

SEVENOAKS JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD – 15 MARCH 2011

UPDATE: SPEED LIMIT REVIEW B2042 (A25 WESTERHAM ROAD, BESSELS GREEN, TO FOUR ELMS ROAD, FOUR ELMS)

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 the speed limit review along the B2042. Members are asked to consider whether to endorse the recommendations.

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 Members endorse the speed limits illustrated in Appendices C and E, subject to funding and Police approval.
- ii. The lead petitioner is informed of the Board's decision.

Background and Discussion

- 1 At the last meeting of the Board, Members considered a report recommending the lowering of speed limits along the B2042 between Bessels Green and Four Elms once finance permits. The preparation of the report coincided with the receipt of a petition requesting a reduction in the speed limit between Whitley Row and Coopers Corner. A copy of the covering letter is included as Appendix A.
- 2 The B2042 is a lower tier B class road and travels predominantly through a rural environment and is generally orientated north to south, incorporating speed limits of 30mph and 60mph. The current speed limits along the B2042 are illustrated in Appendix B.
- 3 Potential schemes to reduce speed limits are prioritised for inclusion in the Crash Remedial Measures (CRM) programmes. Highest priority is accorded

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to proposals that demonstrate a quantifiable injury crash saving, and have the support of the Police.

- 4 Subsequent to the last meeting of this Board officers have carried out a survey of the speed limits with the Police. The road was assessed in accordance with 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”.
- 5 In accordance with the Government Circular 1/2006 and in consultation with the Police, officers’ assessment of the appropriate speed limits along the B2042 is illustrated in Appendix C. The amount of development in Goathurst Common is insufficient for it to qualify as a village and, consequently, does not meet the justification for a 30mph speed limit. It does, however, meet the requirements for a 40mph limit.
- 6 Concerned that the potential £30,000 to £35,000 cost quoted verbally at the last meeting of this Board may make the project unaffordable, Members requested indicative costs of introducing lower speed limits along shorter sections of the road. A breakdown of cost ranging from a minimum of £10,000 to a maximum of £39,000 has been included as Appendix D.

Goathurst Common

- 7 From a local perspective, the 2000 metres of the B2042 through Whitley Row and Goathurst Common has generated the greatest concern. Although it would be possible to consider this short stretch of road in isolation, this piecemeal approach would not address the safety issues that exists along those parts of the B2042 with a worse history of speed related crashes. Nonetheless, the posting of a lower speed limit through the hamlet of Goathurst Common in accordance with Government Circular 1/2006 and thus can be progressed if Members are so minded and if funding can be secured.
- 8 It is recommended that if the speed limit is to be reduced only through Goathurst Common, that the terminal points should be at the Woodman Public House and south of Wheatsheaf Hill. It is proposed that the national speed limit would be retained on the top road that leads to Gracious Lane (although a cost for including this as far as Yorks Hill is included in the estimates provided in Appendix D).
- 9 Were the speed limit to be reduced to 40mph on the B2042 through Goathurst Common, Members may be minded to consider introducing 30mph speed limit through Nightingale Lane and the two unnamed lanes that form the hamlet between the B2042 and the unnamed top road that leads towards Gracious Lane (Appendix E). This is because the speed limit signs that would otherwise face drivers as they enter the lanes from the B2042 would show the national speed limit applying. Whilst this report is not the forum to consider the merits

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and purpose of national speed limit, applying a lower speed limit to the B2042 through the hamlet yet omitting it from these essentially residential roads would be viewed, at best, as incongruous by local residents.

Key Implications

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

- 10 None for Sevenoaks District Council or Kent County Council as a result of this report.
- 11 No funding has been identified to implement the recommendations.

Risk Assessment Statement

- 12 None.

Conclusions

- 13 Whilst lower speed limits on the B2042 are justified by national guidance, to attract funding any proposed changes to the speed limits will need to demonstrate a quantifiable injury crash saving. Such schemes will need to be supported by the Police and prioritised for inclusion in the Crash Remedial Measure (CRM) programme for 2011/12.
- 14 Kent Highway Services are in consultation with the Police regarding the proposed changes to the speed limit along the B2042 indicated in Appendices C and E.
- 15 In light of the above Members are asked to agree the recommendations, but note that the funding has not been identified to implement them.

Appendices

- A Covering letter of petition.
- B Plan of exiting speed limits on the B2042.
- C Plan of proposed changes to speed limit on the B2042.
- D Indicative breakdown of costs for reducing the speed limit.
- E Proposed 30mph speed limit through Nightingale Lane and the two unnamed lanes that form the hamlet between the B2042 and the unnamed top road that leads towards Gracious Lane

Sources of Information: Circular Roads 1/2006 Setting Local Speed Limits.
The background papers pertaining to the report

are held on KHS file.

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