

Report to	Lead Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment
Date	23 March 2009
Report By	Director of Transport and Environment
Title of Report	Petition for the reclassification of the B2095
Purpose of Report	To consider a petition requesting the reclassification of the B2095 from a B class road to a C class road to enable the introduction of a vehicle size limitation

RECOMMENDATION: The Lead Member is recommended to advise the petitioners that It is not proposed to reclassify the B2095 between its junction with the A259 and A269 from a B class road to a C class road to enable the introduction of a vehicle size limitation.

1. Financial Appraisal

1.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

2. Supporting Information

2.1 At the County Council meeting on 9 December 2008, Councillors Bentley and Thomas presented a petition to the Chairman from Hooe Parish Council and Ninfield Parish Council requesting the reclassification of the B2095 from a 'B' class road to a 'C' class road.

2.2 The petition states:

"When the A269/B2095 junction at Lower Street Ninfield was realigned, the B2095 to the A259 Marsh Road running through Russells Green and Hooe was designated by East Sussex County Council a diversion route to Eastbourne and new sign posts were erected on the A269 reading 'A259 Eastbourne.'

This narrow road has many dangerous bends, particularly through the hamlet of Russells Green, and for the safety of all our residents, Hooe and Ninfield Parish Councils have been working towards achieving reduced speed limits, a 30 mph limit where appropriate and a vehicle size limitation.

Hooe and Ninfield Parish Councils, with the active support of our District Councillor, are petitioning for the road to be changed from a 'B' road status to 'C' road status and thus qualify for a vehicle size limitation. We the undersigned strongly support this action"

2.3 A copy of the petition is available in the Members' room. Standing Orders provide that where the Chairman considers it appropriate, petitions are considered by the relevant Committee or Lead Member and that a spokesperson for the petitioners be invited to address the Committee. The Chairman has referred these petitions to the Lead Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment.

3. Comments/Appraisal

3.1 The B2095 runs south west to north east for approximately 3.75 miles between the A259 at the Lamb Inn Public House on the Pevensey Levels to the A269 in Ninfield, and serves the village of Hooe and hamlet of Russell's Green. The road is classified as a 'B' road and has current average daily traffic flows of 2280 vehicles per day at the southeast end and 3,460 vehicles per day at the north east end of the road. Approximately 1% of the traffic using the road is heavy goods vehicles (HGVs).

3.2 A request to reclassify a road requires approval from the Government Office for the South East (GOSE) and, if this approval is given, they will issue a declaration, via the Department for Transport, on behalf of the Secretary for State. The assessment of whether a road reclassification is appropriate depends upon being able to demonstrate that the road no longer performs its intended function within the classified road network. This would be dependent upon the usage of the road in terms of journey types made, traffic flow levels, trip

origin/destination, traffic composition (i.e. vehicle type) and accidents. In addition, the reclassification would potentially necessitate diverting traffic onto alternative routes in the road hierarchy, and an assessment would be required on the suitability and practicality of diverting traffic onto other routes within the hierarchy. Therefore, in practical circumstances, the reclassification of a section of the classified network only tends to be undertaken if a new, more appropriate section of carriageway is constructed, i.e. a by-pass. This is not the situation in this case.

3.3 If a road is down-classified outside of the context outlined above, there are a number of potential implications. Firstly, there is no guarantee that changing the road classification would have any mitigating effect upon traffic volumes itself. The increased use of satellite navigation, particularly by freight and logistics companies, has further exacerbated this issue with traffic being directed along shorter, quicker but less suitable routes, in particular, through rural areas and villages. In the case of the B2095, although changes to the directional signage may assist, drivers who currently use the route regularly or use satellite navigation will know the existing route and therefore it is unlikely that they will divert to the less direct route via the A259/A269.

3.4 Secondly, the reclassification from a B class to C class road would reduce the level of maintenance afforded to the road and consequently a reduction in the level of maintenance funding from Central Government which is based on the length of the various road classes. This would result in the road potentially receiving a lower inspection frequency and response time for defects as well as affect its winter maintenance status.

3.5 Finally, the general reclassification of a road, where there is not a new and/or more appropriate route being constructed, could set a policy precedent within the County and result in receipt of further requests from local communities for the reclassification of other 'B' class, or even 'A' class roads to 'C' class roads to enable the introduction of a weight restriction. In terms of freight routing, the County Council's policy is to keep all A and B class roads open to all classes of traffic, and where any restrictions apply they would still need to allow freight vehicles for access and business purposes. Where access and weight restrictions on particular roads are put in place, these needs to be agreed and enforced by the Police. Such enforcement is quite resource intensive and in effect, the Police would have to follow a vehicle along the whole length of the route, where the ban is applicable, without the vehicle stopping for access, for them to enforce the restrictions. However, there is no guarantee that even with the reclassification of a road and introduction of a weight restriction that freight vehicles will adhere to it.

3.6 As part of the County Council's review of speed limits on the A and B class road network, it is proposed to provide a new 30mph speed limit through Hooe Common as a direct result of the village assessment. It is also proposed to implement a new 40mph speed limit on the B2095 to the north of Hooe Common, between the new Hooe Common 30mph speed limit and the existing 30mph speed limit at Lower Street, Ninfield. These will be implemented by the end of the 2008/09 financial year.

4. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendation

4.1 In practical circumstances, the reclassification of a section of the road network tends only to be undertaken if a new, more appropriate section of carriageway is constructed i.e a bypass. In the context of the B2095, there are currently no such road improvement proposals in the area which would necessitate a review of its classification, I do not, therefore, consider this road appropriate for reclassification. In addition, if the road were down classified outside of this context, there could be a number of potential implications. Therefore, on this basis, it is recommended that the petitioners be advised that it is not proposed to reclassify the B2095.

RUPERT CLUBB

Director of Transport and Environment

13 March 2009

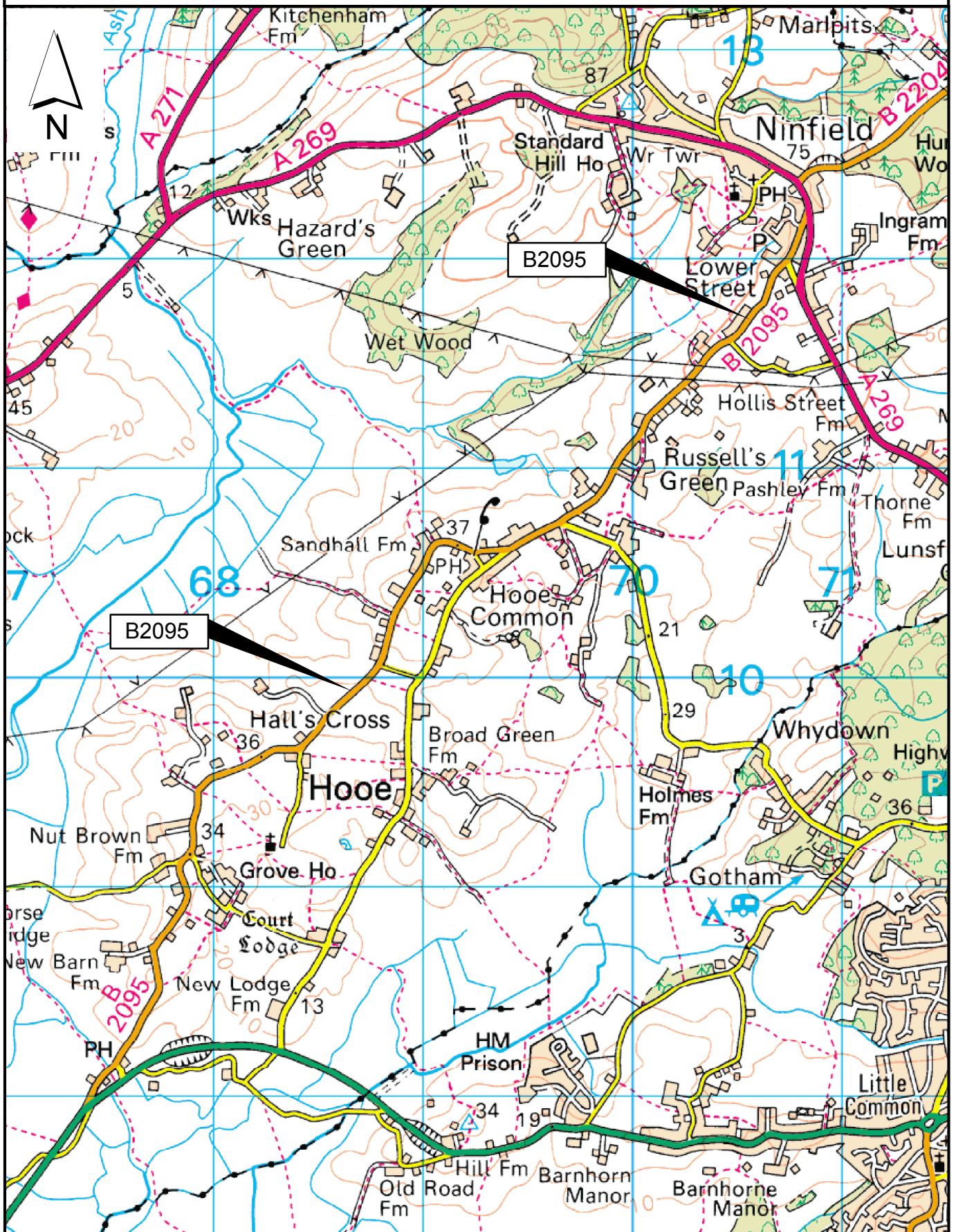
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Local Member: Councillors Bentley and Thomas

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Petition

B2095 Road Reclassification



Scale 1:25000

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