



Ms Emma Neil
Clerk & RFO to the Burwash Parish Council

25 May 2023

Dear Ms Neil

Your recent enquiry 14447817

Thank you for your email of 16 May about the proposed Burwash High Street scheme.

Following our meeting on the 11 May, please find below a summary of the changes to the proposed Burwash High Street scheme. Please accept my apologies for the delay in providing this information.

As we discussed, a number of changes will be required to the scheme at the western end in order for the 20mph speed limit to be self-regulating and therefore acceptable to East Sussex County Council and Sussex Police. The amended scheme now includes an extension of the existing 50mph speed limit on the western approach to the village travelling eastwards to the BP fuel station where the new 30mph speed limit would be introduced. This could, potentially, invite criticism from some local residents as it will require removal of the current 40mph speed limit section. In addition, a number of kerb build outs have been added to physically reduce traffic speeds. which may increase noise from Heavy Goods Vehicles braking.

A number of issues were raised at the meeting on 11 May and these are addressed below.

- Why is it necessary to widen the footway to narrow the road width?

Sussex Police raised concern about the width of the road over this section as they felt that this would discourage compliance with the 20mph speed limit. The new speed limit must be self-regulating, and they advised that they could not support the scheme unless additional measures were put in place over this section. The engineering decision was to reduce the width of this section of the road so that it matched the width of the road elsewhere. The introduction of additional, traditional, traffic calming features in the form of buildouts etc was considered but this was most likely to have required the removal of some of the on-street parking along

the northern side. No parking is lost with the road narrowing option presented. Widening the footway along the southern side resolves the road width concerns identified by Sussex Police, would look more natural i.e. no sudden kerb alignment changes and also provides an improved facility for pedestrians.

- Why is the widening of the footway on the southern and not the northern wide of the road?

This was an engineering decision - the existing road alignment lends itself better to widening along the southern side as opposed to the northern side. Widening along the northern side would have involved working close to the existing, pollarded, trees which, if kept in place, would have ended up in the middle of the widened footway. The northern footway is generally wider than the southern footway. It can be seen on on-line images that vehicles parking at the business called 'Altered Images' on the southern side of the road overhang the footway. Although this type of parking cannot be condoned, widening this footway would provide additional space for pedestrians to pass without having to enter into the road.

- Why can't ESCC use innovative lower cost measures, for example planters on the road such as they have on Tunbridge Wells High Street?

The main difference between Tunbridge Wells High Street and Burwash High Street is that Tunbridge Wells High Street is a local 'B' class route whereas Burwash High Street is an 'A' class route. The volume of traffic and the purpose of the roads are very different. Moreover, the introduction of the planters in Tunbridge Wells High Street were, we believe, introduced with other measures that converted the road from 2-way traffic to 1-way traffic which removed many potential conflicts on this section of the road.

- Why didn't ESCC at the initial design stage add the required measures when the proposals were first drafted?

When the proposals were first drafted the scheme details were based on preliminary comment from both ESCC and Sussex Police supporting the scheme 'in principle'. As with all traffic calming schemes the designers aim is to minimise the number of features that are introduced whilst still ensuring that the scheme is effective in its aims. From the feasibility work undertaken the understanding was that there was general support to the scheme as originally presented. The concerns with the layout arose once the design had been developed and formal consultation undertaken with the statutory parties.

Please find attached 3 drawings which detail the measures that are required to deliver a self-regulating 20mph speed limit through the centre of Burwash. Please note the drawings have been kept quite basic at this stage but they highlight the key new required features.

As I explained in my letter of the 10 January, the cost to construct the scheme has now risen and is estimated to be in the region of £170,000. A contribution of up to £50,000 was agreed by the Lead Member for Transport & Environment, and the remaining final costs would need to be funded by the Parish Council.

We have been through a large number of proposals for this scheme and as I explained at our meeting this amended proposal is the last one that we can offer which would enable an effective and self-regulating 20mph speed limit through Burwash.

If Burwash Parish Council wishes to proceed with the scheme, the Infrastructure Planning & Place team at East Sussex County Council will instruct East Sussex Highways to commence the detailed design phase. This sets out what is required to take place on the highway and from that a detailed construction cost will be produced. Before construction is commissioned and roadworks are booked into the programme for the East Sussex highway network, the final design and costs will be shared with the Parish Council to seek their approval.

In regards to your reference to School Streets schemes, we are familiar with these types of schemes as we operated a [trial](#) in 2021. This has resulted in three temporary schemes being developed into permanent schemes, with the detailed design of these commencing imminently. For your information as part of the review of our [Local Transport Plan 4](#), which sets out the transport strategy for the County, we will be developing a framework to enable us to assess the feasibility of future school street schemes in the County. This will be undertaken during 2023 and political approval for the use of this will be sought in early 2024. I appreciate that this does not provide you an immediate answer with regard to this.

However, we would be willing to assess your school once the framework is approved and we will keep request on file.

In consultation with members of the Parish Council and when they've had an opportunity to review the feasibility drawings, please can you confirm whether the parish council wish to proceed with a scheme with all the identified features and a likely cost of £170K, meaning a contribution of £120,000 from the Parish Council?

I appreciate that my response will be disappointing to you, however I trust that you will understand the reasons for it. I would like to thank you once again for taking the time to contact me about this matter.

Yours sincerely



Nick Skelton
Assistant Director – Communities
Tel: 01273 482994
Nick.skelton@eastsussex.gov.uk