

TO: SWALE JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD
DATE: 18th December 2006
SUBJECT: Weight Limit Restriction – Grovehurst Road, Sittingbourne
BY: Divisional Manager Mid Kent
Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: A representation to impose a weight restriction on Grovehurst Road
Decision Required: That no further action is taken in respect of the representation and the Member is notified accordingly

Introduction

1. A representation has been received from the Local County Member for Swale Central and Borough Councillor for Kemsley, requesting that a weight restriction be imposed on Grovehurst Road (plan annexe A).

Discussion

2. The Member indicates that heavy goods vehicles have no need to use Grovehurst Road since the completion of the new dual carriageway A249 trunk road and bridge over The Swale and the opening of the northern section of the Sittingbourne Northern relief Road linking the A249/B2005 Grovehurst Road junction to the industrial area in north east Sittingbourne.
3. The B2005 Grovehurst Road is designated a secondary distributor road within the Kent urban road hierarchy. Such roads are expected to cater for all vehicle classes including HGVs and in this respect the road still provides important access route for heavy goods vehicles which continue to need access to existing businesses between Sittingbourne, Milton Regis and Kemsley.
4. The B2005 is also the preferred 'abnormal load' route to the industrial area served off Menin Road via Grovehurst Avenue.
5. Presently industrial traffic is positively signed off the A249 at the B2006 Staplehurst Road junction. Staplehurst Road provides a direct link the industrial centre of Siittingbourne and links up with the B2005 Mill Way via St Paul's Street providing access to Trinity Trading Estate.
6. Grovehurst Road currently caters for an average weekday traffic flow 17000 vehicles. During the weekday a daily average of 800 heavy goods classified vehicles use Grovehurst Road which represents less than 5% of the total daily traffic flow.
7. It is anticipated that a small percentage of HGVs from the industrial areas of Sittingbourne will use Grovehurst Road to join the A249 at the Grovehurst Road interchange on route to the Isle of Sheppey. Likewise, there is likely to be a small percentage of HGVs using Grovehurst Road on route from the Isle of Sheppey to industrial area of Sittingbourne.

8. As is usual when requests are made for weight, width and speed restrictions, the Police are consulted for their views as the enforcement authority on moving traffic offences. In a letter from the Traffic Management Unit of Kent Police dated 18 September 2006, several valid issues were pointed out for consideration. In general though the Police were of the view that the benefits of implementing a weight restriction in Grovehurst Road would be negligible as HGVs would still require access to both private and business premises in Kemsley and that enforcement of such an Order would not be given a high priority by the Police as enforcement authority. In bearing this in mind it is important that any traffic regulation Order of this type should be designed to be self-enforcing in order to maintain any level of credibility. Weight restrictions are typically very difficult to be designed to be self-enforcing.
9. Given all of the above and with particular reference to current strategic status of Grovehurst Road and its relationship with the existing signed HGV route, from the A249 via B2006 Staplehurst Road, it would not be appropriate to restrict access for HGV's in Grovehurst Road at this time.
10. It is expected that the B2005 will be downgraded to a 'C' class category road following the full opening of the Sittingbourne Relief Road (SNRR) which will inherit the B2005 class status. The SNRR will link the A249 to the A2 and is expected to be fully operational by 2016. This is the earliest date that the situation could be reviewed.

Decision Required

11. Members are asked to recommend that no further action is taken in respect of this representation and that the Member is notified accordingly.

Contact Officer:
Stephen Huckle 01622 798350
Stephen.huckle@kent.gov.uk

Background documents:
Annexe A – plan