

Agenda Item No: 6
Report To: Ashford Joint Transportation Board



Date: March 2011

Report Title: Proposed Introduction of New and Amendment of Existing Parking Restrictions in Victoria Ward

Report Author: Jamie Watson/Graham Cox

Summary: This report details the results of the recent statutory consultation process undertaken in Victoria Ward, Ashford. Traffic movement and safety proposals have been developed in consultation with Ashford Borough Council to introduce and amend movement and parking controls associated with the new extensions to Victoria Road and Leacon Road Ashford.

Key Decision: YES

Affected Wards: Victoria Ward

Recommendations: **Subject to the views of the Board I propose that:-**

- 1) **The proposed traffic safety and movement management scheme be implemented.**
- 2) **The proposed parking safety scheme to be implemented**
- 3) **That the following orders be made**

**THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
(VARIOUS ROADS, ASHFORD)
(WAITING RESTRICTIONS) ORDER 2011**

**THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
(VICTORIA ROAD, ASHFORD)
(20 MPH SPEED LIMIT ZONE) ORDER 2011**

**THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
(VICTORIA CRESCENT, ASHFORD)
(PROHIBITION OF LEFT HAND TURNS) ORDER 2011**

Policy Overview:

Financial Implications: Scheme to be funded as part of the overall Victoria Way scheme Community Infrastructure Fund 2.

Other Material Implications: None

Background Papers: Victoria Way –Initial Phase, Design & Access Statement Apr 09, 'Victoria Way Major Highway Scheme – Initial Phase' report to 8th Dec '09 JTB, Copies of all responses to the formal public consultation (available in the Members Room only)

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Report Title: Proposed Introduction of New and Amended Traffic Movement and Parking Restrictions in Victoria Ward

Purpose of the Report

1. This report provides an explanation of proposals to introduce and amend various traffic movement and parking restrictions in Victoria Ward, Ashford as well as a detailed analysis of the responses received to the recent statutory consultation process.
2. These proposals form a part of the scheme to link and upgrade Leacon Road and Victoria Road, forming a new through road. The construction element of this scheme is now nearing completion and in order to ensure safe usage of the new link road there is a need to develop and introduce movement and parking controls.
3. Currently both Leacon Road and Victoria Road are not open to through traffic and as such have relatively low traffic usage and speeds. However this will change significantly when they are linked together. With this in mind it has been necessary to take forward to formal consultation a set of proposals that address the increased risk to safety and additional traffic flows. The results of the public consultation are included in this report.

Issue to be decided

4. As set out in the recommendations of this report, the Board is asked to approve the making of the requested Traffic Regulation Orders and the required implementation.

Background

5. On 18th August '09 planning permission was granted (planning ref. AS/09/460) for the Victoria Way - Initial phase, Ashford (Design & Access Statement April 09). This scheme will connect and upgrade Leacon Road and Victoria Road to form a new through road.
6. As the construction phase of the new link road is now nearing completion there is a need to develop proposals that will help control the increased traffic speeds along the new through road due to its change in status, as well as mitigate any safety and parking issues that may also arise.
7. There is particular need for traffic and parking controls around the high pedestrian destinations such as the central 'John Wallis' Square and the local primary school.

- 8, Throughout the design and development stages of the new link road scheme the ethos of safety, functionality and quality have been strongly adhered to. These key criteria have formed the foundations for the development of the traffic and parking control measures detailed below.

Proposals

- 9, Speed Limit controls

Although the majority of the road will be subject to that of a standard built up area speed limit (30mph), it is proposed to introduce a 20mph zone around the central John Wallis Square area and outside Victoria Road Primary School. This is to aid pedestrian safety, particularly in the vicinity of the Learning Link footpath that is a busy pedestrian/cycleway link to the town centre, and to give a more environmentally sensitive feel to the area by lowering speeds but also removing the need for repeater signing. The introduction of 20mph zones in areas where there is high usage by 'vulnerable' users such as near schools is encouraged in the Department for Transport's Circular 01/2006 'Setting Speed Limits'

- 10, School Keep Clear

In addition to the speed limit proposals there is a need to ensure that a clear area is maintained outside the school during school times to ensure full visibility is available for both pedestrians and vehicles when passing the site. The introduction of a School Keep Clear marking and Traffic Order is the most effective method for achieving this and will be in line with Kent Highway Services' aim of introducing these controls outside of schools wherever practical.

- 11, No left turn (Victoria Crescent junction)

A 'No Left Turn' restriction is proposed when exiting Victoria Crescent at the junction of Victoria Crescent and Victoria Road to prevent possible traffic conflicts. Some vehicles, particularly HGV's, would need to swing wide and enter the oncoming traffic lane if they were to attempt to turn left from Victoria Crescent. The design of the junction is affected by the proximity of the adjacent properties. The right turn is unaffected and will operate in the normal manner.

12, Restricted Parking Zone

Although the entire length of the new link road is required to be 'No Waiting At Any Time' to allow for traffic flows and safety it is desirable that these restrictions are implemented in a less visually intrusive way around the central Square. To facilitate this, a restricted zone is proposed in the central square to coincide with the 20mph zone. The restricted zone will remove the need for double yellow lines in the square, and the restrictions will be indicated by use of zone entry/exit signs, and repeater signs.

Visually, this will be more in keeping with the ethos of the high quality finish of the paved areas in that location but will also have the effect, when allied with the 20mph zone of making vehicle drivers feel that the environment is different than usual, thus leading to increased awareness and caution.

13, Shared Footway/Cycleway Crossing

The new extension to Victoria Road will cross the existing shared footway/cycle way known as the 'Learning Link'. To ensure that the link is maintained in a safe and legal manner a Toucan controlled crossing is proposed at the point where the extended road will cross the existing Learning Link pedestrian/cycle route.

Consultation and responses received

- 14, The above proposals have been subject to the statutory advertising and noticing process needed for the introduction of Traffic Orders. This has involved the placing of all the required documents (existing Orders, proposed Orders, plans, statement of reasons) on deposit at both the District Council Office and the County Council office as well as any other relevant public buildings in the affected area.
- 15, Statutory consultation began on the 30th January 2011 and lasted until the 21st February 2011. In addition to the statutory advertising process carried out in accordance with Kent Highways Services policy and the legal requirements set out in the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, all affected properties also received detailed plans and an explanation letter concurrently.
- 16, There have been 7 responses to the consultation received in writing via letter or email.
- 17, Each response has raised objections or observations about different aspects of the scheme. These have ranged from the number of signs and markings to be located on site, to the ability of residents to be able to be collected from their own premises.

- 18, Four of the responses have objected to the additional length of 'No Waiting At Any Time' restriction proposed on safety grounds opposite no's 59/60 Bowens Field. The objections are on the grounds that not only does the current situation provide useful additional on street parking capacity but that there is no evidence, statistical or circumstantial that there are any residual safety implications.
- 19, The proposal to consider introducing restrictions in this location was in response to a representation received from a resident during last years' 'limited waiting' phase 1 consultation in which it was claimed that when larger vehicles park in this location, visibility is severely hampered when exiting his property and thus increases the risk of collision.
- 20, The March 2010 board resolved to continue the 'limited waiting' scheme unchanged at that time but to consider the merits of such a claim as part of the second phase of restrictions (which these orders now form) to be introduced in connection with the Victoria Rd / Leacon Rd extensions.
- 21, The site was visited and surveyed by engineers to determine if the representations claims had validity. It was determined that the visibility may be very slightly impaired if a large vehicle did park in the described location although being a quiet residential area this may occur very infrequently.
- 22, Additional residents had also expressed some desire, at the time of the introduction of the Phase 1 restrictions, to see differing controls in that location, so it was decided that although the situation was marginal and the introduction of controls was not essential it was sensible to propose additional restrictions at this stage as part of larger overall controls.
- 23, Due to the marginal requirement of these restrictions and the objections now received it is recommended that this proposed section of 'No Waiting At Any Time' be omitted from the Order and not introduced, thus upholding the representations received with this objection. The area is a quiet residential cul-de-sac which should not have large vehicles parking and any increased risk caused by reduced visibility should be balanced against very low traffic numbers and speeds thus not creating any undue risk to motorists.
- 24, A representation was received from a resident who was concerned that the proposals would introduce 'No Waiting At Any Time' along the entire length of the new link road, which would leave no provision for vehicles to stop and allow pedestrians to board. This was of particular concern to the resident as they are unable to walk any distance and felt this lack of provision may impinge on their quality of life.

- 25, 'No Waiting At Any Time' restrictions do not prevent any vehicle from stopping to enable a person to board or alight, so this concern is not pertinent. In addition, this resident also states in their representation that they possess a disabled blue badge which would allow for them to park a vehicle on waiting restrictions for up to 3 hours whilst displaying a valid badge and time clock. Therefore this representation has no effect on the scheme and should not be considered as an objection. A written response has already been sent to the resident explaining the operations of such restrictions and that they would be unaffected by the restrictions. They have made no further comment.
- 26, There has been a representation from another resident who had previously made comment on the Phase 1 proposals last year. Again his comments were to be considered at this stage during the introduction of the Phase 2 controls. He had requested additional 'No Waiting At Any Time' restrictions around the stub end cul-de-sac accessing no's 1-12 Bowens Field and that the length of bays opposite properties 62, 63 & 64 Bowens Field should be reduced as he was concerned that egress and access to driveways for 63 & 64 may be impeded and that visibility when exiting the cul-de-sac for properties 1-12 would be hampered.
- 27, We have proposed the additional restrictions previously requested for the stub end of Bowens Field cul-de-sac, so he is in support of that element. However, following site visits by engineers it was felt that the driveways to properties 63 & 64 were not unduly impeded as they have wide (2-3 cars) width accesses combined with road widths and footpath of approx 5m. This gives a clear turning radius before reaching the bays opposite in addition to their wide accesses. The visibility when exiting the cul-de-sac would be affected only marginally if a large vehicle was to park in the end bay, which is currently over 10m away from the junction.
- 28, Bowens Field area is a quiet residential cul-de-sac which should not have large vehicles parking and any increased risk caused by reduced visibility should be balanced against very low traffic numbers and speeds, thus not creating any undue risk to motorists. With all of these elements in mind it is the recommendation to the board that this representation for additional alterations is set aside and the scheme is implemented as advertised.
- 29, A separate representation was received supporting the scheme but requesting that the 20mph zone should have supplementary repeater signs placed throughout to remind motorists of the speed limit in the zone.
- 30, A 20mph zone is a nationally recognised feature and is determined by zone entry / exit signs at either end of the zone. In addition the zone must have traffic calming features at specific intervals to ensure that vehicles are not capable physically of reaching speeds above the 20mph limit thus removing the need for additional signing. Therefore the speed limit becomes self enforcing.

- 31, The Victoria Rd 20mph zone will feature raised ramps, visual narrowing of carriageways, bends and a signalised crossing as well as a 'School Keep Clear' restriction to ensure that it complies with the standards of a zone. This removes the need for additional signing.
- 32, A zone of this type was chosen as a feature of the new link road as it will increase safety around high pedestrian sites like the John Wallis Square and the school but also because it enables a high quality finish to the street scene by reducing the level of street furniture and signing, which is also a county wide aim of Kent Highway Services.
- 32, Therefore it is recommended that this representation has a formal response outlining the signing requirements of a 20mph zone, and the representation set aside and the scheme be implemented as advertised and designed.
- 33, A response was also received from Victoria Road Primary School detailing their concerns surrounding the ability to receive deliveries near to the property and questioning whether the proposed restrictions or road construction would affect this.
- 34, The 'School Keep Clear' restriction immediately outside of the school will prevent loading between 8:00am - 5:00pm but this is consistent with pedestrian safety outside of a school. The rest of the zone has no loading restrictions and so it will be possible to park opposite the School for short periods to load and unload in accordance with standard practice.
- 35, It is, however recognised that the general operating nature of the area will change once the road is linked and placing a large vehicle directly outside of the school for long periods during unloading may have an adverse affect on traffic flows in the area. This should be balanced against a reduced traffic flow expected in the nearby Victoria Crescent. Should a delivery be required which takes longer than usual or the vehicle size required is large enough to have an undue effect on the general road safety and traffic flows it would be advisable for the driver to park the vehicle in Victoria Crescent which is about 25m further away, and manually transport the goods via barrow to the required destination.
- 36, The response received does not support or object to the proposals. It is raising concerns and requesting that certain aspects of the road construction and future traffic management be considered carefully and that a response detailing their specific needs be addressed.
- 37, The School has been a key stake holder in the development of the overall scheme, a formal written response will be sent, explaining the operating nature of the restrictions and how they will influence the school's operations. As this representation is not a formal objection it is recommended that the board note and agree the response but that for the

purposes of this consultation on the proposed controls it be set aside and the scheme be progressed as advertised.

Conclusions and recommendations

- 38, The majority of the objections received have concerned the additional 'No Waiting At Any Time' restriction proposed for a short section outside numbers 13 & 14 Bowens Field. A restriction in that location is not safety critical and was in response to a representation received to the Phase 1 proposals. It is therefore recommended that these representations are upheld and this element of the scheme be deleted and removed from the proposed order
- 39, The other responses are not objecting to the proposals. They are seeking clarity on scheme operation and design. Formal responses will need to be sent, explaining the scheme operation and addressing their individual concerns but as they do not form part of a formal objection process they are not required to be deliberated upon by the Board although full explanations have been included for completeness.
- 40, Following completion of the formal consultation process regarding traffic and parking controls associated with the extensions to Victoria Road and Leacon Road, it is recommended that, subject to the decision of the Board, the above Orders be made and the scheme implemented as advertised, but with the omission of the 'No Waiting At Any Time' restriction as detailed in section 38 above.

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