

Correspondence for August 2025 PC meeting [Agenda item 107]

a. Statutory Consultation - Proposed 40mph and 50mph speed limits on A272 at Hadlow Down

Dear Sir or Madam

As part of our Speed Management Programme, the Road Safety Team has reviewed the speed limits across the county's A and B-class road network, to assess whether the existing speed limit is appropriate, and identify areas where they may be reduced.

We have completed our initial appraisal which assessed each road against a priority framework. This considered a range of factors such as the character of the road environment, the average speed of traffic, the likely number of vulnerable road users, facilities such as schools, shops and medical facilities in the area and the existing crash record. This process has identified 13 sites to be taken forward in the first two-years of the Speed Management Programme.

This year it is proposed that seven locations will be taken forward. Two of the identified sites are on the A272 near Hadlow Down. It is proposed to reduce the existing 50mph speed limit on Main Road to 40mph. Plan 1 indicating the extent of the proposed lower 40mph speed limit is attached for your information. It is also proposed to lower the existing 60mph speed limit between Buxted and Hadlow Down to 50mph. Plan 2 indicating the extent of the proposed 50mph speed limit is also attached for your information.

If you have any comments on either of the proposals, please can you respond to traffic.safety@eastsussex.gov.uk. I would be grateful to receive them by Friday 8 August 2025 quoting A272 Hadlow Down.

b. Draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) Consultation

Dear Consultee,

Wealden District Council has prepared a draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The SCI is a document that sets out what consultation will take place when the Council is developing and reviewing its planning policy documents (including the new Local Plan) and when determining planning applications. It also provides information as to how the Council will work with our partners and communities to facilitate proposals for neighbourhood plans and/or orders.

There is no formal requirement for local planning authorities to consult when reviewing or updating their SCIs. However, we consider that community involvement is important and we would like to provide an opportunity for our local communities, businesses and other interested parties to comment at the earliest opportunity on the process and methods that we intend to use to engage with you in the planning services we provide.

This is your opportunity to have your say on this draft SCI. The consultation will take place between **4pm on Friday 4 July 2025 for an 8-week period to 4pm on Friday 29 August 2025**.

c. A267 Road Safety Group's response to ESCC comments on our Vision and Strategy Document.

Dear Nick

Many thanks for your detailed response to our Vision and Strategy Document that you sent to Susan.

Update

The A267 Road Safety Group now has over 800 members.

We have distributed your response to all the parish councils and we have had confirmation from the parish clerks that they have distributed your response to their own Road Safety and Highways committee members. .

We have also posted your response on our A267 Road Safety Group Facebook platform. For protocol reasons we omitted the names of ESCC personnel mentioned in the document.

Regarding our Vision and Strategy document, to date we have had a good response from all the relevant parish councils thanking us for our involvement. This is encouraging.

Our A267 Road Safety Group members are supportive and make no outrageous demands although some say they would like to see a 30mph speed limit at one of the 'blackspot' areas. These are the areas we have mentioned in our strategy document.

Heathfield and Waldron Parish Council has been very supportive and has made a £500 contribution to fund equipment for the Cross in Hand Speedwatch team.

Concerns: It has been six months since the announcement of the ESCC Speed Reduction Scheme. Questions are now being asked as to whether the scheme is set to go ahead with 'devolution' on the horizon, which is liable to affect every level of local authority in the area.

Funding: We appreciate that ESCC finances are in a parlous state. This has been well documented.

The BBC reported the following: The council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) predicts a £36.5 million deficit for the 2026/27 financial year, increasing to £56.2 million by 2027/28 and £70.8 million by 2028/29.

Apportionment: Will a large proportion of the £500k budget be allocated to consultation fees and are they capped? Perhaps a light could be shed on the approximate amount – if any – that would be allocated to consultation fees?

Ring Fencing: Will the ring fencing of the Speed Reduction Scheme be removed and the project shelved? Presumably this could be affected by any future mayoralty. Hopefully not?

To allay any fears, is it possible that you can give an update to where the Speed Reduction scheme is at present in terms of timing. Hopefully the consultation period will commence soon,

ESCC response: Dealing with the points raised in your response, these are as follows: Our Vision and Strategy document covers the stretch of the A267 from the Mayfield Roundabout to Horam, not between Hadlow Down A267/A272 junction.

Part of our thinking behind the blanket 40mph speed limit from Wellbrook Hill to Horam would allow for Speedwatch groups to work unhindered at selected sections of the A267. Certainly, it would be an advantage, especially at the 'black spot areas.' As you are aware, Speedwatch can only operate at sites where the speed limit is up to 40mph.

Crash Data: Parish councillors on the respective committees have voiced their concerns that the crash data provided by Sussex Police is incorrect. This was borne out regarding a serious accident on Wellbrook Hill where a vehicle was severely damaged. This was a full emergency but the data reported that the accident damage was 'slight.'

Parish councillors have also commented on the validity of the crash data provided as it was felt there were actually more incidents than reported. Hence, since January 2025, we have been recording accidents where emergency vehicles have been in attendance.

Since, January 1 2025 there have been 15 accidents reported by our group members and the general public. There are where emergency services have been called to the accident. In one incident the air ambulance had been called. There could be others where the air ambulance has been involved.

We have been informed that the overall cost of an incident where all emergency services attend is approximately £30k. Currently 15 x £30k equals £450k

If the accident is a fatal one, we have also been informed by a highways consultant that the overall cost is £2million.

We have published these figures on our A267 Road Safety Group's Facebook page and in the media. To date the cost figures mentioned have never been challenged.

As you are aware, there have been two recent fatal accidents on the A267, one in March 2022 at Isenhurst Junction (the inquest was held in early 2024) and the other at Mayfield Flat in October 2024 (investigations are still ongoing.)

Again, using the above figures, £4 million will have been spent on the two fatal accidents thus, making a total £4.450 million spend of taxpayer's money.

East Sussex Road Safety Programme: Thank you for the update information

A267/A272 Junction: We assume the works carried out cover the illuminated speed awareness sign, northbound.

We understand work has been put in place to cut back the foliage that is obscuring this sign. Although we have been informed the sign is working, we have been told a vehicle has to be doing over 50mph to trigger the sign's activity.

Information to members: We have made very clear to our A267 Road Safety Group members that this is a speed reduction scheme.

Clarification of speed limits Black Spot Areas: Please can the proposed speed limits be clarified and be more specific. We have set out our assumptions as follows.

Clarification of speed limits at Black Spot Areas:

Wellbrook Hill Currently 50 mph reduction to 40 mph?

A267/ A272 Junction Currently 60mph reduced to either 30 mph or 50mph?

Mayfield Flat: Currently 60mph reduced to 50 mph?

Jewson's to A265/A267 junction: Currently 40 mph. Will there be no change or will it be increased to 50mph? Your information does not make this clear.

In 2022 there was a fatal accident at this junction. For nearly 20 years, motorists and residents have been campaigning for a speed reduction here due to many accidents and near misses. The current speed limit at the junction is 40mph. The 40mph commences at Jewson's on the A267 and continues to the A267/ A275 Junction at Cross in Hand. The road measurement is 0.8 miles and there are approximately 28 entrances from private and commercial properties onto the A267 north and southbound. This area has had more media and social platforms coverage than all the other junctions and therefore the speed limit at this junction should stay at 40mph or serious consideration should be given to lowering the speed limit to 30mph.

Little London Road: Currently 40 mph- assume no change?

Average Speed Cameras (ASC's): Thank you for the information. Certainly, the black spot areas mentioned would benefit from such a scheme, possibly a pilot scheme could be installed at one of the sites to evaluate the effectiveness of using such equipment. Wellbrook Hill, Mayfield Flat and Isenhurst Junction have all been scenes of fatalities.

We shall be pursuing the installation and costs of the above with:

RoadSafety@sussex.police.UK. We understand there is a grant scheme available.

We have been told that there is an abundance of this type of camera on most of the major road network in Surrey. We have also been told ASC's are a way forward.

Speed Management Programme: Traffic Regulation Order (TRO): Thank you for the information. We have spoken to parish councils and, to date, the councils all report that they have had no communications from ESCC regarding the proposed Speed Reduction Scheme. As previously mentioned, is it possible we can have an update on how the scheme is progressing, with a timetable?

Speedwatch: We have had encouraging news on the recruitment of a Speedwatch team for Cross in Hand. Naz Mian, who is a Heathfield and Waldron parish councillor has volunteered to be the coordinator of the group. One of the A267 Road Safety Group founder members, Sarah Jones, has forwarded the names of a number of individuals who are all willing to be potential volunteers. As mentioned, HWPC has purchased the Speedwatch equipment. This

is currently stored in the parish council offices. We envisage that the volunteers will be fully trained and ready to go by October 2025, if not sooner.

Speed Indicator Devices (SID'S) Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS):

Thank you for pointing us in the right direction on the Traffic Advisory leaflet.

We feel that the identified black spot areas fall into the categories stated in your response. Currently we are in discussions with Hadlow Down Parish Council on the viability and the contractual arrangements they have with their supplier.

As soon as we have a clear indication of the proposed speed limits on the A267 from Mayfield Flat to Horam, we should have a clear indication of the type of equipment we will need and the costs involved. Currently the thinking is the trialling of portable devices.

Funding will be via grant schemes, CIL funding, PCC funding and sponsorship.

Obviously, we will seek early engagement with ESCC Highways and the Licensing Team.

Deer Warden: Along with his colleagues, Julian Butcher is a great asset to the community. He is a regular poster on the A267 Road Safety Groups Facebook page and a great communicator. We must say the signage on the A267 is pristine and in all the right places. Well done, Julian.

Sussex Police, Enforcement and Speed Cameras/Average Speed Cameras:

Thank you, we are aware of the changes from the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership to the Road Policing Unit. We have also been informed that all the temporary road signage is being replaced with new Sussex Safer Roads liveried signage. We understand this will be available shortly.

Double White Lines Request: This request is for the northerly Meres Lane junction opposite the Hospice in the Weald charity furniture outlet.

Potholes: Thank you for the update. Although potholes are a bone of contention affecting the day-to-day driving experience in East Sussex, it is good to see there are regular updates from ESCC informing us of where the daily pop-up repairs are taking place.

General Housekeeping: Road signage is an area that needs urgent attention. Currently the community relies on a band of road sign volunteers to ensure road signs and central reservation bollards are clean and, where necessary, rubbish is cleared from verges.

One of our members, David Collumbell, a member of the Brighter Crowborough group, has cleaned all the signs from Horam to the Mayfield roundabout and beyond. Well done to David and his wife Doris for doing a wonderful job.

The above groups appear to be based all over the UK. Would it not be possible, given the right legislation is in place, to encourage the sign cleaning volunteers to set up a company and charge ESCC a fee to clean the road signage?

Foliage Removal: This another area that also needs urgent attention. A great number of signs are obliterated by foliage from vegetation. We are sure a East Sussex contractor would welcome such a lucrative contract.