

**TO:** SWALE JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

**DATE:** 9 September 2013

**SUBJECT:** Eden Village Proposed Bus Facility – Revised Report

**BY:** KCC Head of Transportation and Development

**Classification:** Unrestricted

**Summary:** Consultation has been undertaken on a proposal to open a bus link in Eden Village, Sittingbourne to facilitate a bus route.

**Decision Required:** To recommend that the existing posts between the eastern and western lengths of Crossways are removed and that a bus only traffic order is implemented.

### **Introduction**

Members may recall that a paper on this matter was brought to the last meeting of the Board at which time it was agreed that the Order would be advertised and any representations reported back to the Board for consideration.

### **Discussion**

When the planning application was granted for the development of Eden Village on Fulston Manor, one of the conditions was that a bus link solely for buses would be provided at Crossways, and a sum of money was secured to pump prime the bus service for 5 years.

The bus service has now begun, but the bus link has remained closed to all traffic since the construction of the development. The area is served by a new bus service (service 9) which has been introduced on a commercial basis in the off peak. The peak service will commence in September and will be funded by the pump priming money for five years.

Opening the bus link at Crossways would enable the service 9 to better serve the residents of Eden Village and also serve the Northwood Drive area, providing residents with a new bus service. This will also substantially increase the likelihood of the service becoming commercially viable, so that it continues after five years when the funding runs out.

Opening the bus link would require removal of the posts which effect the road closure and the implementation of a traffic order to limit the use of the link to buses only.

### **Representations Received:**

To date six representations have been received:

Chalkwell (bus company) have written in support of the Order stating that it would enable the provision of a more comprehensive and improved service in both the peak and off peak times as they can currently only access the development to the end of Bluebell Drive. They add that opening the link would enable them to add a service on Saturdays to Eden village, and that currently services in Northwood Drive and Sterling Road have to be financially supported by KCC which should significantly reduce if the link could be opened.

Kent Police have written in objection to the Order on the grounds that it will not be self enforcing and therefore ineffective and will leave the Police with the task of undertaking constant enforcement. The Police have also queried the suitability of the roads to act as a bus route. Kent Police request that the proposal is withdrawn until a physical bus gate or similar can be introduced.

Four residents of Crossways have also sent in objections, and have made the following points:

Residents were promised that there would be no access other than foot between the two sides of the estate;

Fulston Manor already has a bus service and another one is not necessary;

Yellow lines will be required and will cause problems for residents;

The bus gate will not be wide enough for a bus.

It will still be possible for motorbikes to use the link at speed to the detriment of pedestrian safety;

Can it be proven that the bus service is viable?

The bus currently sits at the existing barrier running its engine for up to 15 minutes suggesting that the service is not being used;

Residents have not been offered the opportunity to comment on the frequency of the proposed service;

Residents have not been told how the bus gate would operate;

Not all residents were directly consulted;

A cul de sac is a valuable amenity that the council is proposing to remove without explanation or compensation.

Residents will not benefit from this proposal;

The road was not designed with a bus route in mind and parked cars narrow its usable width. There is only a footway on one side of the road. Residents pulling off their drives or using the turning heads will be in serious danger of collision;

Why are bus passengers or the bus company requesting this, and if not them then where has the request come from and how will it advantage the local community?

The surveillance cameras will be intrusive and infringe the Human Rights Act;

Residents will not be able to park outside their house.

One resident has since clarified that his objection is that no means of enforcement has been specified and that a lack of enforcement will create a potential short cut creating problems for residents in the houses adjacent to the bus gate.

### **Discussion**

The provision of the bus link and additional bus service was secured as part of the planning permission and the majority of the points raised in the objections would have been covered at that stage. Parking restrictions are not proposed as part of this scheme.

It is recommended that the bus only traffic order is progressed as advertised. The means of physical enforcement can be considered together with other TROs across the county that require physical means.

### **Financial Implications**

This scheme is estimated at approximately £2000 which can be funded from KCC Public Transport budget. This cost includes the advertisement of the traffic order, removal of the posts and erection of the traffic signs.

### **Decision Required**

Subject to the views of Members, it is recommended that:

1. The posts in the link between the eastern and western lengths of Crossways are removed;
2. The traffic order provided for the prohibition of driving motor vehicles, except for buses, on the length of Crossways between points 104m east of its junction with Northwood Drive, and 86m west of its junction with Iris Drive be implemented as advertised.

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