

Highways Practice Note 027

Essex Quiet Lanes

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HPN prepared by:

Liz Burr
Head of Network & Safety

Highways
County Hall A2 Annexe
Chelmsford
Essex. CM1 1QH

T 0845 603 7631
E liz.burr@essexhighways.org
W www.essex.gov.uk/highways

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Liz Burr	Head of Service	19/2/15
Mark Rowe	Service Director - Essex Highways	
Paul Bird	Director for Commissioning: Transport & Infrastructure	
CLlr R L Bass	Cabinet Member for Highways & Transportation	

1. Scope

The County Council wishes to facilitate the designation of certain roads as “Quiet Lanes”. The purpose of the designation would be:

- to produce a network of lanes designed to protect and enhance the local character and distinctiveness of the countryside
- To protect the amenity of such local rural routes
- To enhance/encourage recreational use of those routes
- To ensure that the maintenance of the route is appropriate and does not widen/urbanise the route
- To dissuade HGVs and other unsuitable vehicles from using the route

This practice note details the County Council’s policy relating to the development and establishment of Quiet Lanes in Essex.

Quiet lanes provide the rural alternative to Home Zones and are covered by the same regulations: the Quiet lanes and Home Zones (England) regulations 2006.

2. Background

A number of possible designations exist and have been considered as ways to facilitate the aims set out in “scope” above; the most appropriate designation for ECC is that of “Quiet Lane”.

- **Public Rights of Way – byways** – open to all traffic (including motorised vehicles but more suited to non-motorised). Has legal definition and is recorded on Definitive Map
- **Public Rights of Way – restricted byway** – pedestrian, bicycle, horses and horse drawn carriages but not motorised vehicles. Has legal definition, recorded on Definitive Map
- **“Green Lane”** – no legal definition or status – generally ancient routes that have existed for many years such as hollow ways, drover's roads, ridgeways
- **ECC Protected Lane** – no legal definition or status – In 1974 ECC defined a designation of “protected lane” – this had no legal status but was a way to identify those routes in the county that had a high historic, environmental, ecological or amenity value (classified as either grade 1 or 2 according to importance/value). The designation continued to be used through to the

1990s. Through the designation the routes were then managed (in terms of maintenance and improvements) to ensure that the route was not widened or urbanized through maintenance or improvement activities. (The principle of using traffic management to fit traffic volumes, weight and speed to the capacity of the lane to avoid damage to their amenity or historic character). The policy applied to 'c' class and unclassified roads. Whilst this designation is no longer actively used by ECC, it is included in some borough/city/district Local Plans.

- **Quiet Lane** – legal definition and status - Local authorities are able to designate country lanes as 'Quiet Lanes' in rural areas, under the Transport Act 2000.

Quiet Lanes

Local authorities are able to designate country lanes as 'Quiet Lanes' in rural areas, under the Transport Act 2000. Country Lanes are an integral part of our rural environment but the volume and speed of traffic, and the presence of heavy lorries can make them uninviting and intimidating.

Quiet Lanes are a positive way of:

- providing a chance for people to walk, cycle and horse ride in a safer environment;
- widening transport choice; and protecting the character and tranquillity of country lanes

Quiet Lanes are really only appropriate for minor rural roads, C or unclassified routes, which are single-carriageway.

Quiet Lanes should be designed to protect and enhance the local character and distinctiveness of the countryside.

The designation of a Quiet Lane should not be seen as a way to manage development and diversification in the rural environment.

Signs should, therefore, be discrete whilst indicating clearly to road users that they are in a Quiet Lane. Signs should neither detract from, nor clutter, the countryside.

Quiet Lanes signs – a national Quiet Lanes sign has been developed to identify entry into and exit from a Quiet Lane. The entry sign may also include a local name for the road. At the exit, the Quiet Lanes emblem is crossed out (see section 5 Additional Information). Local authorities that have introduced Quiet Lanes have tried to ensure that these signs are inconspicuous. Specific DfT authorisation may be required to allow

signs to be combined with other restrictions such as speed orders and HGV restrictions.

Fingerpost destinations can be revised so as not to encourage through traffic. Landscape features, such as hedges, verges, walls and wayside trees can be sensitively managed to improve the landscape, retain local character and make travel easier for cyclists, walkers and horse riders.



Previous Experience in Essex

ECC commenced a Quiet Lanes pilot in Essex in 2004/5.

The aim of this Quiet Lanes scheme was to preserve the character of minor roads and make them more attractive for walkers, cyclists and horse riders to share with motorised vehicles by seeking to contain rising traffic growth that is widespread in rural areas. At the time, three key elements were defined for a scheme:

1. Community involvement to encourage a change in user behaviour
2. Area-wide direction signing to discourage through traffic (this was to be replacement of existing signage rather than additional signage)
3. Entry signing to those entering the area to highlight that they may encounter a variety of road users.

It was also stated that Quiet Lanes would not be designated in order to:

1. Calm traffic on busy roads
2. Reduce the number or speed of heavy vehicles
3. Solve traffic problems on individual isolated roads

4. Use urban traffic calming measures
5. Attempt to deny access to motorised users or hinder residents, visitors and business from going about their daily lives
6. manage development and diversification in the rural environment.

Two groups of pilot schemes were proposed:

- Scheme one – Felsted & Farnham, Manuden and Ugley
- Scheme two - Paglesham, Barling, Hawkwell and Crays Hill

At the time of the pilot, DfT approval was required for such schemes, and approval for the Felsted scheme was given in 2007.

In 2006, Manuden Parish Council withdrew from the pilot following public consultation.

One of the aims of the pilot was to produce a report on the success of the scheme but it has not been possible to find a copy of any such final report and it is not clear if this was ever completed. However, it appears that only the scheme in Felsted was ever implemented.

A number of requests were received from other parishes/areas with suggestions for possible Quiet Lanes, but many of these were rejected as being more appropriate for speed limit changes or other solutions.

Experience from Schemes elsewhere

Quiet lanes pilot schemes, supported by the Countryside Agency, were established in Norfolk (59km in 2000) and Kent (40km in 2001). These schemes were fully monitored.

The main results were as follows:

- No change or a small decrease in measured traffic on quiet lanes (set against an increase on the “control” roads)
- Little change in measured vehicle speeds on quiet lanes (or on the “control” roads)
- Support for the scheme but a third of respondents in Norfolk and a half of respondents in Kent said the schemes weren’t working.

“Overall the quiet lanes pilot schemes should be viewed as a partial success. They have achieved some of their aims, but not the expectations of stakeholders.”

“Quiet lanes are not intended as a traffic calming device and should not be used where traffic flow and/or speeds are already a problem”

“The concept is now intended to preserve the status quo on these lanes rather than to be a means of controlling speeds or traffic flows”

Suffolk County Council has implemented a number of quiet lanes following the launch of a pilot project ‘Quiet Lanes Suffolk’ on 1st March 2014.

Suffolk has designated 5 separate routes as quiet lanes which allow users of multiple modes of transport to share the space. These designated lanes have been chosen because of their quiet nature, their proximity to other public rights of way and because there is an alternative or more suitable road close by for motorised transport to use.

Cyclists, walkers and horse riders are actively encouraged to use Suffolk’s Quiet Lanes in the knowledge that the exercise is benefiting both them and the environment. Suffolk’s Quiet Lanes do not impose speed limits or reduce access by vehicles, and instead encourage vehicles to use more suitable routes.



3. Practice

All proposals for Quiet Lane designation should be via the Local Highways Panel. It is suggested that as any scheme needs to be developed with the full support of the community, that the LHP solicit suggestions from the local community to identify possible roads to be included in this scheme.

Key Considerations

HGVs – once designated, orders could be used to restrict access by HGVs to such routes, although the right and need to access properties/businesses needs to be considered and therefore, an understanding of the number and nature of premises on such suggested routes needs to be gained. In addition, a desire to implement HGV restrictions will necessitate a wider review of signage to ensure that HGVs are able to identify and take alternative routes at the earliest point (avoiding instances where HGVs have to manoeuvre to turn around and find an alternative route).

Speed – speed orders can be used, but the route should be “self-enforcing” in that the environment and appearance of the route does not promote or suggest access for large vehicles or high speeds but suggests a route to be used by non-motorised vehicles. It is anticipated that routes for consideration would have speeds around 20 mph. A Speed Order is advisory and sets an “expected” speed for traffic – it is not enforceable and reduces the signing required. To have an enforceable speed, a Speed Limit Order would need to be implemented which may require extensive signing.

Features – features to give an impression of road narrowing (such as build-outs, markings etc.), or measures designed to reduce vehicle speeds, should be carefully considered – these features are usually applied to an urban environment and so may not be appropriate in a more rural environment. In addition, these may increase the maintenance requirements of the quiet lane rather than reducing the need for maintenance.

Maintenance – maintenance levels and activities need to promote the rural nature and appearance of the route whilst not compromising safety – routes should not be widened by default through surfacing activities and verges/hedges/edges should be allowed to “encroach” on the road. This needs to be offset by the safety needs of non-motorised users on the route. It is proposed that a maintenance regime would be agreed for any Quiet lane designated.

Consultation – the designation of a route as a Quiet Lane requires a formal consultation with the local and wider community. In addition, if there are to be any subsequent orders (such as speed orders, speed limit orders or use orders such as environmental HGV restrictions), these will require their own formal consultation process.

4. Procedure

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;
- and Quiet Lane entry and exit signs to remind drivers that they are entering or leaving a Quiet Lane

Criteria for proposing a route as a quiet Lane:

- less than 1000 motor vehicles per day
- Vehicle speeds should be kept to levels appropriate to the mix of uses and activities expected to take place, usually with the 85th percentile speed below 35 mph.
- “c” class road
- Narrow – single-track is preferred
- be rural in character, though they do not necessarily have to be in a rural area
- single roads can be designated under the Act, the aim of creating a coherent network of routes for non-motorised users should remain.
- Traffic calming and traffic management measures may be required to achieve these conditions; these should be designed to be in keeping with the local environment but must still be effective.

Designation will, however, enable the local traffic authority to make use orders and speed orders which will set out authorised uses for the road, a specified speed and the measures to be implemented to control vehicle speed. NB. Speed orders do not impose speed limits at the specified speed. If wanted for enforcement purposes, local traffic authorities can make speed limit orders for individual roads under section 84 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

Before making a designation or a use order or speed order, the local traffic authority must formally consult those persons likely to be affected. It is important that all affected groups are consulted. Consultation should include those likely to benefit from the scheme as well as those who may be adversely affected

In order to inform people that they are entering or leaving a Quiet Lane or a Home Zone, the local traffic authority must arrange for traffic signs to be erected as prescribed in The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD) (as amended). The signs must be maintained for as long as the designation remains in force.

5. Additional Information

- **TAL 3/04**



TAL 3-04 Quiet
Lanes.pdf

- **TSRGD diagrams**



- **ECC protected Lanes Policy**



ECC Protected Lanes
policy.pdf

- **CPRE's Guide to Quiet Lanes - Campaign to Protect Rural England**

<http://www.cpre.org.uk/resources/transport/roads/item/1867-cpres-guide-to-quiet-lanes>

- **The Quiet Lanes and Home Zones (England) Regulations 2006**

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20100403170017/http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/homezones/>

- **Planning Policy**

Current National Planning Policy contained in the NPPF contains a paragraph on ‘Supporting a prosperous rural economy’ this reads as follows:

Supporting a prosperous rural economy

Planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. To promote a strong rural economy, local and neighbourhood plans should:

- support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well designed new buildings;
- promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;
- support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres; and
- promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.

The ECC Development Management Policy does contain policy DM12 on Rural Diversification:

Policy DM12 Rural Diversification

The Highway Authority has no general presumption against the reuse of agricultural buildings in rural areas. Each site will be assessed on its own merit and having regard to all other policies contained within this document.

The Highway Authority will consider the net change in road traffic impacts, including but not restricted to vehicle numbers, vehicle types and hours of operation, between existing and proposed land uses.

- **Results of DfT supported pilot schemes in Norfolk and Kent – TRIP – UG315**
Quiet Lanes Study

Duration: 08/2000 – 01/2004

Key Results

The Norfolk Quiet lane Pilot Scheme was implemented in April 2000 and the Kent scheme between March 2000 and May 2001. Monitoring was undertaken by TRL, the county councils, the countryside agency and the DfT. Surveys comprised automatic speed/ flow measurements, manual classified counts, video surveys, focus groups and a number of questionnaire surveys to assess attitudes towards the scheme.

The monitoring of the Norfolk and Kent Quiet Lanes schemes indicates that vehicle flows have decreased slightly compared to control roads and vehicle speeds have remained largely unchanged.

The numbers of non-motorised users have fluctuated but have not been seen to increase significantly.

Support for the Quiet Lanes initiative is still high in both areas but a high proportion of respondents thought that it was not working.

The implementation of a single track road with passing places has reduced flows and speeds in Bird Lane but numbers of non-motorised users have not been seen to increase significantly.

Overall the quiet lanes pilot schemes achieved the aims of the project though not all the expectations of stakeholders involved. The study concluded that greater PR needed to be undertaken with locals recounting the success of the schemes.

Policy Implications

Numerous new quiet lane schemes are underway and to achieve success, attention needs to be paid to the suitability (particularly busy or higher speed limit roads) to being turned into quiet lanes unless traffic calming is also included in the schemes. Larger signage whilst appearing intrusive is essential

to ensure visibility to drivers, especially non-locals. Canvassing the support of the local population and business community is essential, especially to ensure local businesses assist in traffic calming.