

**ASHFORD JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD
14 JUNE 2011**

Subject:	Ashford Pedestrian Guardrailing Assessment
Director/Head of Service:	Director of Kent Highway Services
Decision Issues:	These matters are within the authority of the Kent County Council
Decision:	Non-key
CCC Ward/KCC Division:	Bockhanger, Godinton, Stour and Victoria
Summary:	<i>The Board is asked to consider and comment on the proposals to manage sections of guard railing in Ashford</i>
To Note	The proposals as identified in the attached report and make a decision
Classification:	THIS REPORT IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Introduction

On behalf of Kent Highway Services, Jacobs have carried out a survey of pedestrian guardrailing in Ashford and are seeking comments on proposals to remove sections of guardrailing from some sites.

Background

The main purpose of guardrailing is to improve safety by trying to prevent pedestrians from crossing the road at an inappropriate place or from straying into the road inadvertently. Guardrailing can also be used to offer some protection to pedestrians at locations where the swept path of large vehicles, such as buses and heavy goods vehicles, takes the vehicles close to the footway, sometimes overhanging it.

It is recognised that where pedestrian guardrailing is badly sited or over installed it not only alienates pedestrians but also looks unsightly, easily becomes damaged which in turn leads to increased maintenance costs and complaints. Indeed poor guard railing can lead to an increase in pedestrian crashes.

A full report was presented to the Joint Transportation Board in March 2011. Not all sites were discussed on an individual basis. It was recommended to defer making a decision until comments had been received on all sites. Appendix 1 is a report with the final recommendations following comments received.

Kent Highway Services' contractor would be carrying out the removals with the panels being recycled. If decorative or ornate railings and panels are highlighted for removal the Borough Council will be able to retain these for repairs or future use.

Options available

Members of the Board can:

1. support the proposals to remove guardrailing at the sites identified in Appendix 1
2. reject some/all of the proposals

Implications

1. Financial – Funding will be provided by Kent Highway Services. A budget allocation has not been secured specifically for this commission.
2. Programming - It is proposed to undertake the works on a site by site basis where damage has occurred to existing barrier to achieve value for money and efficiency.

Conclusion

The removal of guardrailing which is not required for pedestrian safety or for other reasons is in line with national guidance to de-clutter streets. It will also reduce on-going maintenance costs and help improve the appearance of the public realm.

Contact Officer

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Report – following comments received

Kent Pedestrian Guard Railing Assessment

Ashford – Report on comments



May 2011



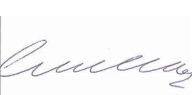

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 Project: Kent Guard Railing Assessment Job No: B1649000
 Document Title: Ashford – Report on Comments

Originator Checked by Reviewed by Approved by

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Contents

1. **Foreword**
2. **Comments received**

An assessment of the pedestrian guard railing in Ashford town centre was carried out for Kent Highways Services in November 2010. A report on the findings and recommendations was sent to County Members, KCC's Transport and Development team and Ashford Borough Council in December 2010. Following this initial consultation a further report was issued on 19th January 2011 taking account of the comments received.

The assessment was also reported upon to the Joint Transportation Board on 8th March 2011.

This report details the comments received through the consultation process and the Safety Auditor's response and recommendation to be taken to the Joint Transportation Board on 14th June 2011 for decision.

General responses

“Railings at particular crossing points near schools should not be removed”

Response - Railings are to be retained outside schools.

“None of the guard railing should be removed as it serves a safety purpose”

Response – the guard railing has been assessed by a Safety Auditor in accordance with the latest national guidance (Local Transport Note 2/09 – Pedestrian Guardrailing, DfT April 2009). Pedestrian safety remains of paramount importance. Wherever safety is a concern railings will be retained and where necessary will be replaced with better condition ones.

Site 1 Location:

Site 1 is located from the roundabout junction with A292 Maidstone Road/New Street/Magazine Road/Chart Road and St Teresa' Close to just passed the St Mary's Nursery School on Chart Road.

Comments received	Response
The 31 panels nearest Maidstone Road controlled crossing protects pedestrians from the drop in level between the carriageway and footpath. The change in level is not immediately obvious to those traversing the carriageway.	The difference in level is noted, on the northwest side of Chart Road panels are to be retained to stop pedestrians crossing here. By keeping some of the panels pedestrians are unlikely to attempt this manoeuvre and cross 4 lanes of traffic.
The 7 panel section adjacent to the Chart Road traffic signal controlled crossing protects pedestrians, in this case from the steeply sloping verge. Pedestrians maybe caught unaware and slip particularly in poor weather conditions.	The 7 panels serve no useful purpose. It is unlikely that pedestrians would cross the verge here as a wide footway directs them to the crossing point.
The 17 panel section outside numbers 109 and 111 New Street protects pedestrians from the drop in level between the carriageway and the footpath.	These panels are not on a pedestrian desire line. There is already anti pedestrian surfacing here to discourage any crossing. The pedestrian guard rail is not a vehicle restraint system
The remaining sections of guardrail proposed for removal force pedestrians to use the designated crossings.	Site 1 is so open that the crossings are visible from a substantial distance. In general pedestrian guard rail is to be retained at the controlled crossings to ensure people are channelled (eg if the crossing is not visible as it's round a bend). The pedestrian railing is to be retained outside the 2 schools.
I would be extremely concerned if the railings in the upper part of Chart Road were altered in any way. These keep children off the road and are essential.	The railings adjacent to St Marys Primary School are to be replaced.
The railings should be retained at the roundabout at the top of New Street and at Chart Road on the way to St Mary's School.	The railings at the roundabout are not required to act as a guide. As the footpaths are well identified and the crossing points are defined by dropped kerbs and tactile paving. The railings adjacent to St Marys Primary School are to be replaced.
RECOMMENDATION PARTIALLY REMOVE – The majority of the railings offer little benefit as a guide or a protective device except outside the both the primary school and the nursery school where these guard railings should be retained. 22.5 panels that are to be retained are located on a shared foot / cycleway and should be 1.4m high – they will therefore need replacing.	

Site 2 Location:

Site 2 is located on A292 Maidstone Road from the junction with Chart Road. The site has mainly residential properties on the western side and the Highworth Girls Grammar School and some small business outlets on the eastern side.

Comments received	Response
The 3 and 6 panel sections outside numbers 5 & 7 Maidstone Road encourage pedestrians to use the dedicated crossing	The signal heads of the crossing point can be seen from some distance. There is also pink tactile paving indicating where the crossing is. The footway is wide. Site observations revealed that very few people use the crossing.
I would be extremely concerned if the railings in Maidstone Road were removed, these keep children off the road and are essential.	The railings are on the central reservation with the crossing points being well used.
RECOMMENDATION REMOVE - The pedestrian guard railings offer little benefit as a guide or protective device	

Site 3 location

Site 3 is located on Chart Road. The site is located in a residential area

Comments received	Response
<p>10 panels within the 31 panel section (those outside numbers 1 & 3 Chart Road) protect pedestrians from the deceptive difference in level between the carriageway and footway. The remainder of the railings encourage pedestrians to use the designated crossing.</p>	<p>The panels outside numbers 1 and 3 are not on a pedestrian desire line and the footpath ends at this point. The costs of maintaining the pedestrian guard rail cannot be justified. With regards to the other 31 and 8 sections identified for removal, these are located where people are unlikely to cross. Travelling west pedestrians will have passed a controlled crossing point. Few movements would be made on the south side of Chart Road as this footpath only leads to 2 houses. People living on the residential estate will be aware of the controlled crossing in the vicinity.</p>
<p>I would be extremely concerned if the railings in the upper part of Chart Road were altered in any way. These keep children off the road and are essential.</p>	<p>The railings adjacent to St Marys Primary School are to be replaced.</p>
<p>RECOMMENDATION PARTIALLY REMOVE - The pedestrian guard railings located on the western side footway offer little benefit as a guide or protective device. The large grassed central island has 2 staggered panels positioned approximately 1.5 metres apart on an incline and these panels should be retained.</p>	

Site 4 location

Site 4 is located on Somerset Road. The northern side of the site has mainly residential properties and on the southern side Edinburgh Road runs parallel to Somerset Road and a car park.

Comments received	Response
The 30 panel section of guardrail discourages pedestrians from crossing the carriageway where there is a potential trip / slip hazard posed by the steep gradient on the refuge between Somerset Road and Edinburgh Road.	The site is not on a pedestrian desire line and pedestrians would have to cross 6 lanes of traffic which is a deterrent to such movement. Coming from the residential area the desire line towards the town leads pedestrians to the controlled crossing point.
RECOMMENDATION REMOVE. The pedestrian guard railing located on the northern footway offers little benefit as a guide or protective device as pedestrians were observed crossing Somerset Road at the point where Sturges Road and Kent Avenue merge at the footway on the northern side.	

Site 5 location

Site 5 is located on Edinburgh Road/Park Street. The site is located on the southern footway outside a block of offices with an arched access to a lane on the southern side.

Comments received	Response
A continuous row of planters have now been installed although these are only partially successful because they do not block the desire line between the end of the 5 panel section and the controlled crossing adjacent to the petrol station on the corner of Somerset Road and North Street. The 2 and 5 panel sections guide pedestrians to the designated crossing.	The road here is straight with good visibility, pedestrians can clearly see the crossing.
RECOMMENDATION REMOVE - The pedestrian guard railing offers little benefit as a guide or protective device.	

Site 6 Location:

Site 6 is located on Elwick Road. The site is located on the southern footway at a bus stop and is adjacent to Elwick Place car park.

Comments received	Response
The carriageway width in this section of Elwick Road (between Station Road / Beaver Road and Church is to be reduced and the bus shelter repositioned. The 10 and 12 panel sections either side of the access to Elwick Road car park direct pedestrians to the designated crossing.	Confirmed that the alterations are inline with the recommendations (Jamie Watson – KHS). The panels either side of the car park access are situated on a very wide footway on a straight road with good visibility with low pedestrian usage
RECOMMENDATION REMOVE - The pedestrian guard railing offers little benefit as a guide or protective device.	

Site 7 Location:

Site 7 is located on Station Road. The site is located on the northern footway outside the AMF Bowling Centre and is adjacent to Kent House.

Comments received	Response
Removal agreed.	
RECOMMENDATION REMOVE - The pedestrian guard railing offers no benefit as a guide or protective device.	

Site 8 Location:

Site 8 is located on Park Street. Park Street is a way one system where at the site is separated into a northern and southern section by a long central island. On the northern side of the central island are bus stops and the southern part of Park Street is an access and egress for taxis, a restaurant and the British Heart Foundation.

Comments received	Response
The 10 panel section encourages pedestrians to cross the carriageway at the designated crossing point.	The 4 signal heads at the crossing and the zig zag markings on the carriageway guide pedestrians to the crossing, the footway is also wide here.
RECOMMENDATION REMOVE - The pedestrian guard railing offers little benefit as a guide or protective device.	

Site 9 Location:

Site 9 is located at the roundabout junction of Mace Lane/Hythe Road and Henwood/Mill Court. - The site is located at a large roundabout junction where there is an Express Store, residential properties with Kent Fire & Rescue Service and some industrial estates located on Henwood.

The northern footway with a segregated cycle facility has a wide footway and a wide space between the cycle facility and the pedestrian guard railing.

Comments received	Response
The 2 panel section in Mace Lane on the eastern side of the traffic signal controlled crossing encourages pedestrians and cyclists to cross the carriageway at the designated crossing point.	The 2 panels are right on the crossing, others are being retained. The cycle giveaway and signalised crossing indicate that cyclists must stop here.
The 23 panel section in Mace Lane encourages pedestrians and cyclists to cross the carriageway at the designated crossing point and discourages pedestrians crossing the carriageway where their path is obstructed by a pedestrian guardrail on the opposite side of the dual carriageway and raised roundabout centre island.	The removal of the 23 panel section will allow more space on the shared footway / cycleway. The white line of the cycle route visibly directs users to the designated crossing point. The railing on the opposite side of Mace Lane is to be retained. Pedestrians will be able to see this which will discourage crossing here.
RECOMMENDATION PARTIALLY REMOVE - The pedestrian guard railings assessed for removal offer little benefit as a guide or protective device. The 8 panel section was reassessed following comments and as a result is recommended to be retained as there is a trip hazard. The panels at Henwood are recommended to be retained following comments received about cyclists using this route.	