

Committee:	Regulatory Planning Committee
Date:	13 September 2023
Report by:	Director of Communities, Economy and Transport
Title of Report	Traffic Regulation Order – A265 Burwash Road & B2096 Battle Road, Heathfield
Purpose of Report	To consider the objection received in response to the formal consultation on the draft Traffic Regulation Order associated with the development of Cart Barn, Burwash Road, Heathfield
Contact Officer:	Mark Weston – 01273 482242
Local Member:	Councillor Cross

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Planning Committee is recommended to:

- 1) Not uphold the objections to the draft Order as set out in paragraph 2.2 of this report; and**
 - 2) Recommend to the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport that the draft Traffic Regulation Order be made as advertised.**
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CONSIDERATION BY DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITIES, ECONOMY AND TRANSPORT.

1. Introduction

1.1 Planning permission for a residential development of 15 dwellings at Cart Barn, Burwash Road, Heathfield, TN21 8QY was granted by Wealden District Council in November 2020 (Planning application reference WD/2019/2321/MRM). A planning condition was attached to the permission that secured the requirement for a review of extent of the existing 30mph speed limit. This needs to be implemented through a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO), the cost of which is funded by the developer. The proposed lowered speed limit is intended to reduce vehicle speeds on the approaches to the new junction (the development access).

1.2 To encourage compliance with the extended 30mph speed limit, gateway features consisting of red coloured road surfacing, road markings and speed limit signs are proposed at the start of the new limit.

1.3 An initial consultation was carried out between 7 November 2022 and 30 November 2022 with the local District, and County Councillors, and statutory consultees including the emergency services and bus companies.

1.4 On 19 May 2023, the County Council gave notice under the relevant section of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (as amended), that it was proposing to amend the existing Traffic Regulation Order. A copy of the draft Traffic Regulation Order is included in Appendix 1. Copies of the advertised Notice of proposals were placed on posts in Burwash Road and Battle Road, copies of the proposals were also placed on deposit in County Hall reception for viewing by members of the public. In addition, the Public Notice was advertised in the local newspaper (The Sussex Express) on 19 May 2023. The formal period for representations ended on 12 June 2023.

1.5 It is acknowledged that the Parish Council were not consulted initially due to an oversight. However, it was agreed with them that this matter would not be taken forward until such time as they had considered it and provided their comments.

1.6 The proposals are as follows:

- To extend the 30mph speed limit in the following lengths of road: A265 Burwash Road: From the current 30mph speed limit (135m east of the centreline of B2203, Tower Street), eastwards for 575m and B2096 Battle Road: From the junction with Burwash Road south-eastwards for 155m.
- The existing 40mph and National speed limits will remain in force outside of the 30mph limit will remain in place.

1.7 The proposed speed limit will reduce vehicle speeds on the approach to the new junction that accesses the approved residential development. This will allow for compliance with visibility guidance, increase pedestrian safety and minimise potential for collisions at the proposed site entrance. The 30mph speed limit will also cover the junctions of the A265 Burwash Road with Newick Lane, B2203 Battle Road, Crown Drive and the access road leading to Heathfield Household Waste Site which will further enhance road safety in the area.

2. Comments and Appraisal

2.1 During the formal consultation period, five items of correspondence were received. While they were in favour of the proposed speed limit reduction in principle, they all expressed a desire for it to be extended further along Battle Road and they are therefore considered to be objections to the proposal. Full copies of all the correspondence received have been made available to the Members of the Planning Committee.

2.2 The grounds for the objections are that:

- “The proposed 30mph limit should be extended to join the existing limit at Punnetts Town, creating a safer environment for students walking and cycling to and from the College from Heathfield and Punnetts Town on the Battle Road or Broad Oak using Halley Road”.
- “Disappointed you aren't extending the 40mph limit further SE thus replacing the NSL stretch on the Battle Road”.
- “We are supportive with the speed limits being reduced to 30mph as indicated on the plan. However, the 30mph speed limit should extend all the way down Battle Road (B2096) through to Punnetts Town, to make this route safer for students walking and cycling to Heathfield Community College from both the Heathfield and Punnetts Town directions. In turn, this would help East Sussex County Council meet its Net Zero targets by encouraging students to use more sustainable means of transport to get to school. Currently, this route is prohibitively dangerous for walkers and cyclists”.

- “I am in full agreement with the changes but would like to see the 40mph section on the Battle Road section extended to meet the 40mph limit which starts by the Heathfield Community College”.
- “Members also asked for consideration to be given to the extension of the speed limit to 30 mph further along the Battle Road to the pelican crossing at the junction of Halley Road, given the large number of school age individuals using the road. The national speed limit is considered inappropriate due to the close proximity of the schools”.

2.3 It is not considered that the objections provide sufficient grounds to warrant the modification or withdrawal of the proposals. The TRO relates solely to the development in Burwash Road and is a mitigation measure for it as a requirement of the planning permission for the site. The Traffic Regulation Order will implement a speed limit extension, it is not to address any existing road safety concerns and its implementation is paid for by the developer.

2.4 Speed limits, to be effective, must be set at a level which appears reasonable to a driver and adequately reflect the environment through which the road passes. Many people consider speed limits as the answer to all road safety concerns and whilst appropriately set speed limits can improve road safety, erecting speed limit signs does not always produce the desired level of vehicle speeds unless a driver can see a need for the limit. It is considered that to reduce the speed limit further along Battle Road would require traffic calming to be designed and implemented. It is not considered appropriate to introduce a further extended 30/40mph speed limit as part of this proposal, as it is not required to make the development acceptable in planning terms and therefore cannot be requested of the developer.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendation

3.1 This proposal seeks to address road safety concerns associated with the proposed development at Cart Barn only. It is considered that the concerns raised by the objectors should not be upheld and the proposals should proceed as per the advertised TRO.

3.2 In turn, it is recommended that the Planning Committee recommends to the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport that the draft Order be made as advertised.

RUPERT CLUBB

Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None