

SEVENOAKS JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD – 15 MARCH 2011

UPDATE: PETITION – SPEEDING TRAFFIC IN BAYHAM ROAD & SERPENTINE ROAD

Report of the: Director of Kent Highway Services

Status: For Consideration

Executive Summary: This report follows from the recommendations of the previous Joint Transportation Board Meeting regarding a petition received from the Hollybush Residents Association. It requests action to reduce the road safety risks and environmental nuisance caused by early morning traffic through Bayham Road and Serpentine Road. Members are asked to consider and resolve how to proceed.

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 Mr David Brazier

Head of Service KHS – Head of Countywide Improvements – Behdad Haratbar

Recommendations:

- i. That results of the speed survey are forwarded to the Police for appropriate enforcement action.
- ii. That Members note neither Bayham Road nor Serpentine Road meet countywide criteria for the installation of a speed indicator device or a speed camera.
- iii. That the highway authority does not pursue measures specific to addressing speeding in Bayham Road & Serpentine Road at this time.
- iv. That the lead petitioner is informed of this Board's decision.

Background and Discussion

- 1 At the last meeting of this Board a petition received from the Hollybush Residents Association was discussed, a copy of which is included as Appendix A to this report. The petition was supported by a letter from St John's Church of England Primary School (included as Appendix B). A letter was also received from Sevenoaks Town Council requesting that speed checks were carried out, this letter is included as Appendix C.

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- 2 The current speed limit of Bayham Road and Serpentine Road is 30mph and is correctly signed. Kent Highway Services commissioned Jacobs to carry out automatic traffic counts on both Bayham Road and Serpentine Road. A copy of the location plans is included as Appendix D. The location of the traffic count was in accordance with the area indicated by the plan accompanying the petition as being the most affected which has been included as Appendix E.
- 3 The surveys were carried out between Wednesday 22nd September and Sunday the 3rd October 2010. Members requested a break down of traffic throughout the day. Included as Appendix F is an hourly weekday and weekend average for the duration of a day.
- 4 The Survey results for Bayham Road showed that overall, the 85th percentile speed for westbound traffic was 32mph and for eastbound traffic was 32.2mph. The 85th percentile is the speed not exceeded by 85% of drivers and is the national standard measurement of drivers' speed. The corresponding speeds in the period highlighted in the petition (0600-0700 weekdays) were 35.8mph for westbound and 32.4mph for eastbound traffic.
- 5 The survey results for Serpentine Road showed that the average 85th percentile speeds for westbound traffic was 27.5mph and for eastbound was 25.7mph. The corresponding speeds in the period highlighted in the petition (0600-0700 weekdays) were 28.9mph for westbound traffic. On this evidence, there is no justification for installing measures to reduce drivers' speeds in Serpentine Road.
- 6 Members asked that officers undertake additional investigatory work and report the outcome for Members' consideration.
- 7 Officers share petitioners' and Members concerns at the speed with which some drivers travel along many roads including Bayham Road. There are essentially three ways in which the authorities can influence drivers; Education, Enforcement and Engineering. These are considered as follows.

Education

- 8 Achieving change through education relies on methods such as Interactive Speed Signs and hazard warning signs.
- 9 Kent County Councils (KCCs) policy states Interactive Speed Signs should only be considered when there is an accident problem associated with inappropriate speed. The 3 year crash record for Bayham Road and Serpentine Road show that there has been 1 crash resulting in personal injury along these lengths of roads. This crash, which resulted in a slight injury, occurred at the junction with Bayham Road and Serpentine Road and was a result of a vehicle reversing round a corner and can not be attributed to speed. Therefore an Interactive Speed Sign would not meet policy criteria.
- 10 Hazard warning signs are used where it is assessed that a hazard exists which would not otherwise be readily apparent to road users. There are no patterns

of crashes on these roads suggesting a hazard exists and therefore warning signs would not be suitable.

Enforcement

- 11 On account of exceeding the speed limit being a criminal offence, the responsibility for enforcing speed limits rests with the Police. As reported to the last meeting of the Board, the results of the speed surveys carried out in Bayham Road and Serpentine Road have been reported to them in order that they may take any enforcement action they consider appropriate. A response from the Police Traffic Management Unit has been included as Appendix G. However, since their resources necessarily have to be focussed on more serious crimes, the level of speed enforcement will not be as high as some petitioners believe is required.
- 12 To enhance compliance with speed limits at locations where there has been a history of speed-related crashes, the Kent and Medway Safety Camera Partnership operate mobile and fixed speed cameras. Bearing in mind that no such crashes have been reported to the Police in the last 3 years, neither Bayham nor Serpentine Road meet the criteria that enable either to be considered as a location for either a fixed or portable speed camera.

Engineering

- 13 At the last meeting of this Board, Members requested indicative costs of introducing physical measures that would meet the petitioners' goal of reducing speeding. Officers advise that bearing in mind the alignment, volume of traffic and amount of kerbside parking, the most reliable method of persuading drivers to travel slowly along the length of Bayham Road would be to install road humps.
- 14 Although, by introducing traffic calming, KCC can physically force drivers to drive more slowly, requests have been received for such schemes on hundreds of roads across the County. Because KCC's resources are unable to progress this number of projects, the scheme prioritisation system approved by County Members ensures that resources are used to traffic calm only those roads that have the worst history of road traffic accidents. This is because, statistically, it is these roads where it is most likely that accidents will occur again in the future. Although, under this policy, traffic calming Bayham Road would not achieve sufficient priority to be traffic calmed, indicative costs for such a scheme have been prepared and are included as Appendix H to this report.
- 15 Nonetheless, currently each County Council Member can request up to £25,000 a year to spend on locally important traffic and transport issues by using the "Member Highway Fund". Schemes funded from this budget are not formally prioritised and the local County Member could, if he wished apply for these, or other, speed-reduction measures in Bayham Road and/or Serpentine Road.

- 16 In their most recent letter in support of the petition (see Appendix J), Sevenoaks Town Council suggested that a lower intensity of traffic calming, perhaps in the form of one or two pinch-points, would assist in reducing drivers' speeds. Officers advise that whilst such a measure would have some effect close to the speed-reducing feature(s), be they road humps or pinch-points, national experience is that they would have negligible effect elsewhere along the road. For instance, in trials where the mean speed of traffic is currently 30mph, road humps placed 80metres apart have been found to reduce mean speeds to 20mph and 85th percentile speeds to 24mph. This increases to 23mph and 28mph respectively where the humps were placed 120 metres apart.

Key Implications

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

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

Risk Assessment Statement

- 18 None.

Conclusions

- 19 Speeds in Serpentine Road are sufficiently low as to not warrant enhanced enforcement. Speeds in Bayham Road are marginally higher than the speed limit and Police will be notified to consider any appropriate enforcement action.
- 20 Whilst traffic volumes are reasonably high for unclassified residential roads, there is not a pattern of personal injury crashes which can be attributed to speed.
- 21 In light of the above Members are asked to agree the recommendations.

Appendices

- A Copy of Petition.
- B Supporting letter from St John's Church of England Primary School.
- C Letter from Sevenoaks Town Council requesting speed survey.
- D Location plans of automatic traffic counts.
- E Plan submitted with petition indicating the most effected area.
- F Automatic Traffic Count Data.
- G Email from the Police.
- H Indicative costs of traffic calming.

J Letter from Sevenoaks Town Council suggesting actions from the authorities

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

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