

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 improve safety on the roads around Arlington, due mainly to its use as a 'rat run' from the A27 to the A22 at Hailsham.**

Purpose of Report: **To consider the petition to improve safety on the roads and lanes around Arlington.**

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

- (1) That a lower speed limit on the roads and lanes around Arlington is not presently a priority for the County Council; and**
 - (2) A review of warning signs, road markings and verge marker posts in the area will be undertaken to help make drivers more aware of the alignment of the road.**
-

1. Background Information

1.1 At the County Council meeting on 10 February 2015 Councillor Bennett presented a petition to the Chairman requesting East Sussex County Council;

"To improve safety on our roads and lanes around Arlington, due mainly to its use as a 'Rat Run' from the A27 to A22 Hailsham route, speed restrictions should apply, particularly as it is an important area for tourists, cyclists, equestrians and walkers".

1.2 A copy of the petition is available in the Members Room. Standing Orders provide that where the Chairman considers it appropriate that 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 predominant factors to be considered when determining an appropriate speed limit for a particular road are the number of properties that are clearly visible to drivers and the average speed of traffic already using the road. Although it is acknowledged that there are some properties in Arlington, the lanes are predominantly rural in nature with continuous development over a relatively short length of road. As a result, it is not the type of road where a driver would expect a reduced speed limit.

2.2 It is recognised nationally that the majority of drivers will travel at the speed they consider to be safe for the conditions of the road. The majority of responsible drivers using the roads and lanes around Arlington will already be choosing to travel at a speed below the national speed limit due to the geometry and alignment of the rural lanes.

2.3 The County Council has agreed to carry out speed surveys on the C340 The Street, C340 Wilbees Road and C210 Caneheath. The speed survey locations have been agreed with representatives of the petitioners. The survey results should be available for the Lead Member meeting and they will indicate the speed and volume of traffic using the lanes as a 'rat run' during the peak hours of the day. The location of the three surveys is indicated in Appendix 1.

2.4 The crash data provided by Sussex Police indicates that there has been 1 serious injury crash and 2 slight injury crashes on the The Street, Wilbees Road and Caneheath in the latest 3 years. The severity and location of the crashes near Arlington are shown in Appendix 2. Excessive speed has not been identified as a main contributory factor in any of these crashes and the contribution a lower speed

limit would make to casualty reduction would therefore be limited and not a priority for the County Council at the present time.

2.5 As the national speed limit applies on The Street, Wilbees Road and Caneheath it is not necessary to provide repeater signs indicating the limit. If a lower speed limit was introduced it would be necessary to provide repeater signs at regular intervals along the roads. Experience has shown that there is a risk that some drivers would see repeater signs as a target and be encouraged to increase their speed accordingly. The results of the speed surveys will help to provide us with a clearer idea of the speed of traffic using the rural country lane around Arlington.

2.6 The resources available for the introduction of lower speed restrictions are limited. A report was considered by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment at the meeting on 27 April 2015. The roads around Arlington were not identified as a priority for funding from the Capital Programme for Speed Management in the 2015/2016 Financial Year.

3. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendation

3.1 It is therefore recommended that the Lead Member advises the petitioners that a lower speed limit on the roads and lanes around Arlington would not produce a significant reduction in driver speeds due to the geometry and alignment of the roads.

3.2 A lower speed limit on the roads and lanes around Arlington is not a priority for the County Council at the present time. It may also not be the most appropriate way to reduce the number of injury crashes on the lanes. To improve safety on The Street, Wilbees Road and Caneheath it would be more appropriate to ensure that appropriate warning signs, road markings and verge marker posts are in place to help make drivers more aware of the alignment of the road.

RUPERT CLUBB

Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Contact Officer: Michael Higgs

Tel No. 01273 482106

Email: Michael.higgs@eastsussex.gov.uk

LOCAL MEMBERS

Councillor Bennett

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None