

Committee, group or subgroup: **Road Safety Group**

Meeting Date & venue: Monday 15th July 2024, 10.00am @ SPC Office

Report author: Cllr A Sharp - chairman

Present: A Sharp (AS), B McLaughlin (BM), M. Alessi, M Buller (MB) Speedwatch Rep. and SID data expert.

Apologies:

Matters Arising: - from previous minutes - none

1. Highways Improvement Plan HIP– Kent Highways contact: Greg McNicholl.

Please note MBC only allow us to have 2 'live' projects – our other projects / wish list are 'archived'. Last F2F meeting with KH was 19th February (MB, PR and AS present). KH has no money.

As previous meeting AS has updated HIP Document and circulated to group – see below.

Other items to consider adding considering what is achievable and affordable:

Cars parking on corner of verge at entrance to the field during the school drop off / pick up times. Concerned for safety of children coming out of the field. Contacted KH to suggested that SPC could install some bollards.

Greg Mc Nicoll at KH has said that if KH own the road we would need their permission and they would have to do it, so add to HIP. i.e. SPC not allowed to do the work.

The group were concerned that putting in a few posts was a waste of a HIP item and as low urgency would never reach the top of the list. Group suggested we add in the Surrenden Road, Thatcher Road and Chestnut Avenue bollards as HIP 2 – shunt all the other items down. Report to SPC to decide. Group members decided to all look round and see if there are other areas that need similar bollard protection.

HIP 1 (was 2) The Quarter - Bus stop / crossing & 30mph

Following our meeting with Kent Highways we had a confidential item about what KH is suggesting that was to be discussed at full council in April, which was agreed. In KH hands now. Latest information is that we may see some feasibility design work in September, although the previous employee's contract has now run out! Richard clerk was meeting with LP-Reed on 19 June.

Action: **We await KH response. Ask Clerk for LP-Reed comments.**

HIP 2 (was 3) Hawkenbury Bridge

Background - Its a grade 2 listed bridge so can't demolish and rebuild wider.

We would need to be gifted some land to enable the widening of the bridge.

There is no good easy electrical provision. (we note there are houses next to it with electricity).

Need some way to indicate to traffic going over the railway bridge they could be about to encounter stationary traffic; could this be achieved by a higher traffic light indicator?

There is historical precedence - Wye bridge grade 2 listed bridge, close to a railway crossing, was widened to comply with EU regulations of width and weight needs. However a house was demolished providing the extra space needed. Looking at £100,000 to £150,00 to install power.

Action: We suggest it remains on HIP and continue to liaise with Headcorn PC and monitor crashes.

HIP 3 (was 1) Double yellow lines (DYL) on main road A229 and Chapel Lane extension, single lines (SYL) on Cornforth Close, Chestnut Avenue and Poyntell Road.

Kent Highways have said that they will not do this as there is no current **road safety issue**.

Maintenance:

The existing lines on crossroad and Sainsburys roundabout not done – no rain now. **Ask RG to chase.**

Marden Road bends posts / bollards – many have been knocked down due to accidents. They need replacing or maybe it's time to put in chevron signs on the corners instead? **Ask RG to chase**

Potholes that have been marked for repair – when is that happening? **Ask RG to chase**

Action: Monitor the road situation to see if there is evidence of a safety issue.

2. Gybbon Rise / Surrenden Road Primary School Drop off / pick up

Greg at Kent Highways put this back to 'us' to meet with the school and sort.

MB produced an drawing to create a flow of traffic through the school site. See attached.

a) Coming off main road A229 onto school field. Agreed this would pass the issue onto different residents on the main road, cause more traffic issues and be too dangerous.

b) Coming onto school site from Surrenden Road, through playground and out onto Gybbon Rise.

Diagram does not show current shed, play area, rain shelter on left of site. Concerns about safety on site, (combining vehicles and students), school liability and loss of land use on the site.

Action: report to SPC to confirm the group's work done on this. It is the groups suggestion that this is a highways safety issue and as such Kent highways should manage this directly with the school as SPC have no powers to intervene.

4. Headcorn Lay by

KH Greg McNicholls said that the area belongs to KH, so any road works would need to be to highway standards. However, because there is a ditch, they will not put in a layby as they *"wouldn't want to formally encourage parking there, as there is a risk someone could fall in to the ditch. People are currently parking there of their own accord, but if we were to formalise it, it means we then take that risk on. There is also the initial cost and ongoing maintenance as a factor too."*

Generally felt that this was not a good enough response. Surely by admitting they are responsible for this part of the highway and its poor condition they must surely be responsible for any pedestrian tripping and should ensure the area is safe?

Action: report to SPC to confirm the group's work done on this. It is the groups suggestion that this is a highways safety issue and as such Kent highways should manage this.

5. SID – permission at Headcorn Road, Marden Road, Bathurst Road sites.

Note - the camera should not stay in the same location longer than 3 weeks.

Batteries last 5 – 11 days depending on traffic going past i.e. drain quicker on Headcorn Rd

Headcorn Road facing east for 2 weeks (some leeway allowing up to 3 weeks subject

Headcorn Road facing west for 2 weeks to availability to turn the camera.)

Bathurst Road for 1 week (this should ideally be 1 in term time / 1 in holidays)

Marden Road facing west for 1 week

Marden Road facing east for 2 weeks

Data report Data indicates an increase in speeding. [Report from MB](#)

Bathurst Rd has a 1% speeding record as we suspected.

Marden Rd from roundabout can get up to 60mph there. Still some drivers avoid the roundabout, Marden to Staplehurst, treating it as a straight road. We were unable to install a SID by the bungalows where old 40mph sign was as KH said there was not enough green verge.

Data shows that the batteries are not being changed weekly and the camera is staying in position over 3 weeks. Clerk's suggestion that a rota of cllrs to do this, confirms this. MB reported 44 days on Headcorn Rd facing West.

When SPC accepted the SID it was on the understanding that staff – caretaker Paul – would be able to change the battery once a week and turn or move the camera every 2 weeks. It was not inferred that volunteer councilors would be doing this. The group understands the personal constraints of the caretaker, but this is a staff task as they would be covered by insurance. Would volunteers? Group suggested that if this was proving impossible that they should do a report to full council.

Action: Continue to monitor SID data.

6. Speedwatch MB has contacted those trained to meet for a refresher. 4/7 who responded yes will be out on Friday 26th July. Hopefully get some more volunteers.

Auto Speed watch – June 2022-> to now. Auto speedwatch records cars 46mph – 69mph. Also catches no MOT or Tax. Letters have evidently been going out from the Police if Facebook chatter is anything to go by. June logged 1023 vehicles 45 – 69mph (doesn't record 70+) in daylight hours (solar powered)

7. Hedges - Nesting season. Please note any areas of concern ready for letters mid September.

8. Accidents/incidents reported – staplehurstroadinfo@gmail.com

12th July cyclist going past Hush Heath Winery was overtaken round the blind bend by a mini out of Hush Heath, forcing cyclist into potholes (been marked for repair) into another cyclist coming the other way. Mostly frustrated by potholes. See item 1 Maintenance.

9. AOB:

10mph sign disappeared off new estate – resident wanted to know why. Suspect it was for development vehicle purposes and advised them to contact HA / developers.

Dates of forthcoming meetings: Next meeting Monday 2nd September 2024, 10am.