Clerk's Report to Council Summarising Feedback from other organisations

The Clerk sent the GTA Traffic Calming Feasibility Assessment to the following agencies on 14th December:-

- Traffic Calming Working Group
- East Sussex Fire and Rescue
- SECAmb
- Sussex Police
- East Sussex Highways
- Highways England

So far, the Clerk has received responses from the Traffic Calming Working Group, SECAmb and Highways England. The Clerk has also received a response from St Thomas' Primary School.

Response received from SECAmb:-

"As with any traffic calming scheme we are genuinely happy to support it.

We do ask that consideration is given when planning how such calming measures will be implemented. Ambulances are large and heavy vehicles and ultimately need a reasonable amount of space to safely pass other vehicles whilst responding to emergency calls. I would imagine that this is similar to the requirements of the Fire authority.

In addition to this, if any so called "rat runs" are to be closed off or amended so that they are only accessible from one end again due consideration needs to be given for any increases to response times or the ability to turn emergency vehicles round.

Please pass this back to the council on our behalf."

Response received from Highways England:-

"Thank you for contacting National Highways in regard the Traffic calming feasibility assessment for Winchelsea.

Unfortunately due to the limited time scale for responding we have not had the opportunity to consider each option in detail, however we have considered the concept and our general comments on the proposals are as follows, but we reserve the right to consider the final scheme in more detail, and request that appropriate time be given to do so.

In general National Highways are supportive of the intent of the measures being considered, however our final response will need to consider the following;

It is not totally clear why drivers are diverting from the A259 to pass through the town, it is assumed that it is mainly a case of it being a shorter (and hence potentially quicker route) – this should be understood in more detail to ensure the correct solution is being delivered.

Diverted traffic volumes are unlikely to adversely impact on the A259 which from the traffic flows given should have capacity, although the alignment will reduce the actual capacity at some locations. The reduction of turning movements that are likely as a result of the proposals are likely to mitigate the increase in traffic volume.

It should be noted that at this time National Highways have no plans to improve this section of the A259 and this should not be relied upon in the consideration of this scheme.

The A259 around Winchelsea is of poor alignment especially for larger vehicles and there are occasions when the road becomes blocked, if the restrictions within the town remove the local alternative route then possible congestion during such instances will be greatly exacerbated with considerable diversion routes. Likewise for road works on this section the diversion routes are extensive and the impact of this should be considered especially given the nature of the road features on this section that may have a higher maintenance liability than usual.

Right turning traffic to and from the A259 increases collision risk and hence proposals that reduce or remove those movements are welcome, however the impact on diverted traffic to other junctions should be considered. This especially applies to the junction of Strand Hill where sight lines are poor although personal injury collision rates here appear low.

The proposals are likely to increase traffic entering the town at North Street where the junction has low capacity and this may lead to congestion and queuing on the A259 with associated collision risk. The arrangement and road markings at this junction should be reviewed.

The direction signs for Winchelsea on the A259 will need to be reviewed and clear indication of any no through routes clearly signed to avoid erroneous turning of traffic. Such signing should be provided as part of the scheme.

There will need to be signing on the A259 for the 20mph zone, this will need to be provided as part of the scheme."

Response received from St Thomas' Primary School:-

"Whilst St Thomas' Primary is not situated on any of the roads that would be directly affected by any traffic calming measures suggested in the report, their introduction would result in a significant increase to the safety of our children traveling to and from the school.

St Thomas' is situated at the end of a no through road and the vast majority of our pupils are driven to school. The school requests that parents do not drive down or park on Friars Road as there is no pavement to speak of, and so the children and their parents/carers use the road to walk from their car to the school. As a result of this, the parents/carers use many of the adjacent roads to park and then continue to the school on foot, many of them park on Monk's Walk and walk through a children's playground to get to the school. As highlighted in the report, an ESCC Speed Survey found that "85%ile speeds of 43mph for northbound and 46mph for southbound traffic" for Monk's Walk, vehicles travel at high speed past the children emerging from their cars every day. Some other parents/carers park on the High Street or German Street and walk through the Churchyard to the school, they have to cross these roads dodging the anti-social driving also mentioned in the report.

I would like to thank Icklesham Parish Council for commissioning this report as it clearly shows that something needs to be done to reduce the number of cars using Winchelsea as a rat run and speeding through the town and if nothing changes, it will only be a matter of time before there is another, or more serious crash or injury."

The Clerk recommends waiting for responses from Sussex Police, East Sussex Fire and Rescue and East Sussex Highways before any decisions are made.

January 2022