Public Consultation
21 February – 18 March 2018

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background

From 21st February – 18th March 2018, Kent County Council consulted on proposals for highway improvements on the A20, Harrietsham. This included reducing the speed limit from 40 miles per hour (mph) to 30mph, constructing new pedestrian refuge islands, upgrading the pelican crossing point to a toucan crossing point and widening the footpath to provide a shared footway/cycleway.

Roads with a 30mph speed limit are normally lit throughout the night so if the decision is taken to reduce the speed limit along this stretch, it would mean a full review of the existing street lighting will be undertaken.

Three large estates are being built and the existing footpath is currently narrow and in poor condition. The aim of the scheme is to improve the quality of the existing highway, make it safer by reducing traffic speeds and providing pedestrian crossing points and a cycle facility.

KCC’s project team, are working together in close liaison with Maidstone Borough Council (MBC), Harrietsham Parish Council as well as the housing developers. The consultation was carried out at the detailed design stage to provide local residents and stakeholders with the opportunity to provide feedback on the scheme before plans are finalised for construction.
1.2. Purpose of the Consultation

The purpose of the public consultation was to inform the public and stakeholder organisations about the proposed design in order to provide them with the opportunity to ‘Have their say’ and to help KCC gain feedback to inform changes or improvements to the scheme. The consultation gave the opportunity to:

- Understand why changes are being proposed to the A20 through the village of Harrietsham
- Consider the possible impacts and benefits of the proposed scheme
- Ask questions and provide opportunity to share views on the proposals.

This public consultation offered the opportunity to open a dialogue with stakeholder organisations and the public so their comments and concerns could be incorporated into this report and the on-going work to finalise a scheme.

1.3. Purpose of this Report

This report presents the analysis and findings of the responses to the public consultation on the proposals. In addition, the report summarises the consultation process and the engagement and promotional activities that took place. The report also states how the feedback will be used to progress the proposal and identifies the next steps in the project development process.
2. Consultation Process

This chapter outlines the process followed to deliver the consultation and details the activities and documentation developed to support the delivery of the consultation. The consultation was divided into the five stages. Detailed information on each section is given below.

**Undertake Equality Impact Assessment (see Chapter 3)**
- Identify possible impacts on protected characteristic groups

**Develop consultation process & promotional activities**
- Identify stakeholders
- Define consultation activities
- Define communication activities and frequencies

**Pre-consultation activity/engagement**
- Presentation to Maidstone Joint Transportation Board
- Meeting with Maidstone Borough Council and Harrietsham Parish Council
- Postcards delivered to businesses and residents in and around Harrietsham.
- Posters up on lamp posts and in local businesses.
- Identified stakeholders and groups consulted

**During consultation activity**
- Public consultation drop in events
- Information displayed in Lenham library and Harrietsham Parish Council Office
- Online and hard copy questionnaire
- Presentation meeting at Harrietsham C of E Primary School
- Responding to queries

**Post consultation activity**
- Analysis and reporting of consultation responses
- Feedback to consultees and stakeholders
2.1. Promoting the Consultation

The consultation process was developed by KCC with the aim of involving residents, community groups and interested parties throughout the project to help develop the proposals, drawing on local knowledge and expertise.

Promoting the Consultation

The following promotional activities were undertaken to support the delivery of the public consultation:

- Consultation poster displayed in local shops, business and public places
- Inclusion on Harrietsham Parish Council Facebook Page (14.04.18)
- Postcards distributed to residents and businesses in Harrietsham
- Press release issued to local media outlets (07.02.18)
- Community liaison officer promoted the project to their network
- Page on KCC’s Consultation Directory on Kent.gov.uk
- Delivered Consultation booklets and questionnaires to Harrietsham Parish Council, Harrietsham CoE Primary School
- Consultation posters and booklets and questionnaires in Lenham Library
- Harrietsham Parish Council posted on their Facebook page the “Have your say” poster for the A20 Harrietsham Highway Improvements Scheme.

- **Note:** There were five likes on Harrietsham Parish Councils Facebook page but no further comment was made.

*Please note: materials are available for reference at [www.kent.gov.uk/a20harrietsham](http://www.kent.gov.uk/a20harrietsham)*
2.2. During Consultation Activities

A number of activities were undertaken during the consultation period.

Consultation Events

Two drop-in sessions were held (21 February and 26 February) at Harrietsham Village Hall. These were timed to be inclusive to commuters and those in work and were held on Wednesday 5pm – 8pm and Monday 12pm – 3pm. The purpose of the events was to provide attendees with a forum to discuss the proposals with KCC officers, and ask any questions.

The consultation drop-in session included details of the proposed plans alongside hard copies of the consultation document, questionnaire and postcard.

There was also a drop-in session at Harrietsham C of E Primary School on Tuesday 20th February from 3pm – 4pm.

In excess of 100 people attended these drop-in sessions.

Harrietsham C of E Primary School advertised the scheme and the drop-in session in their Spring Term 3, 9th February 2018 School Newsletter. KCC officers held a drop-in session at the local Primary School on the 20th February for children and parents.
Consultation material

Hard copies of the consultation material were available at Lenham Library throughout the consultation. Copies could also be downloaded from the consultation webpage www.kent.gov.uk/a20harrietsham or delivered on request.

✓ In total the Consultation Booklet was downloaded 259 times in PDF format and 26 times in Word format.
✓ The Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) was downloaded 26 times in PDF format and 5 times in Word format.
✓ The Consultation Questionnaire Word version was downloaded 33 times.
✓ The poster was downloaded 20 times and the postcard 18.

Feedback mechanism

People were asked to provide feedback via a consultation questionnaire, which was available online and in a paper version. The paper version was available at the exhibition events, from the Parish Council or Lenham Library and on request via telephone or email.
3. Equality and Accessibility

3.1. Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

The EqIA provides a process to help us to understand how the proposals may affect people based on their protected characteristics (age, disability, gender, gender identity, race, religion / belief or none, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership and carer’s responsibilities).

An EqIA was completed prior to commencement of the consultation and was available as one of the consultation documents during the consultation at kent.gov.uk/a20harrietsham. This document was downloaded 26 times in PDF format and 5 times in Word format.

We will use the feedback gathered from the consultation to update the EqIA before the outline design is finalised.

The following steps were defined in the Action Plan and additions were made as the project developed. All were taken to ensure the consultation was accessible to all:

- In addition to the consultation being available online, three events were held to provide the opportunity for people to view the material and ask the team questions. Hard copies of the online questionnaire were available and staff on hand to provide support. This was particularly important to ensure the consultation was accessible to people who could not or did not want to access the consultation online. The events were held at an accessible venue. The consultation event information was made available online kent.gov.uk/a20harrietsham for anyone who was unable to attend the events.

- Hard copies of the Consultation booklet, Questionnaire were available in the local Parish Council Office and at Lenham Library throughout the consultation period.
• All publicity material included a phone number and email address for people to request hard copies and alternative formats of the consultation material. Word versions of the Consultation booklet, EqIA and questionnaire were provided to ensure accessibility of documentation to consultees using audio transcription software.

• The Parish Council and Lenham Library acted as a delivery station for completed hard copy questionnaires.

Equality analysis of the consultation data was undertaken (Chapter 5) to identify any new issues that would impact a protected characteristic group. The EqIA will be updated to consider outcomes of this consultation and will be available online at www.kent.gov.uk/a20harrietsham.
4. Response Profile

This chapter summarises the number of consultation responses received and who responded to the consultation.

There were a total of 68 respondents to the consultation:

- Of the 68 responses to the consultation questionnaire 56 were received online and 12 were hard copy responses
- More than 100 people attended the consultation events.

4.1. Respondent Demographics

The following section documents the demographics of the respondents. This data was collated using the ‘About You’ questions in the questionnaire.

4.1.1. Age

Figure 4.1 shows the distribution of respondents’ age. A large proportion of respondents were aged between 65-74 year olds but also a large proportion were aged 35-64.

Please Note: sometimes the percentages of respondents agreeing or disagreeing with a proposal will not add up to 100%. This is because some of the figures have been automatically rounded up or down to the nearest percentage point. It is not a fault with the data.
4.1.2. Gender

- 68% of respondents were male
- 31% of respondents were female
- 2% of respondents preferred not to state their gender.

Results are shown in the pie chart to the right.

4.1.3. Disability

- 89% of respondents did not consider themselves having a disability
- 5% of respondents did consider themselves having a disability
- 6% preferred not to say.

Of those that stated they considered themselves having a disability, the impairments that affected each respondent are shown in the pie chart.
4.2. **Respondent Groups**

**Q1. Are you responding as...?**

The 68 questionnaire responses were analysed together to give an overall picture of the attitude towards the proposals.

![Pie chart showing respondent types](chart.png)

- 85% A local resident
- 9% A local business owner
- 3% A Parish / District or County Councillor
- 3% On behalf of a charity, voluntary or community sector organisation (VCS)*

**Analysis of respondent type**

**Q1a. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation (local community group, resident's association, Council, local business owner, charity, voluntary or community sector organisation?**

This question was answered 7 times.
4.3. **Respondent locations**

**Q2. Please tell us your postcode?**

The responses to the questionnaire were mapped to show where the respondents live. This was based on the postcodes given. The picture maps the postcodes of people responding to the questionnaire. These results show us that the vast majority of the people who took part in the consultation live in and around Harrietsham.
Consultation Results:

4.4. Q3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the A20 Harrietsham Highway Improvement Scheme?

There were 68 responses to this question:

- 49% of respondents agreed
- 29% of respondents tend to agree
- 15% of respondents tend to disagree
- 4% of respondents disagreed
- 3% of respondents either did not know or did not agree nor disagree
Respondents feelings on scheme mapped out on location
4.5. **Q3a. Please add any comments**

There were 57 responses to this question

5% of respondents had concerns at Church Road and Church Lane Junctions

12% of respondents in favour of lower speed limits

10% of respondents suggested the need for enforcement of the speed limits

6% of respondents in favour of increasing the width of the footways

13% of respondents in think it looks a good scheme

4% of respondents had concerns at West Street junctions

3% of respondents suggested the shared footway should be segregated

“**Pedestrian Refuge island widths need to be wide enough for bikes and double buggies.**”

“We need enforcement of the **30mph**”

“**Right hand turn from West Street needs to be looked at**”
'Other comments' were made covering topics such as installation of a Zebra Crossing, increasing the construction work day, adding a roundabout but no comment received more than 2 responses and therefore have not been included in the themed results.
4.6. Q4. We have completed an initial Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) for the proposals put forward in this consultation.

There were 23 responses to this question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme of comments</th>
<th>Number of comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No concern/comment/not applicable</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other comments</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The scheme will benefit disabled</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough thought has been given to users who are less mobile at road junctions</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following issues were identified for people with a disability:

"The issues at Holm Mill Lane junction have direct relevance in relation both to age and disability. There is a mobile home park located at greenway lane with approximately 54 dwellings. All residents are elderly and holm mill lane is their only access onto the A20. Their reaction times are significantly slower than those of younger drivers, placing these residents in particular at high risk when exiting the lane onto the A20. * in addition at least one elderly resident uses a disability scooter in the road at this point in order to access the post office and convenience store in West Street in the village. Installing the 40mph zone well before the lane entrance can only assist with the difficulties we currently have at the junction."

"The minimum recommended width for a two-way cycle track is 3 metres. If these widths cannot be realised, the facility may become difficult for some people to use a 2.5m width is proposed for the shared use footways/cycle tracks. What consideration has been made of the difficulties this will create for mobility impaired pedestrians and cyclists? The dimension of the cycle design vehicle shall be assumed as 2.8m long and 1.2m wide. The size of the cycle design vehicle was developed with consideration to the needs of disabled people who wish to use adapted cycles. Can all relevant aspects of this scheme accommodate two-way usage by the cycle design vehicle?"

"This scheme will serve all residents of Harrietsham equally and will improve the access for those of my neighbours that currently use mobility scooters and struggle on the narrow section of pavement under the A20 railway bridge."

"Did this assessment include the effects of this scheme on the majority - ordinary commuters and business owners - who have no choice but to use this road and who will be forced to rethink where they live (and where they base their businesses) because of the further congestion and reduction of the flow of traffic on a major trunk road through Harrietsham that will be caused?"
5. Next Steps

Following the feedback from this consultation, the design team will be carefully considering points raised to establish whether further design changes are appropriate.

The Maidstone Joint Transportation Board (JTB) had previously considered the Section 106 Highway improvement scheme for traffic calming. The meeting that was due to be held on the 18th April was cancelled and a decision was made that it no longer required presentation to the Joint Transportation Board in its final form.

These proposals however will be presented to the local KCC member and Parish Councillors with final sign off by the Schemes, Planning and Delivery Manager from KCC’s Highways, Transportation & Waste Directorate. When the detailed design is complete it will be available on the consultation website. Construction is likely to start late summer 2018 and Start of Works Notice will be published to inform members of the public.

The Traffic Regulation Order (change of speed limit) consultation which ran concurrently with this wider scheme public consultation, received two objections, which have been reviewed and considered. Our Acting Director of Highways, Transportation and Waste has given approval to the TRO as proposed to progress.

This report is available on our website kent.gov.uk/a20harrietsham and we will send a notification to those who have provided contact details throughout the process, including stakeholder organisations.