

Report to: Lead Member for Transport and Environment

Date of meeting: 17 July 2023

By: Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Title: Petition for the County Council to take steps to reduce the speed and weight of vehicles on the B2095 to address the growing problem of dangerous and inconsiderate driving.

Purpose: To consider the petition requesting that the existing national speed limit is reduced to 40mph between Hooe Village and the A259 trunk road. At the same time considering a maximum weight restriction on the B2095.

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

- (1) The B2095 has been identified as part of the Road Safety Team’s Strategic Casualty Reduction programme and a range of small scale traffic management measures will be implemented that have been shown to positively influence casualty reduction. The road will be monitored post completion of the works to ensure that the package of measures help to improve the safety record.**
 - (2) The request for a lower 40mph speed limit between Hooe Village and A259 trunk road will be assessed as part of our forthcoming Speed Management Programme.**
 - (3) The implementation of a weight restriction on the B2095 would not be in accordance with policy PS4/5 Control of Heavy Goods Vehicles.**
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1 Background Information

1.1 At the County Council meeting on 21 March 2023, Councillor Bowdler presented a petition to the Chairman of the Council. The petition states: *“We the undersigned, strongly support the request that ESCC examine the safety of this road. That serious consideration is given to reducing the maximum speed limit to 40mph on the entire length of the road from A259 to Lower Street, particularly the stretch of road between Hooe Village and the A259, where the speed limit is currently 60mph, where there have been several accidents, including the tragic death of an 11-year-old boy. 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 B2095 connects the A269 at Ninfield in the north with the A259 Trunk Road in the south. There is a 30mph speed limit in the more built-up parts of Hooe Village and on Lower Street in Ninfield. Whilst the petition requests a reduced 40mph speed limit over the whole length of the B2095, it is important to note that a 40mph speed limit is in place between Lower Street and Hooe Village. The section between Hooe Village and the A259 is presently subject to the national speed limit. The extent of the existing speed limits on the B2095 are shown in Appendix 2.

2.2 As a result of the petition, five traffic surveys were carried out on the B2095. One survey was carried out within the extent of the existing 40mph speed limit, and four were carried out in the national speed limit between Hooe Village and the A259. The location of the traffic surveys, the average two-way traffic flow and speed of traffic is shown in Appendix 2. Copies of the speed surveys are available in the Members Room and can be provided on request.

2.3 Policy PS05/02 Local Speed Limits is based on national guidance issued by the Department for Transport. It recommends that 40mph speed limits can be considered in less built-up areas, with set-back properties and frontage access indicating to drivers the need to reduce their speed, with existing mean vehicle speeds below 42mph. A copy of Policy PS05/02 is included as Appendix 3. The speed surveys undertaken on the southern section of the B2095 would indicate that a 40mph speed limit may be acceptable in principle.

2.4 There have been eight personal injury crashes (PIC's) reported to the Police on the B2095 (over a length of approximately six kilometres) in the latest available three-year period to 31 March 2023. Two of the PIC's occurred within the extent of the existing 40mph speed limit, and six of the crashes occurred within the extent of the national speed limit. The location and severity of the crashes is shown in Appendix 4.

2.5 The B2095 was recently identified by the Road Safety Team as a priority for a Strategic Casualty Reduction (SCR) study. As a result, a package of safety measures were drawn up. Improvements to traffic signs and hazard marker posts have been completed. Additional work, including the introduction of coloured surfacing and improvements to the road markings, are being scheduled for implementation. The measures being introduced are in line with previous schemes introduced by the Road Safety Team. The changes aim to help drivers better understand the road alignment and hazards and adjust their behaviour accordingly. Results from previous route-based work have yielded reductions of between 50% and 60% in personal injury crashes over a three-year monitoring period.

2.6 Additional funding of £500,000 from the Capital Programme has been allocated to the Road Safety Team. This funding will allow a Speed Management Programme to commence. It is split over the next three-years with additional on-going funding identified within future Capital Programmes.

2.7 As part of the Speed Management Programme, a review will identify lengths of the main road network that would benefit from a reduced speed limit. We will also check that existing speed limits are effective and are producing the desired reductions in vehicle speeds using available speed data and new in-vehicle telematics. The review will also identify sites of greatest need where proven traffic management measures would have a positive effect and enhance the effectiveness of the speed limit.

2.8 The request for a 40mph speed limit on the B2095 between Hooe Village and the A259 Trunk Road will be assessed as part of the Speed Management Programme. If the road is identified as a priority, a full investigation will be undertaken. This will include the consideration of a lower speed limit.

2.9 If the B2095 is not identified as a priority as part of the Speed Management Programme, the Road Safety Team will contact the Parish Council to explore if they may consider progressing a scheme as part of a Community Match application.

2.10 As few roads in the County are suitable for large lorries, it has been the County Council's policy to allow heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) to disperse over the available road network, rather than concentrate them on individual roads. It is therefore important that national A and B-class roads should be available for heavy lorries. A copy of policy PS4/5 Control of Heavy Goods Vehicles is included as Appendix 5.

2.11 PS4/5 states that a more suitable alternative route for large freight vehicles should be available if an HGV restriction is to be put in place. If a restriction was applied on the B2095, there is the potential for HGVs to divert onto the C40 through Wartling Village. A restriction imposed for environmental reasons would still allow HGVs to use the B2095 for access, delivery or loading purposes.

2.12 A turning count, carried out on 21 September 2021 at the A269 / B2095 junction in Lower Street, Ninfield recorded a total of 2991 vehicles using the road, of which 107 were HGVs or buses (3.6%) The results are indicated in Appendix 6.

2.13 A turning count carried out on 14 October 2021 at the A259 / B2095 junction at The Lamb Inn recorded a total of 634 vehicles, of which 29 were HGV's or buses (4.6%). A turning count carried out

at the same time at the A259 / B2095 slip road junction recorded a total of 1038 vehicles, of which 38 were HGV's or buses (3.7%). The combined results show the total volume of traffic using the road to be 1672 vehicles, of which 67 were HGV's or buses (4.0%). The results are indicated in Appendix 7.

3 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 The B2095 has been identified as part of the Road Safety Team's Strategic Casualty Reduction programme. This will see a range of traffic management measures implemented that have been shown to positively influence casualty reduction. The B2095 will be monitored for a three-year period post completion of the works to ensure that the package of measures help to improve the safety record.

3.2 The request for a 40mph speed limit along the full extent of the B2095 between Hooe Village and the A259 trunk road will be assessed as part of our forthcoming Speed Management Programme.

3.3 The B2095 forms an important link within the County's road hierarchy. Roads are classified to indicate their function, with B class roads linking destinations of local importance, or to feed traffic between A roads and smaller roads on the network. It is therefore important that the B2095 remains available to all classes of traffic. It is recommended that the petitioners be advised that the introduction of a weight restriction on the B2095 would not be in accordance with our policy PS4/5 Control of Heavy Goods Vehicles.

RUPERT CLUBB

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LOCAL MEMBER:

Councillor Bob Bowdler

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

None