

REPORT OF THE LEAD MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

The Lead Member for Transport and Environment met on 5 and 26 June 2023. Attendances:-

Councillor Claire Dowling (Lead Member)

Councillors Abul Azad (1), Godfrey Daniel (1), Johnny Denis (2), Ian Hollidge (2), Carolyn Lambert (1), James MacCleary (1), Wendy Maples (2), Stephen Shing (1) and Georgia Taylor (2).

1. Notice of Motion – Bishopstone Junction, Seaford

1.1 The following Notice of Motion has been submitted by Councillor Lambert and Councillor MacCleary:

On 15 February 2021, Cllr Darren Grover and Cllr Carolyn Lambert submitted a Notice of Motion (NOM) to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment. The NOM called attention to two accidents in two days that closed the A259 in Seaford, the biggest town in Lewes District.

The NOM requested the Cabinet to undertake a proper survey of the whole town, not just the Buckle by-pass, with particular focus on all the junctions with the A259, to identify the areas of greatest risk to both car users, cyclists and pedestrians, and to come up with some concrete proposals to enhance road safety. The NOM recognised that the County Council was already undertaking a review of the A259 from Seaford to Brighton in terms of congestion and argued that the safety of both car users, pedestrians and cyclists should form part of that study. The Cabinet was asked to:

- impose lower speed limits on the approaches to Seaford and to work with partners to ensure these are enforced;*
- provide safe pedestrian crossings at key points of the A259 including at the Bishopstone junctions.*

These requests were refused on the grounds that:

- a study was already being carried out;*
- reducing the speed limit would require a significant level of engineering work;*
- the request for a pedestrian crossing at Bishopstone needed to be considered holistically as part of the study and in any event, funding was not available.*

At the County Council meeting of 7 February 2023, Cllr Carolyn Lambert submitted a further written question to the Lead Member, pointing out that the situation with the A259 was now critical and that Seaford, in particular, was suffering. The A259 continues to be regularly gridlocked and there have been further serious accidents. The outcome of the study has been delayed and any practical proposals are still awaited leaving residents still regularly facing dangers and delays on this difficult road.

Given the further delay to the study, and the length of time residents have been waiting for improvements, this NOM calls on Cabinet to:

- Provide temporary traffic lights at the Bishopstone junction to assess the effectiveness of this as a traffic management solution. The County Council is reminded that, despite initial resistance from the local authority, temporary traffic lights have worked well at Exceat and have been well received by residents;*

LEAD MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

- *Seek to provide a safe route for pedestrians and cyclists over the A259 at Bishopstone by bidding for funding for a footbridge using the £750k still in the County Council's Active Travel Fund.*

1.2 In line with County Council practice, the matter was referred by the Chairman to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment for consideration to provide information and inform debate on the Motion.

1.3 The A259 is a primary coastal route that runs between the County boundary at Telscombe Cliffs and Pevensey Roundabout where it becomes trunk road and part of the Strategic Road Network. The Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) flow on the section between Newhaven and Seaford is approximately 25,950 vehicles per day (2019 figures).

1.4 The road is multi-functional and accommodates local intra-urban journeys along the sections in Eastbourne and through the coastal towns of Seaford, Newhaven, Peacehaven and Telscombe Cliffs as well as longer distance inter urban journeys between these settlements. The inconsistent quality of the A27 corridor, particularly between Lewes and Polegate, means that traffic uses the A259 coastal corridor as an alternative route.

1.5 East Sussex County Council (ESCC) works closely with partners and stakeholders to improve road safety across East Sussex. In addition, each year the County Council develops and implements numerous local transport improvements funded through its capital programme of local transport improvements. In 2022/23 total funding of £11,776m was allocated (a combination of funding from the County Council, Local Growth Fund secured via the South East Enterprise Partnership and development contributions) which delivered over 50 schemes and studies across the county which include a number of road safety and active travel improvements.

1.6 In December 2018, the A259 was identified as part of the Government's Major Road Network (MRN) of economically important local authority maintained A class roads. The MRN sits between the Strategic Road Network, managed by National Highways (formerly Highways England), and the local network managed by the County Council as highway authority.

1.7 In establishing the MRN, Government made funding of between £20m and £50m available for MRN schemes through the National Roads Fund, with an expectation of a minimum 15% local contribution. Department for Transport (DfT) guidance identifies the types of schemes that are eligible for MRN funding include packages of improvements which may include elements of reducing congestion, supporting economic growth and rebalancing, supporting housing delivery, supporting all road users and supporting the Strategic Road Network.

1.8 In 2019, Transport for the South East (TfSE) was asked to coordinate with its constituent local transport authorities on potential MRN schemes across their geography. TfSE assessed all the schemes put forward against the MRN criteria as set out by DfT, as well as TfSE's strategic objectives for the region which focus on sustainable economic growth, improved quality of life and the environment. Following this assessment TfSE identified the A259 South Coast Road Corridor between Pevensey and Brighton & Hove as one of their ten priority MRN schemes for submission to Government.

1.9 Following the adoption of their Transport Strategy in July 2020, TfSE undertook their Outer Orbital Corridor Study which included the A259. The study considered strategic and regional significant interventions that could be delivered to support the delivery of the Transport Strategy vision and objectives by 2050. The outcomes of the Outer Orbital Study informed the content of TfSE's Strategic Investment Plan which was endorsed by the County Council at its Cabinet meeting on 7 March 2023.

1.10 In addition, the County Council commissioned an A259 MRN South Coast Road corridor study in 2021 focussed on the corridor between Eastbourne and Brighton. Complementing the work undertaken by TfSE, the A259 corridor study is multi-modal and uses an appropriate evidence base to seek to identify localised interventions for public transport, improvements to enable people to cycle or walk for all or part of their journeys, alongside localised road and junction capacity

LEAD MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

improvements and the potential use of smart technology along and around the hinterland of this corridor. The outcomes arising from the study have already been used to help inform and support the successful bid for Government funding through the County Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) to deliver bus priority measures on the A259 corridor.

1.11 The outcomes of the A259 corridor study and the TfSE SIP are informing the development of a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) to Government to make the case for MRN funding. Work on the study and the SOBC is expected to be completed in Summer 2023.

1.12 Subject to the approval of the SOBC by Government, further work will be required to progress to the Outline Business Case and then Final Business Case stages which can take up to a further two to three years to complete. Therefore, it is expected it will be 2025/26 at the earliest before any MRN funding would be available for delivering the preferred package of interventions. In addition, a local contribution of at least 15% would need to be provided as part of any funding submission to Government.

1.13 The County Council has a finite amount of funding to develop local transport improvements and needs to ensure that resources are targeted towards schemes which will be of greatest benefit to local communities. All requested road safety and local transport improvements, including requests to change the speed limits are assessed against the established Local Transport Plan (LTP). The content of the capital programme is considered by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment on an annual basis.

1.14 Local authorities have a statutory duty to assess and review crashes involving vehicles on the roads within their area and take such measures as appropriate to prevent such crashes. This informs an annual road safety assessment programme of identified areas of concern and where further investigation may be required. Sites are then treated on a priority basis within the funding available.

1.15 Each year the Road Safety Team identify sites that have the most crashes that result in injury and put in place a programme of works to reduce the number of casualties on these roads. East Sussex define a crash site as one where there have been four or more crashes in a three-year period. In 2022 (looking at the period between 01/01/2020 and 31/12/2022) 49 sites were identified. The A259 at its junctions with Marine Parade and Bishopstone Road were not identified and are therefore not a priority for the Road Safety Team. The A259 junction with Hill Rise has been identified and is ranked as number 47 of the 49 sites. An assessment of this site and the identified crashes will be carried out in the 2023/24 financial year.

1.16 In response to previous concerns raised about road safety and community severance at the Bishopstone Road, Marine Parade and Hill Rise junctions with the A259, a feasibility study was commissioned in 2018/19 to consider potential improvements. These options included the introduction of traffic signals and standard roundabouts at the Bishopstone Road, Marine Parade and Hill Rise junctions as well as a gyratory incorporating the Marine Parade and Hill Rise junctions.

1.17 The findings of the junction study showed that, apart from the introduction of a gyratory, it would not be possible to formalise the current situation without creating significant and potentially unacceptable delays on the A259. However, the introduction of a gyratory would potentially require land acquisition and be prohibitively expensive to implement. Consequently, the outcomes of the Bishopstone junction study have been fed into the wider A259 South Coast Road corridor study for further consideration.

1.18 As part of the current A259 MRN study, the A259/Hill Rise junction to A259/Bishopstone Road junction area have been considered as part of the potential package of schemes to be put forward for funding as part of the SOBC. To support this work, fixed signalisation of the A259/Hill Rise/Marine Parade junction was initially tested using local junction modelling software. The modelling demonstrated that the addition of traffic signals at the junction, whilst assisting the side road movements, resulted in significant and a likely unacceptable length of vehicle queues occurring along the A259. This reaffirms the modelling outcomes from the previous Bishopstone junction study.

LEAD MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

1.19 The A259 MRN corridor study and the County Council's BSIP are looking at alternative options to encourage active travel and reduce congestion on the A259. As the A259 is a high priority bus corridor, the impact on bus operators and passenger journeys are being taken into account in relation to any transport interventions taking place on this corridor. Delays on the A259, as a result of introducing traffic signals at this junction, would have a detrimental impact on bus journey times where significant BSIP investment is planned on bus priority measures to improve overall reliability on journeys using the high frequency bus service serving Telscombe, Peacehaven, Newhaven, Seaford and Eastbourne.

1.20 As the Notice of Motion highlights, temporary traffic lights have been implemented at Exceat Bridge. However, the operation at this site is predominantly two-way traffic but also allows for exit movements out of The Cuckmere Inn access/egress at the western end of Exceat Bridge.

1.21 The simple systems that temporary traffic signals run on with set run time for traffic movements on each arm mean that they are not able to operate in the same, more dynamic and complex way that permanent traffic signal systems can. As highlighted above, the modelling assessment undertaken both as part of the Bishopstone junction study and more recently as part of the A259 study has identified that the introduction of permanent traffic signals at this junction would create significant delay and likely unacceptable queues on the A259 corridor.

1.22 Given that temporary traffic signals would run more slowly and be less efficient than permanent signal systems, their introduction at this location would result even greater delay and queuing on the A259 corridor. In addition, running temporary traffic signals at all three junctions (Bishopstone Road, Marine Parade and Hill Rise Junction) on the A259, would be difficult to implement, and add further to the inefficiency of movements on the network particularly on the A259 arms where the efficient and expedient movement of traffic is a priority.

1.23 It is recognised that the A259 creates a barrier for pedestrian and cycle movements. However, the available data on pedestrian and cycle numbers and road safety data suggests that there is currently low demand and priority for pedestrian and cycle crossing in the area.

1.24 The Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plan (LCWIP) incorporates the A259 as part of the East West corridor route between Seaford and Newhaven. The plan includes recommendations for crossing points along the route and improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure in the Bishopstone Area. However, the recommendations are not prioritised in the LCWIP, are at concept level and are unfunded.

1.25 When considering the practicalities of providing a footbridge as a safe route for pedestrians and cyclists, there are a number of factors to take into consideration. In order for the footbridge to be usable for both pedestrians and cyclists, it would need to be fully compliant with the Equality Act 2010. This would mean that ramps would need to be provided at the required gradients and, depending on the design, potential return areas at the end of each ramp in order to achieve appropriate height over the road. Because of the potential scale of the structure over the A259, there may be a need to purchase third party land outside the highway boundary to accommodate a footbridge and its footings. In addition, any bridge would be on the edge of South Downs National Park, and the Park Authority would need to be consulted to ensure that any design and its visual impact was in keeping with the adjacent landscape and setting. Finally, the A259 is an abnormal load route given its proximity to Newhaven Port therefore any bridge would also need to be high enough to accommodate any abnormal vehicles.

1.26 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been conducted and is found at Appendix 1.

1.27 In relation to the costs of providing a footbridge, based on estimates taken from similar bridges, this would be between £3-6 million.

1.28 The Notice of Motion also asks that the £750,000 underspend from the Active Travel Fund be allocated to deliver the footbridge over the A259. The County Council submitted a project change request to Active Travel England, who are now administering active travel funding on behalf of the Department for Transport, in December 2021 requesting the reallocation of this funding to

develop and deliver the three school streets schemes in Lewes, Sidley and Eastbourne. ESCC has received an in-principle approval from Active Travel England to use this underspend on developing and delivery the school streets projects and therefore it is not available to be reallocated to fund a footbridge at Bishopstone.

Conclusion

1.29 The Notice of Motion requests that temporary traffic signals are introduced at the Bishopstone junction to assess their effectiveness as a traffic management solution, and that a bid be submitted for the introduction of a footbridge over the A259 for pedestrians and cyclists near the Bishopstone junction, which is part-funded using the £750,000 Active Travel Fund underspend. Previous traffic modelling to assess the benefits and impacts of introducing traffic signals at the junctions in Bishopstone demonstrates that whilst signalisation would benefit movements from side roads, it would generate extensive queuing and potentially unacceptable delays on the A259. The introduction of a footbridge in this location is seen as not affordable or practicable, but that signalised surface crossing options, being considered as part of the A259 MRN study are more likely to demonstrate value for money. Moreover the £750,000 Active Travel Fund underspend as highlighted in section 1.25 of this report has subsequently been reallocated to develop and deliver three school street schemes in the county. It is therefore recommended that both elements of the Notice of Motion are not supported.

1.30 The Lead Member for Transport and Environment recommends the County Council to:

✧ (1) reject the Motion for the reasons set out in the report.

2. Notice of Motion to review and update policy PS05/02 Local Speed Limits

2.1 The following Notice of Motion has been submitted by Councillor Denis and Councillor Georgia Taylor:

Policy PS05/02 sets out the Council's policy on local speed limits. It claims to be in line with Government best practice guidance and legislation on road safety. (Road Traffic Regulation Act, and more recently the Department of Transport Circular Roads 01/2013.)

The Policy sets out speed limits in section 5 of this policy with average speed limits and it states that if average speeds are above that level then, subject to "available resources", where injury or crashes at a site justify the necessary expenditure, engineering measures will be implemented first and, if this is not possible, then a lowering of the speed limit may be introduced.

This policy oversimplifies an approach to road safety and speed limits that is not consistent with the guidance outlined in the Department of Transport Circular Road 01/2013.

The above Circular sets out that "Local traffic authorities are responsible for determining speed limits on the local road network".

It continues: "The underlying aim should be to achieve a 'safe' distribution of speeds. The key factors that should be taken into account in any decisions on local speed limits are:

- *history of collisions*
- *road geometry and engineering*
- *road function*
- *composition of road users (including existing and potential levels of vulnerable road users)*
- *existing traffic speeds*
- *road environment*

LEAD MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

While these factors need to be considered for all road types, they may be weighted differently in urban or rural areas. The impact on community and environmental outcomes should also be considered” [my emphasis].

The following parts of the policy PS05/02 are not consistent with national Circular 01/2013: specifically:

- *Paragraph 5. Speed limit table is an over simplification of a complex assessment and as such is only one part of the overall process. Using this table in this way means that the views and experiences of residents are not being taken into account when assessing speed limits as set out in the Circular. (ref 23 Circular 01/2013)*
- *Paragraph 6. Refers to speed limits being investigated will be subject to “available resources”. The Circular outlines a cost benefit analysis that includes a wide range of non monetary benefits that have to be considered including quality of life factors and fear of speeds [my emphasis]. (ref: 31 Circular 01/2013)*
- *Paragraph 7a: casualty reduction: The Circular further sets out that the assessment is not simply about casualties on a road or killed or seriously injured, but is a more complex process of assessment that has to include the experience of other road users, pedestrians, cyclists, horses and riders [my emphasis] (ref 32 Circular 01/2013)*
- *Paragraph 7c: The self enforcing requirements of PS05/02 is not a defacto requirement. It is a factor to consider and as such the danger is that policy is used to uphold existing speed limits rather than consider why compliance might be an issue and how to address compliance. (ref 26 Circular 01/2013).*
- *Appendix A outlines an approach to speed limit criteria that is equally outwith of the national guidance, which requires local traffic authorities to perform an assessment that includes listening to local residents, and introduce 20mph speed limits in towns AND villages, “particularly where the streets are being used by people on foot and on bicycles, there is community support and the characteristics of the street are suitable” (ref 84 Circular 01/2013).*

Such priorities are given further emphasis in the January 2022 revisions to the Highway Code, in particular, the clear notation on the ‘Hierarchy of Road Users’, which “places those road users most at risk in the event of a collision at the top of the hierarchy. ... [These are] pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders and motorcyclists, with children, older adults and disabled people being more at risk.”

This Council agrees:

- a) To request the Lead Member for Transport to demonstrate that PS05/02 and its operational implementation is fully in line with the Circular 01/2013 with a full audit of speed limit assessments completed in the last 2 years.*
- b) To request that the Lead Member shares the results of this audit with Full Council within two months.*
- c) That PS05/02 be reviewed within the next two months and be presented to Full Council to ensure it is fully in line with all aspects of Circular 01/2013*
- d) That community and resident experience, quality of life and fear of speeds are included as explicit criteria in PS05/02 as clearly indicated in Circular 01/2013.*

2.2 In line with County Council practice, the matter was referred by the Chairman to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment for consideration to provide information and inform debate on the Motion. A copy of the Notice of Motion is included as Appendix 2 to this report.

2.3 Adopted Policy PS05/02 Local Speed Limits (included as Appendix 3 to this report) was approved by the Lead Member for Communities and Safety on 16 March 2018. It is based on a range of national guidance issued by The Department for Transport (including Circular 01/2013 that provides guidance to local authorities for assessing and setting speed limits), best practice, and is informed by the Council’s experience of achieving effective speed limits. Circular 01/2013 is government guidance and whilst it provides high level advice about what should be considered when setting effective speed limits, it is not definitive.

LEAD MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

2.4 East Sussex County Council (ESCC) is committed to working with all stakeholders to improve road safety across East Sussex, including our partners on the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership.

Setting effective speed limits

2.5 The principal aim in determining appropriate speed limits is to provide a consistent message between the speed limit and what the road looks like, and for changes in the limit to be reflective of changes in the road layout and characteristics.

2.6 The use of average speeds to help define the level of a new speed limit recognises that most road users drive at a speed that they consider to be safe and appropriate for the road characteristics. A limit should therefore seek to reinforce what an average driver sees as the safest speed for the environment, thereby achieving the highest level of compliance and a 'safe distribution' of vehicle speeds.

2.7 The 'Key points' section to Circular 01/2013 includes that 'speed limits should be evidenced, self-explaining and seek to reinforce people's assessment of what is a safe speed to travel. They should encourage self-compliance'.

2.8 It also states that the guidance should also 'be used as the basis for assessments of local speed limits, for developing route management strategies and for developing the speed management strategies which can be included in Local Transport Plans'.

2.9 National and international studies have indicated that reducing a speed limit with traffic signs and road markings alone only reduces the average speed of traffic by about one or two mph at most, and only then when a driver can readily see the reason for the lower limit. This replicates the Council's own findings from before and after studies when lower speed limits have been introduced.

2.10 This is reflected in the guidance which states 'unless a speed limit is set with support from the local community, the police and other local services, with supporting education, and with consideration of whether engineering measures are necessary to reduce speeds; or if it is set unrealistically low for the particular road function and condition, it may be ineffective and drivers may not comply with the speed limit'. In addition, evidence indicates that where signed only speed limits are introduced which do not match the average speed of traffic, there can be increased overtaking and conflict between drivers, which increases the likelihood of collisions.

2.11 Sussex Police have confirmed that they will not support any lower speed limits that cannot demonstrate that they will be self-enforcing and that they will not provide any additional enforcement over that which would have been provided prior to the introduction of any lower limit.

2.12 It is therefore important that any consideration relating to a lower speed limit must consider the prevailing conditions and existing average speed of traffic, as this will demonstrate what is likely to be an effective speed limit. If a lower speed limit is deemed desirable but is not reflected in the road's characteristics or average speeds, then traffic management or engineering measures will be required to ensure that the imposed limit is effective.

Review of relevant national guidance

2.13 Following receipt of the Notice of Motion, a review was undertaken of the relevant national guidance issued by The Department for Transport (including Circular 01/2013 and the January 2022 revisions to the Highway Code) and this concluded that adopted Policy PS05/02 continues to reflect national guidance and best practice.

Wider policy and operational context

2.14 It is important to clarify that the purpose of Local Speed Limit Policy PS05/02 is to clearly set out the key criteria required to ensure that speed limits are effective and should not be considered in isolation when considering how ESCC assesses and prioritises road safety concerns

LEAD MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

including requests for lower speed limits. It is important to consider the wider policy and operational context, including the County Council's Local Transport Plan, and the processes and criteria followed when setting the annual Capital Programme for Local Transport Improvements, the Annual Road Safety, Community Focused Road Safety and the Speed Management Programmes.

Capital Programme for Local Transport Improvements

2.15 Each year the County Council develops and implements numerous local transport improvements funded through its capital programme of local transport improvements. In 2022/23 total funding of £11,776m was allocated (a combination of funding from the County Council, Local Growth Fund secured via the South East Enterprise Partnership and development contributions) which delivered over 50 schemes and studies across the county which include a number of road safety and active travel improvements.

2.16 All requested road safety and local transport improvements, including requests to change the speed limits are assessed against the established Local Transport Plan (LTP). The content of the capital programme is considered by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment on an annual basis. Key objectives against which requests are assessed include the extent to which it will:

- Improve the economy
- Improve public safety and health
- Tackle climate change
- Improve accessibility to employment, education, health facilities and other services
- Improve quality of life

2.17 A review of ESCC's Local Transport Plan commenced in Summer 2022. The Government's guidance on developing Local Transport Plans is due imminently and it is expected to indicate the need to focus on decarbonising transport as well as integrating the Government Levelling Up, Bus Back Better and Gear Change strategies into the Council's transport strategy for the county. A key element of the development of the new LTP has been to engage with members, stakeholders, local communities and businesses early and throughout the process to actively seek their views and comments. This was initially through public and stakeholder consultation on issues, opportunities and priorities in autumn 2022 and at present via a series of workshops on the vision, objectives, preferred strategy and potential interventions to deliver the strategy. A LTP Reference Group comprising members of the Place Scrutiny Committee and chaired by Councillor Redstone has been established to provide Member input and challenge throughout the LTP's development.

2.18 Consultation on the draft LTP strategy, which will include an updated scheme assessment process, will be undertaken in autumn 2023 with final adoption of the strategy programmed for early 2024.

Annual Road Safety Programme

2.19 All road safety concerns that are raised by Members and residents are assessed by a member of the Road Safety Team and where appropriate improvements introduced. In addition, annually the Road Safety Team identifies sites that have the most personal injury crashes (PIC's) and put in place a programme of works to help reduce the number of casualties on these roads. As part of this year's Road Safety Programme, 49 locations have been identified where four or more PIC's have occurred in the three-year assessment period of 01/01/2020 to 31/12/2022.

Community Focused Road Safety Schemes

2.20 The Council receive many requests for small scale road safety improvements to be made, including changes to speed limits, which do not meet the requirements to be considered as part of the Annual Road Safety Programme. To address these concerns £750,000 has been allocated from the Community Match underspend to deliver community focused road safety interventions. Selected schemes address identified road safety concerns and are identified by considering a range of issues and specific site characteristics, weighted to define their relative priority. Current funding will enable a three-year programme of works to be delivered. Approval has also been given for any future underspends from the Community Match allocation to be allocated to support further Community Focused Schemes to be delivered.

Community Match Initiative

2.21 Where requests from Members or residents do not meet the criteria for inclusion in the above Programmes, the Community Match Initiative provides residents with the opportunity to take forward schemes to lower the speed limit where appropriate when these are funded locally. Where possible, the Council will support and assist local communities and town/parish councils to implement such schemes, if they are funded externally, or match funded through Community Match.

Notice of Motion

2.22 The Notice of Motion highlights extracts from Circular 01/2013. The Road Safety Team have regard to and consider the guidance as a whole during their assessment of sites for potential inclusion within the annual Road Safety Programme, the Capital Programme for Local Transport Improvements, the Community Focused Road Safety Programme and will do so when considering schemes for the Speed Management Programme. Appendix 4 sets out the sections of guidance referred to in the Notice of Motion and provides further clarification on when the Road Safety team consider these.

2.23 In order to undertake the assessment and analysis requested it would be necessary to divert officer resource away from delivering the annual road safety programmes as detailed above in this report.

Review of Speed Limits

2.24 Following the release of updated national guidance by the Department for Transport in 2006 the Road Safety Team completed a review of rural speed limits. As a result of this review, and in line with the guidance, several lower speed limits were introduced on rural roads. The speed limits met the guidance in terms of visual characteristics. The opportunity was taken to undertake some 'before and after' studies to help understand the effect that introducing lower speed limits had on driver behaviour. The results of this study are included as Appendix 5 to this report.

2.25 The results demonstrate that producing lower vehicle speeds is more complex than solely relying on the introduction of a new speed limit and associated signing.

2.26 The Council is aware that neighbouring authorities have, or are considering, amendments to their adopted policies relating to the introduction of local speed limits and will assess the effectiveness and impact of these policy changes when outcomes are known.

2.27 A £500,000 budget has been allocated to undertake a new Speed Management Programme with additional on-going funding identified within future Capital Programmes.

2.28 As part of the Speed Management Programme a review will identify lengths of the main road network that would benefit from a reduced speed limit. It will also check that existing speed limits are effective and producing the desired reductions in vehicle speeds using available speed

LEAD MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

data and new in-vehicle telematics. The review will also identify sites of greatest need and local concern where proven traffic management measures would have a positive effect and enhance the effectiveness of the speed limit. Over the next three years, more than 25 stretches of road will benefit from speed limit reductions or measures that will increase the effectiveness of existing speed limits.

Conclusion

2.29 ESCC is committed to working with all stakeholders to improve road safety across East Sussex, including our partners on the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership.

2.30 Speed limit policy PS05/02 is based on national guidance issued by the Department for Transport, best practice, local experience, the views of Sussex Police as the appropriate enforcement authority, and is reflective of what is required to produce an effective speed limit. The policy will continue to be reviewed regularly to ensure that it complies with the latest national guidance available.

2.31 The policy is not prescriptive and allows for lower speed limits to be considered for those locations deemed appropriate if the necessary traffic management or engineering measures are implemented to ensure compliance.

2.32 The policy has been found to be fit for purpose. It does not commit the Council to fund speed limits that are not an identified priority or linked to an approved scheme funded from alternative sources.

2.33 Following receipt of the Notice of Motion, a review was undertaken of the relevant national guidance issued by The Department for Transport (including Circular 01/2013 and the January 2022 revisions to the Highway Code) and this concluded that adopted Policy PS05/02 continues to reflect national guidance and best practice. Therefore, it is not recommended that valuable resources are diverted to undertake the review requested by the Notice of Motion.

2.34 The new Speed Limit Programme will assess the potential for lower speed limits across all A and B class roads within the County and identify a programme for improvements. Over the next three years, more than 25 stretches of road will benefit from speed limit reductions or measures that will increase the effectiveness of existing speed limits.

2.35 The Lead Member for Transport and Environment recommends the County Council to:

✧ (1) reject the Motion for the reasons set out in the report.

26 June 2023

COUNCILLOR CLAIRE DOWLING
(Lead Member)