

Report to: Lead Member for Transport & Environment

Date of meeting: 13 December 2021

By: Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Title: Petition to address Road Safety concerns at Whatlington Road, Battle.

Purpose To consider a petition for East Sussex County Council to urgently address speeding and overtaking along Whatlington Road in Battle from Caldbec Hill to Punchbowl Corner.

Recommendation: *The Lead Member is recommended to advise the petitioners that:*

- (1) A potential scheme to reduce vehicle speeds and overtaking is not a priority for the County Council at the present time; and**
 - (2) Petitioners and Battle Town Council may wish to consider taking a potential scheme forward through the Community Match Initiative. A Feasibility Study (at a cost of £500) would be required prior to a Community Match application.**
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1 Background Information

1.1 At the County Council meeting on 23 July 2021, a petition was presented to the Chairman by Councillor Kathryn Field on behalf of residents concerned about road safety on Whatlington Road, Battle, requesting that *“the council urgently look at issues of speeding and overtaking along Whatlington Road from Caldbec Hill to Punchbowl Corner”*. A plan showing the length of Whatlington Road where concerns have been expressed is attached 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 Transport and Environment.

1.3 The section of Whatlington Road from Caldbec Hill to Oakhurst Road (just to the south of Punchbowl Corner) is subject to a 30mph speed limit and is a straight section of road. The speed limit changes to 40mph from Oakhurst Road for the remaining length of Whatlington Road and includes the bends by Punchbowl Corner to the north of Oakhurst Road. A 7.5 tonnes weight restriction with an ‘Except for Access’ provision is in place on Whatlington Road from the junction with Virgins Lane in Battle to the junction with Riccards Lane in Whatlington.

1.4 The crash data supplied by Sussex Police for the most recent three-year period (up to 30/09/2021) does not show any recorded personal injury crashes on the section of Whatlington Road from Caldbec Hill to a point north of the bends at Punchbowl Corner (by a property called 'Olde Wayes').

2. Supporting Information

2.1 The County Council has a limited amount of funding to develop local transport improvements and we need to ensure that we target our resources to those schemes which will be of greatest benefit to our local communities. To help us prioritise the numerous requests received for improvements, we developed a process to determine which schemes should be funded through our Integrated Transport Programme.

2.2 A request to install priority working build-outs/chicanes to reduce vehicle speeds on the straight section of Whatlington Road between Virgins Lane and the bends by Punchbowl Corner was made by Councillor Field in July 2021 and was assessed to determine if it was a priority to be funded through our Integrated Transport Programme. A potential scheme on this section of Whatlington Road was not identified as a priority for funding.

2.3 The use of double white line systems is strictly controlled by national guidance and would only be considered in instances where forward visibility is severely restricted and/or there is a significant personal injury crash record involving overtaking manoeuvres. It is not appropriate to install double white line systems on all roads where bends are present. The national guidance makes it clear that the emphasis should always be not to provide double white lines unless they are clearly justified.

2.4 Visibility on the section of Whatlington Road between Caldbec Hill and Punchbowl Corner, where speeding and overtaking is of concern, is very good as this is a straight section of road. There have been no crashes involving overtaking reported to Sussex Police on this section of road in the last twenty years. A double white line system to prohibit overtaking is therefore not appropriate. The issue of overtaking on this straight section of road may be positively influenced by the introduction of some form of traffic calming/priority working scheme.

2.5 The Community Match Initiative is a possible way forward should the Town Council and the local community identify this stretch of road as a priority for them to part fund a traffic calming/priority working scheme to reduce vehicle speeds and overtaking.

3 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that the Lead Member for Transport & Environment agrees that the installation of measures to reduce vehicle speeds and overtaking is not presently a priority for funding from the County Council's road safety budget. However, appropriate improvements could be considered should an alternative source of income become available or if an application through Community Match was successful.

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LOCAL MEMBER

Councillor Kathryn Field

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None