

Report to: Lead Cabinet Member for Communities and Safety
Date of meeting: 25 March 2021
By: Director of Communities, Economy and Transport
Title: Petition to reduce road traffic accidents on the B2100 Church Road / Rotherfield Road.
Purpose: To consider the petition to reduce traffic accidents on the B2100.

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

- (1) A 40mph speed limit on the B2100 between Rotherfield and Jarvis Brook is not a priority for the County Council.
 - (2) The location does not meet the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership criteria for a speed camera.
 - (3) The location does not meet the criteria set out in the Road Safety Team's Working Practice for vehicle activated signs.
 - (4) The location does not meet the requirements of the High Level Sift assessment process for consideration of a vehicle restraint system.
 - (5) The provision of new hazard marker posts on the bend will be investigated.
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1 Background Information

1.1 At the County Council meeting on 1 December 2020, Councillor Standley presented a petition to the Chairman of the Council "to reduce road traffic accidents on the B2100 Church Road / Rotherfield Road" (a Location Plan is included as Appendix 1). The petition requests that East Sussex County Council, as the highway authority, should urgently:

1. Reduce the 60mph speed limit to 40mph on the B2100 road between Milk Lodge Farm, Rotherfield and Palesgate Lane, Jarvis Brook.
2. Plan safety improvements to enforce the proposed limit, either by a speed camera, a speed notification device and / or westbound carriageway restriction fence.
3. Require removal of solid obstructions from the fatal bend and reinstatement of reflectors.

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 B2100 Rotherfield Road is subject to the national speed limit between the 30mph speed limit at Rotherfield and the 40mph speed limit at Jarvis Brook (approximately 920 metres). A plan showing the extent of the existing speed limits is included as Appendix 2.

2.2 The road was resurfaced in May 2019. The road surface, road markings and cats-eyes are therefore in a good condition between Rotherfield and Jarvis Brook.

2.3 The Road Safety Team uses a three-year assessment period to prioritise road safety work. This helps to ensure our resources are targeted at locations that are experiencing the highest number of personal injury crashes (PIC's) and allows us to monitor our road safety work effectively. This approach is based on national guidelines and best practice. There has been one fatal and one slight injury crash reported to the Police within the national speed limit in the latest available three-year period (01/02/2018 and 31/01/2021). The location and severity of the crashes are shown in Appendix 3.

2.4 The Police investigation into the fatal crash that occurred on 26 September 2020 is still ongoing. It is for the Coroner to ultimately decide the cause of the collision but, at the present time no highway factors have been identified.

2.5 The resources that are available for road safety are limited and priority must be given to locations with a history of personal injury crashes. As part of this year's Road Safety Programme for Local Safety Sites, we have identified 75 locations where at least four PIC's have occurred in the latest three years (within a 25-metre radius in urban areas or a 50 metre radius in rural areas). The crash record on the section of the B2100 Rotherfield Road covered by the national speed limit would not identify the area as a priority.

2.6 Previous assessments of the 'A' and 'B' class road network in the County, including the most recent Speed Management Programme, have not identified the B2100 between Rotherfield and Jarvis Brook as being a priority for further investigation.

2.7 The use of safety 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. A Road Safety Officer has assessed this location and it does not meet the necessary criteria for a safety camera to be considered.

2.8 Our working practice for Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS), provided on a permanent basis, stipulates that they are only used where there is evidence of a significant level of crashes involving personal injury. This location would not meet this requirement. If we extend their use to locations not meeting this criterion, their proliferation will reduce their impact at other locations. This follows national guidance issued by the Department for Transport.

2.9 Speed indicator devices may be considered on a temporary basis as an educational tool. Approval for this type of sign is restricted to roads with a speed limit not exceeding 40mph.

2.10 The provision of a vehicle restraint system (VRS) to prevent vehicles leaving the road would need to be prioritised and assessed in a similar way to other road safety work. The request for a VRS has been assessed using the High Level Sift as the initial stage of our scheme prioritisation process but, did not meet the benchmark score to be considered further and is therefore not a priority for us at the present time.

2.11 Although we will not be removing the trees near Old Forest Lane, we will investigate the provision of hazard marker posts on the bend and review the existing signing along the entire length of the road. The branches hanging over the public highway and the blocked gully covers along the route have been added to the highways works programme. We are in contact with Crowborough Town Council about the broken finger post opposite Palesgate Lane.

2.12 The provision of a new footway along the B2100 Rotherfield Road has been assessed using the High Level Sift process, to see whether it might be a priority for future consideration. However, it did not achieve the benchmark score required to enable a more detailed assessment to be taken forward. It is understood that Rotherfield Parish Council had previously expressed an interest in exploring what options might be available to improve pedestrian facilities along this route and were advised to approach East Sussex Highways regarding a Feasibility Study into the provision of a route along this length.

3 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that the petitioners be advised that a lower speed limit on the B2100 between Rotherfield and Jarvis Brook is not a priority for the County Council at the present time.

3.2 It is also recommended that the petitioners be advised that the location does not meet the Sussex Safer Roads Partnerships' criteria for a safety camera, or our working practice requirements for a Vehicle Activated Sign. The request for a new vehicle restraint system has also been assessed and could not be justified at the present time.

3.3 It is recommended that the Petitioners be advised that the provision of hazard marker posts on the bend near Old Forest Lane will be investigated and the existing signing along the route will be reviewed.

3.4 It is recommended that the Petitioners be advised that the provision of a footway between Rotherfield and Jarvis Brook does not meet the benchmark score for further investigation but, they may wish to contact Rotherfield Parish Council to ascertain their interest in a community funded scheme.

RUPERT CLUBB

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LOCAL MEMBER: Councillor Bob Standley

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: The Petition, the Safety Checklist and Report