

To: Sevenoaks Joint Transportation Board

By: KCC Highways & Transportation

Date: 13th December 2022

Subject: Results of the public consultation for a proposed speed limit reduction on A225 Shoreham Road, Shoreham

Classification: For decision

Electoral division Sevenoaks North & Darent Valley

Summary: This report provides details of a proposed speed limit reduction on A225 Shoreham Road, Shoreham and the results of the associated public consultation

1. Introduction and background

In June 2020 a request was made to Kent County Council (KCC) by Shoreham Parish Council (SPC) via their Highway Improvement Plan (HIP) to reduce the existing national speed limit on Shoreham Road to a 40 mph limit between Otford and Preston Farm. SPC are particularly concerned about vulnerable road users accessing the public footpath network and the speed limit being too high for the road environment.

The existing national speed limit is bordered on both sides by 30 mph speed limits and sits between the villages of Otford and Eynsford. Following an assessment by KCC officers, the original request was not considered entirely suitable.

A 40 mph limit from Otford to a point north of the layby on Shoreham Road (opposite Station Road, Shoreham) and then a 50 mph as far as Preston Farm Cottages was therefore suggested as a more appropriate option.

Eynsford Parish Council, after hearing of the proposal, also requested a 50 mph speed limit to join up with SPC's proposals and to extend as far as Eynsford village as part of their HIP.

2. Investigation

KCC work to Department for Transport Circular 01/2013 'Setting Local Speed Limits' when determining the correct speed limit for a road.

The factors that are taken into account when setting a speed limit are:

- history of collisions
- road geometry and engineering
- road function

- composition of road users
- existing traffic speeds
- environment

Speed surveys were carried out at four locations between the 30 mph gateway for Otford and Preston Farm. Reviewed alongside the factors listed above, the data supported a reduction to the speed limit as the recorded average speeds suggested good overall levels of compliance with the proposals.

Following the supporting request from Eynsford Parish Council for a 50 mph speed limit reduction, three further surveys were taken on the remaining stretch of road (A225 between Preston Farm and Eynsford). Again, the average speed data suggested that the proposed speed limit reduction to a 50mph would be well complied with.

A225 Shoreham Road is on KCC's list of crash cluster sites for investigation this year and officers are reviewing this data to assess if there are any additional engineering measures over and above the proposed reduced speed limits which could be practically implemented.

3. The proposal

The proposed speed limits are as follows (please also refer to Appendix A for further details):

40 mph speed limit

From a point 95 metres south of the junction with Fackenden Lane to a point 476 metres north of the junction with Station Road, Shoreham

50 mph speed limit

From a point 476 metres north of the junction with Station Road, Shoreham to a point 83 metres southwest of the junction with Station Road, Eynsford

4. Traffic Regulation Order consultation

The traffic regulation order consultation was undertaken between 16th September 2022 and 10th October 2022.

In total there were 113 responses, of which 82 were in support of the proposed speed limit reductions. There were 31 objections in total and upon further analysis, it was determined that 6 were valid objections on traffic management grounds, with the others classified as a comment. The responses can be found in Appendix A.

The objectors were contacted on 14th October with further information regarding the proposals and were given 7 days to advise if they wished to remove their objection. If no response was received, the objection was regarded as upheld. At the end of this period, no one wished to remove their objection.

The 6 objections received on traffic management grounds from the consultation are detailed in the following table.

Table 1: Objections on traffic management grounds

No.	Objection	KCC comment to all objections
1	<p>The only justification for a 50mph speed limit between Shoreham and Eynsford is the double bend under the railway bridge. Therefore the 50 mph limit should be confined to about 100 metres either side of the bridge. Anything else will impose unnecessary delays for traffic and is likely to be ignored on these straight sections of road which have good visibility and no adjacent developments. Enforcement will, on current experience, be minimal and ineffective without safety camera monitoring in several locations.</p>	<p>We work to guidance set out in the Department for Transport (DfT) circular 01/2013 'Setting Local Speed Limits' to help ensure that any speed limits are evidenced and self-explaining, with the aim to encourage self-compliance. The key factors that should be taken into account in any decisions on local speed limits are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • history of collisions; • road geometry, environment and engineering; • road function; • composition of road users (including existing and potential levels of vulnerable road users); • existing traffic speeds
2	<p>Whilst I fundamentally agree with reducing the risk of an accident at the junction of Station Road and the car park of Shoreham Railway Station I would suggest the junction itself is the cause of the problem, if there even is one. Dropping the speed limit of the rest of the road from 60 to 50mph is a pointless exercise. The A225 is a lovely piece of Road and aside from crossing under the railway line, is perfectly acceptable to drive up to 60mph. As for the junction. The same will happen at this junction as what has happened at Franks Lane and Eglantine Lane. Pulling out of these junctions requires greater care than is usual because of the lack of sighting time and distance. The other thing that will occur is pulling out on to a 40mph Road, specially where sighting time/distance is minimal, the gap you intend to pull out into assumes the chap</p>	<p>Shoreham Road is an A class road being the A225 and has a strategic function linking Sevenoaks to Dartford. We would therefore not be able to prohibit HGVs from using the road.</p> <p>Between the Otford gateway and the proposed end point for the 40mph speed limit north of Station Road, Shoreham, there are a number of junctions including a busy junction at Station Road. There are also bus stops and public rights of way which emerge onto the A225 indicating the presence of vulnerable road users.</p> <p>From the end of the proposed 40mph through to Eynsford there are fewer junctions and less evidence of vulnerable road users.</p> <p>The DfT recommends that a 40mph speed limit 'should be considered where there are many bends, junctions or accesses, substantial development, a strong environmental or landscape reason, or where there are considerable numbers of vulnerable road users.'</p> <p>The guidance states that a 50mph speed</p>

	<p>driving along the main road is actually doing 40mph. So nothing really improves. One accident every once in a blue fit isn't a good enough reason to drop the speed limit when the actual cause (lack of sighting time/distance) won't be addressed. Fix that first. Whilst you're there, revisit the junctions of Franks Lane/A225 and Eglantine Lane/A20...</p>	<p>limit 'should be considered for lower quality A and B roads, that may have a relatively high number of bends, junctions are accesses', but also 'where mean speeds are below 50mph, so the lower limit does not interfere with traffic flow.' The proposed speed limits meet these criteria.</p> <p>The DfT advises that the minimum length of any speed limit should not usually be less than 600m except in exceptional circumstances where it may be reduced to 400m for lower speed limits and 300m on roads with a purely local access function.</p>
3	<p>The overall investment required would be far better used to improve the few junctions with the A225 along the route to give better sight lines and easier access to and from the road. This would not require ongoing policing or the installation of more road furniture along this rural road. A major concern is the amount of HGV traffic that uses this road which does impact all who live along or use the A225 from Gore Hill junction to Otford.</p>	<p>We also advise that speed limits should not be used to warn of single hazards but reflect the road environment as a whole. We would therefore not consider implementing shorter lengths of speed limit to highlight the junction with Station Road or the railway bridge.</p> <p>The A225 Shoreham Road, Shoreham does feature on our latest list of crash cluster sites for 2022 and officers are currently reviewing this data and the site to assess if there are any additional engineering measures over and above the proposed reduced speed limits which may be practically implemented in the new financial year (2023/24).</p>
4	<p>This section of A225 has functions well under current speed limits with the exception of the Shoreham Station junction and the Preston Farm railway corners, which require improved awareness - probably from relevant signage.</p>	<p>The request for a reduced speed limit is being promoted by both Shoreham and Eynsford Parish Councils through their HIPs. It is one of Shoreham parish council's highest priorities. The proposals also have the support of county councillor Roger Gough.</p>
5	<p>This is an unnecessary speed reduction plan, that rather than address the issue around the Shoreham station junction, plans to unnecessarily reduce speed for the complete road from eynsford to otford.</p>	

6	I live in Shoreham. Turning right at the station to Otford is dangerous. shade from trees/sunlight flashing sunlight is difficult to accommodate. PLUS that road is increasingly being use by supercars and big motorbikes as a race track. Noisy and dangerous.	
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5.0 Corporate implications

5.1 Financial & VAT

The speed limit reduction is proposed to be funded via a combination of contributions from Shoreham Parish Council, Roger Gough (MEM) and KCC.

5.2 Legal

All works will be within the publicly maintainable highway for which Kent County Council is responsible

5.3 Corporate

None.

6. Recommendation

That the Joint Transportation Board agrees to overturn the objections and recommends proceeding with the implementation of the reduced speed limits as advertised via the traffic regulation order.

The introduction of the order is recommended on the grounds of improving safety for road users on the A225 Shoreham Road and particularly for vulnerable users.

Contact Officer:	Stuart Taylor, Planning & Advice Project Engineer, West Kent Highway Improvements Team, Kent County Council, 03000 418181
Reporting to:	Ryan Shiel, Programme Manager, West Kent Highway Improvements Team, Kent County Council, 03000 418181

Appendices

Appendix A – Consultation responses

Appendix B - Traffic Regulation Order Consultation Deposit Document and scheme plans

Background papers - None