

Agenda Item No. 7

TO: SWALE JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

DATE: 18th September 2006

SUBJECT: A251 FAVERSHAM TO CHALLOCK – SPEED
MANAGEMENT

BY: Divisional Manager – Kent Highway Services, Mid
Kent Division

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: A report on the progress of the proposal to introduce lower speed limits along the route.

Decision required:

1. That Members recommend that a 40 mph speed limit is introduced in the three villages, North Street, Sheldwich and Badlesmere and the previous consultees are informed accordingly, and
2. That a 50 mph speed limit is introduced along the remainder of the road.

Introduction

1. At the meeting of this Board on 19th December 2005 Members recommended that a speed limit of 30 mph within the villages along the A251 and a 50 mph speed limit along the remainder of the road be introduced.
2. The A251 between Faversham and Ashford is a important route and connects the A2 and M2 to the north to the M20 and A20 to the south. There are three villages along the route. The villages of Sheldwich and Badlesmere have 50 mph speed limits and North Street and the remainder of the road is subject to national speed limit, 60 mph.

Discussion

3. Following the recommendation of this Board referred to in 1 above officers wrote to the residents within the villages informing them that a 30 mph speed limit would be introduced. However in reducing the speed limit it would need to be demonstrated that they meet the requirement of the national guidelines on speed limits. The national guidelines advocate that speed limits would have to be appropriate to the local environment, appear realistic to drivers and be self enforcing. These principles were the subject of a report to a meeting of the Highway Advisory Board, which is the subject of a separate report to this meeting of the Board. These, therefore, form the basis of our agreement with the Police for speed limits.

4. A speed survey of the villages along the route was therefore carried out and the results are shown below:

Location	85 th percentile speed Northbound (mph)	85 th percentile speed Southbound (mph)
North Street	46.3	49.2
Sheldwich	48.1	47.6
Badlesmere	45.6	45.4

In line with the necessary requirements these were the subject of discussion with the Police who have indicated that they would not object to lowering the speed limits in North Street from 60 mph to 40 mph and in Sheldwich and Badlesmere from 50 mph to 40 mph and that they would not support lowering the limits along these villages to below 40 mph. In respect of the remainder of the road the Police would not object to lowering the speed limit from 60 mph to 50 mph.

5. As can be seen from the speed survey the 85th percentile speed is in the region of mid to upper 40s mph. It would therefore be very difficult to argue for a greatly lower limit which would be unenforceable. Experience has shown that inappropriate speed limits can cause accidents as vehicles travelling at speeds appropriate to local environment collide with vehicles travelling at lower designated speed. This often raises a call for further traffic calming which may not be possible to achieve, especially on a major Class A road.

Decision required

1. That members recommend that a 40 mph speed limit is introduced in the three villages, North Street, Sheldwich and Badlesmere and the previous consultees are informed accordingly, and
2. That a 50 mph speed limit is introduced along the remainder of the road.

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