

JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD 11 DECEMBER 2012

Subject:	A2042 Faversham Road, Ashford – Proposed Waiting Restrictions
Director/Head of Service:	Director of Highways and Transportation, Kent County Council
Decision Issues:	These matters are within the authority of Kent County Council
Decision:	For recommendation
KCC Division:	Ashford Rural East; Ashford Rural West
ABC Ward:	Kennington; Boughton Aluph and Eastwell
Summary:	This report sets out the outcome of a consultation into safety improvement proposals for the A2042 Faversham Road, Ashford.
Classification:	THIS REPORT IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Introduction

The Road Traffic Act 1988 (Section 39) puts a statutory duty on Highway Authorities to undertake studies into road crashes, and to take steps to both reduce and prevent them from occurring in the future.

In 2011 there were a total of 4,213 crashes on Kent's roads, resulting in injuries to 5,706 people. Keeping road users safe is one of Kent County Council's top priorities. To help achieve this, data is used (provided by the Police) to target 'crash cluster' sites, where a pattern of incidents has been identified that could be reduced or prevented by the introduction of highway engineering methods.

This process is conducted on a yearly basis. Initially, crash cluster sites are identified where in the last three years of available records, there have been six or more crashes in urban areas; and four or more in rural locations. In the annual review of 2011, eleven crashes were identified in the stretch of Faversham Road between The Towers School and Upper Vicarage Road, of which one was categorised as 'serious'.

Safety concerns had previously been raised with both Kent County Council and Kent Police by residents, in respect of this stretch of road. In response to this, the County Member for Ashford Central, Mrs Elizabeth Tweed,

authorised the installation of flashing speed signs at each end of Faversham Road.

Identification of potential improvements

For further robustness, a longer period of study from the beginning of 2008 was considered. The crash data was analysed and the following key factors were identified:-

- A total of 14 collisions occurred, with 3 resulting in serious injury.
- These collisions resulted in 18 casualties (on average, 4 per year).
- 4 involved parked vehicles. One of these was categorised as 'serious', with a young pedestrian crossing from behind a parked car.
- 4 involved pedestrians not using the designated crossing points, including 3 directly outside the school, where a new controlled pedestrian crossing facility is in place.
- 2 involved right turning vehicles.
- 2 involved collisions at junctions.
- 10 occurred during the peak daytime period 8am-6pm.

Based upon this crash record, an assessment was made of the likely crash savings that could be delivered by various potential improvements and initiatives:

Speed reduction measures: The A2042 is a main arterial route into and out of Ashford. It is current KCC policy not to install traffic calming on A roads, and unfortunately there is not enough carriageway width to install traffic islands. Previous surveys had indicated that there was not a speeding issue, although some residents disputed the results, due to the positioning of the surveys. Further speed limit repeater signage is not permitted, as this road is subject to a 30mph limit by virtue of the presence of a system of street lighting. The site does not meet the strict criteria for a new speed camera; new sites are only installed with a history of speed related crashes, where crashes are categorised as either 'serious' or 'fatal', and all other possible remedial measures have been put in place first.

Parking restrictions: The crash record indicated that the presence of parked vehicles on this busy route is causing a safety issue. Three of the crashes occurred in peak times; the other was just outside of this period (6.30pm). It was observed on site that some vehicles tended to speed up on the approach to the parked areas, in order to try and 'beat' the cars coming the other way; forward visibility is very good along this road, as it is very straight. It was considered that the introduction of parking restrictions could save one crash per year.

Improvements to existing flashing sign: One of the new flashing speed signs funded by Mrs Tweed is located just to the north of The Towers School. It was noted on site that the effectiveness of this sign had been compromised by the presence of overhanging branches and vegetation, which were preventing the sign from picking up speeding vehicles and activating. It was considered that if

this was addressed, the fully working sign would help to address the crash record along this stretch of road.

Road safety education: The incidents in the vicinity of the school are of particular concern, particularly as there is now a new pedestrian crossing facility directly outside. It was considered that closer working with The Towers School, with road safety education initiatives, could help to reduce the incidents of pedestrian injuries from occurring.

Based upon the above assessment, a scheme was proposed:-

- Parking restrictions.
- Vegetation clearance for the flashing sign.
- Speed surveys, in new locations to those undertaken previously.
- The intervention of road safety education.

Funding was allocated from KCC's annual Casualty Reduction Measures (CRM) Programme for 2012/13, on the basis of the predicted crash savings. A budget of £5,000 was subsequently set aside for the scheme.

Consultation

Between 28 October 2012 and 19 November 2012, a public consultation exercise was undertaken on the proposals. The proposed parking restrictions were formally advertised as a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO), under "The Kent County Council) (Various Roads, Borough of Ashford) (Waiting Restrictions and Street Parking Places) (Amendment No. 27) Order 2012", with a notice in the paper, notices on site, and letters to statutory consultees.

A consultation leaflet was prepared for nearby affected residents and may be seen in Appendix A. It was distributed to local residents within the area indicated on the plan provided in Appendix B, which also shows the proposals. Twenty seven representations were received, including two district ward councillors, the Sandyhurst Lane Residents' Association, Kent Police, Stagecoach, and a petition from the Kennington WI with 81 signatories. Full copies of all representations made will be available to view at the JTB meeting.

In overall terms there was strong objection to the provision of the proposed parking restrictions. The results of the consultation may be summarised as follows:

RESPONSE	NO. OF RESPONSES
Support	4
Marginal / neutral	4
Object	19

It should be noted that district ward councillors, the Sandyhurst Lane Residents' Association, and a petition from the Kennington WI were amongst

the objections. Stagecoach supported the proposals, because it would help improve the punctuality of the bus service.

A number of common themes and issues emerged when the consultation responses were examined in more detail. Particular attention was paid to those people who took the time to write in and register their objection to the scheme, so that their concerns could be looked at to see if anything had been overlooked in the earlier part of the investigation process. These have been summarised in the following table:

COMMENT OR CONCERN	NO. OF RESPONSES
Already a lack of parking in the area	10*
Concerns that traffic speeds will increase	10*
Negative impact on WI Hall	7*
Parked cars act as traffic calming	6
Requested traffic calming instead	4
There is not a safety problem	3

*indicates that this concern was raised by the Kennington WI petition.

Already a lack of parking in the area: Parking on the highway is allowed where it will not cause obstruction to other road users (including pedestrians and cyclists). There are no "rights" to park outside your own house or even in the same road; the public highway is primarily to be used for passing and repassing. It is clear from the crash record that vehicles parked in this road are causing an obstruction, resulting in road casualties. In situations such as this, the Highway Authority has the power to introduce a TRO to control on-street parking, to ensure that there are minimal problems with traffic movements, and to improve safety for all road users. .

Concerns that traffic speeds will increase: This concern was anticipated in advance of the consultation; namely that more double yellow lines would encourage drivers to travel at higher speeds. Two speed surveys were installed in order to inform the debate; their locations can be seen in the plan in Appendix B. One survey was placed where parking restrictions are already in place; the other was located where parking restrictions were not in place, but were being proposed under the TRO. The outcome was:-

LOCATION	Mean	85 th %ile	Mean	85 th %ile
	Northbound		Southbound	
Site 1 (double yellow lines)	29.3	34.9	30.2	35.6
Site 2 (no current restrictions)	27.4	33.3	29.4	34.9

Kent Police's response was as follows:

"With the exception of site one southbound being just over 30mph, the mean speeds at both locations are all less than the posted speed limit, therefore the data shows that the majority of traffic is complying with the current speed limit. Kent Police accept that there will be some motorists who drive at inappropriate speeds but there is no evidence to suggest that there is a higher

rate of speeding at this location compared to any other location in Kent, so it is reasonable to compare this site with other locations throughout the county. Kent Police appreciate that there are some areas in Kent where local residents have concerns about road safety and put forward their views on the actions they would like to see, and on occasion this is for police enforcement of speed limits. However, it is not possible to take action at all these locations and so they are prioritised to effectively use the resources available. The intervention point for enforcement by Police in a 30mph speed limit according to Association of Chief Police Officer (ACPO) guidelines is 35mph, and as the speed data shows that the majority of traffic is travelling below 30mph, Kent Police would view the enforcement of this speed limit as a low priority.”

Kent Police do not consider that this road has a significant speeding problem, even in the sections where double yellow lines are already in place. The evidence of the surveys suggests that overall speeds may increase by 1-2mph in the new areas of double yellow lining, but that they will still fall within acceptable levels for the posted speed limit. The majority of crashes are happening during the day, when speeds are lower due to higher traffic flow and greater use of the pedestrian crossings. It is expected that speeds may slightly increase after the proposals, but that this will not impact adversely upon the recorded crash record.

Negative impact upon WI Hall: This was a valid concern, because the hall is a valuable resource for the local community. Some correspondents have requested that an investigation is undertaken into establishing new off-road parking for the hall, but this is outside of the remit of KCC Highways & Transportation. The impact on the hall needs to be weighed up against the negative effect on road safety that parked vehicles are having upon the road outside. A number of correspondents have queried how they will drop off elderly residents or heavy equipment to the hall, if the proposals go ahead. It should be noted that the proposals would not prevent this from happening, because limited waiting for a short period of time is permissible on double yellow lines, for the purposes of loading and unloading.

Parked cars act as traffic calming: Unfortunately, the recorded crash record suggests otherwise.

Requested traffic calming instead: It has previously been discussed that various speed reduction measures are not appropriate for a road of this nature.

There is not a safety problem: Unfortunately, the recorded crash record suggests otherwise.

.

Conclusion

A pattern of injury crashes has been identified in Faversham Road, Ashford. Since the beginning of 2008, these crashes resulted in 18 casualties.

Parking restrictions, together with improvements to the existing flashing sign and road safety education, are projected to reduce the amount of crashes and casualties. The recommended scheme to achieve the maximum crash savings is shown in Appendix B.

An alternative option could be considered, to try and mitigate the effect on the WI Hall, whilst still having a positive impact upon improving road safety. This alternative option is shown in Appendix C. A section of new double yellow lines could be downgraded to a single yellow line, which would be in operation from Monday to Saturday, 8am to 6pm. It extends for 60 metres in the vicinity of the hall. Users of the hall could then still park nearby in the evenings and on Sundays. However because one of the parked vehicle crashes occurred outside of peak hours, and there will still be parked vehicles at certain times of the day, this scheme cannot be expected to have the same projected level of crash savings as the original proposal; for this reason, it is not the recommended option.

Recommendation

It is recommended that:

- Members endorse the decision to proceed with the new parking restrictions shown in Appendix B, and as originally advertised under “The Kent County Council) (Various Roads, Borough of Ashford) (Waiting Restrictions and Street Parking Places) (Amendment No. 27) Order 2012”.

Contact Officer

Steve Darling, Traffic Engineer, KCC Highways & Transportation

APPENDIX A – Consultation Leaflet



THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL (VARIOUS ROADS, BOROUGH OF ASHFORD) (WAITING RESTRICTIONS AND STREET PARKING PLACES) (AMENDMENT No. 27) ORDER 2012

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL proposes to make the above named Order under various sections of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, the effect of which would be to introduce new waiting restrictions in the following roads:

Faversham Road, Ashford
Broadhurst Drive, Ashford

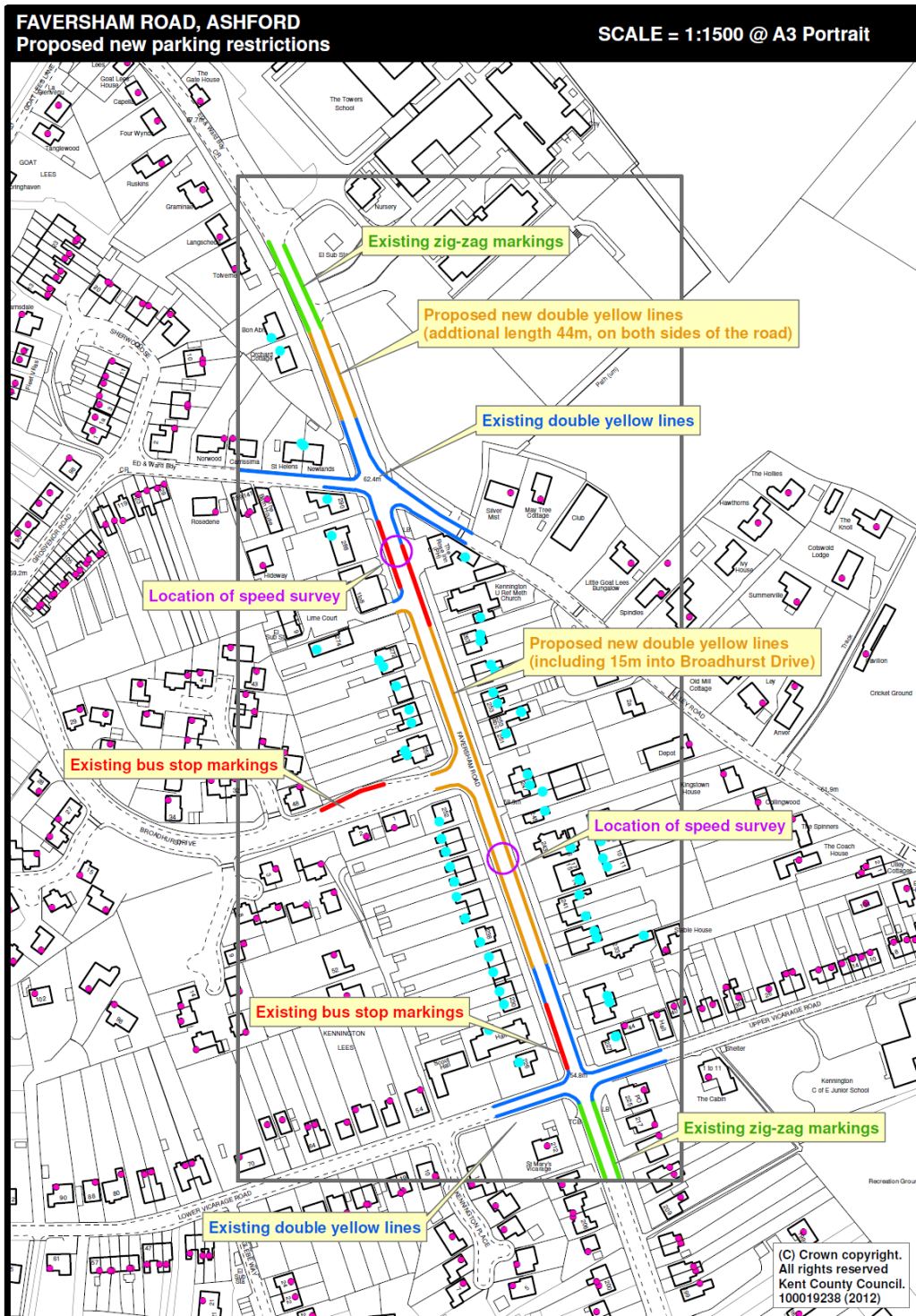
Full details are contained in the draft Order which, together with the relevant plans and a Statement of Reasons for proposing to make the Order, may be examined during normal office hours at County Hall, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1XQ; at the offices of the Ashford Highways Depot, Javelin Way, Henwood Industrial Estate, Ashford, Kent TN24 8AD; or online at:

www.kent.gov.uk > Roads and transport > Highway maintenance > Traffic regulation orders > Proposed TROs

You may also view an indicative plan of the proposals, overleaf. They have been developed in response to a recorded history of crashes over the last three years of available data, where a number of incidents have involved parked vehicles and resulted in injury to persons.

Any persons wishing to support or object to the proposal should write to Steve Darling, Ashford Highways Depot, Javelin Way, Henwood Industrial Estate, Ashford, Kent, TN24 8AD or email tro@kent.gov.uk - quoting the name of the Order and stating their reasons, by no later than **Monday 19 November 2012**.

APPENDIX B – Plan of Proposals and Extent of Leaflet Drop
(NB: The Towers School was included)



APPENDIX C – Alternative Proposal

