

## **Meeting with East Sussex County Council**

**County Hall, November 18th 2015**

### **Notes of the Meeting**

**Present:** ESCC: Mark Valleley (Team Manager, Infrastructure Design U& Delivery) , Kal Pegler (Principal TDC Officer), Ian Johnson (Local Traffic & Transport Safety Officer), County Councillor Sheppard

DSW Neighbourhood Plan: Mike Burr, Tom Dufty, Tony Gedge, Paul Farrands, Tom Jones

#### **Agenda:**

To acquaint the ESCC with the content of the DSW Traffic & Transport FG report and policies and seek their support in principle for its content

To seek ESCC's specific support for the implementation of (or at least the conduct of a feasibility study) a Quiet Lane project for Spatham Lane, Streat Lane and Beacon Rd in order, hopefully, to gain discretionary CIL funding from Mid Sussex District Council.

#### **Traffic & Transport Report & Policies**

Mike outlined the content of the report, the need for protection of the area's special heritage and the need for special treatment. The criteria being used by ESCC to determine priority for funding excluded relieving communities such as Ditchling Streat and Westmeston from the very damaging effects of traffic on community life and heritage. The recent publication 'Roads in the South Downs' published by the SDNPA in association with the highway authorities in the Park, including ESCC, rebalanced the criteria and placed emphasis on conservation of landscape and communities and was very encouraging. The approach taken by the DSW report was to place a 'cordon sanitaire' around the area and to place emphasis on the fact that drivers are entering the Park and the need to respect and conserve all that that entails. Measures such as staggered speed zones; 20mph limits; speed detection cameras measuring average speeds were contained in the report. In fact most of the measures it contains were originally contained in the LATS drawn up by ESCC itself in 2009. He wanted ESCC to know that the thinking had 'moved on' from the idea of turning the Beacon Rd into a no-through road, which divided the community and it was known wasn't supported by ESCC. The report also promoted the shared space concept for Ditchling village centre which was something ESCC had suggested.

Mark explained that following the new government's election in 2010 the authority's funding for highways had been cut by £60m. This had required a refreshed strategic look. Other than demonstrable safety reasons, the sole criteria for priority funding for highways was economic regeneration/development, particularly along the coastal strip and Uckfield & Newhaven towns where there were significant housing developments. LATS had been replaced by Local Transport Plans. The former no longer formed a basis for determining priority or spend and could not be reopened. However it could be converted into a 'village' plan. ESCC had now produced its

third LTP.

Tom said that although the DSW area itself was not scheduled for any significant developments, the parishes and towns on its northern and western boundaries were equivalent in total to those planned for Newhaven & Uckfield, and these would have very serious traffic consequences for the DSW roads. Shouldn't this be equally considered? The DSW area found itself in a catch22 situation. Without any major development within the area (and whatever there was was likely to be affordable housing only) there would be no CIL income to spend on roads. The only sources other than ESCC was discretionary funding from MSDC or from the SDNPA's own CIL funds

Mark said that obtaining CIL funding from either source would depend on having a specific planned and costed project supported by ESCC. It was important to couch such applications in the context of "supporting the introduction of specific calming measures around the area".

The SDNPA 'Roads in the South Downs' publication had not been formally endorsed by, or politically accepted by, ESCC. It did not bear its logo. He had contributed to drafting its content but his political masters were not aware of it (nor his officer colleagues). It represented SDNPA's aspirations only and did not represent the strategic pull for ESCC's policies for roads in the Park. The most that could be said of it is that ESCC has a duty to take account of those aspirations. ESCC had "yet to have a conversation with the SDNPA" to further that duty.

### **Quiet Lanes**

Paul asked if ESCC would support the introduction of Quiet Lanes for Streat Lane, Spatham Lane & Beacon Road. Quiet Lanes had first been introduced in 2010 since when they had been introduced in all counties bar East Sussex. They gave special attention to the safety and needs of pedestrians, horse-riders and cyclists.

Mark said that ESCC was against designating reduced speed limits, quiet lanes etc unless they were largely self-enforcing. There had to be something that positively influenced driver behaviour, not just psychology, either in the form of physical measures prohibiting most drivers from doing anything but comply, or because the immediate surroundings (e.g buildings) conveyed the reinforcing message to drivers that they should reduce speed. Furthermore Quiet Lanes would normally only apply to lanes which had less than 1000 vehicle movements daily.

Councillor Sheppard asked where traffic would go if deterred from the Quiet Lanes? Would it not make matters worse on the B2112? As one who drove through Ditchling regularly he could not see how anything could be done, at any time, to reduce traffic on the B2112, let alone make it worse. He felt things could only be left as they are.

Mark said that if this was to be taken any further there would need to be "a study" before applying for CIL

### **Next Steps - Action**

It was jointly agreed to hold a meeting of ESCC officers and DSW project team with representatives of SDNPA and West Sussex CC the purposes of which would be:

1. To make the argument for the DSW neighbourhood plan area to be a case study for the implementation of the policies in the SDNPA publication 'Roads in the South Downs'
2. For all to agree one specific concrete project for which the DSW Project Team could make an application for CIL funding from SDNPA & MSDC

the meeting to be held within 3 months. Councillor Sheppard agreed to attend..