

Dear Mr Whyles,

Firstly I would like to apologise for the delay in responding to your request fully and thank you for your patience while the various members of the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership have reviewed the concerns raised by Bury Parish Council.

I would like to reassure you that we do take these concerns very seriously and have spent many hours discussing the issues and concerns you have raised as well as what we can do as individual authorities and as the Partnership. As you know the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership is formed by agreement from Brighton and Hove City Council, East Sussex County Council, East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, Highways England, Sussex Police, West Sussex County Council including West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service. By working together we are able to share expertise and experience to address road safety across Sussex.

Please find our comments and information in relation to the points you have raised below in order to ensure that we have effectively recognised and addressed your concerns in full.

### **Motorcycle activity in Bury**

We recognise that Bury Hill is part of a route that motorcyclists travel, particularly at weekends and in warmer weather, as is the case for many sites across the county. Whilst we do not advocate that Whiteways Café and the Bury Hill route is promoted for bikers, we have addressed the popularity through investing significant operational response during busy weekends of motorcyclist activity.

Utilising the data available, we have reviewed your concerns regarding the numbers of motorcyclists through Bury Hill. We recognise that particularly during high traffic volume it may seem like a disproportionately high number of motorcyclists, however we wish to emphasise that the number of bikers travelling through Bury is not significantly higher in comparison to other communities across the county.

### **Community Speed Watch**

Our work with Bury Parish Council alongside Sussex Police has resulted in significant resourcing and operational activity taking place across Bury and neighbouring communities to engage and educate bikers on the impact of their road use on local communities. Bury Hill has received a substantial amount of operational resource in response to the lack of Community Speed Watch activity able to take place in the area. Whilst it is undoubtedly unfortunate that Community Speed Watch is unable to take place, we cannot work outside the safeguarding procedures put in place for both CSW groups and riders to ensure the safety of volunteers and to maintain transparency in recording and reporting speed limits.

### **Road Layout of Bury Hill**

Traffic Management teams and West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) have reviewed the speed limit for Bury Hill and have assured SSRP that the current

speed limit suits the layout of the road and does not meet the criteria for change. Unfortunately any jurisdiction to change the speed limit is held with WSCC and SSRP are unable to provide any further guidance.

We understand and empathise with your views in relation to the road layout of Bury Hill. Having consulted again with WSCC, they have confirmed that the road layout would not benefit from a central barrier. As with every review undertaken, there remains a need to balance current risk with the risk should any changes be made; and the installation of a central barrier heightens the risk of a fatal incident should a collision occur.

With review to your comments regarding the view of bikers from vehicles travelling down the hill, we wish to reassure you that motorcyclists are a priority group for SSRP; we seek to change behaviour and attitudes towards bikers and reduce risky behaviour. A crash barrier, or average speed camera, would not address behaviours and alternative means, such as police presence and enforcement, are considered to be more effective in long term behavioural change.

### **120mph speeds**

As mentioned above, significant resourcing has been dedicated to Operation Downsway and supporting activity, particularly utilising the skills and expertise of Roads Policing to address motorcyclists travelling at high speeds. Unfortunately, vehicles which exceed the speed limit to such a degree are of such rarity and not demonstrated in long term data that it is significantly challenging to predict and address these incidents. If we are aware of any such behaviour or planned activities in advance, we will of course seek opportunity to engage with the rider community.

### **Data Box**

In relation to your comments regarding the WSCC data box, I can only apologise for the inconsistent functionality of the equipment. However, our Data Team have worked over the past months to understand the full and concise picture of Bury Hill activity.

With regards to your points demonstrating 7,333 total journeys taking place on Bury Hill, 2,515 vehicles were recorded as travelling over 50mph, with 171 vehicles travelling at speeds in excess of 75mph. This accounts for 2.3% of total road users for this period.

As much as we understand your concerns raised, I wish to highlight our approach. SSRP utilises data to understand traffic patterns, and 2020 saw a significant change in road use due to Covid. The weekend of May 17th saw a particular spike in motorcycle activity across the whole of the county due to temporary changes in lockdown regulations. This saw an unusual high percentage of motorcyclists out on the roads, all of which has impacted the data available.

We appreciate that these occasional spikes in traffic flow and motorcycle activity may be temporarily disruptive to residents, however unfortunately with limited resources the data does not support the need for an average speed camera to address the above concerns.

### **Motorcycle Photographer**

Unfortunately, SSRP has no remit to address the photographer taking images of bikers passing through Bury Hill. However we have passed concerns from residents to Sussex Police who are best placed to advise and take action regarding the photographer. Whilst we understand that the photographer's presence can encourage inappropriate road behaviour, and how frustrating this may be for residents, SSRP are unfortunately unable to comment or propose any specific action to be taken.

### **Road risk and noisy vehicles**

I acknowledge your points raised in relation to noise-related mental health, alongside the causal link between noisy vehicles and risky road behaviour. Sussex Police are in the process of trialling Acoustic Camera technology, however official results and evaluations have not been published by the led trials held at Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea. As such, we are unable to say what the learnings are from that scheme. We are aware that the idea for the concept started in 2014 and the Acoustic Camera scheme was set up in 2019, therefore it appears to be a lengthy process.

We are hopeful that the evaluation report will provide answers and progress of technological development would mean that this option, if suitable and is agreed for a specific location can be rolled out in a shorter timescale.

Sussex Police have taken the concept of the Acoustic Camera technology and are utilising different legislation to the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (to avoid delay). The desire is to have the evaluation of this concept within the year and if successful, work in partnership to further deploy this new technology to other locations across the county. Acoustic Camera technology is still relatively new, it carries number of risks as well as possibilities and these need to be balanced so as not to undermine confidence in the criminal justice system. It is paramount that Sussex Police are confident in the scheme to be able to use this technology going forward.

Whilst we recognise that having an average speed camera may be a preferred solution, there is no data to suggest a reduction in noise as a result of an average speed camera, and it is important for Sussex Police to undertake trials to address noise issues before investigating alternative means to resolution.

### **Walkers using South Downs Way**

Footpaths remain at the management and ownership of West Sussex County Council, unfortunately SSRP has no cause to raise in relation to road design and layout. I would recommend SDNP liaise with West Sussex County Council for guidance on adjustments to the footpath or crossing layout. I recognise and

empathise with your concerns, but our collision data does not demonstrate a significant risk in relation to the crossing.

### **Anti-social driving/riding**

Work to address anti-social driving/riding is led by Sussex Police, in which Operation Downsway has benefited from a significant investment of resource. In the last 10 years, a total of 16 collisions have taken place in Bury Hill: 3 fatal, 6 serious, 7 slight. I absolutely acknowledge the need for SSRP and colleagues to work collaboratively and utilise both KSI data and localised concerns and reports, however work to combat anti-social driving/riding falls under Sussex Police, who are able to deploy resourcing to address concerns where data does not support the need for resourcing available from the SSRP team.

### **Operation Downsway**

Operation Downsway continues to run throughout Sussex and in Bury, providing visible support to residents and deter those who seek to disregard the rules of the road. Whilst I acknowledge the need for continued presence, this remains subject to Sussex Police resourcing and tasking SSRP Safety Camera Vans as required. The Safety Camera team, whilst limited in their resourcing, identified Bury as a site during Covid and continues to prioritise this area outside of Operation Downsway and on overlapping operations to combat a multitude of road safety issue across the county. If you would like further detail on Sussex Police activity I would highly recommend you contact your District Commander (Chief Inspector Carter) who will be able to support on localised issues, where SSRP continues to provide support across the entire county.

### **Police presence**

I understand your concerns relating to long term solutions outside of police resourcing and presence. Bury Hill is acknowledged as a Safety Camera site for long-term activity, including that outside of Operation Downsway. However, average speed cameras have no demonstrable success in reducing noise, particularly when addressing the concerns raised throughout this letter. I understand your link between speed and decibel rates, however having sought guidance from our colleagues in Surrey, there is no demonstrable link between installation of average speed cameras and the reduction of noise.

### **Technological limitations for Bury Hill installation**

Whilst we are aware of your long standing issues, unfortunately works are subject to criteria set out within the Partnership before any installation plans are put in to place. Within this criteria we are predominantly led by collision data, however, we do factor speed related concerns, yet Bury Hill does not meet the criteria in either collision data or speed concerns for fixed and average speed cameras. From reviewing your letter it seems that the majority of your concerns are around noise related motorcycle issues, which whilst absolutely valid, fall outside the capabilities of SSRP to address in this instance.

### **Changes to speed limit and road layout**

West Sussex County Council are the lead authority to manage, implement and maintain limits and road layout changes. Whilst SSRP would be consulted on any works undertaken, WSCC are the highway authority and would be at their discretion to determine any changes made.

Whilst I acknowledge and appreciate your concerns raised in ongoing communications with Sussex Safer Roads Partnership and colleagues at Sussex Police, unfortunately Bury Hill, whilst identifiable as a location for motorcyclists to regularly ride through, does not fit the criteria for fixed or average speed enforcement.

Work will continue within the Partnership to address motorcyclist safety, however with limited resourcing we feel it is imperative that any work undertaken is balanced by data and evidence to support ongoing projects.

I fully recognise that this may not provide you with the answers that you may have hoped for, rest assured we will continue to support Sussex Police operations across Sussex, including Bury Hill to engage and educate riders on the use of the roads, and will consult with Sussex Police once evaluations have taken place for Acoustic Camera technology.

Many thanks  
Emma Tugwell-Smith

Operations Manager  
Sussex Safer Roads Partnership

Operations Command

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