

Report to: Lead Member for Transport & Environment

Date of meeting: 13 June 2022

By: Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Title: Petition to consider Road Safety at Eridge Green (A26)

Purpose: To consider a petition requesting road safety improvements for all users be made on the A26 Eridge Green

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

- (1) A pedestrian crossing on the A26 at Eridge Green is not a priority for East Sussex County Council at the present time;**
 - (2) A reduction of the existing 40mph speed limit on the A26 at Eridge Green is not a priority for East Sussex County Council at the present time;**
 - (3) The implementation of traffic calming on an 'A' class road would not be supported by emergency services as this would affect their response times;**
 - (4) Improvements to the junction of Sham Farm Road is not a priority for East Sussex County Council at the present time;**
 - (5) Although not a priority for East Sussex County Council, a request for measures could be put forward via the Parish Council requesting a Feasibility Study and using the Community Match Initiative; and**
 - (6) The implementation of Pedestrian warning signs will be assessed against national criteria and guidance.**
 - (7) East Sussex Highways have been asked to assess the condition of the road markings in the area and make improvements where appropriate.**
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1 Background Information

1.1. At the County Council meeting on 08 February 2022, a petition was presented to the Chairman by Councillor Georgia Taylor from a group of residents calling on the County Council to improve road safety for all road users on the A26 Eridge Green by:

- Providing a safe crossing;
- Slowing down traffic;
- Providing safe passage for cyclists, wheelchair users and walkers.

1.2. A copy of the petition is available in the Members' Room. Standing Orders provide that where the Chair 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. Eridge Green is situated on the A26 between Crowborough and the border of Tunbridge Wells (Kent County Council), as shown on the location plan set out in Appendix 1.

2.2. The A26 Eridge Green is predominantly rural in nature with properties set back from the road. The property accesses onto the A26 serve as an indication to drivers of the need to reduce their speed. The existing 40mph speed limit is in line with national guidance and adopted Policy PS05-02 (attached as Appendix 2) and is considered appropriate.

2.3. When entering the 40mph speed limit travelling northwards, the '40' signs are yellow backed with a village nameplate reading 'Eridge – Please drive carefully' beneath the terminal sign on the right-hand side. Adjacent to the terminal sign (left hand side) is red surfacing and a '40' roundel within this, all of which highlights the speed limit to drivers. There is also a Vehicle Activated Sign opposite the property 'The Hollies' which reads '40 SLOW DOWN' should vehicles be exceeding the speed limit. On the southbound approach, there are yellow backed 40mph speed limit signs.

2.4. At the present time, East Sussex County Council has very limited funding available for assessing the effectiveness of a speed limit or for considering lower speed limits. The only resources currently available are from a wider road safety review that is being targeted at the 'A' and 'B' roads in the county with a killed and serious injury (KSI) crash rate above the county average. The latest crash record shows that there have been no personal injury crashes between Sham Farm Road and Eridge Church over the most recent three-year period and as such, it would not be a priority for us to consider above other sites. Any traffic calming proposals on an A class road is also likely to be objected to by the emergency services, passenger transport providers and the freight industry.

2.5. The County Council has a limited amount of funding to develop local transport improvements and needs to ensure that resources are allocated to those schemes which will be of greatest benefit to local communities. To help prioritise the numerous requests for improvements, a process was developed to determine which schemes should be funded through an Integrated Transport Programme

2.6. A request for a pedestrian crossing on the A26 Eridge Green has been assessed to determine if it might be a priority for future consideration; however, it did not achieve the benchmark score to be taken forward at this time.

2.7. In light of residents' ongoing concerns regarding crossing the road at this location, a request for a pedestrian crossing has also been assessed through the 'Community Match Underspend' scheme. However, as there is only a footway on the eastern side, to create a crossing point here would require the introduction of new footway which would exceed the £40,000 cap that has been introduced to ensure that this project targets small-scale works, allowing the County Council to deliver several schemes of local importance. A pedestrian crossing therefore does not meet the criteria for funding under the Community Match Underspend scheme.

2.8. It is noted that visibility to the right when exiting Sham Farm Road onto the A26 is restricted due to the bend in the road. For those drivers approaching the junction heading south on the A26, the junction is signed with a yellow backed junction warning sign with a 'SLOW' marking on the carriageway adjacent to this to highlight to drivers there is a junction ahead. The Police Crash Record for the most recent three-year period shows that there have been no personal injury crashes at this location. In light of the above, this junction would not be a priority for us to investigate above other sites where there have been incidents of people killed or seriously injured.

2.9. It is noted that the lines and signs in the area are in need of attention, and this has been passed to colleagues at East Sussex Highways.

2.10. The Road Safety Team will assess whether Pedestrian warning signs to highlight to drivers the possibility of pedestrians in the road, meet the national guidance standards for the implementation of traffic signs on the public highway.

3 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

3.1. It is recommended that the petitioners be advised that their request for a lower speed limit and pedestrian crossing on the A26 Eridge Green does not meet the County Council's criteria and, therefore, due to limited resources this site would not be a priority to consider above those currently identified for investigation.

3.2. It is recommended that the petitioners be advised that their request for traffic calming measures has not been identified as a priority for the County Council at the present time and that the measures available for use on a busy A class road are very limited owing to the likelihood of formal objections from statutory consultees to such proposals.

3.3. It is recommended that the petitioners be advised that due to the crash record at the junction of Sham Farm Road/A26, this site would not be a priority to consider above those currently identified for investigation.

3.4. It is recommended that the petitioners be advised to contact Rotherfield Parish Council to see if they would support a Feasibility Study into whether any measures could be considered for part funding through the Community Match initiative.

3.5. It is recommended that the petitioners be advised that lining and signing maintenance in the area has been passed to East Sussex Highways to investigate.

3.6. It is recommended that petitioners be advised that the Road Safety Team will consider the implementation of 'Pedestrian Crossing' warning signs at this location.

RUPERT CLUBB

Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Contact Officer: Jo Reed

Tel. No. 07748 761449

Email: jo.reed@eastsussex.gov.uk

LOCAL MEMBERS

Councillor Georgia Taylor

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

N/A