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Ms Laura Squires
Kent County Council Highways
Transport and Development

Your Ref:

Our Ref: 101/SL/12127/11

Date 3rd November 2011

Valley Road Fawkham – Petition for 20 mph Speed Limit

Dear Ms Squires

The introduction of any new speed limit is a very emotive subject, as is the antisocial behaviour of those motorists who exceed the present limits.

As with all new Traffic Regulation Orders we would look for their introduction to be in the main self-enforcing. Kent Police would seek that the advice and guidance given in Department for Transport Circulars 5/99 and 9/99, which specifically relates to 20mph zones/limits, is complied with. These guidelines ensure that proposals maintain consistent and realistic speed limits.

In order to ensure credibility of a new speed limit we would expect all aspects of Circular Roads 01/2006 to be adhered to.

Any speed limit introduced outside of this guidance will not only be ineffective but will leave the Police with the task of carrying out constant enforcement, where previously an issue of excess speed did not exist.

Kent Police would seek that the legislation and advice given in the Traffic Signs Manual Chapter 5, and the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002, is complied with.

Having studied the proposal and visited the area I make the following observations:

Circular 01/2006 states 'Successful 20 mph zones and 20 mph speed limits should be generally self-enforcing. Traffic Authorities should take account of the level of police enforcement required before installing either of these measures. 20 mph speed limits are unlikely to be complied with on roads where vehicle speeds are substantially higher than this.'

The speed data provided by KCC Highways show that there is currently a well observed 40 mph speed limit with mean speeds of 32.4 mph northbound and 32.6 mph southbound and 85th percentile speeds of 38.3 mph. Research into 20 mph speed limits carried out by TRL showed that where speed limits alone were introduced, reductions of only about 2 mph in

'before' speeds were achieved. A 20 mph speed limit would not be appropriate at this location as there would be little if any chance of compliance. Kent Police would only agree to a 20 mph speed limit if it was implemented with physical traffic calming features sufficient to reduce vehicle speeds to below 20 mph.

Although the petition states '*Several accidents have occurred along Valley Road and outside the school itself, road safety outside the school is appalling*' the collision statistics to the end June 2011 show there have been 3 injury collisions in the vicinity of the school in the previous 3 years. 2 of the collisions occurred on Saturdays when the school was closed and none of the casualties was a child. The 10 year data shows a total of 4 injury collisions (including the 3 detailed previously) the additional collision was at 20:30 hours on Friday 22nd July 2005, again when the school was closed. Whilst it is accepted that not all collisions are reported to the police there is no reason to believe that there is a higher level of under-reporting at this location than any other within Kent. The collision record for valley Road in the vicinity of the school is not high.

Kent Police would therefore not support a 20 mph speed limit.

The speed data does suggest that a reduction in the speed limit to 30 mph could be considered. Although the school does sit outside the village centre it may be possible, with the introduction of enhanced signing, to achieve speeds suitable for a 30 mph limit. The signing would have to be carefully considered to avoid a situation where the gateway to the village is lost and vehicle speeds through the centre increase. Kent Police would be happy to discuss what measures would be needed should there be a proposal to reduce the speed limit to 30 mph.

Yours Sincerely

Paul Cave
Police Constable 7981
Traffic Management Unit