

Alfriston Feasibility Study – APC Enquiries

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Introduction

This Technical Note (TN01) has been prepared based on comments raised by the Alfriston Parish Council (APC) regarding the proposals put forward by East Sussex Highways (ESH) for a series of traffic management improvements within the village of Alfriston.

In June 2020, ESH produced a feasibility report that identified various proposals which could be provided, such as a village-wide 20-mph speed limit, HGV restriction measures, and measures to limit illegal parking within the village centre.

However, during a meeting held with ESCC (East Sussex County Council), ESH and the APC, on the 28th July 2020 APC requested further clarification on some items relating to the feasibility report.

Therefore, the following paragraphs have taken each of the points raised by the APC, with ESH providing a summarised response to each particular statement in [blue](#).

A copy of the meeting minutes has also been provided for further reference and is provided within [Appendix A](#) of this Technical Note.

APC Enquires & ESH Response

APC Comment – “We would like to see a road surface treatment throughout the length of North Street and the High Street, so that it retains that sense of a different space the whole way through”.

ESH Response – DfT Local Transport Note 1/07 ‘Traffic Calming Measures’ provides advice on the use of traffic calming measures. It covers relevant legislation and the design, effectiveness and installation (including signing and lighting) of measures.

With regard to changes in colour and surface texture, this can indeed encourage lower vehicle speeds, but it is important that the skid resistance of any material used for traffic calming is adequate for the type and speed of traffic carried.

Rough surfacing can be difficult for elderly and mobility-impaired people to cross and can also be uncomfortable for cyclists. Noise from vehicles crossing the textured surface may be a nuisance to those working or living along both North Street and the High Street.

Another consideration in converting 604 metres of carriageway with a coloured surface or texture would be the ongoing maintenance issues. Water can get into potential cracks and freeze, therefore widening the crack. In poor weather this ‘freeze-thaw’ effect can lead to a quick deterioration in the surface quality and could cause potential potholes.

As highlighted within the main feasibility report, the village is subject to around 4,355 two-way vehicle movements per day which, in modern day standards, is not particularly high and therefore the issue of ‘wear and tear’ on this particular stretch caused by traffic shouldn’t be classed as major. The wear caused by traffic numbers on a painted surface slowly causes a polish type finish, which in turn would decrease the amount of grip, meaning that the surface may need to be replaced or other steps taken to restore the texture. This, however, is a slow process and the surface frequently needs replacement for other reasons, prior to grip becoming an issue.

Other problems that sometimes require maintenance treatments include utility trenches and poor underlying ground conditions. Any utility trench – the excavations that the gas, water companies and other similar operators make in the road to maintain their own apparatus – introduces joints and weaknesses into the road surface. In some instances, utility companies don’t reinstate the carriageway back to its original state, with different colours and materials being used to seal their labour and therefore leaving a type of ‘patchwork quilt’ effect behind.

It should also be noted that coloured road surfaces tend to deepen in colour after 2–3 years so that they appear black from the drivers’ viewpoint and therefore cease in becoming effective. A village-wide scheme is likely to be of a high cost (see subheading ‘Indicative Scheme Costings’). Therefore, it is proposed that minimum five metre strips of contrasting road surface texture and colour be installed at the village gateways to remind motorists of a change in environment, rather than a village-wide road surfacing scheme.

APC Comment – *“Is there anything more that can be done to discourage HGVs travelling through the village e.g. width restriction”.*

ESH Response – As highlighted at the meeting, installing width restrictions would not be possible as it would hinder genuine access to the village for deliveries, refuse trucks, farm machinery, larger emergency vehicles and the buses/coaches that also visit the village on a daily basis.

Horizontal carriageway deflections, such as chicanes, can be used in order to discourage HGV movements. This is achieved by installing chicane priority in the opposite direction to the desired HGV rat-run route. This encourages HGV drivers to use alternative routes. However, attitude surveys conducted into traffic calming schemes suggest that the general public dislike horizontal deflections, such as chicanes, more than they dislike road humps.

Other horizontal carriageway deflections, such as localised narrowings, have been installed to influence vehicle speeds, though this is not always successful. In the case of kerb build-outs and pinch points, the narrowed carriageway, even if reduced to a single lane, still allows most vehicles to be driven relatively quickly through the available gap, unless there is opposing traffic to prevent this occurring.

While ESH recognise that chicanes can be used successfully in traffic calming schemes, not all areas have benefited from such a highway change. In some instances, the features have been removed because of complaints from residents, emergency services, or bus operators.

Therefore, consultation prior to installation of horizontal deflections will be a necessary part of the design process. Besides the groups mentioned, consultation should also include haulage associations and local farmers given Alfriston’s rural nature.

The placement of chicanes along Alfriston Road, North Street and White Way were discounted on the reasons listed above. Hence the introduction of further signage and the existing signs being transferred onto a yellow backing board not only improves the conspicuity of the signage, but also provides a neater assembly in situations where signs are accompanied by supplementary plates. It also eliminates the risk of signs and supplementary plates getting misaligned, an example being one of the ‘Except for loading’ supplementary plates which is currently facing the wrong direction.

Therefore, it is suggested that a monitoring period also be introduced once the updated signage strategy is in place, in order to gauge if a reduction in HGV movements has indeed occurred.

APC Comment – “Is there any further options to implementing changes to North Street (to slow down vehicles) such as Convex mirrors, rethinking of give-way lines, buildouts, or perhaps planters to break up the straight lines. Would it be possible for a trial study to be undertaken?”

ESH Response – Mirrors can give a distorted view of the road and a misleading impression of the speed of approaching vehicles. Convex mirrors will not give a clear view of smaller vehicles, such as motorcycles and pedal cycles and the placement of mirrors on the highway should not be encouraged. It should also be noted that mirrors are also classed as a road traffic sign and as they are not prescribed in the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD), their use on the highway is subject to special authorisation by the Department for Transport (DfT).

Requests for special authorisation to enable the placement of a mirror on the highway are assessed by the DfT against stringent criteria. Therefore, the use of mirrors has been discounted as a viable option.

With regard to the introduction of buildouts, give-way lines and planters, these options would have the potential impact of vehicle queuing. Using the observational surveys along the High Street in 2017, the footage displayed a significant number of congestion occurrences, as vehicles were forced to mount pavements or reverse back to allow passing traffic to get by. This was due to temporary traffic signals and 20mph speed limit trial period. Introducing buildouts along High Street and North Street would further intensify this issue, as illustrated within **Figure 1.1** below.

Figure 1.1

Grid lock' situation because of southbound vehicle queues & congestion at Market Square.



ESH are aware that planters and trees have been used within local villages within the county as a means of enhancing schemes and reducing carbon dioxide in the air, but plants can be vandalised, and the roots of some types can damage underground services or pavements.

It should also be noted that planters require regular upkeep. Shrubs can also cause problems if they are not maintained at their designed height or spread, which in turn has the potential to cause potential reduction in sightlines, especially given the road networks narrow carriageway and thus as result could lead to driver uncertainty and unnecessary accidents. Therefore, it is on this basis that these design options have been discounted.

APC Comment – *“In terms of gateways, APC would like a pinch point rather than just a sign moved. APC are keen not to have a standard white picket fence gateway”.*

ESH Response – As mentioned within the feasibility report, the ESH design has looked at the potential addition to the village gateway of single-lane priority pinch points, in which priority is provided for traffic leaving the village and signed accordingly with priority signage and possible give-way road markings. However, as stated previously, should the carriageway be narrowed then this could potentially make drivers choose to drive relatively quickly through the available gap, unless there is opposing traffic to prevent this occurring.

The DfT guidance also states that single-lane priority pinch points are only feasible if traffic flows are balanced. Using the datasets provided by ESSC from the survey undertaken on Thursday 13th of July 2017, over the 12-hour period 2124 northbound vehicle movements and 2326 southbound vehicle movements were recorded, thus making a single-lane priority pinch point viable as a design option.

However, like all highway improvement schemes that involve permanent change to the existing highway, the layout will be subject to a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit which will consist of an independent auditor checking that the proposed design option put forward has been designed and built to the highest safety standards.

Gateways themselves can have many different forms and aren't limited to the standard white picket fence as highlighted by the APC. In some areas the conspicuity of the signs and markings can raise objections, but trials have shown that conspicuity of the gateway is a requirement for them to be effective.

Some local authorities have overcome this problem by using existing features such as historic arches, or features using local materials such as fences or brickwork coming near to the edge of the carriageway to emphasise the gateway.

ESH have recommended that the village gateway be positioned in conjunction with the start of the 20-mph speed limit on North Street and High Street. However, further dialogue will be required by all parties with regard to the gateway's final placement due to APC previous suggestions regarding the importance or the location being close to visual cues (such as the first view of St Andrews church/the built environment) in order to reinforce the impression that the driver is entering a new/different space.

As referenced within the feasibility report the village gateways design currently consists of the village nameplate sign, a pair of 20-mph terminal speed limit signs on either side of the carriageway, and a 5m carriageway-wide section of contrasting buff coloured surfacing with 20-mph and 30-mph roundel road markings in the appropriate lanes. A further potential addition to the village gateways could be the inclusion of single-lane priority pinch points, in which priority is provided for traffic leaving the village and signed accordingly with priority signage and possible give-way road markings.

APC Comment – *“The roundel at the Willows and Dene car park; the road between the two is a major pedestrian crossing point. Although it is expected that other measures will assist in calming traffic, APC would still like to see a redesign in this space”.*

ESH Response – ESH understand that this location is one of the main pedestrian crossing points within the village. However, it was previously suggested by APC that roundel itself would act as a traffic calming feature, with the main aim being to increase driver's sense of awareness, lower traffic speeds and also provide a safer pedestrian crossing point.

Yet, as identified within the collected datasets there is no significant record of pedestrian PICs at this location, with the village itself only have three recorded PICs over a 70-month survey period.

It should also be assumed that traffic would indeed comply with a permanent 20-mph speed limit and that village gateways could create a sense of place, meaning that the roundel could be considered to be an unnecessary traffic calming measure within the village.

However, the introduction of a roundel could be investigated further, should the installation of the gateways fail in not creating a safer place for pedestrians to cross. As mentioned previously, it is recommended that some form of monitoring period be introduced in order to gage how the scheme itself is operating.

Indicative Scheme Costings

As mentioned previously ESCC may be able to fund part of the construction regarding these traffic management improvements within the village of Alfriston. However, if the Council cannot fund a Gateway, the Parish Councils or Community Groups will therefore have to contribute from their own budgets.

The APC could apply for the governments Public Works Loan Board, which loans to public bodies from the National Loans Fund, with the monies being using in order to finance part of the suggested measures.

Therefore, in order to calculate what funds would be required to finance these traffic management improvements an indicative pricing strategy has been provided in order to notify the APC with some form of guide on costs. It should be noted however that once the scheme itself is 'fixed' then a target cost will be set to firm up the cost of the work.

Below is a guide to the cost of the more common requests that the council receives for the provision of highway works (as of August 2020). **PLEASE NOTE: Costs quoted are approximate and are only activities associated with construction, the costs provided below do not include fees involved with the design and implementation of the scheme or the cost of any legal procedures involved unless stated.**

However, ESH have for assistance included an extra 20% onto the cost in order for the APC to gage a more realistic price for the overall works.

Table 1.1
Indicative Highway Works Costings - Village Gateway

Village Gateway			
Item	Cost	Notes	Example
White Entrance Gates (x2)	£2150	Supply & Install Cost for wooden gates (If plastic its approx. £800)	
Sign 'Welcome to Alfriston' with a 20mph sign	£390	Supply & Install Cost (2 signs) **Posts not included in above price	
Yellow Backing Board	£0	Incl above	
5m of red asphalt surfacing	£450	Red SMA (incl Stop & Go TM)	
20 mph white roundel on the road	£250	With Stop & Go TM	
Detail design costs	20%	Does not include cost for any legal procedures	
Total Cost		£4,728	
This cost will rise if any electrical work to the signs is required			

Table 1.2

Indicative Highway Works Costings – Asphalt High Street & North Street

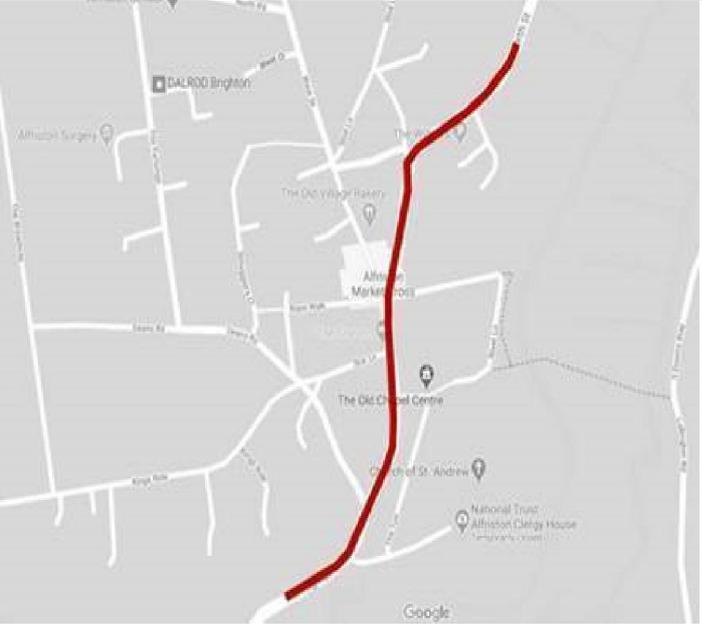
Coloured Asphalt High Street & North Street			
Item	Cost	Notes	Example
Coloured asphalt along the length of the High Street and North Street. The study area has been calculated to the length over 604m width a 5m width.	£125,000	Anywhere between approx. £25 to £40 per sqm incl prelims and TM costs. It depends on whether both chips and bitumen are coloured or just the bitumen.	
20 mph white roundel on the road	£3,000	A roundel should be no more than 100m apart. So, we have calculated twelve roundels, six in each direction at a cost each of £250.	
Detail design costs	20%	Does not include cost for any legal procedures	
Total Cost	£153,600		
This cost will rise if any additional highway works are required			

Table 1.3

Indicative Highway Works Costings – Cobbles / Setts Market Square & High Street up to Star Lane

Cobbles / Setts Market Square & High Street up to Star Lane			
Item	Cost	Notes	Example
Cobbles / Setts around Market Square and High Street up to Star Lane, Study area has been calculated to be 200m in length with a 5.0m road width.	£95,000	Approx. £95 / sqm but depends on the material, time taken for Installation.	
Detail design costs	20%	Does not include cost for any legal procedures	
Total Cost	£114,000		
This cost will rise if any additional highway works are required such as bollards and drop-kerbs.			

Appendices

Appendix A

Alfriston Meeting Minutes (28/07/20)

Alfriston Village, Traffic Calming Scheme

Tuesday 28/07/20 11.00

Microsoft Teams

Karl Taylor, Assistant Director Operations, ESCC
Andrew Keer, Transport Planning Manager, ESCC
Councillor Stephen Shing, Local Member, ESCC
Andy Mileham, Transport Planning Scheme Lead, East Sussex Highways
Nick Beechey, Vice-Chairman, Alfriston Parish Council
Stephen Rabagliati, Councillor, Alfriston Parish Council
Jen Watkins, Chairman, Alfriston Parish Council
Victoria Rutt, Clerk, Alfriston Parish Council
Georgia Saunders, PA to Karl Taylor, Minutes

1. Introductions

KT introduced the attendees and the purpose of the meeting and apologised for the length of time it has taken to respond to Alfriston PC. KT reiterated his commitment to reach an amicable solution for the village.

2. Presentation

AK gave background to previous meeting where the improvements for Alfriston Village were outlined.

AM presented to the meeting.

The feasibility study consisted of two parts; firstly, reviewing the data provided by the Parish Council and secondly, the data reviewed by East Sussex Highways (ESH). Alfriston Parish Council (APC) had proposed some 52 measures to improve the centre of the village, of which ESH have judged 27 would be deliverable. The ESH report and appendices sets out those measures that could be readily introduced, and others that would be more difficult to achieve for legal, safety and practical reasons.

From the analysis undertaken by ESH, experience would suggest that with appropriate signage most people would adhere to the 20-mph limit, along with other potential measures implemented to enforce this:

- 20mph gates at specific locations along the road into / out of the village.
- 30mph speed signs removed and replaced with 20mph speed signs.
- HGV restrictions enforced using signage.

- A review of parking, additional signs put up and short stay bays created to reduce illegal parking.

KT asked the group of their reactions to the report / presentation.

NB said Councillors were grateful for the opportunity to read through the report. Much of what the report deems deliverable is welcomed by the APC and they are grateful that ESH has taken onboard ideas the village had proposed. NB highlighted that the proposals submitted by the village were not just from the Parish Council, but from a number of interested groups and residents, including, the local MP, District Council and other Council representatives.

APC would like to still see the following points investigated despite ESH initial findings in the report:

- The roundel at the Willows and Dene car park; the road between the two is a major pedestrian crossing point. Although it is expected that other measures will assist in calming traffic, APC would still like to see a redesign in this space. They would like this to be kept in for consultation.
- Road surface treatment throughout the length of North Street and the High Street, so that it retains that sense of a different space the whole way through.

In terms of items kept in by ESH that APC had disregarded:

- 20mph roundel markings on the road.
- Parking in Market Square; APC was against having designated parking spaces because of road markings and signage which have to go with them and could change the feel of the village.

APC are against enforcement cameras but for a form of visits from enforcement officers. In terms of random enforcement, which has been asked for many times, a temporary weigh bridge would be a welcomed alteration to the village and APC would like this to be considered.

In terms of gateways, APC would like a pinch point rather than just a sign moved. APC are keen not to have a standard white picket fence gateway.

APC would like to see the following discussed / addressed:

- Whether there is anything more than can be done to discourage HGVs travelling through the village e.g. width restriction
- Implementing changes to North Street
- Convex mirrors
- Re-think of give way lines; build outs instead
- Planters to break up the straight lines – could a trial be undertaken?
- A double yellow line outside the Star Pub to be created
- Bollard review

AK said that with regard to Market Square and not wanting car parking spaces to be created; in order to carry out enforcement, some marking, or sign is required by law.

NB said there are some businesses who want short term parking in the square. There is also a problem with the public parking long term in the square. NB said the committee meeting discussed if they wanted short term parking bays but decided against this because of the signage / lines etc. that would be required. They concluded that the most reasonable solution would be double yellow lines.

KT responded to feedback shared by NB.

KT reiterated that parking enforcement across Wealden District has not been decriminalised and remains the responsibility of Sussex Police. Any changes to existing parking restrictions and introduction of new restrictions would need the support of Sussex Police as the enforcement body.

KT said in terms of gateways, this is an item that East Sussex County Council (ESCC) would not fund and we would look to APC to fund. APC could come up with their preferred design, as long as this satisfied a road safety audit in terms of its size, location and passive resistance, then that should be acceptable.

With regard to the road surface, there is a precedent elsewhere in the county where ESCC has used different coloured surfacing but would look for a contribution from APC. There would be ongoing maintenance costs associated with this, and particular difficulties when for instance a utility company were to dig up an area and not putting down the exact same colour.

In terms of a weigh bridge and enforcement of HGVs, this falls to Sussex Police. KT suggested asking Maria Caufield to add weight to this plea. ESH would liaise with Highways England with regard to signing on the A27.

Installing width restrictions, would not be practical as it would hinder genuine access to the village for deliveries, refuse trucks, farm machinery and buses/coaches

NB said an indication of what ESCC would pay for and ballpark figures in relation to the 'shopping list' so APC can gauge a cost contribution from the parish.

Cllr Shing noted the following points:

- SDNP may have an opinion of 20mph roundels
- Item 9.2 of report – is there a direct effect of the proposal on businesses?
- Loading on yellow lines should be permitted

KT said that ESCC road safety colleagues would advise on what is legally required and whether 20mph roundels would be a legal requirement.

AK said he would need to review 9.2 before offering an answer. Ordinarily, ESCC does not engage with alterations from the highway to businesses.

NB said that loading and unloading is permitted on yellow lines, unless specifically prohibited by a loading ban.

NB raised the following point unrelated to the traffic calming report; APC would like a temporary pedestrianisation around Market Square to allow for social distancing.

AK explained that ESCC recently received funding from DfT as part of the Government's Active Travel response to covid-19 and sought advice from Borough / District Councils to understand where walking and cycling measures might be implemented. This resultant ESCC bid to the DfT for the first phase was approved, and work is currently being undertaken, but focusing in the more populated coastal towns where the greatest number of residents would benefit. Phase two of funding is heavily associated with walking and cycling and there is therefore an expectation that any funds distributed to Councils will be used for permanent walking and cycling schemes. AK explained that for this reason, ESCC would not currently have a response to NBs request.

NB stated that APC are only requesting a road closure order and temporary barriers.

KT explained that other factors such as deliveries, bus stops, access to West Street and large vehicle use etc. would have to be taken into account before approving a road closure. What NB is describing would require a temporary traffic regulation order which requires a public consultation. For this reason, the Council could not simply close a public highway with temporary barriers without the necessary legal order.

KT said WDC have the ability to close a road for a specific event through the use of the Town Police Clauses Act, thereby giving cafes, restaurants etc. the ability to move their business into the open space for a specific occasion. This application would have to be for a specific event e.g. bonfire night or Alfriston's Dickensian Shopping Night

KT closed the meeting by reiterating ESCC commitment to reach an amicable solution with the Parish Council and that he would like to see measures being implemented during the next financial year.

In terms of next steps, ESH will allow APC sufficient time to consider the report fully and for further comments. ESH will review the comments NB shared today and put together a proposal for further review by APC ahead of a public consultation.

KT explained that if APC wanted to borrow money through the Public Works Loan Board then they may want to start this process as it does take time, however he does recognise that they may need rough costs from ESH before they request funds.

The meeting closed with agreement to meeting again later in the summer.