

SEVENOAKS JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD - 12TH DECEMBER 2007

REQUEST FOR TRAFFIC CALMING AT WEST END, KEMSING

Report of the: West Kent Divisional Manager

Status: For Consideration

Chairman Cllr James London

Head of Service Head of Transportation & Planning – Mr. Ray Dines

Recommendation: It be RESOLVED that:

(a) Members note the results, analysis and conclusions drawn from the traffic speed survey carried out in West End; and

(b) Members endorse Kent Highway Services' decision to advise Kemsing Parish Council of the conclusion reached, namely that West End does not meet the criteria for the introduction of a 20mph speed limit.

Background

- 1 A petition was received from the local community in Kemsing concerned about the traffic management situation. Officers met with the Parish Chairman and Clerk and investigation work was undertaken so that advice could be offered to a future meeting of the Board.

Introduction

- 2 In accordance with protocols required on the receipt of petitions, the Board was informed that a petition had been received from the residents of Kemsing village. The petition, which had 334 signatures, was also copied to Kemsing Parish Council.
- 3 The petition concerned the alleged excessive speed of traffic passing through West End. The road has village shops and a garage. There is also a primary school that the local children attend from the village. Older children from the village are picked up and dropped down in West End to attend secondary schools elsewhere.
- 4 The petition finally suggests that some sort of traffic calming is required along the main road of the village, with the implementation of a 20mph speed limit in West End in place of the current 30mph limit.

Discussion

- 5 Officers undertook to commission a 24 hour automatic traffic speed survey in West end in order to obtain objective traffic data.
- 6 Traffic speed and volume surveys were carried out over a period of seven days commencing on the 12th September 2007.

Current speed limit (mph)	85 th percentile speed westbound (mph)	85 th percentile speed eastbound (mph)	Mean speed westbound (mph)	Mean speed eastbound (mph)
30	32.7	33.3	26.2	28.0

- 7 The above table shows mean speeds and 85th percentile speeds (the speed at or below which 85% of the traffic is travelling). The figures for each category and direction are the average speeds recorded over the seven days.
- 8 The 85th percentile speed was used, until recently, to establish local speed limits (Circular Roads 1/93). Recorded speeds of 32.7 and 33.3 mph reinforce the position that the existing 30 mph speed limit is still appropriate.
- 9 The latest Government guidance, Circular 01/ 2006, uses the mean speed to establish the speed limit. The average mean speeds of 26.2 and 28.0 mph exceed the stated threshold for the requested 20 mph speed limit to be introduced on the road; research concludes that it would be unreasonable to expect drivers to adhere to it. Traffic calming measures would need to be introduced to reduce speed further and thus create a self-enforcing 20 mph limit.
- 10 Traffic calming measures have to be street lit to make drivers aware of the features on the highway. Although the Department for Transport (DfT) Traffic Advisory Leaflet 9/99 permits 20 mph speed ‘zones’ (networks of roads subject to a 20 mph limit) without the need for street lighting, roads with a 20 mph ‘limit’ supported by traffic calming features are street lit. West End, Kemsing does not currently have street lights.
- 11 The injury crash data for West End shows three crashes over the five year period to 31st August 2007. Two crashes were classified as ‘slight’ and one as ‘serious’. All were due to driver error; none was attributable to excessive speed.

Conclusion

- 12 The average vehicle speeds obtained from the automatic survey exceed the threshold for a 20 mph limit imposed by signs only. The introduction of a 20 mph limit would require additional traffic calming measures to meet the requirement for a 20 mph limit new speed limit to be self-enforcing.

Item No. 15

- 13 The Parish Council has indicated that residents do not want street lighting in the village and so KHS will not be progressing the option of a 20 mph limit with traffic calming features.
- 14 The injury crash history suggests that the introduction of a 20 mph limit would contribute little to addressing the causes of the crashes that have occurred over the past five years.

Resolution

- 15 It be RESOLVED that:
- (a) Members note the outcome, analysis and conclusions drawn from the traffic speed survey carried out in West End; and
 - (b) Members endorse Kent Highway Services' decision to advise Kemsing Parish Council of the conclusion reached, namely that West End does not meet the criteria for the introduction of a 20mph speed limit.

Sources of Information: Petition from the residents of West End, Kemsing; traffic speed survey of West End, Kemsing (September 2007)

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GEOFF HARRISON-MEE

DIRECTOR OF KENT HIGHWAY SERVICES

