

County Council – 10 February 2026

Item 7 – Notice of Motion by Councillor Field

20mph Speed Limits in new developments

1. Introduction

1.1 Councillor Field has submitted the following Notice of Motion:

“Evidence shows that 20mph limits:

- increases a pedestrian's chance of survival if hit by a car*
- improves the quality of life for those living in a 20mph zone*
- leads to calmer streets and improved community cohesion*
- reduces pollution*

This Council requests the Cabinet to:

Consider implementing a maximum speed limit of 20mph when adopting roads in new developments.”

1.2 The Notice of Motion has been seconded by Councillor Wright and was referred by the Chairman to the Place Scrutiny Committee for consideration prior to Full Council. At its meeting on 27 November 2025, Place Scrutiny considered a report on the issue.

2. Background

2.1 A previous Place Scrutiny Review of Local Speed Limit Policy was undertaken in 2024 and agreed at Full Council on 11 February 2025. The committee's recommendation that “the County Council regularly reviews Policy PS05/02 Local Speed Limits when there is a change in national guidance” was agreed.

2.2 On 7th January 2026, the Government published a national Road Safety Strategy, and this stated that the Department for Transport will develop new guidance to support local authorities. This will include a new edition of the best practice guidance ‘Setting Local Speed Limits’ and an updated Manual for Streets.

2.3 Currently speed limits on new roads adopted by the County Council are set once the road has been adopted, constructed and fully open to traffic. This is because the proposed speed limits need to be supported by evidence identifying actual speed measurements at a given location. The required evidence will only be available once a development is fully occupied, travel patterns are well established, surveys have been undertaken and there is a clear need for a limit which can be appropriately delivered and has the required support of Sussex Police.

3. Place Scrutiny Committee consideration

3.1 In November 2025 Place Scrutiny considered a report on the Notice of Motion. The committee noted the County Council's role in relation to adopting new roads and the national guidance it works within when setting speed limits. The committee also noted the Council's

support in principle for residential roads in new developments being designed to achieve maximum speeds of 20mph and that this was reflected in the Council's design guidance.

3.2 Whilst recognising the national frameworks the Council works within, and the current absence of a mechanism to implement a 20mph limit at road adoption stage, some Members proposed that ESCC could consider developing a local policy to give effect to the motion through its role as a statutory consultee on new developments. Following a vote, the committee agreed by a majority of 7 to 4 to recommend to Full Council that it supports the Notice of Motion.

4. Conclusion

4.1 In light of the Government's Road Safety Strategy and the forthcoming updates to 'Setting Local Speed Limits' and Manual for Streets, the County Council will need to review its own approach to setting speed limits, including on adopted roads in new developments.

4.2 As part of this review, and should this Motion pass, Cabinet will consider whether there is an opportunity to make adoption of new roads in new developments contingent upon them having a speed limit of 20 mph.

4.3 In the meantime, as all the District and Borough Council's are reviewing their Local Plans at present, the County Council will continue to make representations that seek to ensure that policies for new developments prioritise designs that achieve low speed neighbourhoods.

Background information

Place Scrutiny Review of Local Speed Limit Policy – Report of the Review Board

<http://esmodgov01v/documents/s64437/Appendix%20-%20Scrutiny%20Review%20of%20Speed%20Limit%20Policy.pdf>