

Maidstone Joint Transportation Board



**18
October
2017**

Queens Avenue, Maidstone

Decision Making Authority	Kent County Council
Lead Director	Roger Wilkin
Lead Head of Service	Tim Read
Lead Officer and Report Author	Jennie Watson
Wards and County Divisions affected	Bridge Ward
Which Member(s) requested this report?	Dan Daley

This report:

Investigates concerns raised in Queens Avenue following a petition received and asks members to discuss options highlighted and recommend if any further action is to be taken.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Maidstone Joint Transportation Board	18 October 2017

Queens Avenue, Maidstone

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

- 1.1 A petition from residents of Queens Avenue area was presented to the JTB on 21 March 2017 by County Councillor Dan Daley with the following wording:

You will be aware of issues of traffic safety and congestion in Queens Avenue.

We the undersigned require our local representatives to take action to ensure that KCC undertakes a full study to explore all opportunities for controlling and limiting traffic movement and inconsiderate parking, fully consults all affected residents and businesses in Queens Avenue and adjoining roads and further acts to implement appropriate solutions.

Councillor Daley spoke on the petition and suggested:

- That an officer from Kent County Council Highways should conduct traffic survey of this area, with a view to regulating the traffic flow better; and
- Some solutions to the problems faced by residents may include single yellow lines, a commuter parking ban or introducing a one way system on Queens Avenue.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 2.1 To report the investigations into the issues raised in the petition and consider potential solutions
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3. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Kent County Council Officers met with Dan Daley, local residents, the lead petitioner, Shernold School and KCC's School Travel Planner to discuss the issues raised and our subsequent investigation is summarised below.
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4. INVESTIGATION RESULTS AND AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 4.1 The two main concerns for residents are speed and congestion issues. Queens Avenue is a residential road that links London Road and Queens Road. Queens Avenue also serves an independent school for children aged between 3 and 11 years. The maximum number of pupils attending the school is 160. During peak periods there are concerns that traffic backs up onto Queens Road as children are being dropped off and congestion is caused by vehicles parking too close to junctions.

- 4.2 Another considered contribution to the congestion is long term parking due to vehicles being left for periods during the daytime and the overspill from The Pippin public house in the evenings.
- 4.3 Queens Avenue is also considered to be a cut through in both directions by traffic avoiding the lights in London Road. A small number of heavy goods vehicles take advantage of this.
- 4.4 Injury crash data has been checked for Queens Avenue for the latest available 3 year period and it has been established that there have been no recorded issues.

4.5 Traffic Survey

Speed survey equipment was installed just south of Vicary Way on Friday 30 June 2017. Vandalism to the survey tubes took place on 4 July. Therefore, traffic speeds were recorded for 5 days and not the normal 7 days and the results of the survey are below:

4.6 Volume

Direction	Week day daytime hourly average (7am-7pm)	Weekend daytime hourly average (7am-7pm)	Week day morning peak hour (8am-9am)	Week day afternoon peak hour (5pm-6pm)
Northbound (Heading towards London Road)	100	58	144	155
Southbound (Heading towards Queens Road)	129	66	211	183

The results above show that on average more vehicles are travelling southbound from London Road to Queens Road and these numbers are roughly halved at the weekend. The traffic using Queens Avenue will include local residents, school traffic and also some through traffic.

4.7 Mean speeds

Direction	Weekday mean speeds (mph)	Weekend mean speeds (mph)	Weekday morning peak (7am-9am) (mph)	Weekday afternoon peak (3pm-6pm) (mph)
Northbound	21.4	23.8	21.4	20.2

The results above show that average speeds are higher at the weekend. This could be due to less traffic and on-street parking. The highest speeds

recorded were 50.8mph northbound at 2000 hours and 42.2mph southbound at 0700 hours.

4.7 HGV Movements

Direction	Weekday daily average	Weekend daily average
Northbound	16	2
Southbound	11	2

The HGV movements fall significantly at the weekend as the figures above show. Deliveries to the school and local residents are included in these figures.

5. OPTIONS:

Reduce speed limit to 20mph:

20mph zones are generally used in residential areas such as Queens Avenue. These zones are designed to be self-enforcing so that the traffic naturally keeps to the speed limit.

Advantages:

The current mean speeds of 22.4 and 22 mph would mean that this could be implemented without additional measures such as speed humps, road narrowing etc. Given the existing mean speeds, we would expect 20mph zone signing to reduce traffic speeds by 1 or 2 mph at the most. The speed data does not indicate a speeding issue in Queens Avenue.

Disadvantages:

It is considered unlikely to have a significant effect on current speeds and as the results show there is not a speeding issue in Queens Avenue.

Cost:

Approximate costs for the minimum measures such as terminal signs and 20mph roundels, including the Traffic Regulation Order would be in the region of £2000 to £3000.

5.1 Traffic calming:

Traffic calming such as speed humps, chicanes and road-narrowings are used to manage traffic speeds. The type of measure which is most appropriate varies from site to site.

Advantages:

Drivers may use alternative routes to avoid traffic calmed streets.

Disadvantages:

The speeds in Queens Avenue are already low and probably would not make a significant difference to speeds. Physical traffic calming will increase vibration and noise levels and be disturbing for nearby residents.

Cost:

Traffic calming such as speed humps is costly and could cost in the region of £25,000.

5.2 One Way Options:

One option is that the school engages with local residents and parents to see how between them they can manage school pick up/drop off times and Kent County Council's School Travel Planner has offered advice on this. One idea could be an informal arrangement that the school agrees with parents that when dropping off and picking up. For example parents could agree to enter Queens Avenue from one direction and exit in the other direction to assist in avoiding too much conflict with two way traffic.

5.2.1 One Way System for whole length of Queens Avenue:

Advantages:

A one way system can prevent vehicles using Queens Avenue as a cut through in one direction and help traffic to move more freely.

Disadvantages:

By implementing a one way system, this could encourage more through traffic in the direction of traffic flow and almost certainly speeds will increase. Vehicle drivers will be tempted to drive faster because they do not expect any oncoming vehicles. This would not be a recommended option in a residential area as pedestrian safety would be compromised. It may also be an inconvenience to local residents who may experience longer journey times. There will be more traffic using London Road and Queens Road which will increase congestion and cause additional delays at the traffic lights.

It should be noted that Queens Road junction would have increased traffic and the Traffic and Network Solutions Manager has confirmed that no scope to increase the extra green time from Queens Road as the priority would be on the A20 London Road.

Cost:

This scheme would require a Traffic Regulation Order and illuminated signs, changes to road markings and a build out at an approximate cost of £10,000-£15,000.

5.2.2 Part One Way System:

This would limit the one-way operation to the section from London Road to Clements Court with a build out at the junction and no entry signs.

Advantages:

This would prevent vehicles using Queens Avenue as a cut through from London Road to Queens Road. This option would also prevent

vehicles parking too close to the junction (corner protection) and improve visibility for drivers.

Disadvantages:

This may be an inconvenience to local residents who may experience longer journey times, although less so than a full one way system. There will be more traffic using London Road and Queens Road which will increase congestion and cause additional delays, at the traffic lights.

It should be noted that Queens Road junction would have increased traffic and the Traffic and Network Solutions Manager has confirmed that no scope to increase the extra green time from Queens Road as the priority would be on the A20 London Road.

Costs:

This scheme would require a Traffic Regulation Order and illuminated signs, changes to road markings and a build out at an approximate cost of £10,000-£15,000

5.3 Parking Restrictions:

Unfortunately, parking is an issue outside virtually every school with primary aged children as most parents are required to park up and walk their children into school and collect. As stated above, the school is working with KCC's School Travel Planner to look at initiatives to ease the congestion during peak times and the school has staggered drop off and pick up times to help alleviate congestion.

There are currently zig zag lines outside Shernold School 34m in length and this is considered appropriate for this location. Therefore, we would not recommend making any changes to these.

The overspill parking from The Pippin Public House will be at lunchtimes, evenings and weekends and it would rely on visitors to the pub to park in a responsible manner and not block residents' drives.

Advantages:

One advantage of introducing residents only parking, day time restrictions on parking and/or double yellow lines is that it will prevent long term parking by commuters and overspill from the The Pippin. By introducing double yellow lines on junctions, this will improve visibility for drivers and improve safety at the junction.

Disadvantages:

Any parking restrictions implemented would have an effect on residents and their visitors, as well as commuters. Time limited parking bays would require residents to purchase permits for themselves and possibly visitors, which would be an ongoing cost for them. A permit system would need to be promoted by Maidstone Borough Council.

Day time restrictions on parking such as one or two hour restrictions at some point during the day for commuter parking would have an effect on

residents as they wouldn't be able to park there for that hour and this would rely on Maidstone Borough Council to enforce. If parking was restricted in Queens Avenue, it would have a diverse effect as the problem would be moved to nearby streets and could cause more significant issues.

It is also worth noting that if we reduced on street-parking in Queens Avenue, it is likely to increase traffic speeds as the current on-street parking situation provides a "natural traffic calming". In addition, the parking layout varies from day to day which means that drivers would be more attentive to road conditions than they would with fixed traffic calming.

Costs:

An approximate cost for parking restrictions would be in the region of £1200 minimum for a Traffic Regulation Order plus works to implement parking restrictions. This would start from £500 for extended junction protection at either end of Queens Avenue and for on-street timed parking bays this would be significantly higher as every length of bay would need to be signed. Therefore approximately costs could be up to £10,000.

6. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 KCC Officers are recommending that 5.2.2 Part one- way system would be the best option technically. All options considered have some beneficial effects; they also have negative impacts for road safety or residents themselves, which they may not have considered. The crash data and traffic speed data does not justify the need to do works to calm traffic, but do indicate that there is some through traffic using Queens Avenue. The partial one way option could be progressed if funding were available. The effects on traffic at Queens Road and London Road junctions would need to be considered as part of the detailed design of this option. The corner protection to the junctions with Queens Avenue/London Road and Queens Avenue/Queens Road could also be taken forward as this would aid in keeping these junctions less congested.
- 6.2 At present, there is no funding source available to progress any scheme at this location.