



OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE (WAVERLEY)

D127 HALE HOUSE LANE, CHURT: RESPONSE TO PETITION

7 MARCH 2008

KEY ISSUE

A petition has been received asking the County Council to investigate vehicle speeds and increased usage of Hale House Lane as a rat-run and by Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs).

SUMMARY

Hale House Lane is a narrow rural road, similar to many of Waverley's country lanes. It is subject to a 6'6" width restriction. The existing 40mph limit is appropriate for the nature of the road, and police records do not indicate a particular road safety problem. With the opening of the A3 tunnel in 2011, traffic levels in the Hindhead area should significantly decrease, alleviating current rat-running problems generated by drivers looking to avoid congestion at the Hindhead Crossroads. The police have been advised of residents' concerns about HGVs using the road and inappropriate speeds, and it is recommended that action is confined to refreshing faded road markings.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Local Committee (Waverley) is asked to agree:

- (i) To note the contents of the petition and the concerns raised, but recognise there should be a marked reduction in any rat-running once the Hindhead Tunnel opens in 2011.
- (ii) Ask the Local Highway Manager to have road markings refreshed.

1 INTRODUCTION AND DISCUSSION

- 1.1 A petition signed by 127 residents requesting the County Council to investigate problems of excessive speeds and HGV usage of Hale House Road, Churt was submitted to the Local Committee on 14 December 2007.
- 1.2 The majority of Hale House Lane is a typical narrow country lane bordered by hedges and in places sunken between banks. It has frequent bends, crest and dips. There are no verges, footways or street lighting. There are occasional accesses onto fields or dwellings.
- 1.3 The speed limit is 40mph, which is the lowest appropriate speed limit for a rural road of this nature (30mph limits are reserved for villages).
- 1.4 Hale House Lane is subject to a traffic order, made in 1978, which restricts vehicle widths to widths to 6' 6", and which is clearly signed at either end of the road. The Police is the enforcing authority for this order, and they have been advised of residents' concerns.
- 1.5 Speed measurements are unlikely to be meaningful, because speeds will vary markedly from one location to another due to the winding nature of the road. However, it is considered that the narrow width and lack of forward visibility restrict 'safe' speeds to 40mph or less to permit stopping if a hazard is encountered. Drivers travelling at higher speeds endanger themselves and other road users. Again, the Police have been advised of residents' concerns.
- 1.6 Generally, the road is adequately signed for a 'D' road, with the correct width restriction plates, and advisory signs at either end warning drivers of the bendy nature of the road ahead. Some 'SLOW' road markings are worn and should be refreshed.
- 1.7 In the past three years the Police recorded one personal injury accident in Hale House Lane, involving a horse being 'spooked' by a passing car. In the same period four accidents have been recorded in Jumps Road, and thirteen have been recorded in Tilford Road. (A traffic calming scheme for Tilford Road is currently under development).
- 1.8 The petitioners consider that Hale House Lane is being used as a 'rat-run' by drivers avoiding the Hindhead Crossroads junction. Traffic patterns in the Hindhead area are expected to dramatically change once the A3 tunnel opens in 2011, and it is likely that there will be a significant reduction on country lanes currently being used to avoid the crossroads.

2 CURRENT POSITION

2.1 As above

3 CONSULTATIONS

3.1 None to date

4 FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Re-painting SLOW markings will be funded from the maintenance budget.

5 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 No specific implications.

6 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The report responds to concerns about road safety.

7 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 As above

8 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 As above

9 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

9.1 Faded marking will be refreshed under the 2008/09 maintenance programme.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: None