

## REPORT OF THE PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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The Place Scrutiny Committee met on 28 November 2024.

Present: Councillors Matthew Beaver (Chair), Ian Hollidge, Eleanor Kirby-Green, Steve Murphy, Paul Redstone, Georgia Taylor and Stephen Shing.

In attendance virtually: Councillor Philip Lunn

Also present: Councillor Claire Dowling (Lead Member for Transport and Environment).

### 1. Scrutiny Review of local Speed Limit Policy

1.1 The Place Scrutiny Committee has completed its Scrutiny Review of Local Speed Limit Policy. A copy of the Committee's full report is attached at Appendix 1.

1.2 A Review Board was established in March 2024 and was comprised of Councillors Matthew Beaver, Julia Hilton, Ian Hollidge (Chair), Eleanor Kirby-Green, Philip Lunn, Steve Murphy, Paul Redstone and Brett Wright. The review examined the Council's approach to setting local speed limits in East Sussex as part 1 of a two phase review.

1.3 The scope of the review included an investigation of various aspects of the current policies, procedures, and approaches to setting local speed limits including:

- 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 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.

1.4 The review examined evidence from officers and Sussex Police including the Council's current policies, the approach other local authorities are taking to local speed limits, Department for Transport guidance, and national studies undertaken on the impact of setting lower speed limits.

1.5 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 Committee has made a number of recommendations to better communicate the Council's policy approach to residents and has suggested changes in the process for responding to the number of requests the Council receives for changes to local speed limits.

1.6 The Place Scrutiny Committee **recommends** to the County Council that –

1.6.1 The Council regularly reviews Policy PS05/02 Local Speed Limits when there is a change in national guidance.

1.6.2 The ESCC website pages are updated to provide clearer information on the purpose of local, county wide speed limits and the wider policy context they are applied in.

1.6.3 Officers review the speed limit assessment process and criteria that other local authorities have introduced to manage demand to identify any potential efficiencies in officer time.

1.6.4 The Council introduces a step-by-step process and guide for changes to local speed limits.

1.6.5 A review is undertaken on the information provided to local communities, including Parish Councils.

1.6.6 Information is provided on the Road Safety section on the ESCC website, including case studies, on the potential cost of designing and implementing signed only speed limits and also speed limit schemes where traffic calming is required. In addition, information is provided on the length of time it can take to deliver speed limit schemes.

1.6.7 Officers refresh the information on speed limits on the ESCC website pages and create a speed limit change enquiry page.

1.6.8 The Council considers whether additional communication materials are required that:

- 1) Outline the Council's approach to assessing local speed limits and the prioritisation process to help local communities understand the types of speed reduction measures that might be possible;
- 2) Explain that potential schemes that meet our policy, but are not currently a priority for the County Council, may be implemented if externally funded and delivered through the Community Match programme or a Section 278 agreement; and
- 3) Assist with the recruitment of volunteers to local Community Speed Watch groups (e.g. through Parish and Town Councils).

**PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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[See also Report of the Cabinet – 28 January 2025]

28 November 2024

MATTHEW BEAVER  
Chair