

**Report to:** Lead Member for Transport and Environment

**Date of meeting:** 16 December 2024

**By:** Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

**Title:** Petition – traffic management in Maplehurst Road, Hastings

**Purpose:** To consider and respond to the petition received from local residents requesting the closure of Maplehurst Road in Hastings at its junction with the A21/A28 Westfield Road junction or the introduction of access only restrictions and appropriate enforcement measures.

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

- (1) following the opening of the Queensway Gateway Road, a programme of post-opening monitoring will be undertaken for a period of up to 12 months to assess any changes to traffic movements in and around the vicinity of the Queensway Gateway Road scheme; and**
  - (2) the outcomes of the monitoring will be used to determine whether any further measures are required, including in Maplehurst Road, to mitigate any identified impacts.**
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## **1. Background Information**

1.1 A petition containing 70 signatures was submitted by Councillor Pragnell to the Chairman at the Full Council meeting on 8 October 2024 requesting the closure of Maplehurst Road in Hastings at its junction with the A21/A28 Westfield Road junction or the introduction of access only restrictions and appropriate enforcement measures.

1.2 The principal issues raised in the petition include the safety of vulnerable road users (people walking and ‘wheeling’ – (i.e. people using mobility scooters and wheelchairs), especially children and older people; the volume of traffic using the road; ability for residents to access their driveways; and the unfair burden being placed on this part of the road network.

1.3 The petition also puts forward a number of suggested solutions in response to these issues. These include the closure of the Maplehurst Road junction with the A21/A28 or restricting the road to access only via enforcement using Automatic Number Plate Recognition cameras. Since receipt of the petition, the County Council has also received correspondence from local residents and stakeholders both in support and against the petition request. Those correspondents in favour of the petition are generally residents of Maplehurst Road whilst those not supporting the petition are other residents from outside the locality.

1.4 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**

### Maplehurst Road

2.1 As part of the A2100, Maplehurst Road in the north of Hastings is approximately 230 metres long and historically is part of the A28 to Westfield. At its northern extent, Maplehurst Road has a T-junction with the A28 Westfield Road, and is also near the junction of the A21 and A28. At its southern extent, there is a T-junction arrangement with the B2093 The Ridge, Maplehurst Road, alongside Maplehurst Close, Maplehurst Rise and Maple Heights (all cul-de-sacs), is predominantly residential apart from The Harrow Inn at the junction between The Ridge and Maplehurst Road. It is also a key

route for emergency services, especially ambulances that need to access the Conquest Hospital on The Ridge from the A21 north of Hastings and the A28. A plan showing Maplehurst Road in context is at Appendix 1.

2.2 Maplehurst Road is subject to a 30mph speed limit and is already traffic calmed with a number of raised tables (speed humps with a long flat section that are generally used at junctions and can also improve crossing facilities for pedestrians) along its length – on the entry and exit from its junction with The Ridge as well as across the extent of the junction with Maplehurst Close. There is also a raised table on the entry and exit from Maplehurst Road’s junction with the A28 which also includes a 6 foot 6 inches ‘except for access’ signed width restriction for traffic travelling southbound (towards The Ridge).

Issues raised in Petition

2.3 The petition raises concerns about road safety on Maplehurst Road. There have been no collisions on Maplehurst Road in the last 5 years (from 1 October 2019 to 30 September 2024). Over the same time period, there have been 2 slight collisions on the A21 south of the junction with the A28 as well as a fatal collision at the A21/A28 junction.

2.4 The County Council has a statutory responsibility to investigate personal injury crashes on the county’s roads and put measures in place to prevent future crashes, and the Council takes this responsibility very seriously. With limited resources available, road safety interventions are directed at locations in the county with the most personal injury crashes, as this produces the greatest effect on casualty reduction. In order to fulfil this responsibility, the Council develops an annual road safety programme and in this year’s programme has identified 24 sites with 4 or more personal injury crashes over a 3-year assessment period. Maplehurst Road, or it’s junctions at either end, have not been identified as priorities for part of this programme.

2.5 The petition highlight’s concerns about the level of traffic using Maplehurst Road and the unfair burden being placed on this part of the road network. Traffic surveys as part of the County Council’s routine base transport monitoring programme were undertaken at the A28 Westfield Road and The Ridge junctions in September 2019 and 2021. Given the 2021 surveys were undertaken at a time when traffic flows were still being affected by the Covid pandemic, the 2019 surveys provide a more robust assessment of traffic using Maplehurst Road.

2.6 As shown in the tables below, there were 7,548 traffic movements between 7am and 7pm into and out of Maplehurst Road at its junction with The Ridge and 7,325 movements at the A28 junction during the same time period.

<b>The Ridge/Maplehurst Road junction traffic flow (7am to 7pm) – September 2019</b>			
	<b>Total flow</b>	<b>Flow towards junction</b>	<b>Flow away from junction</b>
A2100 Maplehurst Road	7,548	4,513	3,035
B2093 The Ridge (west of junction)	17,296	7,239	10,057
B2093 The Ridge (east of junction)	20,180	10,760	9,420

<b>A21/A28/Maplehurst Road junction traffic flow (7am to 7pm) – September 2019</b>			
	<b>Total flow</b>	<b>Flow towards junction</b>	<b>Flow away from junction</b>
A2100 Maplehurst Road	7,325	2,932	4,393
A21 North	14,257	7,203	7,054
A21 South	16,917	8,987	7,930
A28	8,565	4,410	4,155

2.7 In comparison, as set out in the table below, other roads in the vicinity including The Ridge (which has an annual average daily traffic (AADT) flow of between 17,770 and 22,300 vehicles), have higher levels of traffic flow than the 7,325 – 7,548 AADT on Maplehurst Road .

<b>Automatic Traffic Counter site</b>	<b>2023 AADT</b>
A2690 Queensway, just south of Napier Rd	18,481
Queensway, between Combe Valley Way & Churchwood Drive	11,343
A2100 The Ridge W, between Queensway & Junction Rd	22,299
B2093 The Ridge, just east of Conquest Hospital	17,734
A2100 Hastings Rd, Telham	12,277
A28 Westfield Lane	8,742
A2101 St Helens Rd	16,849
Ivyhouse Lane	2,464

2.8 In relation to parking, the residential properties on the western side of the road are mainly terraced or semi-detached with some having off-road parking directly outside their frontage whilst others park on-road, many of which are parking half-on, half-off the adjacent footway. On the eastern side of Maplehurst Road, various properties are set back from the road with driveways and/or garages. Whilst the petition highlights that residents are not able to access their driveways due to other vehicles using the road and drivers being discourteous. These issues can be experienced on any road with residential properties off or adjacent to the highway across the country. However, all road users should accord with the Highway Code which aims to promote safety on the road, whilst also supporting a healthy, sustainable and efficient transport system. Rule 147 of the Highway Code advises that all road users being careful of and considerate towards all other types of users whilst Rule 151 advises that in slow moving traffic, drivers should allow access into and from side roads (and by implication this would include driveways), as blocking these will add to congestion.

#### Queensway Gateway Road

2.9 In October 2014, Sea Change Sussex (SCS), as the scheme promoter, submitted a planning application to Hastings Borough Council (HBC) for the Queensway Gateway Road (QGR), linking Queensway and the A21. Ahead of submitting the planning application, SCS undertook engagement with Maplehurst Road residents on potential traffic management options for the road due to the potential impact the opening of the Queensway Gateway Road would have on traffic flows in the locality and particularly on Maplehurst Road. HBC's Planning Committee approved the planning application in February 2015 with a condition that modifications to the northern end of Maplehurst Road to control traffic behaviour be introduced. However, following a judicial review the HBC's original planning decision on the application was quashed.

2.10 Consequently, HBC's Planning Committee reconsidered the application in December 2015 and the scheme was granted planning permission in January 2016. Whilst the application's Transport Assessment and December 2015 Planning Committee report continued to discuss the potential closure of Maplehurst Road being modelled and assessed, this was not secured by a planning condition in the January 2016 (and extant) planning permission granted by HBC. Therefore, there is no planning requirement to introduce modifications or traffic management measures on Maplehurst Road.

2.11 Following the grant of planning permission, SCS have taken forward the phased construction of the Queensway Gateway Road over several years using Local Growth funding secured through the South East Local Enterprise Partnership. The road from a new roundabout on Queensway through to the western extent of Whitworth Road has been completed in various phases between July 2016 and July 2019. However, the construction of the remaining phase through to a proposed new roundabout on the A21 remained outstanding.

2.12 With the need for third party land to construct the roundabout on the A21, an alternative scheme, which still delivers improvements to traffic flows in the locality, has been developed which comprises utilising the existing alignment of Whitworth Road and, with localised widening of the road, introducing traffic signals at the existing A21 Junction Road/Whitworth Road junction. To complete the final phase of the road, a funding contribution of £2.5m was secured through the Hastings and Bexhill

Levelling Up Partnerships, with the transference of responsibility to complete the scheme now resting with the County Council and not SCS, the original scheme promoter.

2.13 Construction of the final phase of the QGR commenced in September 2024. The traffic management during construction includes the closure of the northern end of Maplehurst Road at its junction with the A28 with southbound access only available for emergency vehicles. This is a temporary measure during the construction and has been implemented through a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order. Upon completion of the scheme these temporary traffic management measures will be removed, and two-way traffic movements reintroduced on Maplehurst Road. Traffic flow data is being collected on Maplehurst Road during this temporary closure.

#### Response to petition

2.14 The completion of the final section of the QGR will involve the closure of the existing junction between The Ridge and Junction Road and Junction Road with Whitworth Road. As with any new and major road infrastructure project, such as the completion of the Bexhill Hastings Link Road in 2015 and the Queensway Gateway Road, there will be a natural settling period as traffic flows and movements adjust to the revised network layout.

2.15 Whilst the County Council can undertake transport modelling to assess what these potential changes in transport movements might be, post-opening monitoring needs to be undertaken to understand what actual changes take place. To allow for traffic to settle back to 'normal', regular post-opening monitoring can take up to 12 months.

2.16 Therefore, once the QGR is open to traffic, the County Council will undertake post-opening monitoring of the impacts on traffic flows in the area, including on Maplehurst Road. This will be through its existing network of automatic traffic counters that will collect data on the volume of traffic flow on the roads in the vicinity as well as replicating turning count surveys at the Maplehurst Road junctions with the A21/A28 and The Ridge, as well as other junctions. This will enable a comparison analysis with previous traffic survey data and help to understand if there are any impacts on traffic movements arising from the QGR. The outcome of this post-opening monitoring would then be used to determine whether there is a need to consider further measures in the vicinity of the QGR, including in Maplehurst Road.

2.17 In undertaking the post opening monitoring, the Council will also consider the potential wider impact that introducing any traffic management measures or restrictions in Maplehurst Road would have, including how this could affect access to and from the communities along the A28 into Hastings as well as emergency services that need to access The Ridge corridor, and especially the Conquest Hospital.

### **3. Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations**

3.1 Maplehurst Road is part of the A2100, and links to the A28 Westfield Road at its northern extent and B2093 The Ridge at its southern extent. It is predominantly residential with a 30mph speed limit, existing traffic calming in situ and a 6 foot 6 inches 'except for access' width restriction for traffic travelling southbound (towards The Ridge). It carries between 7,325 and 7,548 vehicles (7am and 7pm), which is lower in comparison to other roads in the vicinity, with a mix of on and off-street parking and has a good safety record with no collisions in the last three years.

3.2 Planning permission was given by Hastings Borough Council in January 2016 to Sea Change Sussex, the original scheme promoter, to construct the Queensway Gateway Road. This extant permission does not include a planning condition for the introduction of traffic management measures on Maplehurst Road. Whilst the majority of the Queensway Gateway Road has been constructed, the final phase from Whitworth Road through to the A21 has remained outstanding. External funding of £2.5m has been secured through the Hastings and Rother Levelling Up Partnership's to contribute towards the completion of the scheme, with the County Council now taking responsibility to construct this final phase.

3.3 Construction of this final phase of the Queensway Gateway Road started in September 2024 with the road intended to be open in early 2025. As part of the traffic management associated with the construction, temporary measures have been put in place to restrict access to Maplehurst Road at the northern end and its junction with the A28 with southbound access only available for emergency

vehicles. These temporary traffic management measures, implemented under a temporary traffic regulation order, will be removed.

3.4 Once the Queensway Gateway Road is opened to traffic, there will be a natural settling period as traffic flows and movements adjust to the revised network layout including the closure of both ends of Junction Road. It is recommended that the petitioners are advised that, a programme of post-opening monitoring will be undertaken for a period of up to 12 months to assess any changes to traffic movements in and around the vicinity of the Queensway Gateway Road.

3.5 It is also recommended that the petitioners are advised that the outcomes of the monitoring would be used to determine whether any further measures are required, including in Maplehurst Road, to mitigate any identified impacts which will also need to take account of the wider impacts of access for communities along the A28 into Hastings as well as emergency services, especially to the Conquest Hospital. Should the County Council consider that there is a case for introducing further measures on Maplehurst Road, there will be an opportunity for residents to comment on any such proposals as they are developed.

**RUPERT CLUBB**

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LOCAL MEMBERS

Councillor Pragnell

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None