

Update on Petitions submitted to Kent Highway Services

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

Summary

1. A report to update the Board on the current status of petitions received by Kent Highway Services (KHS).

Traffic Calming Measures, Heath Road, Coxheath

2. A petition was submitted in April 2008 by 59 residents, lead by Mr A R Monk of Westerhill Road, Coxheath. It sought action to improve the traffic calming measures installed along Heath Road, Coxheath as the petitioners felt these were dangerous.
3. A number of changes have been carried out to the traffic calming since the submission of this petition and as previously reported KHS had agreed to carry out a review of the safety record in Coxheath, further speed checks and complete the safety audit of the current scheme. This work has been completed and sent to the both the County Councillor and Parish Council. The Parish Council have recently held an exhibition to consult the community of Coxheath on alternative proposals put forward by their independent consultants prior to further discussions with Kent County Council.

Request for the Implementation of a Weight Restriction through Yalding

4. A petition was submitted in September 2008 by Yalding Parish Council with over 570 signatures supporting a previous request for a weight restriction through Yalding and that surveys of lorry movements through Yalding and East Farleigh be undertaken.
5. It was reported at the last meeting of this Board that surveys, paid for by the local County Councillor and Parish Council, had been carried out in November 2010. KHS received the results of these surveys in February 2011 and have subsequently circulated these to the relevant Councillors and Parish Councils. Once the Councillors and Parish Councils have had opportunity to consider these results further discussions will be held with the local community on the way forward. A verbal update on the Freight Action Plan for Kent will be given at the meeting.

Closure of Pheasant Lane, Maidstone South

6. A petition was submitted in August 2008 by some 120 residents, lead by Mr David Fraiss of Osborne House, Loose Road of the Pheasant Lane Action Group which sought the closure of Pheasant Lane to vehicles other than for residential access. The petitioners felt the lane was being used as a rat run, was too narrow for the volume of traffic has too many blind bends with drivers driving too fast and pedestrians are at great risk.
7. At the last meeting of this Board the permanent closure of Pheasant Lane to all through traffic was approved. The process to make the initial Experimental Traffic Regulation Order permanent has been initiated. The existing arrangement of preventing through traffic by removable plastic bollards has not proved durable and has now become a maintenance problem. KHS have investigated more robust options and are working with manufacturers on a design which should restrict motor vehicles, but remains accessible for disabled users and cyclists and importantly, can be removed quickly should emergency access be required.

Road Safety Measures along Walderslade Woods Road

8. Kent Highway Services received a petition from Mrs Gillian Tatnell from Walderslade Woods with 212 signatures requesting a reduction in speed limit with traffic islands and hatching. The petition received the support of Boxley Parish Council although Walderslade Woods Road falls within both Maidstone and Tonbridge and Malling and has been reported to both Joint Transportation Boards.
9. At previous meetings of this Board it has been reported that KHS had submitted a bid for funding through the Local Transport Plans Integrated Transport Programme for 2011/12 for a scheme consisting of gateway signage improvements, improvements to the side road junction warning signs and also to provide traffic islands to protect right turning traffic. A verbal update on the Integrated Transport Programme for 2011/12 will be given at the meeting.

Residents of Tovil Green Court

10. At previous meetings of meeting of this Board it was reported that a petition, containing 31 signatures, had been received from the residents of Tovil Green Court, Maidstone requesting the provision of pedestrian facilities along Burial Ground Lane and Farleigh Hill to enable better pedestrian access to Tesco's and Lidl's.
11. A scheme consisting of a new footway together with an enhancement of the crossing facilities along Tovil Hill had been submitted for funding through the through the Local Transport Plans Integrated Transport Programme for 2011/12. A verbal update on the Integrated Transport Programme for 2011/12 will be given at the meeting.

Penenden Heath Pre-School, Maidstone

12. It has been reported to previous meetings of this Board that a petition, containing 99 signatures, had been received from the local residents and parents of children at Penenden Heath Pre-School, Maidstone requesting safety improvements along the road approaching Penenden Heath Roundabout from Boxley Village.
13. A scheme consisting of a crossing on the Boxley Road (between The Bull and the mini-roundabout) had been submitted for funding through the through the Local Transport Plans Integrated Transport Programme for 2011/12. A verbal update on the Integrated Transport Programme for 2011/12 will be given at the meeting.
14. Cllr Chittenden is however funding, via the Member Highway Fund, a scheme to install 30 mph repeater roundels on Boxley Road in the 30mph section without street lighting from the mini roundabout heading west together with a junction warning sign, SLOW road markings and red surfacing at the Boxley Road / Neville Close junction. These improvements should help to reduce traffic speeds in the area and is with our contractor for programming.

Parking Issues Tudor Avenue

15. It has been reported to previous meetings of this Board that KHS had been passed a petition with 54 signatures from the residents of Tudor Avenue, Maidstone requesting parking restrictions be implemented to deal with commuter parking that the residents feel is causing potential road safety problems.

16. It was proposed that KHS would advertise a Traffic Regulation Order giving notice of the intention to install double yellow lines at certain points along Tudor Avenue to improve road safety on the 26th January 2011. However, due to staff sickness and shortages it has not been possible to progress this Order and KHS are now procuring additional resources and expertise to overcome this problem. Once these resources are in place this Order will be progressed as a priority.

Sutton Road Service Road

17. KHS received a petition supported by 55 out of the 66 residents in Sutton Road service road raising concerns over the volume and speed of traffic using the service road to avoid the traffic signals on the A274. At the last meeting of this board it was reported that the local County Councillor, if supported by local residents, would look to use their Member Highway Fund to turn the service road into a cul-de-sac by the use of removable bollards at one end of the road.
18. KHS have consulted the residents of Sutton Road service road seeking their views on whether they support a formal closure and if so at which location. The consultation closes on the 12th April and a verbal update of the results will be given at the meeting.

Speed Limit Review on the A20 through Harrietsham & Lenham

19. As previously reported to this Board KHS had received a petition from residents of Harrietsham and Lenham in response to the review of speed limit on A20. 48 Pages of signatures were received highlighting residents' extreme disappointment of the review carried out by the County Council on the speed limit on the A20 through Harrietsham and Lenham. The petition requested that a new review is carried out which looks at implementing speed reduction measures along the route. The petition was passed to the speed limit review team to respond to the issues raised in the petition.
20. As reported to this Board the Speed Limit Review was suspended due to Government reductions in grant funding. In August 2010 the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways & Waste wrote to all Members and Parish Councils updating them on the County Councils position with regards to the review of speed limits outlining that in cases where a speed limit demonstrates a quantifiable injury crash saving a funding bid will be made accordingly.
21. The safety record along the A20 Harrietsham has been investigated as part of our annual Casualty Reduction Programme. The analysis of the personal injury crashes through Harrietsham and Lenham does not demonstrate that a lower speed limit would provide a quantifiable crash saving and does not meet with the intervention level set by the County Council therefore, funding would not be available via the Casualty Reduction Programme. KHS will discuss these findings with the local Member to see whether any alternative measures could be provided via the Member Highway Fund.

20mph Speed Limits Around Schools

22. At the July 2010 meeting of this board a petition was received calling upon Kent County Council to review its policy on speed limits starting with those around schools. The petitioners would ideally like a 20mph speed limit in all residential areas, but to start with they called for the County Council to pro-actively work with schools, and where there is a request from parents and support from local residents to implement 20mph speed limits in the area around that school. This was to be done in full consultation with the community.

23. At the last meeting of this board Kent Police submitted a statement reiterating that that they do not support 20mph limits unless they are self enforcing. Either by the fact current speeds are already near 20mph or that sufficient traffic calming measures are put in place to reduce the speed of most traffic to 20mph or less thereby making them self enforcing.
24. Members raised concerns with regard to this statement especially that it places significant financial burdens on introducing any 20mph limit if it requires traffic calming to be self enforcing. Generally, Members felt it was not necessary for all schools to have a 20 mph limit, but that there were many schools that did require it and each application should be considered on its merits. Members raised the fact that in other areas of the Country the police do support 20mph limits without the need to have traffic calming.
25. Members felt it was important to engage with Kent Police regarding their stance on this issue and that the Chairman of the Board meet with Kent Police regarding their policy and report back to the next meeting. The Chairman of this Board, Cllr Gary Cooke, Kent Highway Services and Kent Police met at County Hall on 8th March 2011. Kent Police were represented by PC Geoff Bineham and Sergeant Gary Fittall - Traffic Management Unit Sergeant
26. Kent Police explained that they have very limited resources to proactively enforce traffic offences in Kent hence the requirement for new limits to be self enforcing. Kent Police only have 100 specifically trained traffic officers which equates to a maximum of 20 officers on shift at any one time. The priority for these officers is to concentrate enforcement on major roads which includes Kent's motorway network. It was also mentioned by Kent Police that some of the existing 20mph limits currently in operation without traffic calming such as Sandwich in Kent and the Portsmouth scheme existing traffic speeds were generally at 20mph before the implementation of the limit.
27. At the meeting with the Police various potential options were discussed to find a mutually agreeable way forward. The ideas from this meeting have been discussed with the County Councils Cabinet Member and a further verbal update will be given at the meeting.

The withdrawal of the Arriva 101 Service from Bus Stops at Cobtree Golf Course and Salisbury Road, Kits Coty

28. It has been previously reported to this Board that a petition had been received calling for the reinstatement of the 101 bus service to the Cobtree Golf Course Bus Stop and a report was submitted proposing a number of options and seeking Members views.
29. It was agreed that further quotes be obtained for Option 2 in an attempt to reduce the costs of this preferred option. These quotes have been returned to KHS and passed to Paul Carter, the local County Councillor, for consideration for funding. A verbal update will be given at the meeting.

Postley Road, Maidstone

30. A petition has been received from the residents of Postley Road, Maidstone which raises concern over the dangerous and increasingly unacceptable use of the road by buses including speeding. Kent Highway Services have meet with the lead petitioner and are investigating the issues raised by the petitioners. KHS are currently arranging a meeting with the local Councillors to discuss a way forward with respect to this petition.

Boxley Road and Beechen Bank Road

31. At the a previous meeting of this Board a petition was received requesting a reduction in the speed limit along Boxley Road and Beechen Bank Road. KHS commissioned a speed survey and have now received the results from its consultants and have reviewed the personal injury crash records along Boxley & Beechen Bank Road. KHS are currently arranging a meeting with the local Councillors and Parish Council to discuss a way forward with respect to this petition.

Footpath along Lenham Road to Sports Field, Kingswood

32. At the last meeting of this board a petition was submitted by Broomfield & Kingswood Parish Council signed by 101 residents requesting a footpath be constructed along the Lenham Road, Kingswood to ensure the safety and well being of pedestrians accessing the Sports Field and its facilities.
33. Early investigations revealed that third party land not in the control of the Highway Authority will be required to construct the footway and excluding land costs the footway could cost in the region of £40,000 to £50,000. KHS have written to the land owners in control of the land to ascertain, if funding was available, whether they would be willing to agree in principle to transfer the land to KHS.

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