

QUIET LANES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform the forum about the operation and implementation of Quiet Lanes and the experiences of neighbouring authorities where these schemes have been implemented

2. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

2.1 At the Local Access Forum meeting on 2nd December 2015 the forum requested more information about Quiet Lanes.

2.2 What are Quiet Lanes?

Quiet Lanes are minor rural roads or networks of minor rural roads appropriate for shared use by walkers, cyclists, horse riders and other vehicles. The aim of Quiet Lanes is to maintain the character of minor rural roads by seeking to contain rising traffic growth that is widespread in rural areas.

There are three key elements to a Quiet Lanes scheme:

- community involvement to encourage a change in user behaviour;
- area-wide direction signing to discourage through traffic;
- Quiet Lane entry and exit signs to remind drivers that they are entering or leaving a Quiet Lane, a place where they may expect people to be using the whole of the road space for a range of activities.

Quiet Lanes are intended to be used on lanes which have no more than 1000 motor vehicles per day, with speeds kept to the 85th percentile below 35mph.

2.3 How are they implemented?

- The Transport Act 2000 enables local traffic authorities to designate roads for which they are the traffic authority as a Quiet Lanes.
- Once a lane is designated as a Quiet Lane, the local traffic authority can make Use Orders or Speed Orders for the lane
 - Use Orders permit the road to be used for other purposes other than passage which is communal, social cultural, spiritual educational, entertainment or recreational. These uses must not obstruct the lawful passage of the road by other users.
 - Speed Orders allow a local traffic authority to set a specified speed in consultation with the local community. These do not impose speed limits, but allow road design and additional measures to be implemented to keep vehicle speeds at or below the specified speed.
- Before implementing a Quiet Lane scheme or a Use or Speed Order, consultation with all stakeholders is required at the development of the proposals stage, or before making any order.

2.4 Experiences of nearby Local Authorities / LAFs

Wiltshire County Council

- Designated quiet lane scheme in Pewsey implemented in 2003-04 (Phase 1)
- Speed bumps installed and signs removed from highway
- Residents objected to the scheme
- Subsequent monitoring indicated that the project resulted in little reduction in vehicular traffic speeds or measurable increases in the number of pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians using the designated Quiet Lanes.
- Wiltshire County Council decided not to implement a second phase of the scheme but to continue to monitor the effects of phase 1.

Oxfordshire County Council

- “Country Ways” scheme developed in Checkendon initiated by Highways team
- Highway works included removing white lines, putting in speed bumps and removing signs
- Challenged by local residents and scheme was eventually abandoned.
- 2nd Scheme (initiated by Oxford Rights of Way team) at the Vale abandoned due to experience at Checkendon

Buckinghamshire County Council

- Had a project running for a number of years
- Local residents were not happy with the proposals
- No quiet lanes produced from this project as a result

Mid & West Berks Local Access Forum

- One Quiet Lane into a common at West Berkshire, where there are currently issues with 4x4 drivers.

Slough

- Quiet lanes not an issue in Slough

2.5 General comments

Quiet Lanes were discussed at the last local LAF Chairs meeting. It was commented at this meeting that the quiet lanes scheme may have been replaced with off-road and shared use projects and there may not be a need.

2.6 Impact on the draft Rights of Way Management and Improvement Plan

In light of the findings in this report the Forum is invited to consider whether the Quiet Lanes element within the draft Rights of Way Management and Improvement Plan should remain in the document.