

Questions, Answers and Actions – Horsham County Local Forum 14 March 2022

In Attendance:

County Councillors

Charlotte Kenyon (Chairman), Andrew Baldwin, Nigel Dennis, Paul Linehan, Jay Mercer, John Milne, Christian Mitchell, Katie Nagel and Sarah Payne.

Apologies

Amanda Jupp, Nigel Jupp and Paul Marshall.

Residents

5 members of the public.

Question 1 from Mr B. Hewson:

Is anything going to be done about the excessive speeds of vehicles on Stane Street in Slinfold at weekends?

Not only is the speed a danger to residents, but the noise levels of many of the vehicles is actually painful. I have talked to the parish council about this and been told that statistically the road is a safe one and the police will take no action.

My concern is Stane Street where it passes alongside Slinfold Village, being a trained driver I have a good knowledge of estimating vehicle speeds and they pass my property at speeds of up to 140mph. In three years, the police have put patrols on this just once to my knowledge to escort groups of motorcyclists at the legal speed.

Officer Response to Question 1, in consultation with the local member Cllr Mitchell:

The enforcement of the perceived speeds of vehicles is a matter only Sussex Police can enforce. We have passed details on to colleagues at Sussex Police asking for some enforcement to take place at this location. Anti-social driving can also be reported via their website at <http://www.operationcrackdown.org/>.

The providing of times, dates and even registration numbers will aid Sussex Police with any enforcement they may then undertake.

The resident was not present at the meeting, but the local member made the following comments:

- Referred local residents to [appeal to the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner](#) to provide extra policing resources.
- The County Council is not responsible for enforcing speed limits.
- Members agreed that Stane Street is unsafe.
- Cllr Dennis suggested looking into the benefits of forming a local Community Speedwatch group.
- The resident recalled how purchasing a Speed Indicator Device, using Section 106 funding, has made a positive difference locally.

Question 2 from W. Vickers:

When did it become permissible and acceptable for cars, vans, lorries and building materials to be parked or left on grass verges and pavements?

The beautiful grass and often trees are being destroyed by this practise. We are being encouraged to take more exercise and walk to save the environment. It is impossible to walk on many pavements because they are blocked by vehicles.

Walking in the road to bypass the vehicles is impossible. Pictures attached. The building materials have been there for at least 8 months and are added to at frequent intervals.

What are you going to do about this problem? I look forward to hearing from you.

Officer Response to Question 2, in consultation with the local member Cllr Nigel Jupp:

Storing materials on the public highway is a licensable activity regulated by West Sussex Highways as the local Highway Authority.

West Sussex County Council does not allow materials to be stored on the footway under any circumstances. This is because of the damage this can cause and potential obstruction to the public footway. The County Council will only allow the verge to be used in exceptional circumstances.

All materials must be stored on a spoil board and be safely barriered off with reflective barriers. If there are no streetlamps, we would expect the barriers to have lighting attached.

Any damage caused to the highway will be recharged to the licence holder.

If the activity is taking place on private property a licence is not required from the County Council.

Residents are encouraged to report each case separately via our 'Make an enquiry about a road or pavement' web site so that each case can be appropriately investigated - <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/make-an-enquiry-or-report-a-problem-with-a-road-or-pavement/make-an-enquiry-about-a-road-or-pavement/>

Anti-social parking should be directed to the police or us if yellow lines are required.

The resident nor local member was present at the meeting, but members made the following comments:

- Cllr Linehan commented that he found the County Council's Streetworks Team to be reactive to such issues, in his experience.
- Members agreed with Cllr Dennis' suggestion that the County Council should consider introducing a by-law to permit civilian regulation.

Question 3 from Mr M. Eastwood:

When Highways are dealing with planning applications involving private or unadopted roads - why does the comment 'no objections' apply?

Do Highways actually assess the impact of developments on unadopted roads?

Wouldn't a more appropriate comment be: 'private/unadopted road we are unable to comment'. By lodging a 'no objection' comment on such applications we are seeing a number of applications, on what are often single-track rural roads, often no more than footpaths which are sparsely populated, being given planning permission for multiple houses.

Officer Response to Question 3, in consultation with the local member Cllr Payne:

West Sussex County Council, as the Highway Authority, are consulted by the District & Borough Councils within the County on all planning applications that have a transport impact. These applications include developments that are on private/unadopted roads. Comments upon applications shall principally assess the impact upon the adopted highway but the Highway Authority has a duty of care to ensure that proposals within private land are appropriate and would not likely to result in any undue highway safety issues.

When assessing planning applications, the Highway Authority also comment upon various matters that are on private land because they are material to the consideration of the planning application. This can include car parking levels, the design and layout of cycle parking, electric vehicle charging provision, the design and layout of circulatory space, loading and un-loading provision and the means of access to the development. In light of this the Local Planning Authorities, who are ultimately responsible for the determination of planning applications, are looking for the Highway Authority to provide their recommendation and view as to whether the proposals are acceptable from a planning perspective. Hence the use of terms such as no objections even on sites that are located on private or unadopted roads.

On the issue of planning permission being granted for housing on rural single-track roads, ultimately any decision to grant planning permission rests with the District & Borough Councils as Local Planning Authorities. Any decision made has to be against the relevant planning policy basis which includes the Local Plans adopted by District & Borough Councils and the Government's National Planning Policy Framework. The NPPF states that development should only be refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety or the impacts upon the road network would be severe. This is the context within which the transport implications of planning applications need to be assessed.

Supplementary:

Mr Eastwood reiterated his belief that the County Council's 'no objection' response does not make sense and questioned whether a single-track road is referred to the Public Rights of Way or Highways teams. He gave the example of a tarmac public footpath used by horse riders until lorries and HGVs were

permitted to pass through.

Members' Response:

- Members agreed that the local road network is overused and there are inadequacies.
- Members empathised with the resident's frustration at the National Planning Policy Framework's terminology in relation to the grounds for refusing development and agreed it should be reviewed (in reference to use of the words "unacceptable" and "severe", as highlighted in the officer response).

Questions 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 from N. Soriano of Southwater Parish Council:

Question 4 - What real assistance can/does County provide in respect of working with young people, e.g. youth groups?

Officer Response to Question 4, in consultation with the local member Cllr N. Jupp:

There are a range of services delivered by West Sussex County Council for young people. Specifically in Early Help we offer the following:

- 12 Family Hubs that offer Find It Out a drop-in service for young people seeking support, information, advice and guidance.
- Enabling Young People – short-term low-level intervention conducted over 1-4 sessions either virtually, in a family hub or in the community.
- Direct work on an Early Help Plan as part of whole family worker for those who require coordinated support.
- Access to services via phone, email, through a professional or an online form.
- The new Early Help offer has also introduced Dedicated Schools Teams to help schools identify and address concerns for children and young people. Each school has a named link worker who they can call upon regularly for help. Early Help are also able to offer some bespoke workshops if themes are identified in schools.
- Early Help will also provide advice and guidance to community youth groups if needed especially in terms of safeguarding.

For more information on the Early Help offer including how to contact us for support, [please follow this link](#).

And for details of our 12 Family Hubs, [please follow this link](#).

Wider than Early Help, the Council also have a Young Carers team who provide targeted and group work support to young people with caring responsibilities. There is also Youth Emotional Support teams offering one to one work with young people experiencing emotional and wellbeing difficulties and the Mental

Health in School team providing low level support to schools relating to mental health.

Supplementary:

Has the County Council given thought to re-purposing the former Children and Family Centre properties for refugee accommodation?

And, why has the Southwater centre yet to be released for community use?

Members' Response:

- Cllr Payne confirmed that the County Council's Property Services Team is currently in talks with community groups to explore this possibility. She added that only a select number of properties are WSCC-owned and that it will require demonstrable community demand and buy-in to progress.
- The resident was made aware that the County Council has recently launched its refugee resettlement programme in response to refugee crises, including the conflict in Ukraine. [More information can be found here.](#)

Following the Forum, the County Council's Head of Assets provided the local member with a written update regarding the status of Southwater Children and Family Centre. At the time of writing, the property is being marketed for a leasing opportunity for a nursery provider or similar user. A preferred bidder has been selected and terms are being finalised.

Supplementary:

Is there a policy in place to provide youth groups?

Members' Response:

- Cllr Mercer informed the resident that local authorities are under no statutory obligation to provide support for youth recreation. He added that targeted support is available to high-needs youth clubs, vulnerable people and post-employment aged 16+.
- Cllr Mercer also explained the distinction between the County Council's definition of Early Help and Early Years.
- Henfield Youth Centre was highlighted as an example of a multi-purpose and self-sufficient youth organisation accommodating of nursery children, children aged 8-11 and young people aged 11-18.
- The group were informed that Henfield Parish Council has incorporated their intentioned to employ a youth worker in order to continue its service provision.

Question 5 - Southwater has two sections of road requiring installation of footpaths.

- i. Cripplegate Lane/Worthing Road
and
- ii. Blakes Farm Road/Hangman's Hill.

Both are moved forward without definite plans. Why?

Officer Response to Question 5, in consultation with the local member Cllr N. Jupp:

Arguably for adjustments or improvements to the highway, the most appropriate solution would be to apply for a Community Highways Scheme. This will then prompt a moderation process to assess appropriate prioritisation, and then extend to feasibility studies taking place. This will also take into consideration any S106 funding that may be available.

A site meeting can be arranged to enable colleagues to talk through the processes and see what is available having seen the locations in detail. It is suggested that the Local Traffic Engineer is in attendance, of whom can help with traffic-related matters such as signing and road markings.

Question 6 - Safe pedestrian/cyclist access by the people of Southwater, to Horsham remains without conclusion after many years.

Can a working party be created to explore the various options, as trying to encourage people to become greener, is useless without the ability/facility?

Officer Response to Question 6, in consultation with the local member Cllr N. Jupp:

See answer as above.

Question 7 - The congestion around the road entrances by the two schools in Worthing Road worsens.

Can we have a review to understand how this area can be improved?

Officer Response to Question 7, in consultation with the local member Cllr N. Jupp:

See answer as above.

Question 8 – Concerns made by residents regarding both Southbound and Northbound bus stops at Warnham Gate for yellow lines to be painted and also 'BUS STOP' to be painted in white.

Can the County Councillor support this so it can be progressed further when completing a TRO request online?

Officer Response to Question 8, in consultation with the local member Cllr N. Jupp:

See answer as above.

Question 9 - The northbound bus stop on Worthing Road, opposite Roundstone Caravan Park, and corresponding road crossing allowing safe pedestrian passage from the caravan park.

Can WSCC please provide assistance to provide this infrastructure which has come up on many occasions. If not, please advise why not?

Officer Response to Question 9, in consultation with the local member Cllr N. Jupp:

See answer as above.

Question 10 from Mr D. Buckley of Rudgwick Parish Council:

At the previous County Local Forum on 10 November, I asked about the *WSP report which was due in October. My question was 'why the delay in publication?'

Four months later, what progress has been made?

**WSP is an engineering firm commissioned by WSCC to provide a highways design and consultancy service.*

Officer Response to Question 10, in consultation with the local member Cllr Mitchell:

Following the tragic event at this crossing point, the Council completed a series of remedial works, including installation of wooden guard barriers on the Downslink access ramps, new road signs and vegetation clearance. The measures should significantly reduce the risk of a similar accident happening again. In addition, the Council commissioned a report from WSP consultants to consider what other measures might be implemented, of which have been discussed with SUSTRANS (Sustainable Transport). The report considered three options:

- A bridge
- A pegasus crossing
- A traffic island (this was ruled out due to insufficient land)

For both the Council and SUSTRANS, a bridge would be the preferred option. However, the estimated cost is approximately £2million and unfortunately neither the Council nor SUSTRANS have been able to make an economic case for the bridge, in comparison to other priorities. Therefore, it is not possible to pursue the bridge as a viable option.

Given the traffic island is also not feasible, the Council's approach is to continue investigations into the pegasus crossing which has an estimated cost of between £600,000 and £700,000. The crossing would comprise an on-road signalised crossing and adjustment to the Downslink access ramps. This work would allow for much enhanced safety when crossing the road and would look for options to improve accessibility to the Downslink for everyone whether they are walking, cycling or horse riding. Further work will be required, such as carrying out topographic and ecology surveys to determine the impact of the scheme, this

will help to identify the full scope of works required. The Council will be working in partnership with Sustrans over the coming months to carry out this feasibility work. This will lead to a refinement of the design and cost estimates, which will allow both the Council and Sustrans to determine next steps.

The feasibility report is now available and was sent to Cllr Mitchell on 6 April 2022.

The meeting ended at 7.55pm.