

ROAD SAFETY & ACTIVE TRAVEL NEWSLETTER



ISSUE 1 (APRIL – JUNE 2024)

WELCOME

At Kent County Council (KCC) we are always keen to improve how we communicate with our customers. In the Summer of 2022 we restructured our Road Safety & Active Travel Group (RSATG) to provide dedicated Community Engagement Officers within the Highway Improvement Team.

We are committed to working alongside Parish and Town Councils and County Members in reviewing your highway improvement requests, giving a voice to the communities that you represent.

This is our first Road Safety & Active Travel Group quarterly newsletter and has been designed to keep you up to date with the latest news from the Group and to help you discover first-hand the important role that we all play for Kent communities and the benefits of engaging with us through the Highway Improvement Plan (HIP) process.

MEET THE TEAM HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS TEAM

The Highway Improvements Team is split into West Kent and East Kent, with three different, but interconnected, work streams making up each team:

Community Engagement – works closely with County Members, Parish and Town Councils on all aspects of their Highway Improvement Plan.

Planning & Advice – provides technical advice for HIP priorities, determines the feasibility of schemes being requested and advises on alternative options where a desired scheme may not be possible.

Design & Delivery – designs schemes to meet Kent's highway standards, CDM Regulations and DfT policy and works with KCC's contractors to deliver the work on the ground.

Both Planning & Advice and Design & Delivery also lead collaboratively on the casualty reduction programme and Local Transport Plan (LTP) funded schemes.



USEFUL LINKS

- [KCC Fault reporting tool](#)
- [KCC led consultations](#)
- [District Council services](#)
- [Kent Police reporting tool](#)
- [CrashMap UK](#)
- [DfT's Setting local speed limits](#)
- [Planned roadworks](#)
- [School travel plans](#)
- [Lorry Watch](#)
- [Community Speedwatch](#)
- [Kent & Medway Safety Camera Partnership](#)
- [Kent Road Safety](#)



DID YOU KNOW? 20MPH ZONE/LIMITS

At KCC we receive a large number of requests for the implementation of 20mph speed restrictions and we appreciate that, when installed in the right place at the right time, they are an important measure in improving road safety.

However, any speed reduction through signage alone should not be seen as a tool to address an evidenced speeding issue. The Department for Transport (DfT) has recently updated their guidance on '[Setting local speed limits](#)' which now states that traffic authorities should only introduce 20mph limits and zones in the right places and ensure any such measures are targeted and not introduced as a blanket measure. This is because over-use of inappropriate speed limits risks undermining public acceptance which could impact compliance of 20mph speed limits where they are most needed, such as outside of schools and in residential areas where there is generally a high proportion of vulnerable road users.

Government guidance on the implementation of 20mph schemes states that successful 20mph limits and zones should be self-enforcing and Kent Police do not support new 20mph speed limits unless the existing average speed of vehicles is 24mph or less as they do not have the resources to enforce 20mph sites with poor compliance.

A reduction in the posted speed limit through signage alone is unlikely to make any discernible difference. As such, KCC have to consider this when designing new speed limits. We have to balance the benefits of slower speeds alongside that of compliance. The decisions are always locally determined and an individual assessment is required by considering the existing average speeds to see if they are likely to be suitable.

In some circumstances, where average speeds are between 24-28mph it may still be possible to consider a reduction, but some form of traffic calming (innovative or traditional) would need to be installed to better ensure reasonable compliance.

For details on the site requirements and typical costs of a 20mph limit or zone please refer to pages 9&10 of your Highway Information Pack. Where existing speeds are too high for a 20mph speed restriction to be self-enforcing, and/or traffic calming is not possible, we will work with elected bodies on what other measures we may be able to introduce to address the concerns being raised.

LOOKING BACK

In each issue of the newsletter we will give you an insight into the work that the Highway Improvements Team have delivered as a result of our close working relationship with Parish & Town Councils and County Members.

Between April 2023 and March 2024 we carried out **188** HIP reviews across Kent resulting in the delivery of **23** Parish Council funded schemes and **94** schemes funded from KCC's HIP budget.



2023

THIS QUARTER IN NUMBERS

Between April and June 2024, the Highway Improvements Team has carried out the following work in conjunction with Parish and Town Councils and County Members across Kent:

Parish/Town Council and County Member meetings - **77**

Number of HIP/Parish funded schemes delivered - **23**

Total value of KCC funded schemes (HIP budget) delivered - **£48,875**

Total value of Parish/ Town Council funded schemes delivered - **£20,364**

PRESTON HILL/HIGH STREET, WINGHAM – LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN (LTP) SCHEME

A Parish Council in Dover had raised concerns about the junction of the High Street and Preston Hill via their Highway Improvement Plan. The concerns were vehicles driving at excess speed at the junction, large vehicles mounting the traffic island which resulted in damage to street furniture and there were concerns for pedestrians crossing here.

There was also a property at the junction where several instances of damage had occurred to the property and a highway wall.



The crash data was reviewed and analysed and it did not meet our criteria to fund changes at this location. An outline design and cost estimate was sent to the parish council to reconfigure the junction layout but was too costly for the parish council to fund, so a bid was submitted through the Local Transport Plan funding stream. The bid was successful and the works were completed in November 2023.

The overall cost of the scheme was £117,000.

The works included widening the footway outside the property and realigning the junction by relocating the traffic island. The photos show the road layout before and after completion of the scheme.

Since the scheme has been implemented, there have been no damage only or personal injury crashes reported. This is a really good example of Parish Councils and the Community Engagement Team working together to get the right result.



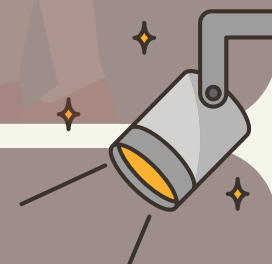
COLLABORATION

Whilst the Highway Improvements Team (HIT) are dedicated to delivering as many feasible Parish/Town Council and County Member promoted schemes as possible, it is also true that simply by being on a Highway Improvement Plan (HIP), with community support and/or with a funding stream identified, does not guarantee that an engineering measure can be identified or delivered.

Not only are we restricted by what is legally, physically and technically possible, sometimes there are just no measures that HIT can deliver that will resolve the concerns of the communities you represent.

However, we are not content to leave it there and we work across the Road Safety & Active Travel Group, for example with the Road Safer User Behaviour team, as well as with wider Highways & Transportation colleagues, and externally with Kent Police, the District & Borough Councils etc.

Looking at the issues together we are able to benefit from other teams' knowledge, experience and resources to find the most suitable solution where there is one. In each newsletter our aim is to give you an example of how we work collaboratively in order to provide the best service to Kent's residents via their elected representatives.



IN THE SPOTLIGHT SPEEDING

Unsurprisingly, speeding is one of the main causes of concern that HIT receives when discussing HIP priorities with Parish/Town Councils and County Members. The first thing your Community Engagement Officer will do is review current average speeds at the location in question. Often this shows that speeding is a perception, rather than an evidenced issue.

However, where there is evidence of speeding (Kent Police consider this to be where average speeds are above the enforcement speed limit of 10% + 2mph), HIT will first consider what engineering measures may be possible to improve compliance with the posted speed limit.

It should be noted that reducing the speed limit of a road is not considered to be an effective way of reducing speeding, however there may be other schemes that we can consider such as the installation of village gateways, upgrading of existing speed terminals, addition of new repeater signs (not allowable on a street lit 30) or installation of physical traffic calming (not possible on unlit or A and B classified roads).



In cases where no physical engineering measures are suitable, HIT considers how we can address the behavioural aspect of speeding, and works collaboratively both internally and externally to determine other solutions that would set residents mind at ease. This could include:

Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) - An alternative to the fixed electronic sign, HIT work with KCC's Traffic Operations Team to offer a SID scheme to help tackle concerns of speeding.



SIDs are non-permanent moveable signs. They comprise of a single SID unit used in rotation across multiple fixed poles within existing 30mph zones as a driver education tool.

Proposed sites are assessed on an individual basis and a minimum of three posts are required per SID, with a bracket for each, to a maximum of five sites per sign in order to retain overall effectiveness.

SIDs are currently not available for use in 20mph speed restrictions, however KCC's Traffic Operations Team is looking into trialing new signs which are sensitive enough to pick up lower speeds, so this may be something that we can offer in the future.



Toolkits - HIT works with our Safer Roads colleagues to offer a number of resources to support Parish and Town Councils to encourage compliance of 20 and 30mph speed limits.

It provides the tools, assets and information needed to successfully communicate this message and consists of posters, car stickers, bin stickers and road banners.

More information can be found on-line at <https://kentroadsafety.info/what-we-do/speed/>

SpeedWatch - Working with Kent Police, and operating at carefully selected sites on roads in 20mph, 30mph and 40mph speed limits, a group typically of three Community SpeedWatch (CSW) practitioners/volunteers 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 46+mph) are recorded and reported. The registered keepers of vehicles observed repeatedly of 'high-end' speeding anywhere in Kent in the previous 12 months are then sent advisory letters by Kent Police.



Parish/Town Council's would need to contact Kent Police, at speedwatch@kent.police.uk, 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.

KCC may be able to assist with the funding of the equipment so please speak to your Community Engagement lead if you are interested.



Targeted road safety campaigns - Where there may be a pattern of collisions that have been attributed to a behavioural issue, such as vehicles not stopping at a STOP junction, HIT can work with the Safer Roads Team to produce a targeted road safety campaign to address the behaviour we would like to change.



RUNNING HORSE ROUNDABOUT, MAIDSTONE – CRASH REMEDIAL MEASURES (CRM) PROGRAMME

The Highway Improvements Team's core responsibility is the analysis of Crash Remedial Measures (CRM) sites across Kent and the identification of engineering solutions that will have a positive impact on collision numbers at that location.

The Running Horse Roundabout, which links the M20 with the A229 Chatham Road, in Maidstone is one of the busiest roundabouts in Kent. There have been 13 personal injury crashes reported to us in the past three years, making this junction a key priority for work to reduce injuries on the public highway. The figure for the past five years is 29.

As a result, an innovative design was produced to adapt the roundabout into a new '[Turbo Roundabout](#)' in a bid to lessen crashes and bust congestion on one of Kent's busiest routes.

Unlike normal roundabouts, Turbo Roundabouts require drivers to choose the direction they plan to travel in before entering the roundabout. Lanes are separated by coloured markings and lines preventing motorists from switching lanes whilst on the roundabout circulatory. As well as increased lines and coloured surfacing, engineers changed the signage on the approaches to the roundabout in all directions to raise awareness of the new style.

This project was delivered in May 2024, finishing ahead of schedule, and already driver behaviour has adapted to the new layout with vehicles being observed entering and travelling around the roundabout in a slower and more disciplined way.

Kent's newest Turbo Roundabout has already received national industry recognition and our very own Design & Delivery Principal Engineer, Chris Koningen, has been asked to present at the next annual conference of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport (CILT) in September.



HAVE YOUR SAY

We value your feedback and would love to hear from you if you have any thoughts or suggestions as to what you'd like to see in future issues. Please complete this brief questionnaire which will allow us to ensure that our newsletters are providing you with the information that you would like to see.

[Have your say - Microsoft Forms](#)