

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

12 March 2012

Report of the Director of Highways and Transportation

Part 1- Public

Matters For Information

1 PETITIONS SUBMITTED TO KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

Summary

This report updates Members on petitions currently being considered by Kent County Council Highways and Transportation.

1.1 Petitions Currently Under Consideration

1.1.1 In keeping with recent practice, this report updates Members on petitions received by Kent County Council Highways and is a standing item on the Board's agenda. For this meeting, Kent County Council will be reporting updates on the following items:

- A20 Wrotham Hill
- The withdrawal of the Arriva 101 Service from Bus Stops at Cobtree Golf Course and Salisbury Road, Kits Coty
- Petition for Traffic Calming on Catlyn Close, East Malling
- Bridge Bashing Priory Road, Tonbridge.

1.2 A20 Wrotham Hill

1.2.1 At the June 2010 meeting of this Board a petition was submitted from local County, Borough and Parish councillors regarding recent fatal road traffic crashes on the A20 at Wrotham Hill (minute no. 10/018 refers). A number of updates have been provided to this Board and meetings have been held with the local Community to discuss the concerns which still persist.

1.2.2 The latest meeting to be held was on 13th January 2012 with the County Council Highways department and representatives of the Parish Council. At this meeting the County Council responded in detail to the conclusions made in a Technical Report produced by Les Henry Associates Limited (May 2011) on behalf of the Parish Council and outlined our current position with respect to funding improvements along the A20 Wrotham Hill.

- 1.2.3 The main conclusions made in the Les Henry Associates Ltd report were that the County Council Highways department should consider providing the following improvements to improve road safety:-
- Amendments to the road markings on Wrotham Hill to prohibit downhill overtaking.
 - A reduction in the speed limit to 50mph.
 - Installation of a safety camera to enforce the speed limit and overcome the problems associated with speeding motor cyclists.
 - A rethink over the road markings on Wrotham Hill to make provision for cyclists.
- 1.2.4 Section 39 of the 1988 Road Traffic Act puts a Statutory Duty on local authorities to undertake studies into road crashes, and to take steps to reduce and prevent crashes. As previously outlined in exercise of this duty the County Council annually analyses the crash statistics and records it holds, on all of the roads the County is responsible for, to identify patterns of personal injury crashes.
- 1.2.5 The objective is to recognise recurring problems which can be tackled by engineering measures to prevent such incidents reoccurring. It should be borne in mind however, that human error is a contributory factor in 95% of all road collisions and therefore, it is impossible to eradicate all crashes occurring at any location. The schemes developed and funded using this approach are identified in the County Council's Local Transport Plan as the CRM Programme. The current intervention level set by the County Council for funding is that in the last three year period there should be at least three personal injury crashes of similar causation at the location and that the identified engineering measures would appreciably reduce the risk of another incident occurring.
- 1.2.6 The recommendations suggested above have been considered as part of this process using the intervention criteria set out above and following a detailed analysis of the latest three year crash record for Wrotham Hill the County Councils formal position on these suggestions are as follows:-
- Amendments to the road markings on Wrotham Hill to prohibit overtaking downhill.

The section of the A20 between the roundabout at the top of Wrotham Hill (A20/M20/Old Coach Road) and the roundabout at the bottom (A20/A227/Pilgrims Ways) has unfortunately been subject to two tragic fatal crashes and another serious crash. One of the fatalities involved a driver hitting a cyclist when both vehicles were travelling up the hill and the other fatality involved a car losing control when driving up the hill veering in to the path of another car driving down the hill. The serious incident occurred on the approach

to the bottom roundabout when a lone motor cyclist's brake locked while slowing down causing him to fall off.

While two of the incidents involved a tragic loss of life and the other serious injury, from the information provided by the Police it appears that human error was the major causation factor and not the road layout. None of these incidents involved a vehicle overtaking down the hill and therefore, the implementation of a no over taking ban on the downhill section would not have had any affect on these crashes.

It was however, agreed at the meeting with the Parish that vehicles overtaking downhill without taking due care and attention could cause a potential safety hazard to vehicles travelling in the middle lane up the hill therefore, Kent County Council would consult on potential changes with Kent Police on the current white lining system.

- A reduction in the speed limit to 50mph & installation of safety cameras.

Along the whole section of the A20 analysed between the M20 & M26 there have been a total of 10 crashes resulting in personal injury in the latest three year period up to the end of September 2011. According to the police reports only one of these crashes clearly involved excessive speed as a major causation factor. Based on the existing crash data the implementation of a reduced speed limit would not have a significant impact on reducing these crashes.

Safety Cameras are not used as a traffic calming measure to enable the reduction of speed limits but to enforce current limits that are being abused. The policy Kent County Council has adopted for the installation of fixed Safety Cameras is that they will only be installed in locations where three or more people have been killed or seriously injured in speed-related crashes. As previously explained there has only been one speed related incident recorded therefore, a fixed camera would not be meet the current policy however, this site may be appropriate for mobile cameras to operate and as such this suggestion has been raised with the Kent & Medway Safety Camera Partnership.

- A rethink over the road markings on Wrotham Hill to make provision for cyclists.

The Les Henry Associates Ltd report recommends an assessment of the impact of removing the climbing lane to provide facilities for cyclists along the A20 Wrotham Hill. The only personal injury crash involving a cyclist between the A20/M20/Old Coach Road and A20/A227/Pilgrims Ways roundabouts was the tragic fatality already discussed involving a driver hitting a cyclist when both vehicles were travelling up the hill.

If separate facilities were provided for cyclists it is likely that a reoccurrence of this incident could be avoided however, the removal of the climbing lane itself could lead to other incidents as vehicles travelling up the hill would no longer be able to overtake slow moving vehicles without entering in to the opposing lane.

As detailed earlier our current intervention level is three incidents of the same causation factor before funding can be justified and with the risk of creating further potential safety issues the County Council will not be pursuing additional cycling facilities on Wrotham Hill.

In summary the County Council has written to Kent Police to ascertain their views on potential amendments to the white lining system preventing overtaking on Wrotham Hill. We have also requested that the Kent & Medway Camera Partnership consider whether Wrotham Hill is an appropriate site to be added to the Mobile Camera enforcement programme. The other recommendations made in the Les Henry Associates Ltd report will not be currently pursued by the County Council for the reasons outlined.

1.3 The Withdrawal of the Arriva 101 Service from Bus Stops at Cobtree Golf Course and Salisbury Road, Kits Coty

1.3.1 As previously reported, a petition was received by the County Council in July 2010 requesting the reinstatement of the 101 bus service to the two bus stops on the A229 at Cobtree Golf Course and opposite Salisbury Road, Kits Coty. This was following Arriva's decision to withdraw the service to these stops on health and safety grounds.

1.3.2 Works to improve the bus stop by Cobtree Golf Course has now been completed and the service reinstated to this stop. There are no current plans for alternative arrangements on the Salisbury Road, Kits Coty side of Bluebell Hill as the options investigated and previously reported to this Board, such as the closure of the slip road, construction of a new acceleration lane or funding additional 150 services, have all been ruled out due to being financially prohibitive. There will be no further updates to report on this petition.

1.4 Petition for Traffic Calming on Catlyn Close, East Malling and Larkfield

1.4.1 Kent County Council Highways received a petition with 46 signatures in March 2011 from residents of Catlyn Close requesting that installation of traffic calming.

1.4.2 Due to significant cut backs in Government funding to Local Authorities the County Council is currently only funding improvements to the Highway which are deemed Safety Critical and will assist the County Council in reducing casualties occurring on our roads. The County Council have no record of any of any personal injury crashes in the last three years in the area therefore have no plans to fund traffic calming measures. The lead petitioner will be informed.

1.5 Priory Road Bridge Bashing Incidents

- 1.5.1 Kent County Council is working with Cllr Alice Hohler to reduce the amount of Bridge Bashing incidents in the vicinity of Priory Road and Vale Road. Upon visiting the site it is felt that there sufficient signage in place on the Vale Road side of the junction but there are improvements to be made on the Priory Road side of the bridge.
- 1.5.2 Cllr Alice Hohler has agreed to fund advanced signage on the southern side of the bridge to eradicate any unnecessary HGV traffic trying to access Vale Road from Pembury Road. Updates regarding the progression of this scheme will continue as part of the Member Highway Fund Works programme report.

1.6 Legal Implications

- 1.6.1 None at this stage.

1.7 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.7.1 None arising at this time.

1.8 Risk Assessment

- 1.8.1 Not Applicable

Background papers:

Nil

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