



C&SPC / KCC HIGHWAYS IMPROVEMENT PLAN

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL'S HIGHWAYS IMPROVEMENT PLANS SYSTEM

What are these highways improvement plans for?



HISTORY

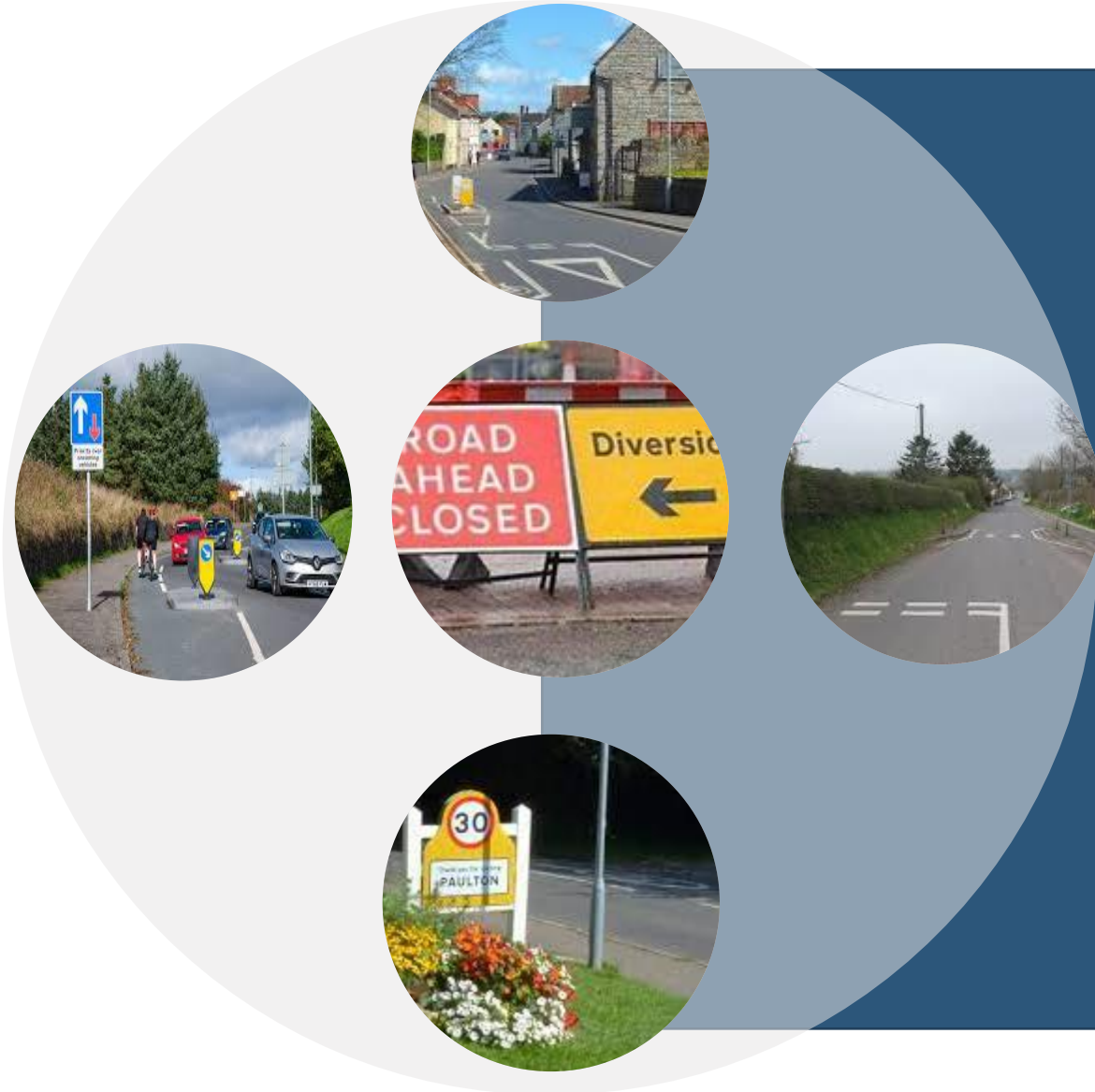
A number of years ago some parish councils raised concerns with Kent County Council (KCC) as they felt rural areas did not have a formal method of requesting changes to the highway network that they believe are important to their communities, and as such were under-represented. Consequently, the Highway Improvement Plan (HIP) was introduced as a way for parish councils to promote **and fund their own schemes** on KCC's roads, with those projects being designed and delivered by KCC officers



THE PURPOSE OF A HIP

The HIP is a document that parish councils can use to propose highway changes they wish to promote *and fund from their own resources* (although on occasion KCC may be able to pay for small improvements from limited funding allocated across Parish Councils).

KCC has committed to supporting parish councils in the delivery of their schemes, usually up to two projects per year, which will be agreed at an annual meeting between the relevant KCC officer and the parish council.



HIGHWAYS IMPROVEMENT PLAN SCHEMES

How do the schemes get approved?



DELIVERY OF SCHEMES



KCC APPROVAL

As with all projects carried out on the highway, any schemes that a parish council wishes to promote and fund will be triaged and delivered to the same standards, rules and regulations as those carried out by KCC directly.

The schemes will be approval by the Principal Designer. As the Highway Authority, KCC needs to be content that any changes implemented on the highway, including those funded by external parties (such as parish councils) are appropriate and adhere to best practice.

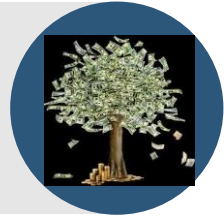


ANNUAL REVIEW

All parish councils can request a review of their HIP once per year, which will be resourced by the appropriate KCC officer. Each parish council can generally request up to two main schemes per year, which will be designed and delivered to the same standards, rules and regulations as all projects undertaken by KCC. Any schemes listed on a HIP are to be promoted and funded in their entirety by the parish council requesting the work. It may be possible to deliver very small improvements using KCC's own budgets, subject to funding and staff resource being available.

THE TAKEAWAY POINTS

FUNDING



- There is no magic money tree
- The HIP is designed to be our community highway improvement plan based on our needs
- But, highways are a County Council responsibility not a Parish Council
- The Parish Council has no funding for highways improvements
- However, you, the community, may decide to fund projects or there may be ways to find funding through grants or other means

- Through your engagement with us, the Parish Council can understand your priorities
- We can prepare the necessary HIP to share with KCC
- We can seek out practical solutions
- We can discuss with our local community, funding options
- One thing is for certain, if we don't have a plan, nothing will change
- Having a plan will also prepare us, in the hope, there may be funding in the future



WITHOUT A PLAN NOTHING WILL CHANGE

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

What do we need from you today?



WE NEED YOUR THOUGHTS & IDEAS

- This is our time to hear from you.
- Have a look around the room at the information/suggestions on schemes that councils put forward
- Look on the map to see what others have flagged up
- Write your idea down, or add your support to a suggestion already on the map, using the form provided

Contact Us

Name *

First Last

Email *

Comment or Message *

Submit



- In brief, put your suggestion on a post-it note with an arrow, and then place it on the map

10mph





KENT COUNTY COUNCIL NEW HIGHWAYS WORKS PACK

Examples of what may be done to improve the local
highways



20 MPH ZONE/LIMIT

20mph zones are often used in residential areas to keep traffic speeds low and suitable for pedestrians and children out and about in these areas.

The zones should be designed to be "self-enforcing" so that the traffic naturally keeps to the speed limit.

This can sometimes be achieved without additional measures due to the physical layout of the road, on-street parking etc. otherwise physical traffic calming measures will be needed to go along with the introduction of the change in the speed limit. This can include gateway treatments, speed humps, chicanes, road narrowing, and other measures to both physically and visually reinforce the reduced speed limit.



TRAFFIC CALMING

Traffic calming is used to manage traffic speeds and can also have an effect on the volume of traffic as drivers may use alternative routes to avoid calmed streets.

There are many different forms of traffic calming which can include gateway treatments, speed humps, chicanes, and road narrowings.

The type of measure which is most appropriate will vary from site to site and careful consideration will be needed to ensure the most appropriate type of calming is used.

It is worth noting that there are unfavourable side effects to most types of calming. Speed humps and cushions for example can cause unwanted vibration and noise for nearby residents, Chicanes and narrowings may result in the loss of on-street parking and can increase noise levels, cause congestion and in extreme cases lead to road rage incidents.



SPEED LIMIT CHANGE

In some situations, the existing speed limit may be considered to be inappropriate and there may be a wish to change it. The speed limit on a road should reflect the local environment, nature of the road and its use. The Department for Transport sets out how speed limits should be set and KCC will follow this guidance with any new requests. Speed limits should not be used to warn of single hazards but relate to the whole road environment.

A change in the posted speed limit alone will rarely make a significant change to the actual speeds of vehicles being driven along a road. Typically, a reduction of only 2-3mph is achieved through signing alone.

A Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) is needed to change a speed limit and if there are significant objections, KCC may decide not to proceed with the change. In particular, Kent Police should not have objections to the speed limit when they are consulted.



GATEWAY TREATMENTS

In some locations, there is a desire to draw drivers' attention to the fact that they are entering a lower speed limit or a village environment.

A variety of measures can be installed which will increase the prominence of the speed limit change or entry to the village.

These can include a speed limit roundel on the carriageway, village nameplates and white 'gates' in the verges.

A mix and match approach can be used to select elements appropriate for the location.



ENVIRONMENTAL WEIGHT LIMIT



In some locations, excessive numbers of large vehicles using a road can be very disruptive to local people. Where these large vehicles are using a road as a through route (rather than those going to local farms, businesses etc.) and there is a more appropriate route, a weight limit could be considered.

A traffic survey would usually be needed to assess the extent of the problem and would act as a guide for the best course of action.

Environmental weight limits are usually set at 7.5 tonnes which allows smaller twin axle lorries, horseboxes etc. to use the roads but excludes anything larger.

Please note that for environmental weight limits we will always include an exemption for vehicles gaining access to properties within the restricted area.

Any restriction should be largely self-enforcing and its reason should be obvious to drivers and not cause them significant inconvenience or cost. Only Kent Police have the power to enforce such restrictions but may not be willing for its officers to spend significant time on this.

ZEBRA CROSSING

Where pedestrians are having difficulty crossing a road, a new zebra crossing may be a suitable solution to deal with this issue. They consist of dropped kerbs, tactile paving, belisha beacons on posts and sometimes high friction surfacing on the approaches to help vehicles stop quickly.

These are only suitable where traffic speeds are reasonably low and pedestrian flows are medium to high throughout the day (a signal-controlled crossing is usually preferable for high or very high pedestrian flows to reduce delays to traffic by grouping pedestrians and where traffic speeds are higher).



PEDESTRIAN REFUGE ISLAND



Where pedestrians are having difficulties crossing the road, an alternative to a formal pedestrian crossing is a refuge island. This allows pedestrians to cross the road in two halves and is particularly useful on busier roads where getting a gap in traffic in both directions at the same time is difficult and where a zebra or puffin crossing is not warranted.

NEW FOOTWAY

Where pedestrians currently have to walk in the verge or carriageway, there may be a wish to provide a footway for them to use. Consideration needs to be given to the number of pedestrians walking along a road against the practicalities and cost of providing a footway.

New footways typically consist of a new kerb (if not already present) with a 1.8m wide blacktop pavement behind.

The footway width may be reduced to 1.2m minimum at pinch points if necessary or widened if there is expected to be a high pedestrian flow or other special access requirements. If the verge is particularly wide, it may be preferable to leave a grass strip between the footway and carriageway.



NEW WARNING/INFORMATION SIGN



There is a large range of different traffic signs that may be used on the highway. KCC will provide warning signs when there is an identified safety issue however other signs can be installed where there is a perceived issue. Other signs such as HGV or other information signs can also be provided.

Scheme promoters should consider the potential visual intrusion of new signage, particularly as many parts of the County fall within the Kent Downs AONB or conservation areas. In addition, too many signs can lead to “sign blindness” where drivers start to ignore signs because there are too many of them and they lose their impact.

KERB BUILD-OUT

A kerb build-out can be provided for a number of reasons. These include:

- narrowing the road as a traffic calming feature
- to bring a pedestrian crossing point out between parked cars to improve visibility and pedestrian safety
- to bring a bus stop out beyond parked cars reducing the loss of parking needed to get the bus into the kerb to pick up passengers
- when placed either side of a junction the give way line can be brought forward to improve visibility for emerging vehicles



PEDESTRIAN DROPPED KERBS



Many pedestrians have difficulty crossing streets where there are full height kerbs.

This can include people with mobility issues, particularly those with walkers, wheelchairs or mobility scooters. They can also present issues to able bodied pedestrians notably parents with prams or pushchairs.

Providing dropped kerbs will help these pedestrians move around more freely. Adding tactile paving will also help people with vision impairments to find the crossing points and guide them across the road.

Dropped kerbs can also be installed individually to assist people to gain access to a parking area or similar.

SCHOOL KEEP CLEAR MARKING

Parked vehicles near an entrance to a school can be a hazard for the children, obscuring their view of traffic and vice-versa.

A School Keep Clear marking prohibits stopping or parking in the vicinity of the pedestrian entrance(s) to the school to deal with this issue.

They can also help to keep an area clear of parking for a crossing patrol to operate safely.

The marking can also be used for combined vehicle/pedestrian access but would not usually be marked for solely vehicular accesses.

The markings only apply Monday to Friday during term times and can either operate for periods at the start and end of the school day or can be continuous between these two time periods depending on the particular local requirements.



VEHICLE ACTIVATED SIGNS



Fixed electronic warning signs are installed at locations throughout the county as a road safety education tool. The most common application is to remind drivers of the prescribed speed limit and activate when the Kent Police enforcement threshold is exceeded.

These signs are non-mandatory and non-statutory; therefore, they cannot be legally enforced and must be supported by other adjacent legal signage. Every location must have either a crash history or speed related problem that has not been addressed by the use of other engineering measures, such as gateways, build outs or white lining improvements. For speed related applications, comprehensive survey data will be required to evidence the issue, as electronic signs are a last resort option. Whilst the signs have a positive impact their benefits are short-lived and decline over time.

A variety of sizes and prescribed legends can be used, including; 30mph, bend/junction warning, road narrows or school; each with an optional SLOW DOWN message. However, the use of smiley/sad faces or “Thank You” is not permitted within the DfT sign regulations.

PARISH SPEED INDICATOR DEVICE SCHEME

Parish Councils are often keen to address speed related issues in their local area. Therefore, we have created a scheme now used across Kent by many parishes; the Speed Indicator Device (SID) – a flexible alternative to the static electronic signs.

This arrangement is for a single SID to be used at multiple sites on fixed poles within existing 30mph zones only. It is a driver education tool but not suitable for use in 20mph areas due to the sensitivity of the radar unit. The equipment is an education tool, not suitable for enforcement action and not safety critical.

For clarity, this scheme is not affiliated with SpeedWatch which is similar but serves a different role and purpose. Active SpeedWatch sites are not necessarily suitable for the SID and each location will be assessed on an individual basis.

All SID apparatus must be procured through KCC using this agreed process, the approved sign supplier and contractor. Whilst there are several manufacturers of similar equipment, these are not authorised for use on the Kent highway network and will be removed.



COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH



Parish Councils are often keen to address speed related issues in their local area.

Operating at carefully selected sites on roads in 20, 30 and 40 miles per hour (mph) speed limits, a group typically of three CSW practitioners monitors the speed of passing vehicles using a portable speed indication device.

Details of vehicles travelling at or above nationally-specified thresholds (25, 35 and 46mph) are recorded and reported. The registered keepers of vehicles observed repeatedly or 'highend' speeding anywhere in Kent in the previous 12 months are then sent advisory letters by Kent Police.

In order to access this scheme, communities will need to identify a number of volunteers to carry out Speedwatch. You will need to gain access to Speedwatch equipment which includes a speed gun and interactive signs. Speedwatch equipment typically costs in the region of £2,500 however it is common for groups adjacent to other active Speedwatch groups to share equipment on an agreed rota.

You need to contact Kent Police to discuss where you would like to operate Speedwatch in your community; they will be able to run through the site risk assessment process and training for operators.

LORRY WATCH

The issue of lorries using unsuitable routes is a difficult problem to deal with. On a strategic level the council has adopted a Freight Action Plan that has a specific objective to try and tackle the routing of HGV's. The intention is to encourage the use of strategic roads for the transportation of goods across the county to minimise the impact on communities. However, it must be recognised that the economy needs be supported, which means that local companies will sometimes use smaller roads to continue their businesses.

There is a scheme we can help set up called Lorry Watch. This scheme aims to empower local residents to record the details of HGVs that are inappropriately using a road. This data is passed to the Freight Officer at KCC who liaise with the Police when a restriction has been broken as they alone have enforcement powers. In this instance, there would be no law broken but the benefit of collecting this data would be to build a picture of the numbers of lorries using the road and which companies are using it.

The Freight Team collect the data and provide this to the Police if it is requested. They will attempt to contact the companies that are caught using a restricted road but do not always get a response unfortunately. Where we can, we will discuss with the business and discuss alternative and more appropriate routes.

The Lorry Watch Scheme is run via the parish councils and a MSRA with public liability insurance will be required prior to commencing with the scheme.



NEXT STEPS

Where do we go from here?



PREPARING THE HIP

DIGESTING THE INFORMATION



- We will take away all the suggestions that you have given to us
- The suggestions will be put into a draft plan using the KCC required format
- We will discuss the draft plan with KCC to understand fully the issues, complexities of schemes, what further work may be required (e.g. traffic surveys), costs and prospects of delivery

- The hard work then begins to start costing everything
- We will need to assess the work involved in further surveys – volumes of traffic, incidents of injury or death, volume & extent of speeding etc
- The Parish Council will prioritise the schemes looking at those with greatest impact & most likelihood of success
- A further draft plan will be produced which will come back out to the community for discussion and consultation
- The finalised plan will then be submitted to KCC



CREATING THE PLAN

BENENDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Highways improvement plan

An example of a Parish Council HIP



Benenden Parish Council Highways Improvement Plan

HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN – Stage 1			ACTION PLAN – Stage 2		
Priority	Location	Problem and suggested remedy	Cost Estimate	Funding Source	Action/Programme (Who/When)
1.	<u>Benenden Crossroads</u> Junction of The Street/ Cranbrook Road/ New Pond Road/ Iden Green Road	<p>Problem There have been a number of accidents and near misses here involving traffic travelling south on New Pond Road overshooting the crossroads. Speed limit on New Pond Road reduces from 60 mph to 30 mph too close to the junction. The site is on the crest of a ridge and is not visible until it is too late for unwary drivers to stop. The overshoot problem may be exacerbated by use of SatNav equipment which does not indicate that a stop is required.</p> <p>Suggested Remedy Reduced speed limit to 20 mph on approach to Crossroads in all directions including the B2086 from Pullington Farm to Benenden School. Propose traffic calming scheme. Improved signage to include use of flashing Cross Roads warning signs and extension of 30 mph speed limits prior to new 20 mph zone on New Pond Road and Iden Green Road.</p>	£1000	KCC S106/278	Parish to report non-working VAS. KCC to investigate feasibility of altering Give Way to Stop on Iden Green Road. Parish to consider requesting funding from developers to make improvements to crossroads.
2.	<u>Iden Green Crossroads</u> Four-way crossroads incorporating triangular junction in the centre of Iden Green	<p>Problem This is a dangerous crossroads particularly for vehicles turning right onto Mill Street from Standen Street. Visibility here is just 16 metres looking westwards. The 85% speed has been measured here as 35 mph for northbound traffic and 37.9 for southbound traffic (speed limit is 30 mph). Peak speeds of over 50 mph have been recorded at this site.</p> <p>Suggested Remedy Reduce traffic speed on Mill Street from Little Weavers to Cotton Cottage by lowering the speed limit to 20 mph. Propose a traffic calming scheme. Road markings need to be refreshed and signs need replacing.</p>		KCC	KCC to investigate feasibility of improving warning signage on approaches to crossroads.
3.	<u>Benenden Hospital</u> Goddards Green Road	<p>Problem Speed of through traffic at the Hospital is a serious problem posing a danger to patients and staff crossing from the car park to the main Hospital entrance</p> <p>Suggested Remedy Reduction of maximum speed limit to 20 mph on Goddards Green Road from East End Chapel to Mockbeggar Lane. Propose a traffic calming scheme.</p>	£200 £500	BPC KCC	Speed survey to ascertain current speeds. Install pedestrian warning signage in advance of the informal crossing points
4.	<u>Walkhurst Road/ The Street/ Rolvenden Road (War Memorial)</u> Triangular junction to the east of the village centre.	<p>Problem A difficult junction to negotiate safely with narrow access and restricted sightlines.</p> <p>Suggested Remedy Reducing speed limits along B2086 to 20 mph will help here (see item 2 above). Refresh road markings. Replace existing damaged signage.</p>			Junction improvements to take place as part of a nearby development works. Damaged signs to be

					reported on online fault reporting tool.
5.	<u>Walkhurst Road</u>	<p>Problem The rural character of this lane is suffering because motorists use it as a rat run between Goddards Green Road and Benenden Village Centre.</p> <p>Suggested Remedy Walkhurst Road to be designated a "Quiet Lane" with speed limit reduced to 20 mph and "Access Only" signage sited at each end of the road. The name "Walkhurst Road" should revert to its previous name of "Walkhurst Lane" to reflect the rural nature of this byway.</p>			<p>BPC to contact TWBC regarding change on road name.</p> <p>Quiet Lanes not current KCC policy. Other options discussed include provision of warning signage as appropriate. BPC to consider whether they wish to include more signage as this conflicts with a more rural area.</p>
6.	<u>Green Lane/ Stepneyford Lane</u>	<p>Problem The rural character of these connecting lanes is suffering due to speed and weight of traffic. Walking or cycling is particularly hazardous.</p> <p>Suggested Remedy Both Green Lane and Stepneyford Lane to be designated as "Quiet Lane" status with speed limits reduced to 20 mph and "Access Only" signage sited at the junctions with Goddards Green Road and the B2086.</p>			<p>Quiet Lanes not current KCC policy. Other options discussed include provision of warning signage or road markings as appropriate. BPC to consider whether they wish to include more signage as this conflicts with the rural character.</p>
7.	<u>Mockbeggar Lane</u>	<p>Problem The rural character of this lane is suffering due to speed and weight of traffic</p> <p>Suggested Remedy Mockbeggar Lane to be designated as a "Quiet Lane" with speed limit reduced to 20 mph and "Access Only" signage sited at the junction with Goddards Green Lane and Cranbrook Road</p>			<p>Quiet Lanes not current KCC policy. Other options discussed include provision of warning signage or road markings as appropriate. BPC to consider whether they wish to include more signage as this conflicts with the rural character.</p>
8.	<u>Whole Parish</u>	<p>Problem Road markings and signage is in a generally poor state throughout the parish. Many junctions suffer from poor visibility due to overgrown hedges restricting sightlines.</p> <p>Suggested Remedy Road markings at all junctions should be refreshed and road and speed signs repaired or replaced as appropriate. Hedges and verges around all junctions should</p>			<p>Maintenance issues to be reported on online fault reporting tool.</p>

		be maintained regularly to ensure sightlines remain clear and safe.			
9.	<u>The Street</u>	Alternative road markings to reduce speeding traffic. Remove centreline road markings	£1000	KCC	KCC to confirm whether resurfacing will be taking place. If so, prepare altered white lining scheme assuming suitable timescale available.
10.	<u>Iden Green Gateways</u>	Replace existing gateways on Mill Street and Iden Green Road	£2,500 per location	BPC	BPC to confirm if funding available for installation and all future maintenance



THANK YOU FOR COMING



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