

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

9 March 2009

Report of the Head of Transport and Development

Part 1- Public

Matters For Decision

1 A228 LEYBOURNE AND WEST MALLING BYPASS - BEFORE AND AFTER MONITORING

Summary

This report informs the JTB of the redistribution of traffic following completion of the Leybourne bypass and dualling of West Malling bypass. Members are invited to note the results. The report also summarises further studies requested following a presentation to local Parish Councils and Members on 11 February.

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 In keeping with good practice it was recognised at an early stage that 'before and after' monitoring of this major scheme would be required to measure its effects. Kent Highway Services in association with Peter Brett Associates (PBA), who were the County's consultants for this scheme, undertook a series of counts at different times but generally at or prior to 2003.
- 1.1.2 These counts covered the A228 corridor and other north-south roads such as Bull Road, Lunsford Lane, Seven Mile Lane, St Leonards Street, Oxley Shaw etc. as well as east-west roads such as Park Road, The Street and Teston Road.
- 1.1.3 The counts were repeated in 2008 and Peter Brett Associates have undertaken a significant study and produced a detailed report which brings this data together in comparison.
- 1.1.4 Account has also been taken of the ongoing increase in traffic growth arising from increased car ownership, increased wealth and economic activity and development via approved planning applications. This is often referred to as background traffic growth, is ongoing nationally and the government provides national and local actual and forecast growth figures. Comparison has therefore been made between 2003 and 2008 data using these forecast figures (as if the scheme had not been implemented) and between the actual and 'equivalent' 2008 data.

1.2 Results and discussion

- 1.2.1 A much abbreviated table and map is put before this Board for information which shows the results in 2-way 12 hour (7am to 7pm) weekday figures. Directional, peak hour and 24 hour data (although not for all sites and scenarios) is also available in the full PBA report. The broad findings are that Leybourne bypass currently attracts over 21000 vehicles per day and West Malling bypass has seen an increase in daily traffic flows of 32%. Castle Way has experienced an 80% reduction in traffic, Oxley Shaw 40% and St Leonards Street 30%. Most other sites show a nil or less than 10% change. Some increases in traffic have been observed in Lunsford Lane and Bull Road which bridge the M20 to the east and west of junction 4, although this has been less than some local perceptions.
- 1.2.2 There is no doubt in engineering terms that a better more efficient scheme could have been built. There has been much debate and criticism of the numerous sets of traffic lights on this scheme. However schemes with free flowing slip roads, more flyovers, structures and grade separated junctions, would have taken considerably more land and cost more, to a point where it was financially prohibitive. Such a scheme was also not deliverable due to evolving Government road building policy and the Highways Agency's concern for the resulting traffic impact upon the M20 motorway. The latter concern stemming from the Government's removal from its road building programme in 1996 to widen the M20 motorway (Junctions 3 to 5).
- 1.2.3 From the figures given above however, there is also no doubt that the A228 Leybourne and West Malling bypass scheme has been enormously successful at doing what it set out to do. The scheme has allowed greater access to junction 4 of the M20. More importantly it has done this in an achievable, proportional and cost effective way.

1.3 Future analysis

- 1.3.1 On Wednesday evening 11 February, these results were presented to the local Parish Councils, Borough and County Members. There was concern from Members covering Larkfield and East Malling that the study area did not extend far enough east to include particularly Leybourne Way, New Hythe Lane and the road between Watringbury and the A20 which passes through East Malling. Further research is required and some new surveys may need to be undertaken to establish before and after comparisons on these roads.
- 1.3.2 Whilst north-south traffic flows on the A228 near the southern end of the bypass together with traffic flows on St Leonards Street have been obtained, concern was also raised regarding direct measurements on the A228 at Kent Street. This section of the A228 is now noticeably of a lower standard in relation to the A228 as a whole. New traffic monitoring at the approaches to the Kent Street junction is to be undertaken in any event and this will be compared to historic – pre-bypass data.

1.4 Legal Implications

1.4.1 Not applicable

1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.5.1 None at this stage

1.6 Risk Assessment

1.6.1 Not applicable

1.7 Recommendations

1.7.1 Members are asked to note the report and endorse the request to extend the study area as identified in the report for comparative monitoring.

Background papers:

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Nil

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