

## SEVENOAKS JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD – 14 DECEMBER 2011

### PETITION – VALLEY ROAD, FAWKHAM

Report of the: Director of Kent Highways and Transportation

Status: For Consideration

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**Executive Summary:** This report describes a petition received by the parents at Fawkham School. It requests action to lower the speed limit from 40mph to 20mph and for additional road safety measures along Valley Road.

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**This report supports the Key Aim of** Reducing speed, encouraging safer driving and tackling known speeding crash hotspots. Also improving pedestrian safety, including measures to improve access for people with disabilities as indicated in the Sevenoaks Community Plan.

**Chairman** Cllr James London

**Head of Service** Kent County Council Highways and Transportation – Head of Transportation – Tim Read

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#### **Recommendations:**

- i. That the highway authority does not pursue any changes in the road environment or a reduction in the speed limit along Valley Road in the vicinity of Fawkham School.
  - ii. Members note the provision of parking facilities and pedestrian access into the school is not the responsibility of the highway authority.
  - iii. That the lead petitioner is informed of this Board's decision.
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#### **Background and Discussion**

- 1 A petition signed by 135 people has been received from parents at Fawkham School. A copy of the petition (excluding signatories) is included as Appendix A.
- 2 The petitioners are requesting the following which have been addressed under separate headings below:
  - The speed limit is reduced from 40mph to 20mph.

- Additional road safety measures including a pedestrian crossing, school crossing patrol, physical traffic calming measures and school keep clear markings.
- Constant maintenance of signage.
- Limited school parking capacity to be addressed.

#### Reduction in the speed limit

- 3 The current speed limit of Valley Road outside Fawkham School is 40mph. Kent Highway Services commissioned Jacobs to carry out automatic traffic counts on Valley Road in close proximity to Fawkham School in October 2010.
- 4 The Survey results for Valley Road showed that overall, the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed for northbound traffic was 38.3mph and for southbound traffic was 38.3mph. The 85<sup>th</sup> percentile is the speed not exceeded by 85% of drivers and is the national standard measurement of drivers' speed. On this evidence, the current 40mph limit is well observed. The corresponding speeds in the school drop off period (08:30 – 09:00, weekdays) were 31.8mph for northbound and 32.4mph for southbound traffic and in the afternoon pick up (15:00 -15:30, weekdays) were 33.3mph for northbound and 32.2mph for southbound traffic.
- 5 A lower speed limit would require physical changes in the drivers' environment to ensure that it would be self enforcing.
- 6 Officers carried out a survey of the speed limits outside Fawkham School along Valley Road. Kent County Council follows national guidance laid down by the Department for Transport (DfT) in setting speed limits. The details are contained in a document called "Circular Roads 1/2006 Setting Local Speed Limits". An important principle of this guidance is that, "speed limits should be evidence led, self explaining and seek to reinforce people's assessment of what is a safe speed to travel. They should encourage self-compliance and not be seen by drivers as being a target speed at which to drive in all circumstances."
- 7 Since the Police are responsible for enforcing speeds limits, any proposed change must have their support. In accordance with the DfT Circular 1/2006, officers consulted with the Police to assess the appropriate speed limit along the Valley Road outside Fawkham School. Appendix B contains a letter received from the Police. The Police have confirmed that they would not support a 20mph limit outside the school however they would consider supporting a 30mph speed limit with additional measures to ensure vehicle speeds are reduced to 30mph. The grounds for the police not endorsing a 20mph speed limit are in accordance with DfT Circular 1/2006.
- 8 To assess the justification for funding for the necessary physical works to achieve lower drivers' speeds, potential schemes are prioritised for inclusion in the Crash Remedial Measure (CRM) Programme. The 3 year crash record for Valley Road in the vicinity of Fawkham School show there is no consistent pattern of crashes which suggest lowering the speed limit would not reduce

the crash record. Accordingly this proposal will not be funded from KCC's CRM programme.

#### Additional safety measures

- 9 Formalised crossing facility/school crossing patrol – Because of the conflict between pedestrians and vehicles at the existing school access, this is only feasible if a new pedestrian access into the school and corresponding changes to the footway are made. None of this would be funded by the highway authority. If the changes were made, then it would be for the school to consider whether to fund and operate a crossing patrol.
- 10 School Keep Clear Markings – The school Keep Clears are already marked for the appropriate length. The district wide School Keep Clear Order is currently being progressed as a Member Highway Funded scheme by Sevenoaks District Council.

#### Maintenance of signage

- 11 Following on from the submission of the petition, the Highway Steward for area undertook an ad-hoc inspection of this section of Valley Road, and as a result of this inspection, arranged for the lining on this section of Valley Road to be refreshed; this included the edge of carriageway lining, 'School Keep Clear' and the 'School Slow' markings on the approach to the school. These works have now been completed.

In addition, the Highway Steward has also raised a job for approx 540m worth of 'siding' to be undertaken on the footway accessing the school to restore the full width of the footway, and some minor patching to the footway where necessary.

On completion of this additional work on the footway, this will complete the maintenance work in this section of Valley Road; however KCC Highways will continue to monitor Valley Road in line with the statutory inspection requirements, and undertake works as necessary.

#### School drop-off parking.

- 12 Parking facilities for schools are not provided by Kent County Council Highways. Therefore any concerns should be directed to the school.

### **Key Implications**

#### Financial; Resource (non-financial); Legal etc.; Value For Money

- 13 None for Sevenoaks District Council or Kent County Council as a result of this report.

## **Risk Assessment Statement**

14 None.

## **Conclusions**

- 15 The County Council's policy is that any proposed changes to speed limits or installation of speed-reducing measures need to demonstrate a quantifiable injury crash saving. Such schemes will need to be supported by the Police and prioritised for potential inclusion in the Crash Remedial Measure (CRM) Programme for 2012 / 13.
- 16 It is the case that the pattern of reported crashes in the last three years suggests that there would have been no fewer crashes had the speed limit been lower. Accordingly this proposal will not be funded from KCC's CRM programme.
- 17 Improvements to pedestrian access into the school, and parking for parents are for the school and not the highway authority to consider.
- 18 In light of the above Members are asked to agree the recommendations.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A - Copy of Petition.

Appendix B - Letter from the Police.

**Sources of Information:** The background papers pertaining to the report are held on KHS file WK/T/SEV/Fawk/01.

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