

Report to: Lead Member for Transport and Environment

Date of meeting: 18 November 2024

By: Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Title: Petition: Implement a 40mph speed limit within the parish of Arlington

Purpose: To consider a petition for a traffic safety survey and implementation of a 40mph speed limit within the parish of Arlington

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

- 1) an assessment of the safety record of the roads detailed in the petition has been undertaken by the Road Safety Team and there are no locations that meet the Council's threshold for inclusion in our annual road safety programme; and
 - 2) the roads and lanes within the parishes of Arlington, Berwick and Long Man set out at paragraph 1.1 below do not meet the Council's policy for a 40mph speed limit, and measures such as gateway features, Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) and improved signage may be appropriate. These measures could be considered via the Community Match initiative. The Traffic and Safety team can provide Arlington Parish Council with advice over what measures could be considered.
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1 Background Information

1.1. At the County Council Full Council meeting on 9 July 2024, a petition was presented to the Chairman by Councillor Bennett on behalf of Arlington Parish Council. The Parish Council are requesting a traffic safety survey and the implementation of a 40mph speed limit on the following roads within the parishes of Arlington, Berwick and Long Man:

- Arlington Road West, Michelham Priory Road, Caneheath, Tye Hill Road, Tye Hill Lane, Wilbees Road, The Street, Chilver Bridge Road, Common Lane (Berwick), Bayleys Lane (Wilmington), Robin Post Lane (Wilmington), Hayreed Lane (Wilmington), Thornwell Road (Wilmington)

1.2. 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. A copy of the petition is available in the Members' Room.

2 Supporting Information

2.1. The roads within the parishes of Arlington, Berwick and Long Man are subject to the National Speed Limit and are predominantly rural single-track lanes with limited frontage development. There are narrow sections and low bridges. A location plan can be found at Appendix 1.

2.2. Each year the Council identifies sites that have the most crashes that result in personal injury as part of the annual Road Safety Programme. The causes of the crashes are studied to assess how we can reduce the number of casualties on the roads in East Sussex. We use our crash data analysis system to identify where crashes are happening. Our system holds all

personal injury crashes recorded by Sussex Police. A crash site is identified as a location where there have been four or more crashes in a three-year period, within a 25-metre radius in urban areas and a 50-metre radius in rural locations. Based on the crash analysis each year 24 sites are prioritised and then fully investigated and assessed by experienced members of the Road Safety team, with measures introduced to address the crash record.

2.3. An assessment of the safety record of the roads detailed in the petition has been undertaken by the Road Safety team and there are no locations that meet the Council's threshold for inclusion in our annual road safety programme. The crash data provided by Sussex Police, for the roads identified by the petitioners, indicates that there have been 2 serious and 6 slight personal injury crashes for the latest three-year period up to 31 August 2024. A plan showing the location of these crashes can be found at Appendix 2 The crashes do not form cluster sites as detailed above. It has been noted that one crash has excessive speed as a contributory factor.

2.4. The setting of appropriate and effective speed limits has been subject to a significant level of research. It is important drivers are provided with a consistent message, so they know what is expected of them as they enter different road environments. A predominant factor considered when determining an effective speed limit is the number of properties that are visible to drivers. Although it is acknowledged that there are some visible property frontages in these parishes, including two pubs and the village hall within Arlington, the lanes are predominantly rural in nature with continuous development over a relatively short length of road.

2.5. Due to limited frontage development and local characteristics, these roads and lanes do not meet the Council's policy requirements for a lower speed limit; therefore, the national speed limit applies. Whilst they are subject to the national speed limit, the onus is on the individual driver to drive in a safe and judicious manner, and to the conditions of the road and the surroundings through which they pass. It is recognised nationally that most drivers will travel at the speed they consider to be safe for the conditions of the road. The majority of responsible drivers using the roads and lanes around Arlington will already be choosing to travel at a speed below the national speed limit due to the nature of the rural lanes.

2.6. Speed surveys have been carried out on Caneheath and The Street. There is a permanent telemetry device located on Arlington Road West. The location of the three surveys and data results are included in Appendix 3. The surveys in Caneheath and The Street indicated that the average speed of drivers is below 35mph with 85th percentile speeds (the speed that 85 percent of the drivers are travelling below) of around 40mph. Data from the permanent telemetry device in Arlington Road West indicated that the average speed of drivers is 41mph with 85th percentile speeds of 49mph. Road Safety officers' expectation is that the other roads detailed in paragraph 1.1 will have broadly similar average speeds.

2.7. A 40mph speed limit would be higher than the recorded mean speeds for Caneheath and The Street and is unlikely to achieve speed reductions or improve safety. Data for Arlington Road West indicates that drivers are already driving at around 40mph without the need for a reduced speed limit therefore a 40mph limit would be unlikely to have the desired speed reducing impact.

2.8. Where the national speed limit applies, it is not necessary to provide repeater signs indicating the limit unless there is street lighting present. If a lower speed limit was introduced on Arlington Road West, The Street and Caneheath, it would be necessary to provide speed limit repeater signs at regular intervals along the roads. There is a risk that some drivers would see the signed 40mph speed limit as a target or assume that it is safe and appropriate to drive to the limit throughout the area. This could result in increased speeds on The Street and Caneheath whereas at present, the majority of drivers are choosing to drive at or below 40mph on these roads.

2.9. The roads identified by the petitioners do not meet the criteria set out in the Council's Policy for a lower speed limit in terms of the road character or environment, therefore the national speed limit is the correct restriction for these roads. A copy of policy No. PS05/02 Local Speed Limits can be found at Appendix 4.

2.10 Road Safety features such as vehicle activated signs (VAS), gateway features and improved signage may be appropriate for the area. It is recognised that whilst a road safety scheme in Arlington is not currently a priority for East Sussex County Council, it is still important to the local community and certain measures could be considered under the Community Match initiative. This initiative can provide part funding for local schemes and is managed by East Sussex Highways. Further information regarding this can be found at [What is Community Match | Community Match | live.eastsussexhighways.com](https://www.eastsussexhighways.com/community-match)

The Community Match initiative can be used to consider schemes that would cost less than £120,000 to design and construct, which would include VAS gateway features and additional signage.

2.11 In order to determine which measures could be suitable in this area, prior to a Community Match application, it is suggested that Arlington Parish Council contacts the neighbouring Parish Councils, to ascertain whether they would be interested in supporting a scheme to influence traffic conditions in the area. Support from the Parish Council does not need to be financial – any group interested in taking a scheme forward through Community Match can provide the funding. The Traffic and Safety Manager is happy to meet with the Lead Petitioner and the Parish Council to discuss possible scheme options.

2.12 The speed data from Caneheath, The Street and Arlington Road West that was recently collected can be provided to the group, upon request, however, should further speed data be required, more data can be collected by contacting our Transport Monitoring Team at transport.monitoring@eastsussex.gov.uk. There is a charge for providing this service, the cost to undertake one 7 day speed/volume survey is £422+VAT, however discounts are available when multiple surveys are requested. Further speed data collection will not be funded by East Sussex County Council.

3 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

3.1. Speed surveys have shown that average speeds on Caneheath, The Street and Arlington Road West are already very close to or below 40mph, and it is expected that the other roads detailed in paragraph 1.1 will have broadly similar average speeds.

3.2. It is recommended that the Lead Member advises the petitioners that a lower speed limit on the roads and lanes detailed in paragraph 1.1 does not meet the Council's policy for a 40mph speed limit for the reasons set out in paragraphs 2.4 and 2.5. It is also recommended that the petitioners are advised that an assessment of the safety record of the roads specified in the petition has been carried out and there are no locations that meet the Council's threshold for inclusion in our annual road safety programme.

3.3 It is recommended that the Lead Member for Transport and Environment advises petitioners that whilst a lower speed limit does not meet the Council's policy for a 40mph limit, other road safety improvements could be considered should an alternative source of funding become available, or if an application through Community Match was successful.

3.4 It is recommended that the Lead Member for Transport and Environment advises the lead petitioner that the Traffic and Safety Manager is happy to meet to discuss possible options for consideration through Community Match. The speed data for Caneheath, The Street and

Arlington Road West that was recently collected can be provided to the group, upon request and further speed data collections can be arranged, should external funding be available.

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LOCAL MEMBERS

Councillor Nick Bennett

Councillor Stephen Shing

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None