

Notes from the 20mph Working Party Meeting (V1)

Held at the Steyning Centre on 25th Oct' 2023 @ 6.30pm

Purpose: To discuss the possibility of implementing a 20mph speed limit in Steyning

Present:

Ian Alexander (IA) – Steyning Parish Council/Steyning & District Community Partnership – Chair

Geoff Barnard (GB) – Greening Steyning

Vicci Johnson (VJ) - Greening Steyning & SPC Cllr.

Russell Barnes (RB) - Steyning & District Business Chamber (RB)

Deborah Hanson (DH), Andrew Sharp (AS) - Steyning Parish Council

Mike Croker (MC) - Bramber Parish Council

John Fullbrook (JF) – SPC Clerk

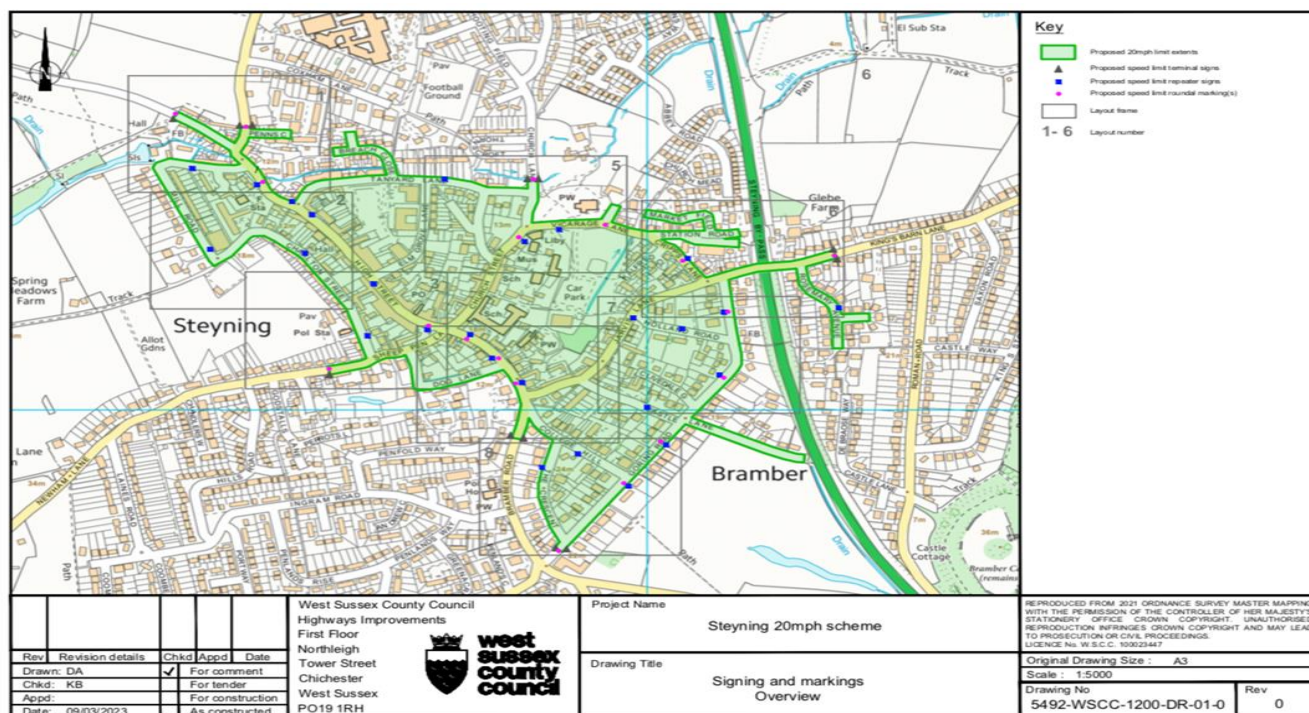
Status of the 20mph Community Highways Scheme (CHS) Application – Brief update

Following extensive work by the 20mph Working Party, and a broad-based survey to gauge public reactions, a CHS application for a 20mph zone was submitted to WSCC in summer 2021.

This was accepted as a candidate scheme by WSCC Highways Department in autumn 2021. As a first step in developing plans, speed data was collected in January 2023 on a number of roads in the town.

A proposal for the scheme was then developed by WSCC Highways Department, and this was forwarded to SPC by Cllr Linehan in May 2023. This proposal set out plans for a significantly reduced scheme compared to the original CHS application. Rather than covering the whole residential area of Steyning and adjoining parts of Bramber, it focuses on just the centre of Steyning, and adjoining roads (see plan below).

A response to this revised proposal was compiled by this working party on the 3rd July and sanctioned by the SPC Community Com. noting thanks for the work undertaken by WSCC but detailing reasons for the groups/committee's general feeling of disappointment that a number of crucial areas/roads had been excluded due to them not passing the WSCC criteria for proceeding with the scheme. This SPC approved response had been sent to WSCC. The response from WSCC Highways dept was received via Cllr Linehan. It noted further reasoning for their decision, answering some of the questions raised and asking for a definitive response from this joint Steyning & Bramber group, the Parish Councils and the County Councillor so that it could determine a schedule for proceeding or not as per advised - This working party was convened to draft a response for the PC's.



Notes from this meeting

1. Appointment of Chair/Secretary

IA offered to chair the group, and JF to take notes.

This was agreed, with thanks.

2. Apologies received and input from Cllr Linehan as relayed by the Clerk

Paul L sent apologies. When asked about his attendance Cllr Linehan stated that he felt at this stage he had to remain slightly removed from the detailed discussion within the working party forum so that his advocacy of the scheme, or not as the case may be, could be entirely based upon the empirical evidence.

The Clerk had asked for a WSCC senior engineer to be in attendance so that any remaining points could be clarified and as requested by members and Cllrs, however Cllr Linehan explained that he felt it inappropriate to place a WSCC engineer within the working party at this stage of the process when that engineer could be part of the group which may determine whether the application proceeded or not, nor was it entirely appropriate he felt to be putting a WSCC officer on the spot in this way.

He also mentioned once again that he is thinking of conducting a separate survey of residents to gauge the level of support before giving his backing to the scheme.

{The school rep. could not attend due to the meeting being held during the Half Term Break}

3. These were the views expressed by the Working Party members.

- It was suggested that WSCC had not been receptive to the views expressed within the last SPC/BPC response, rather they had continued to simply clarify their decision-making process.
- It was felt that this therefore left the group with a simple choice for what was seemingly to be its final decision. This being to accept the revised scheme; Say 'No' to the revised scheme; or continue to attempt to modify the revised scheme in some way
- Some members wondered whether the revised scheme could perhaps be treated as a phase 1, which would lead at some point in the future to the full scheme being adopted, be it due to a change in the political landscape at WSCC or at governmental level, or at least some future modification of the criteria employed to determine schemes such as this.
- Members remained very disappointed – Given that some of the most important roads that the working party thought needed traffic calming were not included.
- Levels of signage continued to be a cause for concern and were more than thought expected or required.
- Members could not understand the high expense of the scheme and remained incredulous when attempting to resolve whether the benefits and infrastructure delivered could possibly be worth the level of investment forecast.
- There was strong support for a scheme which delivered safer roads, and it was felt if the revised scheme met this target at all, then it was at a much lower level than hoped for.
- Some members were concerned about the public relations associated with either saying 'No' to a much-vaunted scheme or indeed saying 'Yes' to a scheme of such reduced scope.
- Saying 'No' may also be perceived as a waste of public money.

- It was suggested that if the scheme were to proceed then those areas not covered by the revised proposal but that were part of the original application could be the subject of a 'Peoples 20's plenty' campaign whereby stickers/signs could be attached to bins and other street furniture asking drivers to reduce speed – as had seemingly been successful in Cowfold and Storrington previously
- VJ and GB on behalf on Greening Steyning stated in conclusion that they would support saying 'No' as it was a waste of public money, they believed continuing to attempt to modify the revised scheme at this stage to be a waste of time
- RB stated on behalf of the Steyning and District Business Chamber that they will always support highway improvements to the High Street that enhance access to business and supported the traders themselves. The Chamber are grateful to be involved as part of the working party so their voice can be considered. They however do not really feel that either the original proposal or the latest proposal supports their objectives. That is not to say they oppose either, merely feel that money could be better spent in the High Street on other initiatives.
- MC restated on behalf of Bramber PC that Bramber roads had been excluded and that it had become a purely Steyning scheme Bramber members were therefore very disappointed with this situation.
- It was agreed that in consideration of the original targets for the application, the revised scheme could not be seen to have achieved either appreciable safety benefits, nor reduced motor vehicle emissions in the way envisaged
- Indeed, a great deal of time has been committed and we should seek to work proactively with WSCC and strengthen those working relationships.
- It was agreed that a publicity campaign would be needed to get a positive and informative message out to the residents of Bramber and Steyning in the light of this decision.
- **Some members also wanted it noted that they could be encouraged to support it, with what they believe to be minor changes in regards to positioning of signs which would meet our requirements of the scheme with minimal effort and cost from WSCC.**

4. Recommendation to be considered by SPC Community Com. as follows

The members resolved to agree a recommendation to SPC Community Committee that SPC declines to pursue the revised proposal in its current format, because it does not believe the scheme is good value for public money, and it does not meet the requirements of the original application.

Compiled by JF - 31st Oct 2023

Agreed by W. Party members 2nd Nov 23