

**Report to:** Lead Member for Transport and Environment

**Date of meeting:** 25 May 2022

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

**Title:** Petition calling on Wealden District Council and East Sussex County Council to reduce the speed limit on the A22 from Cackle Street to Lampool Roundabout permanently.

**Purpose:** To consider the petition requesting a reduced speed limit on the A22 from Cackle Street to Lampool Roundabout.

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

- (1) A lower speed limit on the A22 from Cackle Street to Lampool Roundabout is not a priority for the County Council at the present time; and
  - (2) Temporary posters, that include a road safety message to advise drivers of the risk of encountering deer in the road, will be put up during the deer calving and rutting seasons.
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## **1. Background Information**

1.1 At the County Council meeting on 8 February 2022, Councillor Galley presented a petition to the Chairman of the Council. The petition states:

*“As East Sussex Highways department have deemed it necessary to reduce the speed limit to 40mph on the Maresfield by-pass due to the works entrance and exit stretch, this sets a precedent for other sections of the A22, including from Cackle Street to Lampool Roundabout. There are many side road junctions on both sides of this section of the A22 particularly Cackle Street, Huggetts Lane, Tylers Lane, Old Forge Lane and Picketts Lane. There are many private, but also some commercial access drives, especially Coniston Nursing Home, AM Skips and Stratton Cars, all trying to access a road with vehicles travelling at the national speed limit (60mph) and above, in some cases”.*

A Location Plan is included 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.

## **2 Supporting Information**

2.1 The A22 between Cackle Street and Lampool Roundabout is subject to the national speed limit. The side roads to the northeast of the A22, including Old Forge Lane, Tylers Lane, Huggetts Lane and Cackle Street are all part of the Ashdown Forest 40mph speed limit. There is also a 40mph speed limit for Nutley starting approximately 40-metres southeast of the Cackle Street junction. Picketts Lane to the southwest of the A22 is subject to the 60mph national speed limit. The extent of the existing speed limits is shown in Appendix 2.

2.2 As a result of the petition, two speed surveys were carried out on the A22 between Cackle Street and Lampool Roundabout. The surveys were carried out approximately 75-metres southeast of the Old Forge Lane junction, and immediately opposite the access of Old Forest Lodge nursing home. The average 24-hour daily traffic flow was recorded at 10,562 vehicles near Old Forge Lane, and 10,162 vehicles opposite Old Forest Lodge. The location of the two surveys is shown in Appendix 3.

2.3 The result of the speed survey carried out to the southeast of Old Forge Lane recorded the average speed of traffic to be 50mph southbound and 45mph northbound, with 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds

(the speed that 85% of drivers are travelling below) of 58mph southbound and 52mph northbound. The survey carried out opposite Old Forest Nursing Home recorded the average speed of traffic to be 46mph southbound and 43mph northbound, with 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds of 55mph southbound and 50mph northbound. The results of the speed surveys are summarised in Appendix 3, and the full results are included in Appendix 4.

2.4 The predominant factors that we consider when determining an appropriate and effective speed limit is the level of frontage development visible to a driver and the average speed of traffic. It is recognised nationally that most drivers travel at the speed they consider to be safe, based on their assessment of the local environment. It is acknowledged that there are some private and commercial accesses adjoining this part of the A22, but the road is predominantly rural in nature, with development set back from the road, so it does not give drivers the visual message to support a 40mph speed limit.

2.5 In our experience, reducing a speed limit with traffic signs and road markings reduces the average speed of traffic by about 1mph, and only when the reason for the speed limit is obvious. The results of the speed surveys indicate that permanent traffic calming features would be required if a 40mph speed limit was to be effective on this part of the A22.

2.6 The 40mph speed limit that was introduced on the A22 Maresfield by-pass during roadworks was a temporary measure. Traffic management for roadworks is covered by separate and specific guidance issued by the Department for Transport designed to ensure that highway works contractors can fulfil their obligations to ensure the safety of the public and their own employees. These obligations are defined by several legislative documents including the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015.

2.7 The resources that we have available for road safety is limited and priority must be given to locations with a history of personal injury crashes. Any interventions need to be planned and account for the reasons the crashes are occurring. To prioritise our work the Road Safety Team uses a three-year assessment period, this is in accordance with national guidance, and helps to ensure our resources are targeted at locations that will produce the biggest impact in terms of casualty reduction.

2.8 Over the approximate 1.6km section of the A22 there have been six personal injury crashes reported to the Police in the latest available three-year period (01/03/2019 and 28/02/2022). However, only one of those crashes included a speed related causation factor as defined by Sussex Safer Roads Partnership (SSRP). The other personal injury crashes were due to affected vision, driver / rider error, driver behaviour or an animal or object in the road. As a result, a lower 40mph speed limit would not have necessarily prevented these crashes. The location and severity of the personal injury crashes on this part of the A22 are included in Appendix 5.

2.9 As part of this year's Road Safety Programme, we have identified 59 locations where at least four personal injury crashes occurred in the three-year study period of 01/01/2019 and 31/12/2021. The crash record on the A22 between Cackle Street and Lampool Roundabout does not identify any area as a current road safety priority for the County Council.

2.10 Previous assessments of the rural A and B class road network in the county, including the most recent Speed Management Programme, have also not identified the A22 between Cackle Street and Lampool Roundabout as being a priority for further investigation.

2.11 The causation factors and Police descriptions of the personal injury crashes for the latest available three-year period (01/03/2019 and 28/02/2022) do indicate that deer contributed towards two of the personal injury crashes on this part of the A22. As a result, we have arranged for temporary posters to be put in place during the deer calving and rutting seasons, to warn drivers of the risk of encountering deer in the carriageway, at the times of the year when it is most likely.

### **3 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations**

3.1 It is recommended that the Petitioners be advised that a 40mph speed limit with traffic calming on the A22 between Cackle Street and Lampool Roundabout is not an identified priority for the County Council.

3.2 Temporary posters will be put in place to warn drivers of the risk of encountering deer in the road on this part of the A22, during the calving and rutting seasons.

RUPERT CLUBB

Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Contact Officer: Michael Higgs

Tel.No. 01273 482106

Email: [michael.higgs@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:michael.higgs@eastsussex.gov.uk)

LOCAL MEMBER:

Councillor Roy Galley

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None