

ASHFORD JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD 15th JUNE 2010

Subject: **A28 BETHERSDEN - SPEED LIMIT REVIEW**

Director/Head of Service: Director of Kent Highway Services

Decision Issues: These matters are within the authority of the Kent County Council

Decision: For information

ABC Ward/KCC Division: **Weald Central/Ashford Rural West**

Summary: This report sets out the results of a further study into the speed and safety issues raised by Bethersden Parish Council following the results of the Speed Limit Review

For Information: **This report is for Members' information.**

Classification: THIS REPORT IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Background

In 2006, Central Government issued circular 01/2006, "Setting Local Speed Limits". This directive required traffic authorities to review the speed limits on all their A and B roads, and implement any necessary changes, by 2011, in accordance with this guidance. The review has been undertaken across most of the Ashford Borough and has provided a snapshot assessment of the suitability of the speed limit on each of these roads.

Bethersden Parish Council objected to the conclusions and recommendations of the speed limit review. Bethersden Parish Council issued a response to the public consultation of the review, claiming that there was evidence to suggest that, in some instances, lower speed limits and additional engineering measures were required to deal with the issues being experienced along the A28. The issues raised by Bethersden Parish Council were mainly site specific, at areas identified as "hot spots", and also for vulnerable road users. At a special meeting of the JTB in January, it was agreed to look into Bethersden Parish Councils concerns further, hence a presentation of Kent Highway Services findings at this meeting.

Presentation

The presentation explains what Kent Highway Services do to investigate and analyse highway matters raised by colleagues, Kent Police, through our own research and also of issues raised by Parish Councils and members of the public. The presentation gives factual evidence of crashes, driven speeds,

traffic volumes, road surface condition and other relevant factors used to determine whether these circumstances warrant further investigation, with an aim to use engineering measures to mitigate the effects of any failings.

Results of Further Investigation

Crash data has been studied. At the “hot spot” areas studied, there are a number of recorded personal injury crashes where the road surface was showing as wet. Some remedial works have already been completed and further investigations are being undertaken with regard to surface water drainage. The road surface condition has also been checked and currently falls below the minimum intervention levels for action. There is no other evidence of a pattern of crashes that would warrant further investigation to implement engineering measures to mitigate these.

Driven vehicle speeds have been collected. The current posted speed limit on the stretch of the A28 in question is 40mph. The data shows that the mean speeds of vehicles travelling along the A28 in the vicinity of Forge Hill is 36mph westbound and 36.5mph eastbound and in the vicinity of Kiln Lane to be 38.5mph westbound and 38.5mph eastbound respectively. Kent Police have confirmed that they would not support a reduction in the speed limit to 30mph. The governments Traffic Advisory Leaf 01/04, states that “where appropriate speed limits in villages should be 30mph”, but for the reasons mentioned above, and the fact that the village “proper” with its associated services, i.e. school, church, village hall, post office etc, is located to the north, away from the A28, a 30mph limit is not appropriate. Additionally, when travelling from the east, the road is straight with good forward visibility and there is the likely risk that, if the speed limit is set too low, drivers will try overtaking as they can see ahead.

Traffic volume was also looked at and the HGV movements found to be in line with that expected on Kent's roads.

Use of the road by vulnerable people was considered to be an issue by the Parish Council and the lack of provision for this. The provision of a formal pedestrian crossing point on the A28 has been looked into, but the alignment of the road makes it difficult to identify a suitable safe location for its installation, which meets the design criteria. Therefore, in order to facilitate pedestrians that are already crossing near to the junction of Forge Hill, and subject to safety audit approval and a successful bid for funding through the LTP, it may be possible to provide an informal crossing point by way of some dropped kerbs and a hard standing area to cross onto in Forge Hill.

Conclusions

- KHS will continue to monitor and review crashes on the A28
- KHS will put in a bid for funding, through the Scheme Prioritisation System, for a scheme to provide informal crossing facilities near to the Forge Hill junction

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