

Response to FOI request from [REDACTED] dated 9th August 2025

Request for information:

Sent: Saturday, August 9, 2025 17:10

To: Gemma Hughes <townclerk@crewkerne-tc.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: Hermitage St/Lyme Rd

Hi Katherine

You might remember that we exchanged correspondence earlier in the year relating to concerns over traffic volume and speeding on Hermitage St and Lyme Rd. I have since discussed the situation with Cllrs Paul Maxwell and Mike Best and then exchanged further correspondence with Paul after that meeting.

My intention now is to distribute a letter outlining the situation and discussions to date to all residents who live on, or near to, the relevant roads. From there I'm hoping to arrange a meeting with all interested parties including residents, members and, perhaps the Police. Paul has informed me that he met with a Highways Officer recently who undertook a speed assessment at two locations. In order to construct a letter which includes all the relevant information I request under the Freedom Of Information Act, to receive any information/correspondence relating to this matter, including the speed assessment reports carried out by the County Council.

Many thanks.

Response:

Thank you for your email of 9th August 2025, requesting the above information under the Freedom of Information Act. I am including the only information I have been able to find on the matter and am including a copy for your information.

In accordance with usual procedure this request and the response will be copied to all Town Councillors and published on the CTC website.

Kind regards,

Gemma Hughes

Acting Town Clerk

7th July 2025

Good morning, Gemma.

In order to aid discussions, I have included some notes below which addresses Crewkerne Town Councils current Traffic Management concerns.

- **Weight restriction throughout town.**

A weight limit allows the Highway Authority to prohibit and restrict the movement of heavy goods vehicles. This requires a Traffic Regulation Order which gives the police the power to enforce a weight restriction.

The introduction of a weight restriction on a public road can be considered either for environmental protection, or where there is a need to protect a structure such as a bridge or culvert from the effects of heavy goods vehicles. Where a weight restriction is considered necessary, consideration must be given to a suitable alternative route and the likely effect on other communities.

In certain instances, a route may seem inappropriate for HGV use but there may be no other realistic alternatives. If there are no alternative routes, introducing a weight restriction will only displace problems on to similarly inappropriate roads. Where alternative routes are available, we must ensure wherever possible to positively sign these routes, and give early warning of a weight restricted area, to help the restriction to be self-enforcing. It's important to stress that environmental weight restrictions will nearly always include exemptions for: vehicles making deliveries or collections at premises within the restriction, vehicles working on or near the roads in question, emergency service and military vehicles, buses, coaches and other public service vehicles.

This means that vehicles requiring legitimate access within the area covered by the weight limit, such as to deliver to a shop or access an industrial unit, are permitted. It's not appropriate to impose weight restrictions on routes or areas where the majority of heavy goods vehicles using those roads are doing so to access premises. To introduce a restriction in such circumstances will have little or no effect.

Crewkerne sits on a Local Freight Route, as well as seeing several A-class roads converging. The movement of freight around the county allows us to access the goods and services we want and helps support local businesses. Somerset Council are aware freight transport can have a significant impact on the lives of Somerset's residents and its environment. The Freight strategy tries to balance these two pressures to maximise the benefits we gain from freight whilst minimising its negative impacts. Therefore, we are not in a position to consider introducing a weight limit for Crewkerne at this time.

I am aware of local concerns of HGV movements in and around Market Square. Having met with Cllr Mike Best and Cllr Steve Ashton, I have submitted an order with our Service Provider to deliver improved signage, which addresses the concerns raised.

- **Lack of pedestrian crossings throughout the town centre.**

With Somerset Councils Executive declaring a financial emergency for the Council in response to soaring costs and demands for services, we are reviewing all spending to ensure we can continue to protect our core services and look after people in need. The Council looks after 6,600 km of roads in Somerset and must very carefully prioritise works in line with the limited

budgets available. This involves making some very difficult decisions to make sure our resources are directed where there is clear evidence of significant problems or incidents.

In more recent years this has been supported by the Member led Small Improvement Schemes (SIS) programme that enabled local Member requests to be submitted to tackle priority transport issues in their local areas, which are not addressed by other statutory or competitive funding streams. However, there is currently no budget available to extend this programme at this time. Instead, the intention is to develop a programme of projects aligned to the new Local Transport Plan (currently under development), focusing on the Government transport priorities; particularly carbon reduction, promoting active travel, safety and rural mobility.

Members are encouraged to work with the communities to identify local needs that meet these objectives, for Officers to consider as funding opportunities arise. Where there is good policy alignment, evidence of community support, but no delivery route their request will be added to a register of local priorities for future consideration. This register is held by my colleagues within the Improvement Schemes Delivery team.

The Road Safety team assess our injury collision database and promote the road safety engineering schemes based on the priorities identified from this data as part of a separate programme, which is continuing.

If Crewkerne Town Council wish to consider funding a feasibility study, and if supported, could fund the introduction of a controlled crossing, please send an email to the Improvements Scheme Delivery team [REDACTED], who will be able to provide advice with regards the community funding a new asset.

- **Traffic volume and speeds on Hermitage Street and Lyme Road.**

I have assessed speed data records held for Hermitage Street and Lyme Road, I can report the mean speeds recorded for Hermitage Street range between 12.6mph and 22.9mph, & for Lyme Road range between 15.7mph and 31.1mph. Somerset speed compliance data comes from hundreds of thousands of connected vehicles that have GPS devices installed such as vehicle trackers & sat nav devices. The data is captured across a 12-month period from April to March aligning with financial years and analysed to produce annual average speeds for seven individual time periods. The speed values are based on vehicle speeds along an entire link, rather than spot speeds at the most free-flowing point along a link. This data is used by both Somerset Council and Avon & Somerset Police, to gain an understanding of existing vehicle speeds.

Sometimes, the nature of the surrounds such as the built environment, narrow highway, etc, can give the impression to residents that perceived traffic speeds are much higher than the actual recorded speed of traffic traveling through the town.

Crewkerne Town Council may wish to consider deploying their community SID within the area of concern to record data to understand existing traffic speeds, the data can then be used in two ways. If the data suggests the speed limit is being exceeded, the Town Council can quote the periods of the day seeing the highest number of vehicles contravening the existing Traffic Regulation Order, which will enable the Police to target enforcement. If the data suggests the speed limit is being adhered to, this can be quoted to residents to provide reassurance.

If residents witness non-compliance of the existing posted speed limit, please advise them to report this to the Police, as they are the only authority who can undertake enforcement.

I trust this information is of use.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

Traffic Engineer
Somerset Council

7th July 2025

Hi [REDACTED] and All,

Thank you for your notes on Hermitage Street and Lyme Road, which I completely accept. However, in our walk around, I wonder if we could identify a couple of really simple traffic calming options, such as a tree or a small planter, to break up the long visibility drivers have, some of whom do speed. I accept that most do not. Is there any 106 funds we could use, Gemma? Only a few hundred pounds. I think, even a small intervention would help.

Also, What is the possibility of making Crewkerne town centre a 20mph zone, as it`s hard to go above that, anyway? There is a sign on East Street. Perhaps the 30`s could come down?

Just a few thoughts ahead of Wednesday.

Thanks,

Paul.

3rd July 2025

Hi Gemma,

Please could we add, traffic volume and speeds on Hermitage Street and Lyme Road. This was raised by a resident at the surgery on 28th June (Shaun)

Thanks,

Paul.