

Committee	Planning Committee
Date	13 November 2019
Report By	Director of Communities, Economy and Transport
Title of Report	Traffic Regulation Order for the extension of the existing 30mph speed limit on Church Road, Catsfield.
Purpose of Report	To consider the objections received in response to the consultation on the draft Traffic Regulation Order for the extension of the existing 30mph speed limit on Church Road, Catsfield.
Contact Officer	Nicholas Mitchell (01273 336627) Report prepared and presented by James Vaks (East Sussex Highways)
Local Member	Councillor Kathryn Field

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Committee is recommended to:

- 1. Not uphold the objection to the draft Order as set out in this report; and**
 - 2. Recommend to the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport that the Traffic Regulation Order be made as advertised.**
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CONSIDERATION BY DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITIES, ECONOMY AND TRANSPORT

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 In 2016 Catsfield Parish Council made a request through the Community Match programme for a package of improvement measures along Church Road in the village. The Community Match programme provides local communities with a way to part fund and take forward small scale transport improvements that are locally important, but which are not of sufficient priority to be taken forward solely using County Council resources. The County Council will contribute up to 50% of the design and construction costs for those schemes that are selected to be taken forward.
- 1.2 One of the proposed measures was to extend the existing 30mph speed limit further south along Church Road thereby increasing the distance between the start of the speed limit and Catsfield Church of England Primary School. The school sits within 35m of the start of the current 30mph speed limit. The Parish Council raised concerns that the proximity of the 30mph gateway, combined with the alignment of the carriageway and the lack of formal pedestrian crossing facility outside the school, made it difficult for users of the school to cross the road. A location plan is contained within Appendix 1.
- 1.3 The project was considered at the Lead Member for Transport and Environment meeting in March 2017 at which a recommendation was approved for the County Council to progress the design and implementation of the scheme as part of the 2017/18 Capital Programme for Local Transport Improvements.
- 1.4 East Sussex Highways has since implemented parking restrictions at the Church Lane/ Church Road junction in February 2019, with the Orders being sealed in March 2019. Pedestrian crossing improvement measures outside the school have also been explored and a package of signing and road marking improvements has been developed in

support of the 30mph speed limit extension along Church Road.

- 1.5 Between 10 May 2019 and 31 May 2019, East Sussex County Council (ESCC) gave notice under its powers in the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 that it was proposing to make a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to extend the existing 30mph speed limit along Church Road. A copy of the proposed draft TRO together with the associated improvement measures are included in Appendix 2 and 3 respectively. The draft order was advertised in the local press, statutory bodies were notified and notices were placed along the section of Church Road covered by the proposed 30mph speed limit extension.

2.0 Comments / Appraisal

- 2.1 No objections were received from the statutory consultees. A single objection was received from a member of the public. A full copy of the objection is provided in the Members Room.
- 2.2 Whilst the objection was not against the proposed speed limit, it was on the grounds of the extent to which the limit was being proposed. If the proposed speed limit extension was solely for the benefit of the primary school, then the objector considered the terminal signs should be moved further north towards the school. However, if the proposed speed limit extension was to improve safety for all users of Church Road, as given in the Statement of Reasons in support of the draft TRO, then the objector considered the speed limit should be extended 30m further south of the current proposed location. This would reflect pedestrian activity at the brow of the hill where people wish to cross the road between the church and Commonwealth War Graves. The objector also raised concerns over the potential for road signage, associated with the extended 30mph speed limit, to impact upon the visual amenity of the area.
- 2.3 The proposed length of the speed limit extension and positioning of the terminal signs was based on national guidance and best practice (DfT Circular 01/13). For a speed limit to be effective the reasons for a limit need to be apparent and the principal aim in determining an appropriate speed limit should be to provide a consistent message between the speed limit and what the road looks like. Changes in speed limits should be reflective of changes in the road layout and characteristics. The proposed location for the new 30mph gateway, at the brow of the hill, provides drivers approaching from the south-east suitable forward visibility of this feature. With St. Laurence Church coming into view, this location also provides visual evidence to the driver that the character of the road and surroundings are changing therefore re-enforcing the change of speed limit.
- 2.4 The speed limit extension was developed in consultation with the County Council's Road Safety team and Sussex Police, both of whom were satisfied with the current proposals. Further consultation with both parties following receipt of the objection has confirmed they would not support any further changes to the current extent of limit being proposed. Any longer extension to the extent of the speed limit would be against guidance and best practice laid out in paragraph 5.2.6 of the Traffic Signs Manual Chapter 1 (General) and Schedule 10 General Direction 4 of the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions. There are no traffic management or road safety grounds to extend the speed limit further than is already proposed. A shorter extension also cannot be supported as it would reduce a driver's visibility of the speed limit signs, thereby reducing their effectiveness. This would also not meet the aims of the Parish Council.

3.0 Conclusion and reasons for approval

- 3.1 Following a request made by Catsfield Parish Council through the Community Match programme, a package of improvement measures has been developed for Church Road which includes the extension of the existing 30mph speed limit further south along the road and the associated marking and signing improvements.

- 3.2 The aim of the 30mph extension is to encourage lower traffic speeds at the approach to and outside of Catsfield Church of England Primary School. The scheme has been developed using national guidance and best practice and in consultation with the County Council's Road Safety team and Sussex Police. Following the advertisement of the Traffic Regulation Order for the extension to the 30mph speed limit, one objection was received on the grounds of the extent to which the limit was being proposed.
- 3.3 The Committee is recommended, for the reasons set out in section 2 of this report, not to uphold the objection to the Traffic Regulation Order and to recommend to the Director of Communities, Economy & Transport that the Order be made as advertised.

RUPERT CLUBB

Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

13 November 2019