

<b>Central and South Mid Sussex County Local Committee</b>	<b>Ref No: CSMS03 (19/20)</b>
<b>12 November 2019</b>	<b>Key Decision: No</b>
<b>Hassocks Parish Council Parking Review 2019</b>	<b>Part I</b>
<b>Report by Director of Highways, Transport and Planning</b>	<b>Electoral Division: Hassocks &amp; Burgess Hill South</b>

### **Summary**

Hassocks Parish Council have designed a scheme of parking restrictions intended to manage the high demand for parking in the village, particularly associated with rail commuters. The Parish Council have paid for a Traffic Regulation Order for the proposed restrictions, the public consultation for which received 104 objections and 19 messages of support.

### **Recommendation:**

That the Central and South Mid Sussex County Local Committee (CLC), having considered the response to the public consultation authorises the Director of Law and Assurance to make the proposed Traffic Regulation Order in part, as specified in section 4.9 of this report and the plans attached as Appendix D.

## **Proposal**

### **1. Background and Context**

- 1.1 The village of Hassocks experiences a very high demand for parking in proportion to the size of the village. This is due to Hassocks having a railway station on the Brighton to London main-line, which provides easy rail access to Gatwick and London to the north, and Brighton to the south.
- 1.2 Due to its location, Hassocks Station serves commuters living in a very wide and generally rural geographical area, much of which has a very limited bus service. For rail commuters in such areas, access to the station is virtually impossible by any means other than car travel.
- 1.3 In addition to having a wide natural catchment area, Hassocks Station is particularly attractive to commuters because unlike other mainline stations at Burgess Hill and Haywards Heath, Hassocks has no on-street parking charges.
- 1.4 Hassocks Station has a large station car park but it is observed that early in the morning, despite spaces being available in the car park, commuters often park in surrounding roads instead, presumably to avoid parking charges. Despite this, the station car park is generally full before 8am each day, leaving any commuters arriving by car after this time no option but to seek parking in local roads.

- 1.5 These factors combine to create a very high demand for parking in roads around Hassocks Railway Station. The number of people looking to park in the area increases incidences where inconsiderate parking takes place, which causes obstruction and creates safety issues in narrow roads. The amount of commuter parking taking place also monopolises the availability of on-street parking, leaving only limited availability for residents and visitors to local businesses.
- 1.6 Following initial work in 2007 Hassocks Parish Council conducted a detailed village-wide public consultation on parking issues in 2013 to which 754 responses were received. Of these responses 634 felt parking in the village was an issue, while 120 responses felt it was not. The survey produced a considerable amount of information about the most problematic issues and locations. This, along with feedback from a further public exhibition in March 2018 has been used by the parish council to develop the advertised scheme.
- 1.7 A 'Phase One' scheme, intended to control parking at the most safety critical locations was advertised in January 2018 and implemented in November 2018. The proposal subject to this report is Phase 2 and was designed by Hassocks Parish Council to improve parking availability for residents and visitors and to ease traffic flow in residential roads near the village centre.

## **2. Proposal**

- 2.1 The publicly advertised scheme of restrictions is shown on the set of plans attached as Appendix A to this report.
- 2.2 During the public consultation on the advertised proposal, a large number of objections were received. A formal objection from Mid Sussex District Council raised serious concerns that called the enforceability of the new proposal into doubt.
- 2.3 Following consideration of these objections and enforcement concerns, this report recommends that the original proposal is amended as set out in paragraph 4.9 below.

## **3. Resources**

- 3.1 The original scheme did not qualify for CLC funding due to its' size. Funding from other budgets at the County Council was not available and the proposal is therefore being paid for by Hassocks Parish Council.
- 3.2 The cost of implementing the scheme is estimated to be £10,000. This will be met by the Parish Council from moneys paid by local property developers for improvements to local highway infrastructure under Section 106 of the Highways Act. Future maintenance of new road markings and signs will be met from the local highway maintenance budget.

## **Factors taken into account**

### **4. Consultation**

- 4.1 The statutory public consultation for the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) enacting the original proposal ran from 13 December 2018 to 10 January 2019. During this time public notices were put up in affected areas and documents detailing the scheme were available at Hassocks Library and on the TRO Team's consultation website.
- 4.2 Consultation documents were sent to statutory consultees including the emergency services, Hassocks Parish Council, Mid Sussex District Council, Freight Transport Association, Road Haulage association and all local bus companies.
- 4.3 During the consultation 104 objections and 19 messages of support were received. A breakdown of the points raised and the County Council officer response to these is included as Appendix B to this report, which also includes a summary of each individual consultation response received.
- 4.4 Although the number of objections is high, it is considered that overall, the benefits of the scheme outweigh the points of concern raised.
- 4.5 During the consultation a formal objection was received from the Cabinet Member for Service Delivery at Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC).
- 4.6 MSDC's objection raised concerns about displacement of parking to outlying areas, and that the scope of restrictions will have a detrimental effect on residents and local businesses. It also stated that they will be unable to resource enforcement of the proposed restrictions within the current County Council enforcement contract and the impact on enforcement in other parts of the district if resources are diverted from other areas in Mid Sussex to enforce the new scheme in Hassocks.
- 4.7 A copy of the District Council's objection and the County Council officer response is included as Appendix C to this report.
- 4.8 The points raised by MSDC regarding enforcement are a matter of serious concern to the County Council. It is not acceptable for new restrictions in Hassocks to reduce parking enforcement in other areas of Mid Sussex.
- 4.9 In mitigation of these issues, this report recommends dropping the proposal to prohibit waiting between midday and 1pm Mon-Fri on Highlands Close, North Court, Semley Road and the section of Woodsland Road south of its junction with Chancellors Park. The revised proposals are attached as Appendix D.
- 4.10 If this revised proposal is taken forward, Mid Sussex District Council would withdraw their objection to the enforcement issues caused by the original proposal, provided it is also acknowledged that no additional enforcement resources are available to police the new restrictions in Hassocks. A copy of the District Council's objection and more information about the discussions attempting to mitigate the issues raised are included as Appendix C to this report.

## **5. Risk Management Implications**

- 5.1 If the scheme is not installed the long running parking problems in Hassocks will remain unresolved, with residents continuing to experience inconvenience and frustration caused by unregulated high demand for commuter parking in the village. The level of local interest in this issue is considerable, as shown by the number of consultation responses detailed in section 1.6 above. Hassocks Parish Council have been working to address these issues since 2007 and declining permission to install the scheme may therefore have a negative reputational impact on the County Council.
- 5.2 If the scheme is installed as originally advertised, the enforcement problems highlighted in this report are likely to result in commuters ignoring many of the new restrictions with impunity, which would bring the parking enforcement system into disrepute and generate a significant number of complaints from local residents.
- 5.3 The reduced version of the proposal will address concerns about safety and obstruction using restrictions that will not require additional resources to be committed to enforcement operations in Hassocks.

## **6. Other Options Considered**

- 6.1 A range of options has been considered by Hassocks Parish Council before the final advertised layout of restrictions was advertised. The options considered before recommending the reduced scheme are described in Appendix C.

## **7. Equality Duty**

- 7.1 The restrictions are proposed on the grounds of improving local amenity, preventing the obstruction of traffic and improving safety on the public highway. It is considered that the scheme does not conflict with the County Council's Local Authority Equality Duty and that the reasons for proposing the scheme justify its installation.

## **8. Social Value**

- 8.1 The scheme complies with the County Council policy of promoting a Strong, Safe and Sustainable Place.

## **9. Crime and Disorder Act Implications**

- 9.1 County Council officers do not consider this scheme to have any implications under the Crime and Disorder Act. Sussex Police were consulted on the proposal and confirmed they have no concerns in this regard.

## **10. Human Rights Implications**

- 10.1 The scheme does not present any identifiable concerns under the Human Rights Act.

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**Appendices**

Appendix A: Plans showing proposed restrictions

Appendix B: Summary of Comments and Objections

Appendix C: Mid Sussex District Council Objection

Appendix D: Plans showing revised scheme

**Background Papers**

None