

Report to: Lead Member for Transport & Environment

Date of meeting: 18 July 2022

By: Director of Communities, Economy, and Transport

Title: Petition - Request for a 40mph speed limit extension on the A2100 London Road, Battle

Purpose: To consider a petition for an extended 40mph speed limit on the A2100 London Road, Battle.

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

An extension of the 40mph speed limit on the A2100 London Road beyond that agreed for the Lillybank development is not a priority for investigation by the County Council at the present time.

1 Background Information

1.1 At the County Council meeting on 23 July 2021, a petition was presented to the Chair by Councillor Kathryn Field on behalf of residents concerned about road safety on the A2100 London Road, Battle requesting *“that when the 40mph speed limit is extended to protect the new Lillybank Development, it be extended to a suitable location north of the Canadia Road turning to help protect vulnerable residents from the excessive speeding frequently endangering lives”*. A plan indicating the extent of the proposed speed limit extension and that requested by the petitioners is attached as Appendix 1.

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 Chair has referred this petition to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment.

1.3 The Lillybank Farm development (Millbank Homes, planning application reference RR/2016/725/P) was approved with a Section 106 legal agreement in May 2017. Part of this agreement required an extension to the existing 40mph speed limit on London Road to the north of the proposed access to the development. This measure is required to make the access to the development acceptable in highway standards terms.

1.4 A Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to implement a 40mph extension was originally advertised and approved by Planning Committee in 2018. The developer did however not implement the speed limit reduction within the statutory two-year period, as commencement on site was delayed, and therefore the TRO has been readvertised.

1.5 Millwood Homes are now constructing the Lillybank housing development and there is a need to implement the 40mph speed limit extension. The Traffic Regulation Order was subject to consultation with various interested parties, including the emergency services and re-advertised publicly from 18 February 2022 to 11 March 2022.

1.6 Seven items of correspondence were received during the advertisement period. No objections were received to the proposed extension of the 40mph speed limit itself. Instead, the objectors were requesting that the proposed extension goes further.

1.7 These objections were reported to Planning Committee on 15 June 2022. The objections were not upheld, and the decision made to proceed with the proposal as advertised. A copy of the Planning Committee Report is attached as Appendix 2.

2. Supporting Information

2.1 The introduction of speed limits is a very emotive subject, with many people believing a lower limit will automatically slow traffic down. However, it is recognised nationally that most drivers travel at the speed they consider to be safe for the conditions of the road, based on their assessment of the local environment. There are several factors that are taken into consideration when assessing a length of road for a speed limit, with the predominant factors being the number of properties that are clearly visible to a driver and the average speed of traffic using the road.

2.2 A driver can see a need for a lower speed limit on roads having a high level of visible frontage development. If a road has sporadic development, set back and/or screened by vegetation, they will not identify with the lower limit. If the 40mph speed limit was extended to a point beyond the Canadia Road junction, this would extend it by at least 600 metres from the proposed position agreed for the Lillybank development. As this section of road has very limited development, set back from the road, mostly screened by vegetation and not clearly visible to a motorist, the reasons for the speed limit would not be obvious to a driver. A copy of our approved speed limit policy is attached as Appendix 3.

2.3 The research that has been carried out nationally indicates that speed limits that are introduced with signs and lines alone only reduce the average speed of traffic by about 1mph to 2mph, and then only when it appears obvious to the driver why the limit has been imposed. Setting a speed limit that is significantly below the speed that most drivers consider appropriate only leads to them being widely ignored. This produces a large margin between the slowest and fastest vehicles which is recognised as a significant contributor to crashes. To effectively reduce vehicle speeds engineering and/or traffic management measures would be required.

2.4 To assess if a lower speed limit is appropriate, and whether extensive engineering measures would be needed, it would require a full investigation process to be undertaken.

2.5 This stretch of the A2100 London Road currently has a good safety record with only one slight personal injury crash recorded in the most recent five-year period (up to 30/04/2022) between Virgins Lane and the end of the footway to the north of Canadia Road. With a traffic flow in excess of 8,000 vehicles per day, this equates to over 14 million vehicle movements along this section of the A2100 in the same period. The investigation

of a lower speed limit is therefore not a priority for the Road Safety team due to its limited contribution to casualty reduction.

2.6 Whilst the investigation of a lower speed limit on this section of the A2100 is not a priority for the Road Safety Team, an application through the Community Match Initiative could be considered. It is therefore suggested that the residents contact Battle Town Council to see whether they would support an investigation into the feasibility of a lower speed limit. Details of the Community Match Initiative and the costs associated with a feasibility study and speed surveys can be provided if required.

3 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 An extension of the 40mph speed limit on the A2100 London Road beyond that which has been agreed for the Lillybank development is not a priority for further investigation by the County Council at the present time due to its lack of visible frontage development and good safety record.

RUPERT CLUBB

Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Contact Officer: Helen Clee

Tel. No. 0345 6080193

Email: Helen.Clee@eastsussex.gov.uk

LOCAL MEMBER

Councillor Kathryn Field

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

The submitted petition