

C7 Whole Road Strategy Project

Ref: KPC Meeting 9 September 2020 Appendix 7

C7 – A project for the development of a whole road strategy

The C7 is a rural road in East Sussex linking the port of Newhaven with the county town of Lewes, passing through seven historic villages in between. It runs for seven miles through the Lower Ouse River Valley, within the South Downs National Park. It has retained many of its rural features despite becoming crowded by the expansion of traffic, with a current average volume of 10,000 vehicles/day. The bulk of the traffic is generated by vehicles using the C7 to cut between the A259 South Coast Road and the A27 highway which runs from Eastbourne to Brighton and beyond, connecting to the M23 to London.

A public consultation exercise has been conducted during which local residents were asked to identify their areas of concern about the safety of the road, which were, unsurprisingly, considerable. The results of this survey have been shared with East Sussex Highways who, whilst sympathetic, provided no viable options for delivering reduced speed or traffic flow schemes as the road was not identified as a significant safety hazard and does not feature on any priority list for future funding.

The ongoing concerns voiced by cycling and equestrian groups, as well as local residents, has made the communities along the route of the C7 join together to seek to develop a strategy to reduce speeds, retain its rural nature and, if possible, to divert traffic onto the parallel A26 trunk road, which, unlike the C7, was upgraded in the 1970s to deliver fast access between the coast and the A27.

The starting point for our C7 strategy is the South Downs National Park study 'Roads in the South Downs – Enhancing the safety and quality of roads and places in the National Park' (June 2015). This document*, produced in 2015 by Hamilton-Baillie Associates Ltd, offers a systematic method for helping to establish preferred speeds over rural roads, thereby making them safe for all road users while conserving and enhancing the local landscape. We have recently identified a traffic consultant who will undertake to design a scheme which conforms to the standards presented in this study.

It is our aspiration that the C7 study which they will deliver will be viewed as a best-practice example of how traffic calming schemes can be undertaken in full harmony with their environment - in this case the South Downs National Park and all that it stands for. Our approach is inclusive and has widespread support from members of the local community, local government, businesses and many organisations representing those who have an interest in a safer C7.

* <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Roads-in-the-South-Downs.pdf>