

Report to: Lead Member for Transport and Environment

Date of meeting: 21 June 2021

By: Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Title: Notice of Motion for 20mph Speed Limits

Purpose: To consider the Notice of Motion by Councillor Osborne to set an authority-wide default 20mph speed limit for urban and village roads

RECOMMENDATION: To recommend that the County Council advise Councillor Osborne that:

1. Those urban and village roads that demonstrate a history of personal injury crashes will continue to be identified for appropriate action, which may include 20mph speed limits, if the scheme is of sufficient priority for funding from the County Council's capital allocation for local transport schemes.
 2. At the present time the County Council does not have the necessary resources to introduce an authority-wide default 20mph speed limit for urban and village roads.
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1 Background Information

1.1 Councillor Osborne has presented a Notice of Motion to the Chairman which states:

East Sussex County Council agrees to request the Cabinet to set an authority-wide default 20mph speed limit for urban and village roads. This does not mean 'every road', but that 20mph speed limits should be the norm and higher limits should be exceptions only where there is evidence that such a higher limit will be safe for pedestrians and cyclists. This is recommended by the World Health Organisation and was recently committed to by UK government in the 2020 Stockholm Declaration signed by the UK and 129 other global road safety ministers.

1.2 The Chairman has agreed that this Notice of Motion should be considered by the Lead Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment prior to it being reported to the full Council at its meeting on 9 July 2021.

2 Supporting Information

2.1 Central government supports 20mph speed limits where appropriate. National legislation imposes an automatic 30 mph speed limit on roads provided with a system of street lighting (defined as 'a system of street lighting furnished by means of lamps placed not more than 200 yards [183 metres] apart). This covers most residential and urban roads. These roads are given 'restricted road' status and no speed limit reminder signs are required to give effect to the speed limit.

2.2 To introduce a speed limit other than that imposed by restricted road status would require the making of a Traffic Regulation Order and the provision of traffic signs to give continual reminder of that speed limit.

2.3 If central government were to consider lowering the speed limit that applied to restricted roads, the impact would be significant in terms of the resources required to implement it. Highway Authorities would need to assess all areas covered by a system of street lighting to identify higher standard roads that serve as part of the wider strategic network, and roads where average speeds are too high for the limit to be self-enforcing, to judge whether a lower speed limit would be appropriate. Every junction between these higher standard roads and all other residential roads would then need to be signed appropriately, with Traffic Regulations Orders put in place to back those limits that fell outside of the revised restricted roads speed limit. We would also need to assess all 30mph speed limits introduced by Traffic Regulation Order to see if these needed to be changed to ensure consistency across our road network.

2.4 Adopted Policy PS05/02 (which reflects national guidance and best practice) allows for 20 mph speed limits/zones to be considered where they are likely to be self-enforcing. This can be achieved on roads where the mean (average) speed of traffic is below 24 mph. On roads where the mean speeds are higher, appropriate traffic management/calming would need to be introduced (PS05/02 is attached as Appendix 1). Sussex Police would not support any proposed 20 mph speed limit/zones unless they were likely to be self-enforcing or the appropriate traffic management/calming introduced.

2.5 There are over 1,000 kilometres of 'residential' roads in the County (comprised of more than 4,500 individual roads). Although some roads would only require a Traffic Regulation Order and speed limit signs to introduce a 20mph speed limit, many roads would require some additional engineering measures so that average speeds were appropriate for a 20mph speed limit. The types of engineering measures required on these roads would make it very expensive to introduce an authority-wide default 20mph speed limit on all urban and village roads in the County.

2.6 The type and extent of engineering measures that may be required could only be defined following a detailed investigation, design, and consultation process.

2.7 Although the cost of introducing an authority-wide default 20mph speed limit is uncertain, based on the number of residential roads in the County the total cost would be several million pounds.

2.8 The County Council has a limited amount of funding available to develop local transport improvements. To help us prioritise the numerous scheme requests that we receive, including 20mph speed limits, a scheme prioritisation process has been developed to help us to determine which schemes should be selected for funding from the County Council's capital allocation and potential inclusion in our capital programme of local transport improvements. This process is in alignment with the key objectives of the East Sussex County Council Local Transport Plan 2011 – 2026. The content of the programme is considered by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment on an annual basis.

2.9 The introduction of 20mph speed limits are often well supported by local communities, as they can support greater levels of active travel and help produce an environment which improves health and wellbeing.

2.10 The County Council will continue to support the introduction of 20mph speed limits where these are funded externally or through our community match programme and, where possible, will support and assist local communities and parish councils to implement such schemes.

3.0 Conclusion and Reason for Recommendation

3.1 The County Council will also, where appropriate, continue to support 20mph speed limit schemes funded externally or, where possible, through our community match programme.

3.2 The County Council does not have the resources to deliver an authority-wide 'default' 20mph speed limit. Where appropriate, requests for 20mph speed limits will continue to be subject to assessment through our scheme prioritisation process, alongside other requests for local transport improvements. This will then be used to prioritise schemes for potential inclusion in the capital programme of local transport improvements.

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LOCAL MEMBERS:

All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

The Notice of Motion (4 March 2021)