

To: Maidstone Joint Transportation Board

By: Tim Read, Head of Transportation

Date: 17th April 2013

Subject: Lorry Watch

Classification: Information only

Summary: This report provides an update on the Leeds and Langley trial as well as other schemes proposed in Maidstone.

1 Background

- 1.1** Lorry Watch is a joint initiative between Kent County Council, Kent Police, The Kent Association of Local Councils and Parish Councils/local residents.
- 1.2** Lorry Watch aims to support and empower local residents in areas where issues with the through traffic of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) persist. Residents are provided with temporary signs to publicise the scheme and warn HGV drivers that it is underway. Local volunteers record the identifying features of large vehicles on unsuitable roads and these are passed onto Kent Police. Kent Police then contact the vehicle operators to enquire as to their purpose in the area.
- 1.3** It is important to note that the UK's economy relies on road haulage and in instances where it emerges that vehicles had a valid reason to be in an area e.g. local collections or deliveries this will be fed back to residents. Kent County Council appreciates the vibrancy of Kent's rural economy and in no way wants to penalise businesses that need to receive or dispatch HGVs. Lorry Watch aims to create an environment whereby the lines of communication between local residents and local businesses are open for all parties' mutual benefit.

2 Leeds and Langley Pilot

- 2.1** This pilot scheme was launched on the 14/11/12. This scheme focuses on the B2163 Leeds Rd which, although subject to a 17 tonne vehicle weight restriction, is often used as a cut through between the A20 and the A274. Temporary signs, provided by KCC, were erected by the Parish Councils on the 11/11/12 and the permanent width limit signs have been substantially upgraded.
- 2.2** The scheme ran until January 2013 with regular watches being carried out by Leeds' residents. The decision has now been made by the volunteers to run Lorry Watch once per quarter to try and avoid volunteer fatigue and ensure that the scheme does not lose momentum. The residents have been provided

with larger temporary signs as a result of learning from the previous launch and these will be erected alongside a fortnightly observation regime in April.

- 2.3 There has been an issue around recruiting and retaining volunteers and the scheme is now administered by a small committed group of Leeds residents. In the run up to the scheme launch Langley Parish Council were very supportive and assisted a great deal however they have been unable to mobilise any volunteers. They have made it clear that unless volunteers come forward for April's re-start then they will withdraw due to a lack of community interest.
- 2.4 The data collected shows that only four companies were observed within the restriction on more than one occasion. Kent Police have contacted these companies and in all cases are now chasing up the companies concerned having failed to receive a suitable response. A number of other successes were also recorded including a local company purchasing smaller vehicles that can navigate the restriction legally.

3 Other areas

- 3.1 Ulcombe Parish Council – Will not be carrying out formal observations but have been provided with temporary signage and will pass on the details of any vehicles observed in Chegworth Rd.
- 3.2 Teston Parish Council – Are aiming to launch a formal scheme in April concentrating on Teston Bridge. This will be associated with the successful Speed Watch already operating in the area and will be supported by permanent signage improvement in the area.

Contact officer: Dan Sheppard
Tel: 08458 247800