

Agenda Item No.

TO: SWALE JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

DATE: 17 December 2007

SUBJECT: PETITION RELATING TO TRAFFIC SPEED, HIGHWAY SAFETY AND LORRY MANAGEMENT ISSUES IN TUNSTALL

BY: TRANSPORTATION MANAGER – Mid Kent Division, Kent Highway Services

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report provides details of representations and a petition received from the various church, school and residential communities in Tunstall requesting the following measures in Tunstall village and parish:-

- a 20mph zone in Tunstall Village;
- a speed reducing device between 'The Den' and 'Tunstall Stables' in Tunstall Road;
- a lorry management scheme for Tunstall Parish;
- request for an investigative course of action.

Decision Required: That Members note the report and the investigative action proposed.

Introduction

1. A report from Tunstall Parish Council and a petition signed by a number of residents in Tunstall and the parents of children attending Tunstall Primary School, was submitted to the Highways Advisory Board in November 2007 which claimed that vehicle speeds through the village far exceeds the current speed limit of 30 mph. The accompanying report gives further examples of issues being experienced by the villagers, church and school communities in Tunstall.
2. In addition, representations from the Local County Member for Swale Central and Borough Councillor for Woodstock were made to the Highways Advisory Board in November 2007 on behalf of Tunstall Parish Council requesting the need for a lorry study to be carried out for the village of Tunstall and surrounding rural road network.

Background

3. Members will recall that a report was submitted to the meeting of the Joint Transportation Board (JTB) in June 2006 following a petition received from Tunstall Parish Council requesting the introduction of a 20 mph zone. At that time it was reported that a number of speed reducing measures had been explored with the Parish Council, but it was concluded that it was difficult to justify any of the measures, based on the latest speed and crash data. Members of the JTB at the time endorsed that no further action was justified but that the situation continue to be closely monitored.
4. The issue of heavy lorries using the local rural roads has also been acknowledged. However, it also needs to be recognised an acceptable balance has to be struck between what is legitimate access for lorries serving the local rural businesses and communities and what can be classed as unnecessary, 'rat-running' trips.
5. There is an existing lorry management scheme in place in Borden which includes an exemption for legitimate lorry access to destinations within the restricted roads and, it is envisaged that a similar scheme may be appropriate for Tunstall. Lorry management schemes, by their very nature, are designed to safeguard the County's rural road network and reinforce the need to ensure that heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) use the most appropriate roads for highway safety reasons. However, this particular scheme is currently under scrutiny due to the lack of police enforcement which is the main requirement for such a scheme to be successful.

Proposed Action

6. A letter confirming receipt of the petition has been sent to the Chairman of Tunstall Parish Council with an acknowledgement that the matter will be investigated. As a result of this letter and petition a meeting was held with the Parish Council, local members, representatives of the School and officers from Kent Highway Services on 12 December, in order to understand these concerns in more detail and discuss possible ways forward.
7. At the meeting it was also explained that funding for any highway schemes will be assessed using the PIPKIN priority process and that the outcome of the next round of assessments will not be known until late 2008, for possible implementation during the 2009/10 financial year.
8. As is usual when requests are made for HGV restrictions, an initial survey and investigation will be carried out to establish if there is an excessive number of HGVs using the rural roads in Tunstall compared to the County average. If this is the case then a more in depth investigation will be carried out to understand where lorries are travelling to and from in order to determine legitimate lorry movements to existing rural businesses and

destinations. The injury crash record for the area will also be examined in more detail.

9. This process will also involve consultation with the Police as the enforcement authority. However, given that Police enforcement of such issues is not given a high priority, due to other priorities, it is important that any Traffic Regulation Order that restricts HGV access will need to be designed to be self-enforcing in order to maintain any level of credibility. HGV restrictions are typically very difficult to design to be self-enforcing, particularly when legitimate access has to be maintained.

Decisions Required

10. That Members endorse the actions proposed and that the results of the investigation and recommendations are reported to the next appropriate meeting of the JTB.

List of background documents

A report from Tunstall Parish Council titled "Traffic Problems in Tunstall Village"

Petition from the various church, school and residential communities in Tunstall Village.

Responsible Officer

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