

<i>COMMITTEE</i>	ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
<i>DATE</i>	TUESDAY 2 DECEMBER 2003
<i>TITLE OF REPORT</i>	LOCAL SAFETY SCHEME – HOATH WAY, GILLINGHAM
<i>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER</i>	Keith Hanshaw, head of traffic management, safety and parking, frontline taskforce

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To inform the committee of the results of the consultation with Kent Police regarding the proposed new speed limit for Hoath Way. (See appendix 1, letter from Kent Police) and present three options for member's consideration.

2 RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to endorse option 1 set out in paragraph 4 of the report suggesting that::

- 2.1.1 A 50mph speed limit is introduced on Hoath Way from A2 Watling Street to 100 metres south of Ambley Road. (See appendix 2 attached)
- 2.1.2 The section between Ambley Road and Sharsted Way remain at the national speed limit. (See appendix 2 attached)
- 2.1.3 A 50mph speed limit is introduced on Hoath Way from the M2 to 100 metres north of Sharsted Way. (See appendix 2 attached)
- 2.1.4 An application is made to the Kent and Medway Safety Camera Partnership for mobile safety cameras.
- 2.1.5 Vehicle Actuated Signs are introduced in Hoath Way.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 2nd April 2003 members agreed that officers should consult with Kent Police on the possibility of reducing the speed limit on Hoath Way. The results of this consultation have now been received.
- 3.2 The current speed limit on Hoath Way is 70 mph and results from traffic volume and speed counts show that approximately 14,000 vehicles per day use Hoath Way northbound and approximately 15,000 per day southbound. Vehicle speeds are very similar both north and southbound and the average speed is under 60 mph.

- 3.3 Accident figures between 1/6/00 to 31/5/03, can be broken down into three sections:
1. M2 to Sharsted Way: There have been four personal injury accidents, one occurred on Hoath Way at the roundabout with the M2 and three at the roundabout with Sharsted Way. Three of the casualties sustained slight injuries and one was serious.
 2. Sharsted Way to Ambley Way: There have been four personal injury accidents. Two of the casualties sustained slight injuries, one was serious and the remaining accident was fatal.
 3. Ambley Way to Watling Street: There have been thirteen personal injuries accidents in this section, three of which occurred at the Ambley Way roundabout with the remainder in the section between Ambley Way and Watling Street. Of the thirteen accidents, eleven were slight; one was serious with the remaining accident fatal.

4 REPORT

4.1 There are three options available to members for consideration:

4.1.1 Option 1: Introduce a new speed limit and take action as follows:-

- Introduce a 50mph speed limit on Hoath Way from A2 Watling Street to 100 metres south of Ambley Road.
- Introduce a 50mph speed limit on Hoath Way from the M2 to 100 metres north of Sharsted Way.
- Introduce Vehicle Actuated / Variable Message Signs in Hoath Way.
- Make an application to the Kent and Medway Safety Camera Partnership for mobile safety cameras.
- Keep the section between Ambley Road and Sharsted Way at the national speed limit and continue to monitor speeds and accidents.

This is the preferred option. Kent Police have agreed they will enforce any new speed limit.

The disadvantage of this scheme is an inconsistent speed limit, which could lead to confusion to motorists however; adequate signing should alleviate this problem. The advantage is the speed limit would be enforced by Kent Police and is considered realistic for this type of road.

4.1.2 Option 2: Introduce a consistent reduced speed limit along the entire length of Hoath Way by:

- Introducing a 50mph speed limit on Hoath Way from A2 Watling Street to the M2.
- Introducing a Vehicle Actuated / Variable Message Signs in Hoath Way.
- Making an application to the Kent and Medway Safety Camera Partnership for mobile safety cameras.

The advantage of this scheme is that the speed limit is consistent. The disadvantage is Kent Police would not support the speed limit and 50mph in the centre section could be considered unrealistic for this type of road condition.

4.1.3 Option 3: No changes to the existing speed limit on Hoath Way but:

- Introduce Vehicle Actuated / Variable Message Signs in Hoath Way.

The advantage of this scheme is there would be time to evaluate the recent measures introduced in Hoath Way. The disadvantage is that no application to the Safety Camera Partnership could be made because the current speeds would not justify it.

4.2 Safety Cameras

4.2.1 For dual carriageways the criterion for fixed safety cameras is at least four accidents of a serious or fatal nature per kilometre per carriageway in the last three years. The criterion for mobile sites is at least two accidents of a serious or fatal nature per kilometre per carriageway in the last three years. Both require that at least 20% of the drivers must be exceeding the speed limit to justify the cameras.

4.2.2 These are national guidelines which are implemented by the Kent and Medway Safety Camera Partnership. This is a partnership between Medway Council, Kent County Council, Kent Police, Highways Agency and Kent Magistrates.

4.2.3 For safety cameras to be justified, reductions in the speed limit from National (70 mph) to 50 mph would be required. Any changes would need to be approved by the Police. With the current level of casualties it is possible that certain sections of Hoath Way would qualify as a mobile location,

4.2.4 The Safety Camera Partnership has nine mobile safety camera vans from which enforcement is carried out on roads across Kent and Medway. The traffic support officers use portable laser guns directed out of the back or side of the vans to detect offending motorists. The vans are clearly marked with the words 'Kent & Medway Safety Camera Partnership' and the safety camera symbol.

4.3 Variable Message Signs (VMS)/ Vehicle Actuated Signs (VAS)

- 4.3.1 As part of the Public Service Agreement (PSA) one of the indicators is the reduction in road crashes; as such special authorisation for these signs is not required. It is therefore proposed to introduce VAS signs on Hoath Way. A pilot study of these signs is currently being carried out on the B2000 and Princes Avenue and has recently been introduced on the A228. These signs are showing different types of road safety messages and officers will be assessing the most effective and then proposing the installation of them in Hoath Way.

5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report however; any subsequent works will be funded from the Local Safety Scheme Capital allocation for 2004/05.

6 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report however; a new speed limit order may be required at a future date.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Accident Data
- 7.2 Traffic counts
- 7.3 General file

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