

From: Tim Read – Head of Transportation
To: Swale Joint Transportation Board
Date: 07 December 2015
Subject: **Quiet Lanes**
Classification: **For Information**

Summary: The objectives of Quiet Lanes are to preserve the character of country lanes, to reduce traffic dominance and vehicle speeds, to encourage drivers to look out for and be more mindful of non-motorised road users and, thereby, to encourage more journeys on foot, by bike or by horse. Kent has a Quiet Lane scheme in the Greensand Ridge area of Tonbridge & Malling. The scheme was developed and promoted through a comprehensive programme of engagement. Positive outcomes were recorded, but at relatively high cost in funding and staff resources.

1. Introduction & Background

- 1.1 Between 1998 and 2002 Kent County Council was involved in a national demonstration project with the Countryside Agency and Tonbridge & Malling District Council to trial a new traffic management intervention for rural roads called Quiet Lanes.
- 1.2 The objectives of Quiet Lanes are to preserve the character of country lanes, to enhance the quality of life for rural communities by reducing vehicle speeds and discouraging through traffic, to encourage drivers to look out for and be more mindful of other road users such as horse riders, cyclists and pedestrians and, thereby, to encourage journeys by these road users.
- 1.3 This report summarises the Kent experience and provides links to information available at the national level.

2. The Kent Greensand Ridge Quiet Lanes Scheme

- 2.1 The Kent Quiet Lanes scheme is located in the Greensand Ridge area between Tonbridge and Maidstone. The roads generally have relatively low traffic flows and speeds (albeit some vehicles are recorded travelling at excessive speed) and few recorded incidents of road casualties.
- 2.2 The scheme, implemented in 2000/01, principally involved modifying signing (fingerpost destinations were removed so through traffic would not be encouraged), entry treatments (a simple post and Quiet Lane sign at the entry and exit of the network). The scheme involved extensive engagement with local people and interest groups.

- 2.3 In summary the key results of the scheme (monitored at year 2 after implementation) showed no change to vehicle flows on weekdays compared to a 16% increase on control roads, 6% lower flows on weekends compared to a 4% increase on control roads and vehicle speeds reduced by 1.8 – 2mph. Surveys showed those ‘bothered’ by motor vehicles fell by 10-15% and those who said they used the Quiet Lanes for cycling, walking or horse riding rose from 21% to 35%. Overall, 86% of local people were supportive of the concept, however, 50% of people did not believe the scheme had worked.
- 2.4 The scheme was considered a success in terms of bringing together local communities and partner organisations to work together to encourage a change in driver attitude and behaviour in a rural context.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 The Greensand Ridge Quiet Lane scheme cost £200,000 when implemented in 1991. This comprised £135,000 for engineering measures, £15,000 for monitoring, £2,000 for leaflets and publicity and £50,000 for staff costs. The scheme was funded by contributions from Kent County Council, Tonbridge & Malling District Council and the Countryside Agency.

4. The Strategic Statement and Corporate Objectives

- 4.1 Improving quality of life and road safety is in line with the KCC Strategic Statement 2015-2020; specifically outcome 2: Kent Communities feel the benefits of economic growth by being in-work, healthy and enjoying a good quality of life. The relevant themes in the Local Transport Plan for Kent 2011-2016 are ‘*a safer and healthier County*’ and ‘*enjoying life in Kent*’. There are also links with the County Councils’ Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2013) in respect of our wider public health objectives and the County Councils Road Casualty Reduction Strategy (2014) in respect of improving road safety and improving road safety for vulnerable road users.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The community based approach of the Quiet Lanes scheme was shown to work well in developing a consensus and encouraging a change in road user behaviour of local people in a rural context. However, Quiet Lanes are resource intensive to develop and deliver and an ongoing programme of engagement and publicity is needed to maintain the benefits in the long term.

6. Background Documents

- 6.1 Quiet Lanes – A National Demonstration Project in Kent (KCC, 2002). The Transport Research Laboratory www.trl.co.uk have various monitoring reports on Quiet Lanes and the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England www.cpre.org.uk have produced a Guide to Quiet Lanes (2003).

7. Contact details

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