

To: Thanet Joint Transportation Board
By: Head of Programmed Works Service
Date: 15 March 2012
Subject: East Kent Access Phase 2 – Traffic Calming Along Declassified Roads
Classification: For Decision

Summary: Proposals for traffic management and traffic calming measures along the former A299 and A256 primary routes following the opening of East Kent Access Phase 2

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The route of East Kent Access Phase 2 (EKA2) was the only realistic scheme available because on-line improvements would have required extensive property demolition along the A299 and encroachment into the Pegwell Bay RAMSAR nature conservation area along the A256. It was supported by about 80% of local residents but the inherent disadvantage is that the main traffic movements would be less direct and slightly longer, and there was an understanding that some form of traffic calming would be required along the old roads (see Appendix 1).

1.2 Overview of A299 Canterbury Road West through Cliffsend

1.2.1 The existing A299 through Cliffsend north has been a concern because of the high volume of traffic, especially HGV's, which compromise safety and create severance. There is an existing 30 mph speed limit through the village which is emphasised by an interactive speed sign. Motorists have difficulty accessing the A299 from the south of the village where three roads connect to the main road on steep gradients. There is also a bus service along this route that serves the residents of Cliffsend north.

1.2.2 This section of road is an obvious short cut to and from Lord of the Manor and is of greatest concern as a potential rat run.

1.3 Overview of A256 Sandwich Road through Cliffsend

1.3.1 The A256 through Cliffsend south has a much more open aspect with views across Pegwell Bay and the recreational areas near the Viking Ship. Large volumes of traffic create delays for motorists and those who wish to access the road from the village and from frontage properties. The character of the road is different to the A299 and there are some small businesses including a petrol service station, a public house and a seasonal café. There is an existing 40 mph speed limit through the built up area that is in keeping with the nature of the road.

- 1.3.2 This section of road should be less attractive than the A299 to rat running but the recreational nature of the route does make it an option for motorists, although some continued use could help the small businesses. The main concern is that with less traffic, vehicle speeds will increase especially along the southerly downhill section.

1.4 Traffic Calming Objectives.

- 1.4.1 The main objectives of traffic calming at Cliffsend is to discourage through traffic from using the old roads, to encourage the use of the new dual carriageway and to make the road safe by discouraging inappropriate speeds.
- 1.4.2 The above objectives can be achieved by installing a significant amount of traffic calming but experience has shown that this rarely enjoys universal support and is of course very expensive. EKA2 already requires significant funding support from KCC and in the current economic climate it is particularly important to avoid unnecessary cost or carry out work that subsequently proves to be abortive. The proposed strategy is to not prejudge the issues but to install 'low risk' measures and then monitor their effectiveness.
- 1.4.3 Although expenditure on traffic calming at Cliffsend is perceived as essential, it would be inappropriate to over provide for a village that will now have a bypass when there may be more compelling demands for traffic calming elsewhere in the County.

1.5 Options Considered

- 1.5.1 The most effective measure is to sever both roads at suitable locations. However, there are regular bus services that would no longer be able to serve Cliffsend if either or both roads were closed. The old roads are also required to be used as alternative routes during overnight maintenance operations along the new section of dual carriageway through the underpass under Foads Hill. The Police are also of the view that the old roads should serve as a much needed relief route in the event of a traffic incident along the new road.
- 1.5.2 Any form of road closure would also require vehicle turning areas and provision to serve large vehicles would require land acquisition that could be prohibitively difficult and expensive.
- 1.5.3 There are sound reasons for not closing either road due to the various bus routes that serve the area, including school buses. Adverse public reaction to closure of the A256 during late 2011, while reconstructing Lord of the Manor junction, highlighted the importance of the bus services to Cliffsend. These services are particularly important for the village that has a high proportion of elderly residents.
- 1.5.4 Various Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO's) were considered, such as 'prohibition of all vehicles except for access', installation of bus lanes, and various speed limits. Consultation with the Police identified difficulties with enforcement and so it was not practical to pursue these options.

- 1.5.5 An Order prohibiting Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV's) from using either road, except for access is supported by the Police and this is already being progressed as it should be uncontroversial and desirable to have in place when EKA2 opens. However, should there be any objections to the Order prohibiting HGV's this will be reported verbally at the Board meeting.
- 1.5.6 It is recognised that, with a large proportion of continental lorries using the two primary routes, and with satellite navigation systems now being widely used, HGV's are still likely to be directed along the old roads in the short term. To help discourage such use it is proposed to install non standard 'Do Not Follow Sat Nav' signing, which has been successfully trialled elsewhere, to mitigate this problem. This should help discourage many vehicles, and not just HGV's, from continuing their journey through Cliffsend village.

1.6 Proposals for Public Consultation

- 1.6.1 Proposals were prepared by Jacobs for consultation purposes and which took account of initial discussions with the key stakeholders and these plans will be on display at the Board meeting.
- 1.6.2 The designs propose similar treatment on each approach to the village and with coloured surfacing at each end to highlight the changing character of the road together with the HGV restrictions.
- 1.6.3 Each approach has an initial gateway feature located on the outskirts of the village with kerb build outs to narrow the road, red surfacing and priority signing. There is then a further gateway feature closer to the built up area with red rumble surfacing, kerb build outs to narrow the road again, red surfacing and priority signing. Signing gives priority to those vehicles leaving the village, while those entering the village are required to 'give way'. Village signs will be incorporated into one of the gateways on each approach.
- 1.6.4 The A299 eastbound approach to the village is proposed to have red rumble surfacing on the approaches to both gateways.
- 1.6.5 Traffic speed restrictions were discussed and agreed with the Police. Gateway locations have been coordinated with the speed restrictions and speed limit signing is included in the gateway signing design as appropriate.
- 1.6.6 The existing 30mph speed limit along the A299 Canterbury Road West is proposed to be reinforced with '30' roundel road markings along the carriageway. The existing 40mph speed limit along the A256 Sandwich Road is also proposed to be reinforced with '40' roundel road markings along the carriageway.
- 1.6.7 Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO's) will need to be progressed to coordinate the new speed restrictions with those that already exist. Any objections received to these Orders could potentially frustrate delivery and the Board is asked to endorse a means of addressing any objections received.

1.7 Public Consultation

- 1.7.1 Public consultation was held at Cliffsend Village Hall on Friday evening 21 October 2011, and Saturday morning 22 October 2011. It was well attended with 166 residents signing in, 92 of whom submitted comment sheets. Jacobs' Consultation Report will be available at the JTB meeting
- 1.7.2 The draft proposals outlined above were exhibited to the public who were asked to comment on the proposals and to add any suggestions for alternative features they would like to see, should further measures need to be considered.
- 1.7.3 There was a clear majority in support of the draft proposals with 66% being in favour, 10% expressing no preference, 20% against and 4% unmarked. 49% expressed a view that they doubted if the measures would adequately address the problems perceived, and this probably influenced their scoring.
- 1.7.4 A resident who had studied various publications on traffic calming was advocating table ramps as being the most effective form of traffic calming. He subsequently embarked upon a post consultation exercise in liaison with the residents association. Although feedback questionnaires from his work have been considered by Jacobs, they have advised that this additional consultation did impose some bias on public opinion.
- 1.7.5 The most commented upon issue was the speed limit of 40 mph along the A256 Sandwich Road where more than one third of residents considered 30 mph to be more appropriate. However, given the open aspect of the road, the Police would be unwilling to support such a speed limit without further 'self enforcing' traffic calming measures.
- 1.7.6 A variety of other traffic calming measures were suggested with almost a quarter of residents requesting additional kerb build outs. A variety of other measures and provisions were suggested but only 1 in 15 suggested any vertical deflection perhaps reflecting the unpopularity of such forms of traffic calming.

1.8 Further Consultation with Stakeholders

- 1.8.1 Much of the discussion with key stakeholders occurred prior to finalising the exhibition plans and it was their initial comments that helped shape the proposals. As they had not been given the opportunity to comment upon the latest proposals, a further consultation by letter was carried out. Details included the exhibition plans and a summary of the feedback from residents.
- 1.8.2 Key stakeholders included:- South East Coast Ambulance, Kent Fire and Rescue, Kent Police, Bus Operators, KCC Highways & Transportation and Kent International Airport (KIA). The Parish Council and Residents Association have been consulted throughout.
- 1.8.3 The Police were supportive of the proposals but, as expected, they would not support a reduced speed limit along Sandwich Road without 'engineering' a

solution that would make the lower speed limit self enforcing. They also considered additional kerb build-outs would only be necessary in conjunction with a reduced speed limit.

- 1.8.4 Stagecoach indicated a wish to upgrade their existing bus stops from lay-bys to 'on street' bus stops. This would itself be a form of traffic calming that could be looked into should further traffic calming be considered necessary.
- 1.8.5 KIA had no objections to the proposals or to any additional measures suggested by residents.

1.9 Conclusions

- 1.9.1 The traffic calming proposals as consulted upon would appear to be a favoured, non-controversial provision. There was no strong representation for any other specific form of traffic calming other than for a reduced speed limit along Sandwich Road.
- 1.9.2 Residents' comments that "the measures are unlikely to be adequate" indicates that they would like something else done, yet they appear unable to be specific. This could be because it is a perceived problem or, alternatively, it is because there is nothing suitable that they would like.
- 1.9.3 This seems to indicate a general acceptance to address the problem in stages by first constructing the traffic calming as exhibited, and then to carry out monitoring to test the effectiveness and to identify any problems for further consideration.

1.10 Programme

- 1.10.1 Subject to the views of the Board and the Cabinet Member's approval, the ideal time for constructing traffic calming measures is as soon as possible following the opening of the East Kent Access Phase 2 scheme that is currently programmed for late April 2012.
- 1.10.2 It is known that Southern Gas Networks are keen to carry out works along the old A299 that have been deferred until EKA2 was open, and this work could be coordinated with the traffic calming.
- 1.10.3 There is therefore some uncertainty on timing but the aim would be to carry out the works as soon as possible. Depending on programme and commercial considerations the work may be carried out by either the EKA2 contractor or our Term Maintenance Contractor, Enterprise.

1.11 Financial Implications

1.11.1 The estimated cost of the traffic calming proposals and operational monitoring is £195k and this is included within the overall EKA2 project budget. There is no formal budget as such for any further measures because KCC will have liability for any costs and if further measures are considered necessary then they will need to be considered on their merits, with due consideration of the wider objectives of the East Kent Access Phase 2 scheme.

1.12 Recommendation

1.12.1 Subject to the views of this Board, it is proposed to **RECOMMEND** to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste that approval be given:

- i) to implement the traffic calming measures shown on Drg. No's 331700/TC/001 to 004 inclusive.
- ii) to assess the operational effectiveness of the traffic calming proposals and to report back to this Board six months after implementation.
- iii) that if valid written objections are received to Traffic Regulation Orders, the Area Manager, in consultation with the Chairman of this Board and the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste, give consideration to the objections and make a decision whether or not the TRO should be introduced.

Background documents:

Drg. No's 331700/TC/001, 331700/TC/002, 331700/TC/003 and 331700/TC/004 on display at the JTB meeting.

Public consultation Report - Jacobs January 2012 titled "Cliffsend Traffic Calming - Consultation Report"- To be available at the JTB meeting.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Figure 1- Plan of Traffic Calming Locations

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