PETITION : HEATHER DRIVE TRAFFIC IMPACT

Dartford

1. Summary

A 66 signature petition was received from residents in Heather Drive requesting various measures which include additional traffic calming, no entry into Heather Drive from Shepherds Lane and measures to reduce traffic volume including heavy commercial vehicles. An automatic speed survey was carried out in December.

1.1 This report gives details of the survey results and the response from the Kent Police Traffic Management Unit.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

2.1 Members note the report and the undertaking from the Police to monitor any contraventions of the existing 7.5 tonne weight restriction (except for access).

2.2 The petitioners be advised that there is insufficient justification for any changes to the traffic calming measures of Traffic Regulation Orders relating to Heather Drive at this time.

3. Background

3.1. As discussed in the December Joint Transport Board 2009 report, the supporting letter from the organiser of the 2009 petition calls for additional traffic calming measures to be introduced and states the feeling from residents is that existing measures are not adequate to prevent heavy traffic from using Heather Drive. It also requests the right turn into Heather Drive be closed permanently.

3.2. An automatic speed and class survey was ordered by Kent Highway Services to assess the speeds and class of vehicle using Heather Drive. The safety record of Shepherds Lane junction with Heather Drive was examined to determine whether there was sufficient evidence to suggest a problem with right turn manoeuvres.

3.3. The relevant County and Borough Members have been consulted in order to determine their view and establish if there is overall community support for the resident’s requests.

4. Discussion

4.1 An automatic speed survey was carried out in December to verify speeds and classes of vehicles. The average speed for northbound traffic was 23.1 mph and the average southbound speed was 22.9 mph. The 85% speed (the speed which 85% of drivers do not exceed)
northbound was 26.4 mph and the southbound 85% speed was 27.3 mph.

4.2 The Class Data showed 41 vehicles over Class 5 northbound (Class 5 vehicles may exceed the 7.5 tonne weight restriction dependant on their cargo) and 24 vehicles over Class 5 southbound during the one week period.

4.3 The reported personal injury accident data for the last three years showed only one accident near Heather Drive junction with Shepherds Lane. The accident involved a driver who swerved to avoid a fox and lost control. There were two casualties and only one car involved.

4.4 A meeting was organised with Kent Police but it transpires that they would not support additional traffic calming measures or the right turn ban from Shepherds Lane into Heather Drive and would formally object if proposed. The letter from Kent Police is shown in Appendix A to this report.

**Recommendations**

1. Members note the report and the undertaking from the Police to monitor any contraventions of the existing 7.5 tonne weight restriction (except for access).

2. The petitioners be advised that there is insufficient justification for any changes to the traffic calming measures or Traffic Regulation Orders relating to Heather Drive at this time.

That the Lead Petitioner be advised accordingly.

5. **Details of Exempt Information Category**
   Not applicable

6. **Appendices**

   Appendix A – Letter from P.C. Paul Cave Traffic Management Unit

**BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

The background papers pertaining to this report are held on KHS file.

**Contact Officers:** Rebecca Scott-Beaulieu

**Contact Number:** 01622 798433

Kent County Council
Dear Ms Scott-Beaulieu

Thank you for your e-mail dated 18th May 2010 concerning the proposed restriction at the above location.

I am unsure whether the residents of Heather Drive are asking for the junction with Shepherds Lane to be made a ‘No Entry’ or are requesting that right turns into Heather Drive are prohibited. Having looked at the accident statistics for the area, which you kindly provided, neither proposal would achieve any reduction in the number of collisions or the severity of the collisions. This proposal would not achieve any collision benefits, and must therefore be considered on environmental reasons alone.

Kent Police would not support the introduction of ‘No Entry’ at Heather Drive junction with Shepherds Lane and would formally object if this were proposed. The experience of Kent Police in other locations is that short sections of no entry are often ignored, particularly when drivers can see the full extent of the restrictions. This results in repeated requests to Kent Police to carry out enforcement, the resources and demands placed upon Kent Police are such that constant enforcement demands cannot be met resulting a situation where regulations are regularly ignored by some drivers increasing the risk of crashes.

Kent Police would not support a prohibition of right turn from Shepherds Lane into Heather Drive. The current right turn facility into Heather Drive is provided by a dedicated right turn lane on Shepherds Lane, visibility for drivers turning right is good and there are no recorded injury collisions at this location as a result of a right turn manoeuvre. In order to achieve compliance with any proposed restriction Kent Highway Services would have to physically close the right turn facility, so forcing drivers to continue to the next roundabout where they would have to turn. The roundabout is already heavily used and placing extra demands upon its capacity
could result in an increase in collisions. Kent Police would ask that a full traffic study be completed before they would agree to any prohibition.

The results of the speed survey show that the current traffic calming measures are effective and that mean and 85th percentile speeds are below the current speed limit. There is no evidence that the existing traffic calming measures need upgrading.

Heather Drive is subject to a 7.5 tonne weight restriction and there is no other suitable weight restriction that could be implemented. The weight restriction covers a wide area and is accompanied by a plate as per sign diagram 620 Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002 ‘Except for access’ so there will be a number of larger vehicles that can legitimately use the road however if there is any evidence that the weight restriction is being ignored then I will ask the local police area to take action.

I hope these preliminary views are of assistance to you

Yours sincerely

Paul Cave
Police Constable 7981
Traffic Management Unit