

Committee: **Lead Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment**

Date: **20 July 2015**

Report By: **Director of Communities, Economy and Transport**

Title of Report: **Petition calling on the County Council to reduce the speed limit on Station Road, Groombridge to 20mph.**

Purpose of Report: **To consider the petition for a 20mph speed limit.**

RECOMMENDATION: The Lead Member is recommended to advise the petitioners that a 20mph speed limit on Station Road, Groombridge is not a priority for the County Council at the present time.

1. Background Information

1.1 At the County Council meeting on 10 February 2015 Councillor Whetstone presented a petition to the Chairman requesting that '*East Sussex County Council reduce the speed limit on Station Road Groombridge to 20mph*'.

1.2 A copy of the covering letter and the petition are 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 that a spokesperson for the petitioners be invited to address the Committee or Lead Member. The Chairman has referred this petition to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment.

2. Supporting Information

2.1 The C70 Station Road, Groombridge, between its junction with the B2118 Withyham Road and the railway bridge, is predominantly built up on one side of the road with continuous properties directly fronting the road. It is presently subject to a 30mph speed limit.

2.2 A speed survey carried out just to the North-West of the railway bridge between 22 October and 30 October 2012 recorded the average speed of traffic to be 25.8mph westbound and 28.4mph eastbound; with 85th percentile speeds (the speed not exceeded by 85 percent of drivers) of 30.5mph westbound and 34.5mph eastbound. The survey results indicate that the existing 30mph speed limit is being respected by the majority of drivers. A plan indicating the location of the survey and a summary of the results is provided in Appendix 1.

2.3 It is recognised nationally that the majority of drivers travel at a speed they consider to be safe for the conditions of the road. In our experience, if a 20mph speed limit was introduced on Station Road using signs and lines alone it would only achieve a small reduction in traffic speeds. If the average speed is already below 24mph introducing a 20mph speed limit with signs and lines alone should lead to general compliance with the speed limit. The speed survey carried out on Station Road indicates that the average speed of the drivers to be above 24mph. To introduce an effective 20mph speed limit on Station Road, Groombridge it would be necessary to introduce engineering measures to help reduce the drivers' speed in accordance with the lower speed limit.

2.4 The crash data provided to us by Sussex Police indicate that there has been one serious and one slight injury crash in Station Road, Groombridge in the latest three years. Neither of the two injury crashes was directly related to the speed of the driver. As the road has a relatively good safety record, and considering the circumstances of the injury crashes on the C70 Station Road, a 20mph speed limit is not a priority for the County Council at the present time. A plan indicating the location of the two injury crashes is included in Appendix 2.

2.5 If a 20mph speed limit was introduced on Station Road it would be necessary to erect many more signs on Station Road, Groombridge. We would have to provide 20mph and 30mph terminal signs at the beginning and end of the speed limit and smaller 20mph repeater signs and speed reducing measures at regular intervals along the road. The speed reducing measures and the additional signing and lining may not be popular with all of the residents, so it would be important to carefully consult the local community on any proposal to reduce the speed to 20mph.

2.6 The petitioners may wish to approach Withyham Parish Council to determine whether they support a 20mph speed limit on Station Road, Groombridge and would consider submitting an application for the scheme to be match funded through our Community Match Initiative. A key consideration is whether there would be any prospect of the match funding being raised locally.

3. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendation

3.1 It is therefore recommended that the petitioners be advised that a 20mph speed limit in Station Road, Groombridge is not a priority for funding from our Capital Budget for Speed Management in 2015/2016 financial year. The petitioners may wish to approach Withyham Parish Council to establish whether they would be prepared to submit a request for the scheme to be match funded through the County Council's Community Match Scheme.

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LOCAL MEMBERS

Councillor Whetstone

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None