

# **Heavy Goods Vehicle Issues Raised at Maidstone JTB**

A report by the Head of Transport & Development to the Joint Transportation Board

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## **Summary**

1. This report updates the Board on a number of issues relating to Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV's) discussed at its October meeting.

## **Background**

2. At the October meeting the Board resolved :-
  - That the letter regarding HGV's and Keith Ferrin's decision (on the Yalding Survey) be circulated to Board Members.
  - That an update on the timetable for the Countywide Freight Strategy be brought to the next meeting.
  - Costings for a full (HGV) survey in the Borough of Maidstone and suggestions as to who could carry out this work.
  - That the results of the lorry survey (in Yalding) carried out by the Freight Transport Association be brought to the next meeting.

## **Yalding Heavy Goods Vehicle Surveys**

3. The letter concerning Keith Ferrin's decision not to carry out HGV origin and destination surveys in the Yalding area was originally forwarded to Maidstone Borough Council for circulation to the Members of this Board in April 2008. Following the October meeting it was subsequently resent for circulation. A copy of this letter can be seen in Appendix A.
4. Following a recent period of exposure in a regional television programme and a number of articles that appeared in national industry publications, the Freight Transport Association (FTA) volunteered to conduct a traffic survey in Yalding to provide an independent review of the current situation with regards to HGV's in and around Yalding and provide some recommendations based its the findings.
5. Early on the morning of Thursday 21st August 2008, an FTA Consultancy team undertook a survey to discover the type and frequency of commercial vehicle traffic travelling through Yalding. A copy of the findings of the FTA's survey which has been submitted to Kent County Council can be seen in Appendix B.
6. The main findings of the report were as follows:-
  - A total of 75% of commercial vehicles recorded during the survey were 18 tonnes and under.
  - Considering the quality and convenience of the roads around Yalding, there appears to be no huge advantage in time saved by travelling through the village.
  - Some drivers are being directed through the region following the quickest route recommended by their Sat Nav system.
  - Many vehicles recorded in the survey were without livery, making it almost impossible to identify either the origin or the final destination of the lorry.

- The issue of commercial vehicle activity through Yalding is minor in respect of heavier goods and articulated vehicles. With just under half the total figure representing the 7.5 tonne weight category.
  - The results would suggest that the vehicle count is similar to other B roads across England.
7. Kent Highway Surveys are currently investigating the recommendations made in the report with respect to signing and road layout with a view of submitting a future bid for funding.

### **Cost of HGV Surveys**

8. It is very difficult to provide costings for HGV's surveys without a specific brief as to what requires counting and where. A simple volume count which can determine the number and type of vehicle at a particular location, to a reasonable degree of accuracy, costs approximately £300 per site.
9. A more accurate and useful survey for HGV's is an origin and destination (O&D) survey which is even more complicated to estimate. Due to the alternative methods of carrying O&D surveys out (visually, roadside interview, ANPR camera etc) and the possible number of points to be surveyed and therefore number of staff required could produce vastly different quotes. A recent O&D survey undertaken in Ashford cost £10,000 and O&D surveys for Yalding have been previously quoted at £6,500.
10. There are currently a number of permanent traffic count sites and Automatic Number Plate Recognition cameras already located in Maidstone as part of the Urban Traffic Management Centre. These could be utilised to provide data on HGV movements in Maidstone. If Members of this Board could provide further details as to their survey requirements a more detailed estimate can be obtained.

### **Countywide Freight Strategy**

11. As previously reported to this Board the County Council is preparing a Countywide Freight Strategy for Kent. Appended to this report in Appendix C are two documents showing the latest stage of development of this document. The original deadline for the production of the strategy was by the end of the current financial year. However, it is now likely that the freight strategy will be subsumed into the wider Transport Strategy for Kent currently being produced by Geoff Mee.

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Accountable Officer:                      Andy Corcoran 01622 798378