

SEVENOAKS JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD – 16TH MARCH 2010

MANAGING THE MOVEMENT OF HEAVY GOODS VEHICLES IN SEVENOAKS

Report of the: Local Transport & Development Manager, Alan Ash

Status: For Member recommendation

Chairman: Cllr P J Coates

Head of Service: Head of KHS Transportation & Development – David Hall

Recommendation: it is recommended that the Joint Transport Board (JTB) consider whether an Experimental Traffic Order is to be implemented to impose vehicular restrictions along a section of High Street, Sevenoaks.

Summary

- 1 This report provides an overview of an Experimental Traffic Order proposed to address environmental (air quality) concerns associated with the movement of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) through High Street, Sevenoaks.

Introduction

- 2 Following concerns raised by local Members in relation to problems of congestion and air quality in / around Sevenoaks town centre, as raised and discussed at JTB meetings, possible options to reduce the impact of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) passing through the town centre are currently under investigation.
- 3 This interim proposal to respond to air quality concerns should be considered in the context of a wider initiative to re-model Sevenoaks town centre. The traffic management scheme proposal encompasses both High Street and London Road, and includes the town centre bus station, pedestrian areas and central car parks which lie between these roads and within the High Street, Sevenoaks Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).

Background

Air quality concerns / local congestion

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- 4 The A225 High Street in Sevenoaks Town Centre has been identified locally as an area that experiences congestion. Road traffic is the main contributor to poor air quality and the level of road traffic; particularly through-traffic which is largely outside the control of the District.
- 5 A total of 11 AQMAs have been declared within the Sevenoaks district and the Council has an Air Quality Action Plan that includes measures to improve air quality. In 2006 an AQMA was declared for traffic related NO₂ exceedance relating to the A225 Sevenoaks High Street (AQMA location 10).

Study to assess HGV movements through Sevenoaks town centre

- 6 A briefing note prepared in November 2009 summarised a review conducted by Kent Highway Services (KHS) to investigate HGV movements in / around Sevenoaks urban centre and the surrounding highway network.
- 7 The study found that a relatively small number of through-goods vehicle traffic movements occurred through the A225 High Street, Sevenoaks on a typical weekday, and that the volume of such traffic is considered to be low for a route of this type (Principal County Road).
- 8 The study also advised that a significant proportion (~ 75%) of the recorded goods vehicle traffic movements were associated with serving local businesses within the town centre and its immediate surroundings. On the survey day, a total of 44 journeys were observed where heavy goods vehicles entered and subsequently left the survey area at the same location, having presumably undertaken delivery / collection from premises. The study also recorded that a number of vehicles made the same manoeuvre several times in one day, which may be indicative of trips associated with works being carried out in the area.




Proposed Restrictions

- 9 It is proposed that an Experimental Traffic Order be introduced to implement the following restrictions:
 - To restrict vehicles weighing in excess of 7.5 tonnes from entering High Street, Sevenoaks beyond the junction with Pembroke Road and Suffolk Way at all times, except for loading
 - To prevent all vehicles from entering High Street, Sevenoaks at its junction with London Road*

** right turns from London Road into High Street are currently permitted*

- 10 The appropriate signage will need to be erected to inform road users of the restrictions. Information concerning the proposed signage type, location and description is provided in Table 1 overleaf.

Table 1. Proposed signage to be implemented at specified locations

Signage	Location	Description
	<p>The A225 High Street, Sevenoaks at the junction with Pembroke Road and Suffolk Way</p>	<p>No goods vehicles over 7.5 tonnes maximum gross weight, except for loading</p>
	<p>At the junction of High Street, Sevenoaks with London Road</p>	<p>No entry for vehicular traffic</p>
	<p>The A225 Dartford Road, to the north of the junction with Pembroke Road and Suffolk Way</p> <p>The A225 High Street south of the junction of High Street, Sevenoaks with London Road</p>	<p>New Road Layout Ahead</p>

- 11 It is expected that the Experimental Order to enforce the above restrictions will be in place for a period of 18-months, unless a formal request is made to abolish the Order prematurely.

Monitoring

- 12 It is proposed that liaison will be had with representatives of the Air Quality Team at Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) to establish a monitoring regime in respect of air quality levels associated with the monitoring station positioned on High Street, Sevenoaks and the monitoring of traffic flows on the local road network, i.e. London Road, Pembroke Road and High Street.
- 13 In order to gather robust data, it is important that the monitoring is undertaken for a sufficient period of time to account for possible fluctuations in air quality levels.

Procedures to Implement an Experimental Traffic Order

What is an Experimental Traffic Order?

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- 14 An experimental Order¹ is much like a permanent Traffic Regulation Order in that it is a legal document which imposes traffic and parking restrictions. Unlike a Permanent Order an Experimental Order can only stay in force for a maximum of 18 months while the effects of the ban are monitored and assessed (and changes made if necessary), before the Council decides whether or not to continue the experimental order on a permanent basis.

What are the procedures involved in making an experimental traffic order?

- 15 Notices must be published in the local newspaper along with notices attached to lamp columns or other street furniture (if appropriate). The Council is also obliged to make a copy of the order and other relevant documents available for public inspection.
- 16 Before the Council makes an experimental traffic order it is also obliged to consult the Police, Fire and Ambulance services and organisations representing road users (for example the AA, the RAC, Spokes, CTC, the Pedestrian Association, the Freight Transport Association, the Road Haulage Association).

Is it possible to object to an experimental traffic regulation order?

- 17 It is not possible to lodge a formal objection to an experimental traffic regulation order until it is in force. Once it is in force, objections may be made to the order being made permanent and these must be made within six months of the day that the experimental order comes into force. The Council will then review any raised objections and make recommendations, as required.

Recommendations

- 18 It is recommended that the Joint Transport Board (JTB) consider whether an Experimental Traffic Order is to be implemented to impose vehicular restrictions along a section of High Street, Sevenoaks.
- 19 If the Council formally approve the proposed Experimental Order, the target date for implementation will be Sunday 4th July 2010.

Enclosures

1. High Street, Sevenoaks: HGV Review and Investigation
2. Sevenoaks District Council Air Quality Management Area 10, High Street, Sevenoaks

¹ An Experimental Traffic Order is made under Sections 9 and 10 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 ("the Act") and all other enabling powers after consultation with the chief officer of police in accordance with Schedule 9 to the 1984 Act.