

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 28 January 2025

By: Deputy Chief Executive

Title: Scrutiny Review of Local Speed Limit Policy – Report of the Place Scrutiny Committee

Purpose: To provide an opportunity for the Cabinet to consider the report of the Place Scrutiny Committee.

RECOMMENDATION

To consider any comments the Cabinet wishes to make to the County Council on the report of the Place Scrutiny Committee.

1 Background

1.1 In July 2024 the Place Scrutiny Committee established a Review Board to undertake a review of Local Speed Limit Policy. This was in response to the frequency with which concerns about road safety and speed limits were being raised with Members across the county, and followed a debate at Full Council in July 2023 of a Notice of Motion regarding reviewing and updating Policy PS05/02 on Local Speed Limits.

1.2 A decision was taken by the Review Board early in the review to split the terms of reference into two parts and to conduct the review in two phases, in recognition of both scrutiny time and capacity constraints, and the dependence of some elements on further progression of the Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4). This initial review did not therefore consider the new scheme prioritisation process for the LTP4; the outcomes of the recent review of the speed limits on all 'A' and 'B' roads in the county; or evidence from officers of other local authorities and the Welsh administration on the implementation of 20mph limits and zones. The Place Scrutiny Committee may decide to include these topics in its future work programme through a second review, as outlined in paragraph 4 of the scrutiny review report (appendix 1).

1.3 The scope of this review included:

- Consideration of the purpose of a local speed limit policy and examining how local speed limits are reviewed, assessed and delivered by East Sussex County Council (ESCC).
- Examining whether the ESCC local speed limit policy PS05/02 is in line with national Department for Transport (DfT) guidance.
- Reviewing examples of other local authority speed limit policies (e.g. our nearest neighbours and those with similar road networks to ESCC).
- Reviewing initial national and local written evidence on the impact and effectiveness of lower speed limits and zones (including 20mph limits).
- Exploring other measures local authorities and developments are bringing forward to deliver low speed environments in both urban and rural areas.
- Exploring how ESCC currently communicates the local speed limit policy and wider policy context to residents and considers potential improvements.
- Reviewing the amount of officer time spent carrying out assessments of road safety concerns and preparing petition reports.

2 Supporting information

2.1 The Place Scrutiny Committee has completed the review of Local Speed Limit Policy. The review makes seven recommendations which address the areas covered by the scope of the review. A copy of the report is attached at appendix 1.

2.2 Overall, the review found that the Council's local speed limit policy and approach to setting speed limits is in line with the current Department for Transport guidance and is broadly similar to the approach taken by other local authorities. The review has made a number of recommendations to better communicate the Council's policy approach and has suggested changes in the process for responding to the number of requests the Council receives for changes to local speed limits. The review has focused on developing recommendations which are realistically achievable within the Council's sphere of influence and available resources.

2.3 The Committee's report will be submitted to the County Council on 11 February 2025. The Cabinet has the opportunity to comment to the County Council on the recommendations in the Scrutiny Committee's report, although it cannot alter the report. Elsewhere on this Cabinet meeting agenda (item 7b) there is a separate report by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport commenting on the Scrutiny Committee's report and recommendations.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 Cabinet is invited to consider any comments it wishes to make to the County Council on the report of the Place Scrutiny Committee.

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Local Members: All

Background Documents: None