consideration to provide information and inform debate on the Motion. The Lead Member's recommendation on this Notice of Motion will be reported to the Council at its meeting on 23 March 2021.

2 Supporting Information

A259 - Context

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. The Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) flow on the section between Newhaven and Seaford is approximately 25,950 vehicles per day (2019 figures).

2.2 The road is multi-functional and accommodates local intra-urban journeys along the sections in Eastbourne and through the coastal towns of Seaford, Newhaven, Peacehaven and Telscombe Cliffs as well as longer distance inter urban journeys between these settlements. The inconsistent quality of the A27 corridor, particularly between Lewes and Polegate, means that traffic uses the A259 coastal corridor as an alternative route.

A259 Corridor Study

2.3 In December 2018, the A259 was identified as part of the Government's Major Road Network (MRN) 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.

2.4 In establishing the MRN, Government made funding of between £20m and £50m available for MRN schemes through the National Roads Fund, with an expectation of a local contribution of at least 15% being made to schemes. Department for Transport (DfT) guidance identifies the types of schemes that are eligible for MRN funding include packages of improvements which may include elements of safety, widening, new alignment and junction improvements as well as traffic management and the use of smart technology and data to raise network performance.

2.5 Transport for the South East (TfSE) was asked to coordinate with its constituent local transport authorities on potential MRN schemes across their geography that could come forward as 'early entry' MRN schemes, commencing before Apr 2023 or for delivery between 2023 and 2025. TfSE assessed all the schemes put forward against the MRN criteria as set out by DfT, as well as TfSE's strategic objectives for the region which focus on sustainable economic growth, improved quality of life and the environment. Following this assessment TfSE identified that the A259 South Coast Road Corridor between Pevensey and Brighton & Hove as one of their ten priority MRN schemes for submission to Government.

2.6 Following the adoption of their Transport Strategy in July 2020, TfSE are currently undertaking their Outer Orbital Corridor Study which includes the A259. The study will consider strategic and regional significant interventions that could be delivered to support the delivery of the Transport Strategy vision and objectives by 2050. The study is programmed for completion in September 2021.

2.7 In addition, the County Council is planning to undertake a A259 South Coast Road corridor study focussed on the corridor between Eastbourne and Brighton. Complementing the TfSE study, the study will be multi-modal and using an appropriate evidence base will seek to identify localised interventions for public transport, improvements to enable people to cycle or walk for all or part of their journeys, alongside localised road and junction capacity improvements and the potential use of smart technology along and around the hinterland of this corridor.

2.8 The outcomes of both studies will, in turn, inform the development of a Strategic Outline Business Case to Government to make the case for MRN funding. Work on the A259 corridor study will start this financial year and is expected, alongside the Strategic Outline Business Case, to take between 12 and 18 months to complete.

2.9 Subject to the approval of the Strategic Outline Business Case by Government, further work will be required to progress to the Outline Business Case and then Final Business Case stages which can take up to a further two to three years to complete. Therefore, it is expected it

will be 2024/25 at the earliest before any MRN funding would be available for delivering the preferred package of interventions. In addition, a local contribution of at least 15% would need to be provided as part of any funding submission to Government.

2.10 In response to previous concerns raised about the Bishopstone Road, Marine Parade and Hill Rise junctions with the A259, a feasibility study to consider potential improvements was commissioned through the County Council's capital programme of local transport improvements in 2018/19.

2.11 This study identified and modelled several potential junction and accessibility improvements to address concerns about road safety and community severance between the Bishopstone Road and Hill Rise junctions. These included the introduction of traffic signals and standard roundabouts at the Bishopstone Road, Marine Parade and Hill Rise junctions as well as a gyratory incorporating the Marine Parade and Hill Rise junctions.

2.12 The findings of the study show that, apart from the introduction of a gyratory, it would not be possible to formalise the current situation without creating significant and potentially unacceptable delays on the A259. However, the introduction of a gyratory would potentially require land acquisition and be prohibitively expensive to implement. Consequently, the outcomes of the study will be fed into and considered through the wider A259 South Coast Road corridor study.

Road Safety

2.13 Local authorities have a statutory duty to identify crashes on their road network and put in place a programme of works to address these crashes. Each year the Road Safety Team identifies sites (for urban areas a radius of 25m is applied) that display a minimum of four personal injury crashes recorded within the previous three year period; three years is the nationally accepted timeframe that represents the most up to date situation whilst giving adequate data to assess if there is a causation theme that can be addressed by conventional traffic management or engineering measures. This informs an annual road safety assessment programme of identified areas of concern and where further investigation may be required. Sites are then treated on a priority basis within the funding available.

2.14 Last year's assessment identified 75 sites on the county council managed road network that met these criteria. Within the Seaford area, only the A259 Hill Rise junction was listed and was 46th of the prioritised 75 sites identified on the local road network. A full review using the latest 3 year's crash data (up to December 2020) will be undertaken in due course when a full validation process has been completed. As a result, this may change the relative priority of this site within the annual road safety assessment programme.

2.15 However, as the current review process in place identifies more sites than we are able to treat with the level of funding that is available, and due to the relative priority of the Hill Rise scheme compared to other locations in the county, as highlighted in section 2.12 any safety improvements at the Hill Rise junction would need to be considered as part of the A259 South Coast Road corridor study.

Imposing and enforcing lower speed limits

2.16 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. Local Speed Limit Policy (PS05/02) sets out the principles for setting speed limits in the county. This indicates that 30mph speed limits are appropriate in areas with frontage access indicating to drivers the need to reduce their speed with a mean vehicle speed below 33mph. The policy highlights that 40mph speed limits are appropriate in less built up areas where properties are set back and where the mean average speeds need to be below 42mph whilst 50mph limits are appropriate where there is limited frontage and average vehicles speeds of 52mph. A copy of Policy PS05/02 is included in Appendix 1.

2.17 The introduction of any change to a speed limit needs to be supported by the Police and self-enforcing, potentially through the introduction of engineering measures which are appropriate for the function of the road to reduce vehicle speeds. However, if engineering measures are not appropriate or cannot be justified then a higher speed limit will be considered.

2.18 The section of the A259 west of Seaford was one of several routes identified for investigation as part of a previous assessment of A and B-class roads in the county. The investigation resulted in the introduction of a 50mph speed limit on the section in March 2017. The extent of the speed limit was carefully considered with Sussex Police prior to it being introduced to ensure it aligned with a driver's assessment of the road environment. Consequently, 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 setback properties become visible to drivers. It also meant that Bishopstone Road, Marine Parade and Hill Rise junctions were included in the extent of the 50mph speed limit. This has shown to produce a largely self-enforcing speed limit.

2.19 In addition, a petition to introduce a 40mph speed limit, enforced with speed cameras, was considered by the Lead Member for Communities and Safety at his decision making meeting on 23 July 2019. The Lead Member resolved that a 40mph speed limit on the A259 between Seaford and Newhaven was not a priority for the County Council and that the location did not meet the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership criteria for speed cameras. To introduce an effective 40mph speed limit on this section of the A259 would require a significant level of engineering work to ensure that vehicle speeds are brought down. This could not be justified in terms of the potential impact to casualty reduction.

Pedestrian crossings at key points on the A259, particularly at Bishopstone junctions

2.20 There are numerous crossings and types along the A259 through Seaford ranging from informal crossing points through to signalised crossings. These are focussed on locations where there are desire lines to cross the A259 and their type will be influenced by traffic speed and flow as well as the level of pedestrian activity.

2.21 As highlighted in section 2.7, the County Council is planning to undertake a A259 South Coast Road corridor study which will be multi-modal and seek to identify improvements, including upgrading or new crossings, to enable people to walk for all or part of their journeys. The outcomes of the A259 Bishopstone junctions study referred to in sections 2.10 to 2.12 alongside the local assessment for Seaford which has supported the development of the draft Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for the county will be used as part of the evidence base to inform potential crossing improvements on the A259 corridor.

2.22 However, the delivery of any crossing improvements or other interventions along the corridor is dependent on either securing MRN or other external (e.g. Community Infrastructure Levy) funding or a standalone scheme being prioritised and allocated County Council Integrated Transport funding within the capital programme of local transport improvements.

3 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 Firstly, the Notice of Motion requests that the Cabinet undertake a multi-modal study which considers the needs of all road users, particularly at the junctions with the A259, and identifies proposals to address these. Two studies are already underway or planned to consider these issues. The Transport for the South East's Outer Orbital Corridor Study which is currently underway will consider strategic and regionally significant interventions on the A259 corridor. The County Council led A259 South Coast Road corridor study planned to start this year will identify, using appropriate evidence, more localised interventions for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users as well congestion and safety measures along the corridor. Both these studies will then inform the development of a business case to secure Major Road Network funding from

Government to deliver the preferred package of interventions. As this request is already being actioned, it is recommended that this element of the Notice of Motion is not supported.

3.2 Secondly, the Notice of Motion requests that lower speed limits on the approaches to Seaford are imposed and enforced. The setting and changes to speed limits are undertaken in accordance with the Local Policy PS05/02. A 50mph speed limit was introduced on the A259 western approach into Seaford in 2017 and post-implementation surveys identified that the limit was largely self-enforcing. Previous requests have been made to reduce this speed limit further to 40mph however for this to be effective would require a significant level of engineering work to ensure that vehicle speeds are brought down, did not meet the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership criteria for speed cameras and therefore could not be justified. We will continue to work with the Police to ensure the enforcement of speed limits, however their setting needs to be appropriate to the local environment as set out in our Speed Limit Policy. Therefore, this element of the Notice of Motion is not supported.

3.3 Finally, the Notice of Motion also requests that pedestrian crossings are provided at key points of the A259 including at the Bishopstone junctions. To ensure a holistic approach is taken, the provision of pedestrian crossing improvements at the Bishopstone junction and other locations on the A259 will be considered as part of the wider A259 South Coast Road corridor study. However, the delivery of an interventions identified through the study, including pedestrian crossing improvements at junctions on the A259, will be subject to securing MRN or other external funding or standalone schemes being prioritised for county council funding and inclusion in the County Council's capital programme of local transport improvements. With no funding currently attached to the provision of such improvements, it is recommended that this part of the Notice of Motion is not supported.

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LOCAL MEMBERS

Councillors Grover, Lambert

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None