

To: Maidstone Joint Transportation Board
By: KCC Highways and Transportation
Date: 30th July 2024
Subject: Petition – Replacement of Camera in Loose Road, Maidstone
Classification: Information Only

Summary: This information report provides an update regarding the 125 signature petition received requesting replacement of (Safety) camera in Loose Road, Maidstone

1.Context and background

1.1

The A229, is a local highway authority (KCC) primary route, extending from Maidstone Town Centre, through south of Hawkhurst.

In 1996, at its junction near to Sheal's Crescent, Maidstone, a safety camera was installed due to a history of speed related personal injury crashes.

In 2016, a programme of work was determined to upgrade the complete stock of failing safety camera equipment across Kent & Medway, 80+ sites in total. The Kent & Medway Safety Camera Partnership was tasked with this project, using traffic offence surplus funds, held in Kent Police reserves. The project costs were approx.. £2.1m.

Officers undertaking the upgrade project took this opportunity to determine whether each site was still suitable for a safety camera, given that some cameras has been installed 20+ years prior. 96% of the camera stock was upgraded and replaced on a like for like basis, the remaining 4% decommissioned, after extensive investigations, either due to road layout changes or technical constraints.

In the case of the camera at Loose Road near Sheal's Crescent, changes to the design footprint of the new style housing and the required lining, meant that a camera could not be replaced on a like for like basis. Alternative locations in the near vicinity could not be found.

2. Investigations

2.1

To determine whether the camera's presence was still having the desired effect on traffic, a number of surveys and investigations were undertaken.

2.2

Speed data collected while camera in situ. Data collected September 2021

Northbound 7 Day	Average	26.2mph
Northbound 7 Day	85 th ile	28.47mph

2.3

Speed data collected while camera in situ but bagged over. Data collected January 2022

Camera housing bagged over October 2021

Northbound 7 Day	Average	29.15mph
Northbound 7 Day	85 th %ile	32.6mph

2.4

Speed data collected after camera removal. Data collected March 2023

Note: The camera was removed in July 2022 due to the structural integrity of the housing being compromised due to its age, mechanical failure and erosion. This posed a risk to passing pedestrians and traffic.

Northbound 7 Day	Average	30.18mph
Northbound 7 Day	85 th %ile	33.87mph

2.5

DfT Annual Speed Data

This data relates to vehicle speeds recorded over a year long period across the network. The current data is from April 2022-March 2023. The data is taken from in-built trackers, GPS loggers and vehicle fleet telematic data, containing a mix of cars, HGVs and LGVs. It is not made known which specific sat nav companies supply the data to form these calculations, only that the intention is to provide a representative sample of traffic mix on the network. The dataset itself is a product provided by Ordnance Survey.

Average	23.44mph
85 th %ile	30.44mph

2.6

Personal injury crash data

Crash Number	Date	Direction of travel & Location	Detail of crash
11	22/04/2023	North west.. Sheal's Crescent	Rear end shunt. Speeds not contributory
6	08/09/2021	South. Loose Road	Goods vehicle veered into opposite carriageway. Speeds not contributory
5	28/07/2021	South. Loose Road	Motorcycle overtake stationery traffic, clipped stopped car. Speeds not contributory
1	20/08/2019	North. Loose Road	HGV collided with car. Speeds not contributory
9	25/08/2022	North. Loose Road jw Heather Drive	Motorcycle right turn from Heather Drive and struck car on Loose Road. Speeds not contributory
2	29/08/2019	South. Loose Road	HGV struck pedestrian. Speeds not contributory



3. Other considerations

3.1

Discussions with a member of Southborough Primary School PTA requested that, in the absence of a fixed speed camera, a mobile camera van be deployed at the rear entrance to the school on Loose Road. This was raised with Kent Police through the Kent & Medway Safety Camera Partnership, and Kent Police undertook a site survey to determine its viability. Kent Police reported that they visited the site and undertook a risk assessment. Kent Police noted during their visit that the rear access was in fact still in use, and together with being unable to get the correct visibility splays for enforcement, they found this site to be unsuitable.

3.2

The location in question is within an existing speed camera enforcement area. A safety camera is installed on Loose Road, southbound, near to its junction with Plains Avenue. Additionally there is a further safety camera at Hayle Road. The entire length of this route is covered by safety camera “bellow” signage. This signage will remain in place.

4. Analysis of data

4.1

Having studied the data, both pre and post camera removal, it is evident that while vehicle speeds have crept up marginally, this is not having a detrimental effect on traffic movements or collisions.

5. Recommendations

5.1

Due to technical constraints a replacement camera cannot be located in Loose Road. A review of the data shows no detrimental effects on traffic and/or road user in the absence of a safety camera. This site remains within a speed camera enforcement zone, and as such all camera bellow signage will remain in place.

It is recommended that **no action is taken**. This site should, however, remain under review through Kent County Council's annual crash analysis studies.

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