



Etchingam Parish Council

The Etchingam Safety Action Group Business Plan

For Traffic Management, Etchingam Village, Church Lane and the A265 Etchingam

Prepared by: Etchingam Parish Council (The Etchingam Safety Action Group)

Prepared for: East Sussex County Council Community Match Funding

Content:

1. Introduction
2. The Funding Process
3. Application submission, approval and budgeting
4. Responsiveness to ESCC Local Transport Plan
5. Strategic Case
6. Health and Wellbeing Case
7. Economic Case & Commercial Case
8. Management Case
9. Proposed Package of Measures
10. The Budget
11. Summary

1. Introduction

Etchingham Parish Council has been pursuing a strategy to calm the traffic passing through the Village High Street on the A265 for several years. Consultation with the local community on the Neighbourhood Development Plan, in 2017, identified this as the primary issue of concern in the community. Communication over a period with East Sussex Highways Department and Sussex Police has elicited support in principle, from both parties. The parish council itself, in 2019, commissioned a Road Safety Improvements Feasibility Study into options for improvements. The study was carried out by 2020 Consultancy to establish current issues with road safety and identify the most suitable improvements within the village. The report presented the feasibility study and its expert view on the viability of twelve individual proposals, prioritised in order of effectiveness and impact levels of safety each would provide the community, pedestrians and road users.

There was some delay in progressing matters due to the difficulty of holding meetings and discussions during the Covid Pandemic. However, in April 2022 Etchingham Parish Council formed The Etchingham Safety Action Group (TESAG) and since its launch this sub-committee of Etchingham Parish Council has reviewed the original 2019 Road Safety Improvements Feasibility Study. After the review two of the original proposals have been discounted, due mainly to cost and the limited safety benefits afforded by each of the proposals. A further two of the original proposals have been amalgamated within the existing ten proposals which have been rolled up into four new sub-proposals (*a package of measures*) to avoid duplication of effort.

Etchingham Parish Council, through the East Sussex Highways (ESH) Community Highways programme, has therefore now applied for a feasibility appraisal to be carried out on a package of measures to encourage slower traffic speed through the village, Church Lane and additional parts of the A265, heading east and west.

It is envisaged that the introduction of these measures, would provide a significantly safer environment for pedestrians and residents and encourage better driver behaviour when travelling through the village, Church Lane and along the A265.

The initiative has the strong support of the Etchingham School Board of Governors since it addresses concerns that have been raised by Governors about safe access to the school, both for those arriving on foot and by car.

A recent speed survey appraisal carried out by East Sussex County Councils Transport Monitoring Team has been completed. Results reinforce that majority of traffic passing through the village are travelling at speeds in excess of the current 30mph limit. This report will form part of the supporting documents aligned to this plan. In fact the exceedances were greatest at the west end of the village where the school and village hall are located (hence the particular concern from School Governors), and where there is a greater concentration of residential property fronting onto the main road.

Following this activity Etchingham Parish Council is now in a position to propose a programme of development going forward. The development programme covers the implementation of speed retardation methods and the introduction of gateway treatment to the A265, implementation of a 20mph school safety zone in Etchingham village and a permanent 20mph limit throughout Church Lane. The Parish Council would expect to see these projects through to completion over a period not exceeding two years.

The wider strategy for local traffic and transport promotes further ongoing amendment of current village parking and new cycle ways linking the village of Burwash to Etchingham Station. This is also set out within the Burwash business plan and aligns the villages interest in further improving road traffic safety.

The proposals and business plan are intended to provide the community with a safer, calmer and more attractive environment, throughout Etchingham village.

Many people have been involved in this process and we would like to thank everyone for their interest and commitment. This business plan recognises the authority of the Highways Department at East Sussex County

Council as the primary planning agency for highways development in the county. In addition to its central planning role the highways department makes provision for additional local initiatives under the scheme called Community Match. *“Community Match is an initiative created to enable Local Communities to apply for match funding to deliver additional highway projects. East Sussex County Council will be able to provide up to 50% of funding (up to a maximum value of £50,000), with the community providing the rest”.*

The proposal contained herein is subject to achieving a successful community match funding bid and that being matched with Etchingham Parish Council funding of the same order. These could also be supplemented with possible funding from philanthropic sources. In response to community consultation arising out of the Neighbourhood Development Plan, the Parish Council envisages a phased overall programme of local road enhancements spanning not more than two years. The programme of a package of measures addresses the criteria against which the lead Cabinet member for Transport and the Environment is required to review the proposal:

- a) Local need, benefits of the scheme (these are addressed in the introduction above and detailed further in the business plan).
- b) How the scheme contributes towards achieving Local Transport Policy Objectives, each objective is addressed in a section below.
- c) How deliverable the scheme is: this proposal has been costed to the detail available from the original feasibility study already completed and taking account for inflation and rising material costs. This will be refined again following the design exercise to be conducted for a successful Community Match Funding bid. Furthermore, the Parish Council has resolved to cut its cloth to match the funding available, so that, if necessary, some elements can be prioritised over others when the final refined costings are complete. The business plan has been consulted locally and has the support of the community (registered electors). The results of the community survey were acknowledged formerly by Etchingham Parish Council on the 15th of September 2022, (noted within the Parish Council meeting minutes).
- d) What risks there are to its delivery, economic viability and local support are addressed above. The remaining outstanding risks will be the delivery of high standard of work within budget, by the contractors. As this will be contracted through the highways department, we shall be reliant on their monitoring and governance over their contractors. The main likely catastrophic contingencies are damage to the highway through weather or motor vehicle incident, again this is a highways responsibility which has mitigation strategies available. Covid-19 and or other pandemics remain the main societal disruption risks and these would need mitigation in terms of prolonging spending periods should works have to be brought to a halt.

2. The Funding Process

Community Match requires that:

1. The community identify the issues in question through appropriate consultation (as per (c) above) and registers their interest with ESCC via an email to Community@eastsussexhighways.com (action completed 29/09/2022).
2. Applications are made by local groups (which include Parish Councils) with the support of their local member of East Sussex County Council, Cllr. Eleanor Kirby-Green.
3. Application is made for feasibility appraisal (application being submitted in parallel, appraisal due to be undertaken by Ian Tingley).
4. Additional traffic survey information is given (included and published in feasibility appraisal report). Etchingham Parish Council Community Match Funding Business Plan October 2022.
5. The following are submitted :

- Application form for Community Match Funding.
- Business Plan (herewith)
- Community Highways LTP3 Objectives (Identified in Business Plan)
- Community Highways Funding Contract
- Community Highways Consultation Advice will need to be activated by ESCC Highways

3. Application submission, approval and budgeting

This application is submitted using the appropriate form and with an appropriate business plan as recommended in the guidance. The application is seeking:

- Appropriateness review by ESCC Highways Department. Etchingham Parish Council has liaised with East Sussex County Council Highways in developing these plans, which have arisen out of direct consultation with the community and their representatives. In doing so all relevant surveys, feasibility studies, site visits and reviews have been completed to this point.
- Review by the lead cabinet member for Transport and the Environment against the four criteria listed at the end of section 1 of this paper. If the application is accepted a design cost will be agreed between East Sussex County Council Highways Department and the Parish Council, and half of the cost will be paid up front by Etchingham Parish Council. Once designed, the project will progress to the construction phase. The Parish Council/Community Group will again pay those costs up front. The council has planned its budget to accommodate these costs, sequencing expenditure in accordance with expected timelines.

4. How this plan addresses the 10 Objectives of the East Sussex County Council Local Transport Plan

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Improve maintenance and efficient management of the transport network.

- This plan will assist in reducing damage to pavements, hedgerows, vehicles and houses in the vicinity of Etchingham village.
- It is also our intention to request ESCC Highways Department review and clear all overgrown hedges, remove any growth obstructions from encroaching the pavement and footpaths or interfering with sightlines, and review and refresh all existing road markings where these will not be subject to change under the planned package of measures.

Improve strategic and local connectivity of communities to facilitate economic and physical growth and renewal.

- This plan is part of a wider local transport strategy aimed at improving pedestrian, cyclist and motorist access to and through the village of Etchingham.
- Increasing the overall road safety environment throughout the village, enabling better links between local and surrounding villages to Etchingham Station and other amenities, which will in turn improve the overall sense of community in the area.

Reduce congestion by improving the efficiency of the transport network and encouraging greater use of sustainable modes of transport.

- This plan aims to improve traffic flow through the village of Etchingham, reduce approaching vehicle speeds increasing traffic flows avoiding bottleneck blockages and reverse flows.
- By making the pavements safer to use, people will not add to congestion by feeling they need to use their cars for very short journeys (e.g. taking children to school or calling at the Post Office)

SAFETY IMPACT

Improve road safety for vulnerable road users

- Pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists and horse riders. Many pavements within the village and surrounding areas (Parsonage Croft) are single file width only. A number of pedestrians have been struck while walking on pavements (e.g. while taking children to school or exercising their dogs) by passing vehicles such as lorries and other large vehicles (usually by extended wing mirrors protruding beyond the width of the vehicles) travelling at speeds in excess of the current 30mph limit. It is currently possible to speed into narrow blind areas or pinch points behind parked cars along the village High Street resulting in higher risk situations from which there have been a number of non-fatal accidents. This plan is designed to significantly reduce the occurrence of these incidents through the inbound reduction of speed leading to an overall calming in vehicle speed throughout the village and surrounding areas.
- A reduction in speed, demonstrated over a prolonged period would allow the Parish Council to review parking along the north side of the High Street. Removing parked cars on the north side of the High Street would create clearer visibility for road users and pedestrians looking to cross the road. This issue has been raised by multiple parents, stating the road is unsafe for children to cross forcing parents to drive their children to school adding to traffic current traffic volumes and road safety issues.

Reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured in road crashes

- There is a perception that councils wait for fatalities before addressing risk areas on roads. While this is unlikely, prevention is always hampered by its own success, when things don't happen they don't get recorded, so they often don't count within the data. The A265 has a long history of near misses and non-fatal accidents, more recently the A265 has been resurfaced which unfortunately is encouraging vehicles to test how quickly they can accelerate along the road.
- Accessing the A265 from homeowner's driveways is a significant danger to life, a vehicle pulling onto the A265 will be travelling at circa 7/15mph compared to vehicles travelling along the A265 at the national speed limit. Even within the existing 30mph zone, egress from the Post Office is jeopardised by speeding traffic – this location has been the scene of several incidents in recent years.
- In addition the narrowest parts of the High Street in the village frequently experiences large multi-axle vehicles mounting the pavement passing within inches of residents' properties. There are small children and vulnerable older people living in these properties facing onto Etchingham high street. We need to put a stop to this problem and remove the risk of serious injury or death. Mounting of pavements happens on a regular occurrence and is due mainly to drivers being impatient or unwilling to recognise who has the legal right of way. Reducing speeds throughout the village would support the removal of parking along the north side of the high street, increasing the two way flow of traffic and removing the need for vehicles to mount the pavement on the south side. Considerable damage is occurring to pavements and the services (notably water) running beneath them from this practice.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Reduce greenhouse gas emissions, local air pollution and noise from transport

- While exhaust emissions and pollutant levels exist especially from the A265 the addition of excessive noise is exacerbated by vehicles speeding, mounting and dismounting pavements and generally driving dangerously throughout the village. The proposed plan for Etchingham is likely to see traffic more spread out with individual sites being less subject to constant fumes and intermittent noise day and night. Clear priority signage and improved traffic flow through the village will help to reduce isolated concentrations of toxic emissions.

Increase the resilience of transport infrastructure and services to the effects of climate change

- The wider traffic and transport plans for Etchingham Parish Council include reviewing potential cycle ways which will substantially improve cycling access to the railway station from across the parish, thereby reducing dependence on motor vehicles for commuting. By reducing the speed of vehicles leading into the village and increasing the safety of residents and pedestrians it is hoped that this will encourage more residents to walk their children to school further reducing the number of vehicles and the effects to climate change.

Contribute to the protection and enhancement of the local natural and built environment

- Etchingham village is in the centre of an 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty'. Plans for road speed curtailment and safer pedestrian crossings, primarily aimed at community safety will take account of protection and enhancement of the local natural and built environment, through multiple strategies aimed at excluding or where necessary minimising, the current detrimental effects.

SOCIAL IMPACT

Improve access to jobs, services and leisure

- The Parish Councillors are committed to retaining and supporting the local economy so that our communities continue to thrive into the future. Overall safety and accessibility through healthy transport initiatives will encourage more people to visit, work and live in the Parish, strengthening our ability to grow and flourish.

Improve personal health and well-being by encouraging and enabling increased physical activity through active travel

- Currently the pavements and roads at points in the village are unsafe, causing more people to resort to vehicle use for even short journeys. In conjunction with improved safe pedestrian and cyclist access, and reductions of specific risks to life and limb, the community will have increased opportunity to improve personal health and well-being through these initiatives.

5. Strategic Case

Of paramount importance is the safety of people, on foot, cycling and driving through the village. Pavements are becoming broken and uneven from being driven over, increasing the risk to residents' safety. Along with national priorities for climate management and the regional transport strategy we must foresee increasing numbers of people getting out of their motorised vehicles to walk and cycle. We plan to enhance the connectivity of our village across the parish and to the station. Safe and well signed traffic flow is a key part of our long-term strategy to enhance the space; preserving, retaining and growing its attractiveness to all.

6. Health and Wellbeing Case

By calming traffic speeds and improving traffic flow, we aim to improve the health and wellbeing of residents, Noise is a huge cause of stress to residents living on the High Street, and indeed further along the A265, and this has increased over time as many vehicles have grown in volume, axles and tonnage. Speeding exacerbates this. Traffic calming measures are central to our aim of reducing road rage incidents, near misses and actual accidents at built up and pedestrian points at the church, the village halls and the school, and at other narrow pinch points. Parents escorting children and families at school drop off and collection times are particularly vulnerable.

The recent speed survey appraisal evidenced that majority of traffic passing through the village between 06:00 and 19:00 are travelling at speeds in excess of the 30mph limit. Traffic calming measures are central to our aim of minimising actual dangers and the associated anxiety of constantly anticipating the worst, thereby improving the overall health and wellbeing of residents living at and navigating dangerous points throughout the village.

Of particular interest to note, the speed survey analysis evidenced that in general traffic speeds leaving the village (exiting the current 30mph limits to the east and the west) do not maximise the current national 60mph limit, further reinforcing the case to introduce a reduced speed limit area between the national limit and the existing 30mph areas by introducing the measures outlined within this business plan. Note, however that for vehicles entering the village from the west the transition from the national limit on a long straight stretch of road to 30mph is immediately adjacent to the entrance to the school, village hall and the junctions with Borders Lane and Parsonage Croft which residents feel is a location of particular risk and concern.

7. Economic and Commercial Case

It is a Parish Council priority to strengthen the local economy and play an active part in contributing to the wider economy. Through the emergence of the 2020 pandemic, it is clear that substantial home working has become a feature of our society. Not only is this likely to assist in reversing travel flows out from the capital to the Southeast, in line with the Regional Transport Strategy, but it is also likely to stimulate local peripheral economies and small businesses. It is our policy to welcome, promote, encourage and support more businesses to the Parish, aiming to keep our communities employed and thriving while contributing to the economy of East Sussex as a whole. Ease of traffic flow and safety of pedestrians are both essential components for growing our local economy and promoting more residents to walk and cycle making use of the local small businesses (such as the Station Bistro, Post Office and the new Dog Day-Care facility off the A265).

8. Management Case

Clear priority signage, road markings and safe speed limits that enable early warning for drivers of the need to drive carefully are expected to improve traffic flow, while reducing frustration and inappropriate driver behaviour. With the extended and reduced speed at the east and west end of the village drivers should slow earlier and be able to navigate the roads and surrounding pedestrians with a higher degree of safety.

This is specifically intended to reduce risk at the school, Parsonage Croft and the crossing areas. Drivers entering the village from both the east and the west, particularly those who don't know the area, will be properly and promptly alerted by new signage and gateway treatment of the village area up ahead. Coupled with the Implementation of a new intermediate 40mph speed limit to separate the current national 60mph and 30mph limits will further encourage road users to reduce their speed at an earlier point before entering the school zone and built up village areas making it easier for pedestrians to cross the A265.

9. Proposed package of measures

1. Implementation of a new intermediate 40mph speed limit to separate the current national 60mph and 30mph limits in both directions, east and west of the village on the A265

- The 40mph limit would be at least 400-500 meters in length prior to entering the current 30mph limit to further help reduce speed before entering the village
- The volume of traffic c173,083. pa, the proximity of the existing 60-30 transition to the village school and village halls, plus residential property make the use of the pavements and roads a significant

safety risk for all pedestrians and bicycle users

- The lack of pavements throughout the A265 national 60mph speed limit areas make pedestrian use and vehicle access on and off the A265 extremely dangerous
- Introducing further speed calming measures would positively help reduce the vehicle speeds carried throughout the village and into the current 30mph zone

2. Implementation of a Gateway treatment at 30mph terminals on approach to Etchingham village to slow the speed of vehicles entering Etchingham from both directions (east and west)

- 4 independent gates, with a gateway on each side of the carriageway
- New red coloured road surface with white roundels making the speed limit reduction significantly more visible. It is proven speed reductions of up to 5-6mph can occur within the first 20meters of a gateway treatment, lowering traffic speeds into and throughout the village

3. Installation of a 20mph School Safety Zone along the A265 (spanning from the east of the village just before the entrance to Borders Lane to the end of the current 30mph area, adjacent to the pond west of Parsonage Croft

- Incorporating the installation of flashing warning signage, targeting vehicles at specified times, the Zone would be in operation between 8am and 9am and between 3pm and 4pm
- Installation of yellow backed School warning signs with supplementary plate and flashing wig-wags, one sign to be installed west of Parsonage Croft, and one to be installed east of Borders Lane

4. Permanent reduction of the speed limit on Church Lane to 20mph, due to the blind bend and undulating road surfaces, the lack of pavements for pedestrians and the lack of street lighting

- New signage and road markings incorporating new speed roundels throughout

10. Budget Plan

The current costs are estimated costings based on the original 2019 Road Safety Improvements Feasibility Study for the proposed options, with addition of an increase in inflation and material costs.

Total estimated costs between £80,000 - £100,000. Total funds applied for (50%) £50,000.

11. Summary

This business plan and application is the culmination of a substantial body of work, carried out by community members, across the Parish of Etchingham, over several years. It encompasses long held aspirations, reflected in the consultation of the Neighbourhood Plan. It is considered to be both effective and deliverable and is supported by the Parish Council and our local member of the County Council, as well as residents and the Board of Governors of Etchingham School. We recommend it to East Sussex County Council Highways Department for Joint Community Funding.