

Downs Road and Hog Lane, Northfleet

A report by the Head of Transport and Development to the Highways Advisory Board on 11 November 2008

Introduction

1. A report on Downs Road and Hog Lane, Northfleet was considered by the meeting of this Board held on 8 May 2008. These are narrow country lanes linking the hamlet of Northfleet Green and Istead Rise (south of A2) with the Pepperhill and Painters Ash estates in Northfleet; linking residents with the primary school at Painters Ash and local shops and doctors surgery. Its location is shown in the attached plan.
2. The section of the route from Northfleet Green Road (just south of the Channel Tunnel Rail link) has been closed since August 2006 and under the A2 widening permission it is due to reopen later this year with no restrictions as to its use. At the time of writing the report to the May meeting of this Board, it had been thought that the road would reopen in October but works have taken longer in that area than previously expected.
3. The temporary closure of the road was an opportune time to carry out Public Consultation as to its future use. There were marginally more people wanting the road closed to motorised vehicles than those wishing it to be kept open for cars, vans and motor cyclists. However, the route has been a public highway for well over 100 years, is more convenient and shorter for local people and avoids the need for them to tangle with main road traffic. It is particularly important for residents of Northfleet Green who would otherwise have to use a blind junction onto New Barn Road to go to Painters Ash. On the other hand the lanes are used recreationally by walkers, cyclists and horse riders.
4. The decision resulting from the earlier Board meeting was a compromise in that the road should be kept open for vehicles less than 7 ft wide which would be enforced by physical width restrictions; the use of the road would then be monitored for a year after reopening and the restrictions reviewed.

Discussion

5. Traffic Regulation Orders for the road, for a '30 mph speed limit', 'No stopping' and '6 ft 6" width restriction' (to be enforced by 7 ft wide physical measures at either end of the road) were advertised towards the end of September. The closing date for Objections to these Orders was 13 October and resulted in one Objection from the Highways Agency (which I anticipate will have been resolved by the time of this meeting) and, although not a formal objection to the Orders, two letters from residents of Downs Road, one from a resident of an adjacent road and a 107 signature petition from a mixture of other residents of Downs Road and mainly walkers against reopening the road.
6. These letters and petition contrast the 148 signature petition reported to the Board in May from local residents who wanted the road to remain open as it was their most convenient link for facilities.

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Conclusion

- 7 With opposing views remaining as to whether the road is reopened or not, a year's trial period with the road open appears to still be the best compromise.
8. Subject to the views of this Board it is proposed to recommend to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste that :
 - (i) The Traffic Regulation Orders for a '30 mph speed limit', 'no stopping' and '6ft 6inch width restriction' on the sections of Hog Lane and Downs Road between Northfleet Green Road and just north of old A2 be confirmed; and the appropriate signing and physical width restrictions to be in place on the reopening of the road later this year.

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Background Documents-

Location Plan

Report to the Highways Advisory Board on 8 May 2008 Item 13