

SWALE JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

Agenda Item: 13

Meeting Date	Monday 2 nd March 2020
Report Title	School Buses parking in Swale Way and other areas in Swale
Cabinet Member	Cllr Tim Valentine
Head of Service	Martyn Cassell
Lead Officer	Mike Knowles (SBC)
Classification	Open

Recommendations	Report for Information Only
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1. Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides some background and historical information with regard to school buses parking in Swale Way, Sittingbourne, and in other areas of Swale.

2. Background

- 2.1 Following a request from a Ward Member for an agenda item to be included for the March 2020 Swale Joint Transportation Board meeting, this report provides some information on the issues experienced with school buses in the Borough.

3. Issue for Decision

- 3.1 For a number of years, issues have been experienced with school buses parking at various locations in Swale, specifically in Sittingbourne and the surrounding areas. These buses, all owned by the same bus operator, provide dedicated transport for school children to and from various schools in the area, and the parking issues occur during the school day when they are not in service.
- 3.2 It is understood that the depot for this bus operator is not located in Sittingbourne, and to avoid the need to return this substantial number of buses back to the depot during the day and then back out to schools at the end of the day, the operator instead parks the buses in and around Sittingbourne, using just one vehicle to transport drivers.

- 3.3 A number of locations have been identified as being used to park these buses when out of service. Previously these have included the A2 Canterbury Road, east of the Snipeshill traffic signals, and Swale Way. In the case of Swale Way, around 8 to 10 double decker buses were regularly parked along the southwest side of the road to the east of the Castle Road roundabout. These generated a number of complaints, and in 2018 the County Member funded the installation of 200 metres of double yellow lines through the Member Highway Grant to alleviate the problem.
- 3.4 Following the installation of these restrictions, the buses moved to the opposite side of the road, and in 2019 the County Member once again funded similar restrictions on the northwest side of Swale Way to tackle this issue.
- 3.5 As part of their development works, Meadowfield School in Swanstree Avenue constructed a parking area within their grounds to accommodate daytime school bus parking and this is used on a daily basis by the bus operator, resulting in a reduction in the number of buses parking on-street, and no buses parked in the roads in the vicinity of the school. However, with such a substantial number of buses operating and serving other schools, other locations have now been identified where vehicles regularly park. These include Sheppey Way, Iwade, between the village and Kingsferry Bridge, the A249 laybys between the Sheppey Crossing and Grovehurst/Kemsley junction, and Sheppey Way, Bobbing, between the village and Key Street roundabout.
- 3.6 Quality Bus Partnerships are a voluntary partnership between Kent County Council, District Councils and the predominant commercial bus operator(s) in the area. Operators with a lesser commercial presence (i.e with fewer main bus routes or services operated mainly for schools or under contract to the Council) are not part of the partnerships.
- 3.7 The Swale Quality Bus Partnership includes the three major commercial bus operators in the area, but does not include the bus operator running these particular school services. As such, the level of engagement with this bus operator is far less than with those operators included within the Partnership.
- 3.8 Inevitably, the introduction of isolated waiting restrictions to tackle specific problem areas will displace the buses to other locations and unless alternative parking arrangements can be found it is difficult to envisage a solution to this issue.

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 Members are asked to note the contents of the report.

5. Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Improving Community Safety through safer Highways.
Financial, Resource and Property	Cost and Resource to prepare Traffic Regulation Orders, cost of installing lining and signing.
Legal and Statutory	Sealing by Kent County Council.
Crime and Disorder	None at this stage.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	None identified at this stage.
Equality and Diversity	None identified at this stage.
Sustainability	None identified at this stage.
Health Implications	Acknowledged that this bus service provides essential transport for children living some distance from schools. If buses need to return to depot each day this would negate the environmental impact that the buses are currently having by not having to do this journey. If buses are displaced to other residential locations, this could impact on the wellbeing of residents through loss of on-street parking and/or highway safety reasons.

6. Appendices

6.1 None.

7. Background Papers

7.1 None