

TO: SWALE JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

DATE: 9 September 2013

SUBJECT: Great Easthall Bus Facility

BY: KCC Head of Transportation and Development

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: Consultation has been undertaken on a Traffic Order to reinforce the bus only restriction in Eveas Drive.

Decision Required: Subject to the views of Members, it is recommended that the traffic order for the prohibition of driving motor vehicles, except for buses and cycles, on the length of Eveas Drive between Oak Road and Freeman Drive be implemented as advertised.

Introduction

Members may recall that a paper on this matter was brought to a meeting of the Board several years ago and concluded that a traffic regulation order and changes to the traffic signs were required to make the existing bus gate enforceable.

Discussion

The bus gate is effected by a set of traffic signals that are triggered by the approach of a bus. There have been many instances of non compliance by motorists and the Police have indicated that they are not able to take enforcement action until a traffic order is made prohibiting the use of Eveas Drive except for buses.

Representations Received:

To date five letters of representation have been received:

Two letters of support from residents who comment that the road was originally intended as a bus only link and should stay as such and that at present buses have to reverse back to allow other illegal vehicles through. They would like to see better enforcement of the restrictions and one correspondent has commented that completion of the Northern Relief Road to the A2 would reduce the need for unauthorised vehicles to use the Eveas Drive link.

A further letter of support has been received from Countryside Properties, who are the developers, and who confirm that the link was only ever intended to be used by buses and cycles and that in addition to receiving complaints from residents about inappropriate use of the bus link, they also receive complaints that this practise encourages more vehicles into the adjacent residential streets.

Kent Police have no objections to the proposed Order.

A resident of Mulberry Way has written in objection to the proposed Order as, if the link road were to be used by all traffic it would allow easier access to the school, shops and services in Murston. She also considers that if Eveas Drive were to be opened up it would provide an emergency route if an incident were to cause Swale Way to be blocked.

Councillor Whiting has also written in objection to the Order on the grounds that this length of road should be opened up to be available for all motorists as a link and should not be restricted only to buses.

The closing date for representations to the advertised Order is 19 August and if any further representations are received, Members will be updated.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the bus only traffic order is progressed as advertised notwithstanding the objection received. The bus only link was provided by the developer as a condition of the Great Easthall planning permission as a measure to make the bus service more attractive and therefore to encourage its use. Opening the link up to all traffic would require the traffic signals to operate on single way working and would remove any advantage to the bus service that was originally envisaged when planning permission was given.

Financial Implications

This scheme is estimated at approximately £2000 which will be funded from the developer. This cost includes the advertisement of the traffic order, and erection of the traffic signs.

Decision Required

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

1. The traffic order for the prohibition of driving motor vehicles, except for buses and cycles, on the length of Eveas Drive between Oak Road and Freeman Drive be implemented as advertised.

Contact Officer: Ruth Goudie, Strategic Transportation Planner, KCC Highways.

