**Codicote 20 is Plenty Scheme.**

**Current position:** Over an extended period, concerns had been raised that there was need to take appropriate action to stem the speed of traffic, both through the village, but perhaps more importantly, in the approaches thereto.

Residents and the Parish Council recognised that there was a burgeoning problem being faced by the occupiers of the homes along the High Street and the customers to the High Street shops and other local facilities such as the Village School, the Church and the Residential homes located elsewhere within the Parish.

Codicote was not unique in having these problems. The County Council put aside a budget of £7 million pounds, aimed at putting in speed amelioration schemes (20 MPH Zones), where local support was evidenced. This budget received several hundred applications from across the county and it was proven necessary to prioritise, by serious accident statistics, inter alia, those applications that could qualify for the available funding.

The initial sifting left Codicote at somewhere around 250 +, or –, in the list (I really can’t recall the exact position) but it was obvious from this early work that an application to that fund would not be successful, as the accident record (fortunately) did not have a sufficiently grim data set to succeed in meeting the criteria.

Several speed and volume surveys had been carried out in the village over a period, commissioned through my County Council Highways Locality budget. This work revealed that there was indeed a speeding issue in, and especially around, the core of Codicote, but again, not sufficient to trigger the intervention monies being made available by the County Council.

The original surveys did not cover the full extent of the approaches to the High Street, so to get a clearer picture, I authorised further S and V covert investigations. Although this action did not alter the bidding position for the fund, it showed that there was sufficient reality in the concerns around speeding to occasion some intervention.

Since there was no access to core funding, together with Highway Officers, I examined the case for funding this from a combination of my HLB and section 106 monies which had been obtained by HCC for highway related works, for example those springing out of the housing growth impositions.

Before these monies could be specifically earmarked, it was necessary to ascertain what was needed to put in a scheme that would work and, essentially, to determine whether there was majority public support for the same.

To accomplish this, a draft scheme was prepared, drawing on the data accrued from the S and V surveys. It should be noted that alterations that relate to moving vehicle controls are carried out under the auspices of the arrangements HCC have in place with the Constabulary. The Police will not endorse any scheme that is not (in essence) self-policing. Where mean traffic speeds are within a few percentile points of the desired limit (in this case 20 mph) controls can be as simple as the erection of signs to advertise the limits being imposed. Where speeds exceed these parameters, engineering interventions are required to slow traffic to the desired margins.

The draft scheme reflected the need to install engineering interventions in most, if not all, the approach routes to the core of the village. The surveys revealed that the main High Street showed speeds within the requisite margins, and thus a signage only proposal was made for most of the length of that segment of the village. That was not the case on the approach roads, so other controls were required in these locations – specifically Bury Lane, Heath Lane and St Albans Road.

This proposal was informally consulted on some few months ago and a majority of respondents were found to be in favour of the concept, but not entirely content with the design and location of the suggested speed control interventions.

Following the consultation and the representations that arose from that exercise, engineers engaged in a redesign, to effect as far as it was possible, without compromising the integrity of the scheme, the changes asked for and to seek to ameliorate the concerns that were raised.

**What now:** *In Essence, we have a new scheme.*There is a statutory requirement to formally consult on this as a completed scheme. I know this is very frustrating for all, but, unfortunately there is no other mechanism available to HCC, or to the Parish Council, to take this forward to fruition.

**For absolute clarity:** Highway engineers use algorithms and other evidenced based data to design the pinch points, speed table, road humps or whatever mechanism is to be installed, as each style of intervention is proven to control speed to a varying degree, Thus, the style of intervention is designed to achieve control, to the required margins.

**It needs to be noted and clearly recognised that this proposal is now the final scheme on offer. It cannot be changed in any way, or in the professional opinion of the highway engineers, it would be compromised and thus will not achieve the desired outcome.**

**Time line:** It is proposed to commence the formal consultation with effect from the week commencing the 4th. November. It will need to be advertised in the media and I believe by direct contact with householders, but I am awaiting the fine detail on that and will advise the Clerk as soon as I have the same to hand.

**Funding:** Until the final scheme was drafted, it was not possible to get an accurate costing for implementation. It is now clear that the budget I have available will not cover the entire cost in one financial year.

**There are two options, both of which have to assume that the scheme is approved by a majority of respondents in its current form. If that is not forthcoming, the scheme will not go ahead at all.**

**Option 1:** The approved scheme is implemented and will be put in place over two financial years. That will be more expensive of course as the economies of scale will be lost. I need not over elaborate, but HCC are tied into the contract agreement with the framework contractors and splitting contracts is obviously inefficient and expensive.

**Option 2:** The approved scheme is implemented, and I fund as much as I can from my HLB and other reserved pots as is available in year one. The balance is found by the Parish Council by way of a contribution from reserves. This contribution would not be refundable if the scheme is implemented.

The estimated shortfall is between £17,000 and £20,000. Clearly, I would seek to limit this support to the absolute minimum required to complete the scheme in one financial year.

If fully funded, I would anticipate that works would start in the new financial year.

**Finally:** Given the support the initial proposal received, I am reasonably confident that the final scheme will attract a positive response. It is essential that it does so as it is not HCC policy to impose 20mph zones on communities where there is not a majority of responders in favour of the proposals.

I would hope to see a solid response, but at the very least 51 percent of those that do so must be in favour of the scheme, as now proposed, or it cannot go ahead.

**Conclusion:** I would welcome any input that the Council might be able to provide to publicise the consultation.

I would appreciate the Council discussing the options, should assent from the Parish be achieved, and advise me which of these they are able to endorse and support.

**Richard.**