

Joint Transportation Board

Minutes of a Meeting of the Joint Transportation Board held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **8th December 2009**

Present:

Cllr. Burgess (Chairman);

Cllrs. Mrs Blanford, Clarkson, Claughton, Clokie, Cowley, Ellison, Heyes, Woodford. Mr M J Angell, Mr P M Hill, Mr R E King, Mrs E Tweed, Mr J N Wedgbury.

Apologies:

Mr S J G Koowaree, Mr M A Wickham, Mr T Reed (KALC Representative).

Also Present:

Cllr. Naughton

Andy Phillips (Head of Transport – Ashford’s Future Company), Phil Gilbert (Local Transport and Development Manager – KHS), Steve Rivers (Community Delivery Manager - KHS), Liz Wedgwood (Transport Planner – KHS), Jamie Watson (Project Implementation Manager – KCC), Paul Jackson (Head of Environmental Services – ABC), Richard Alderton (Head of Planning & Development – ABC), Ray Wilkinson (Engineering Services Manager – ABC), Jeremy Baker (Principal Solicitor – Strategic Development – ABC), Danny Sheppard (Senior Member Services and Scrutiny Support Officer – ABC).

323 Declarations of Interest

Councillor	Interest	Minute No.
Clokie	Code of Conduct – Personal but not Prejudicial – Member of the Tenterden and Districts Residents Association	328 & 329

324 Minutes

A Member said that the KALC Representative had made quite an issue at the last meeting that Charing Parish Council had agreed that the existing stretch of Charing Hill with a 60mph limit should remain, rather than making it 40mph for the whole length, and he was surprised to see no reference to that in the Minutes. The Member said that when this matter was reported back to the Parish Council at their next meeting following the JTB, the Parish Council voted to support that the whole of Charing Hill be 40mph.

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of this Board held on the 1st September 2009 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

325 Transport Forum

The Board received the report of the Chairman of the Transport Forum for the meeting held on the 20th November 2009. The Forum had considered updates and discussion on: - Train Services (with particular reference to the proposed Southern Railway timetable changes) and Bus Services.

The Chairman advised that the bulk of the discussion at the meeting pertained to the next item on the Agenda.

Resolved:

That the report of the Chairman of the Transport Forum for the meeting held on the 20th November 2009 be received and noted.

326 Recommendations from Transport Forum in Relation to Southern Trains Timetable Consultation – Proposed Withdrawal of Direct Ashford to Brighton Service

The Chairman of the Transport Forum introduced the item which highlighted the recommendation of the Transport Forum in relation to Southern's proposed withdrawal of the direct Ashford to Brighton service. The Forum had received a presentation from Southern Railways in relation to their proposed timetable changes and Members had objected to the proposals because passengers from the Ashford end of the line seemed to be losing out. The present direct Ashford to Brighton service taking 1 hour 50 minutes was being discontinued and there would be five extra stops and a need to change at Eastbourne which would add 19 minutes to the journey, plus the time needed to change train. Southern's contention that the proposal would create better connectivity with High Speed 1 was in his view a façade and whilst there was a need to alleviate some of the overcrowding, all of the benefit seemed to be going to people between Hastings and Brighton. He urged the Board to support the recommendation that they respond to the consultation on behalf of Members from both Councils asking that the direct Ashford to Brighton service be retained.

Other Members supported the view of the Chairman of the Transport Forum. This was a very popular service and the 0715 train from Ashford could currently get passengers into Brighton just after 0900 which was extremely useful. Two extra carriages between Eastbourne and Brighton would not be the panacea to the issue of overcrowding as this would only bring the train to the level it should always have been at. A Member said he had asked at the Transport Forum that the overcrowding be kept under constant review but he had not been given that assurance.

The Chairman (of the Board) said that a number of people from the Appledore area were very keen on the new proposals. The opportunity to connect to St Pancras in just over an hour was very attractive so there was a bit of a split on the merits or otherwise of the proposals.

Other Members said that on the issue of High Speed trains, they were worried that this was the thin end of the wedge and the start of plans to exclude Ashford. KCC had formed a Group which would be crucial to the High Speed network involving train operators from the UK, France, Holland and Germany and which would try to protect the interests of passengers. Initially people from the South Coast had objected to having to drive to Ebbsfleet to catch HS1 as they wanted to come to Ashford so any moves to diminish rail services for Ashford should be treated with suspicion. Ashford was a hub for High Speed 1 and Eurostar and no obstacles should be put in the way of those people who wanted to use it. There was concern from Members about what may happen with the High Speed trains come the 2012 Olympics and the possibility that Ashford may be by-passed in favour of quicker services to Ebbsfleet so the initiative of setting up the aforementioned group was welcomed.

Resolved:

That the Board respond to Southern Railways Timetable Consultation asking that the direct Ashford to Brighton service be retained as part of the new proposals.

327 Tracker Report

The Chairman drew Members attention to the Tracker of Decisions.

A Member referred to the petition regarding on-street parking received via the Kennington Community Forum and the request for a "slow" road marking at the junction of Thirlmere/Grasmere Road, and was concerned that nothing seemed to have happened regarding this issue since December 2008. At the last meeting in September Mr Gilbert had undertaken to chase this item so was there any positive information? Another Member said he had recently received an e-mail indicating that the request for a marking had been refused and would not be considered further due to the lack of a crash record. The Member who originally raised the issue said that this was disappointing as Inspectors had been out to the site on numerous occasions to ask residents to cut foliage back and surely it would be cheaper in the long run to put down some "slow" markings rather than keep paying call out fees. Mr Gilbert said he would check the status of the request and report back. Members expressed disappointment that decisions over potential road safety improvements seemed to be increasingly predicated by the number of accidents. A lot of what people were asking for was based on good traffic management and road improvement sense and action should not only be taken after accidents had happened.

Resolved:

That the Tracker Report be received and noted.

328 Proposed Alterations to the Waiting Restrictions in East Hill, Tenterden Area

The report detailed the results of the recent consultation in respect to the implementation of safety restrictions in East Hill, Tenterden and additional minor amendments to restrictions in neighbouring roads. Mr Wilkinson outlined the proposals in full and a summary of the objections received.

In response to a question Mr Wilkinson said that they would endeavour to use primrose yellow for the lines rather than the more strident shade of yellow. The lines may appear quite bright initially but they did fade over time.

Resolved:

- That (i) **the amendments to the waiting restrictions be implemented as proposed with the exception of the removal of an existing 9 metre length of double yellow line on the south-western side of Beacon Oak Road to the north-west of the Green Hedges access.**
- (ii) **subsequent to the removal of the reference to the above mentioned 9 metre section of double yellow line in Beacon Oak Road, the Kent County Council (Various Roads, Borough of Ashford) (Waiting Restrictions and Street Parking Places) (Amendment 14) Order 2009 be made.**

Recommended:

That the implementation of the scheme be funded through the Transport Initiatives Reserves (on-street parking surplus account).

329 Proposed Alterations to the Waiting Restrictions & Parking Places in High Street, Tenterden

The report detailed the results of the recent consultation in respect to the implementation of changes to the waiting restrictions and parking places in the vicinity of Tenterden Town Hall, High Street, Tenterden in order to accommodate the agreed implementation of a forecourt area as part of the Tenterden Improved works. In addition the proposed traffic order amendment contained a number of additional minor amendments to restrictions relating to the High Street parking bays utilised by the Friday Street Market. Mr Wilkinson outlined the proposals in full and a summary of the objections received.

In response to a question Mr Wilkinson said that restrictions would be marked by single yellow lines and the nearby signs would clearly show the day and time when restrictions applied.

Resolved:

- That (i) the amendments to the waiting restrictions and parking places be implemented as proposed.
- (ii) the Kent County Council (Various Roads, Borough of Ashford) (Waiting Restrictions and Street Parking Places) (Amendment 15) Order 2009 be made.

330 M20 Junction 9/M20 Bridge and Drovers Roundabout Improvement Schemes – Progress and Approval

Mr Phillips introduced the report which updated the Board on progress with the schemes and in particular the Regional Infrastructure Fund (RIF) funding agreement, land acquisition negotiations, design and public consultation for both schemes. The Board was asked to note the progress being made and recommend the approval of the scheme designs to the Executive. He confirmed that there was £15.1m of RIF investment allocated (a repayable loan rather than a grant) and informal agreements with two developers for a total of £5.4m funding. The various legal agreements would need to be concluded and signed before the works orders were placed and this was due for March 2010, so there was a tight timescale. Mr Phillips also showed a short video clip demonstrating modelled traffic flows at the new signalised Drovers Roundabout including the bus priority lane through the middle of the roundabout. Members considered this graphic gave an excellent illustration of the proposal and hoped to see things presented in a similar way in the future.

The following responses were given to questions/comments: -

- The bus priority lane would not be implemented fully for operation until Park & Ride and Smartlink were up and running but the initial works had to plan for this as they would be criticised if subsequent works were needed in a few years time. The bus priority lane would mean that they did not have to have additional stop lines or signals at the roundabout.
- It was hoped that by signalling the roundabout this would control the speed and make it safer than a free flowing roundabout. There would be a lot more traffic in the area in the future so something did have to be done.
- The design for the footbridge would consider disabled users and there had been discussions with the Ashford Access Group and they had taken away comments about ramps, gradients, level resting areas, seating, safety balustrades, handrails and the contrast of edges.
- The Highways Agency had been involved on the Steering Group for this project so there was a co-ordinated approach in terms of the Drovers Roundabout and the one underneath Junction 9. There were concerns about the current state of Junction 9 and the increasing number of instances of cars queuing back onto the motorway but it was envisaged that signalisation there would allow more traffic to get off the motorway and slip road than at present.

- The A20 exit on to the Drovers Roundabout was currently a key queuing point but it was hoped that queuing would be distributed more evenly when the new roundabout was operational.
- There were illustrations of the proposed footbridge available and these could be provided to Members on request.

Recommended:

- That (i) the progress being made and the results of the public consultation on the schemes be noted.**
- (ii) the schemes layout plan no. B0973500/001 be approved, but without prejudice and subject to planning permission (or development consent order) being granted for the M20 bridge (and a development consent order being granted for the Junction 9 scheme if necessary).**

331 Victoria Way Major Highway Scheme – Initial Phase

The report updated the Board on progress with Kent County Council's proposals to provide a transport link between Victoria Road and Leacon Road through a combination of improvements to the existing Victoria Road and Leacon Road coupled with the construction of a 0.58km length of new single carriageway. Mr Watson ran through the scheme as outlined in the report including aspects of art, engineering and public realm. The complete Victoria Way regeneration scheme would be delivered in phases and this report referred to the initial phase (Phase 1) which would be implemented with the approved Community Infrastructure Fund funding.

Mr Watson then gave a short presentation which included the plans for Victoria Square and impressions of the likely completed design including materials, finishing and public art. He also explained that there were potential parking alterations for residents and businesses in Victoria Road and Victoria Crescent and copies of the letter informing them of the changes, along with an information leaflet which would also be sent out, were tabled for Members information.

The following responses were given to questions/comments: -

- Mr Watson would endeavour to find out the cost of the proposed lamp columns and the existing ones in Elwick Road. He accepted the point about the new ones potentially not matching the more elaborate and expensive columns used around the former ring road and that some of the money spent elsewhere in the scheme could be used to provide higher quality lamp columns. In terms of using "cheaper" materials they were looking for a "halfway house" between good quality materials and ones that could be properly maintained. This was on Phase 1 of the scheme so they did not want to go with anything too elaborate that may need to be replaced later on in the scheme.

- The proposed pavilion in Victoria Square was fairly small and whilst there was the potential to develop it for further uses in the future, it would initially just be used as a shelter. If that was not the desire that would need to be looked at again. In terms of whether the pavilion could be used as a kiosk and Victoria Square as some sort of performance area, this was possible but was not in the initial plans. Mr Watson said that the public art elements consisted of the hoardings and pavilion. He took on board the comments about the design of these and that Victoria Square “lacked vision” so he would go back to the design team to see what else could be produced. Victoria Square would not be suitable as a viewing area for the railway as it lay some 9 metres below the level of the track.
- Mr Phillips said there was a need for some caution regarding plans for Victoria Square. During Phase 1 there would not be any other development around it apart from the existing primary school and electricity sub-station. Zed Homes was scheduled for later so initially it would not be an area that attracted people to it, it would be for passing through but not really stopping or dwelling. Smartlink would not be operating there for at least another two years so it was important to bear in mind the two visions – the initial function and the emerging plans for the whole Victoria Way corridor.
- The final vision for Victoria Way would include cycling facilities but this would not be for the entire length of the road up to Brookfield Road but only the eastern element.
- There was no shared space element to this scheme. Footways and cycleways were totally separate from the carriageways.
- Officers were examining what works could be done at an earlier stage to speed the project up. Tenders were already out and they were hoping to award the contract by February. There might be an opportunity to do prior utility works in places such as Victoria Road and Leacon Road.
- There was a legal obligation to report back to this Board any objections received to the parking arrangements.
- It was not known at this stage if the whole stretch of road would be named Victoria Way when completed, but this was the working title during the project.
- In terms of safety there would be a controlled pedestrian crossing at the learning link and there would also be enhanced lighting and CCTV in the area.
- Traffic flows in Brookfield Road and Elwick Road would reduce but probably by less than 10%. Victoria Way’s main purpose was to serve the traffic coming in from the south west of the town rather than circulating around it.

Whilst supporting the overall Victoria Way scheme, Members expressed general concern about the public art aspects including the bespoke lighting columns and design of the pavilion. Rather than asking Officers to come back to the Joint

Transportation Board and risk delays to the overall scheme, the Board agreed to bring the areas of concern to the attention of the Executive.

Recommended:

That the Executive continue to support the scheme but that the concerns about the design of the bespoke lighting and the pavilion in Victoria Square be noted.

332 Draft Ashford Cycling Strategy

Ms. Wedgwood introduced her report which set out the purpose of the draft Ashford Cycling Strategy and clarified that she was asking for Members' support to take the draft out to formal public consultation.

Members were very supportive of the draft strategy and congratulated Ms. Wedgwood for the work she had undertaken thus far.

The following responses were given to questions/comments: -

- Officers had been working with schools and the Primary Care Trust to promote the health benefits of cycling and were hoping to have a series of launch events involving the schools.
- In developing the strategy Ms. Wedgwood had been working with Strategic Sites Officers in an attempt to get developers to put more secure cycle parking into new developments, and she was pleased to say this was starting to happen.
- They were looking to promote "Bike to Work" Schemes amongst more local businesses.
- Unfortunately it appeared that the bid for the Willesborough Dykes cycle link had been unsuccessful at present.
- Improving the "pinch point" at Blackwall Lane was the number 1 priority in the strategy. This was recognised as an unsafe area. The project was ready to go and awaiting funding.
- There had been a lot of work undertaken surrounding the maintenance budget available for cycle routes. A special separate budget had been achieved but this needed to be worked through properly to identify areas for priority. Provision for litter picking would also be put in place.
- The potential for using the A20 from Charing to Ashford as a cycle route would be examined.

Resolved:

That the draft Ashford Cycling Strategy be taken out to formal public consultation.

333 Ashford Town Centre Streets – Disability Workshop Update

The report updated on the first workshop with disability groups that reflected part of the ongoing monitoring of the Elwick Road shared space scheme.

A Member reported that a further workshop had taken place during the previous week and both had been informative and constructive. Whether the Design Team would address the matters raised at the workshop was another matter but he said he was cautiously optimistic. The full shared space scheme had been in place for just over a year now and, without being complacent, he was pleased to say there had been no reported accidents despite the initial outcry the concept had caused. He had also been encouraged by a comment from a representative from one of the organisations for the blind who had flatly denied the assertion that Ashford was a no go area for blind people.

A Member asked if there was any update on when the Department for Transport were likely to approve the no parking signage for Bank Street as visually impaired people were finding it difficult to negotiate around the vehicles there. Mr Watson said this was a significant issue and he was pleased to say that the signing and lining would be put in place during January in time for enforcement to begin in February. There would be communication to those people who used Bank Street informing them that the area would be properly enforced from February 2010.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

334 Highway Alterations to Latitude Walk Development, Ashford Town Centre – West Street/Godinton Road

Mr Phillips introduced his report which provided an update on progress with Kent County Council's proposals to complete the highway alterations to the frontage of the new Latitude Walk development in West Street/Godinton Road.

A Member said that this area was close to a part of the shared space where there was still huge traffic congestion at the West Street/Forge Lane and Lidl's junction. He sought re-assurances that this proposed work would not make the situation any worse. Mr Watson said that the works would all be off carriageway and it was not envisaged that it would have any significant impact on traffic flows.

Another Member said there was still confusion at West Street and "The Bolt" as traffic did not realise they had to stay right to go straight ahead. He said that better signage was needed as he had seen lots of cars cutting back in at the last minute

and this was dangerous. Mr Watson said that there would be improved signage both approaching, and immediately at "The Bolt", although that was not part of the Latitude Walk scheme.

Recommended:

That the Executive continue to support the scheme.

335 Ashford Station Forecourt Improvements

Report withdrawn for further discussions with Ashford Borough Council's Policy Advisory Group in the New Year.

336 Highways Works Programme Progress 2009/10

The Chairman introduced this information report updating Members on the identified schemes approved for construction in 2009/10.

A Member said that he had been in contact with KCC's Public Rights of Way (PROW) Officer concerning Orlestone Forest and the opportunity for introducing seasonal access permits because of the number of off road vehicles damaging the area. He asked that this be added to the programme as it would require public consultation. Officers agreed to bring this matter to the attention of the Mid Kent Community Delivery Manager and the PROW Officer.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

337 Response to Petition Submitted Regarding a Bus Service at Brisley Farm, Ashford

The report explained that a petition was submitted to Ashford Borough Council's full Council meeting on the 8th October 2009 regarding a lack of a bus service serving the Brisley Farm Estate, Ashford. The response letter from Kent Highway Services was set out for information.

A Member said he was concerned that the petitioner had been advised to submit this petition to the Borough Council when it was clearly a County Council matter. It was noted that the petition had been forwarded to Kent Highway Services immediately but surely this had simply added an unnecessary layer to the process.

Another Member said he was concerned about the proposals as the number 13 service which was proposed to be extended in to Brisley Farm only ran during the week as an hourly service and currently served an important market. Extending the service to Brisley Farm would add to the journey times of those people. The residents of Brisley Farm could easily walk to other existing routes within five or ten minutes and any extension to the number 13 route was not the best way forward.

After discussion the Board agreed that as this was a tendered service and ultimately within the responsibility of Kent County Council, they would note the actions of Kent Highway Services but recommend that if it was possible, an extra bus should be put on to serve Brisley Farm so that the current number 13 service was not disrupted.

Resolved:

That the response to the petition from Kent Highway Services be noted but if it is possible to add an extra bus to serve Brisley Farm, rather than disrupting the current number 13 service, then this should be pursued.

338 Kent Highway Services Update

The report was an update for Joint Transportation Boards across Kent following the KCC Policy Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting on the 10th November 2009, to cover highways and transport issues across the County.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

339 Date of Next Meeting

A Special Joint Transportation Board Meeting had been arranged for 14th January 2010.

Queries concerning these Minutes? Please contact Danny Sheppard:
Telephone: 01233 330349 Email: danny.sheppard@ashford.gov.uk
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Joint Transportation Board

Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Joint Transportation Board held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **20th January 2010**

Present:

Cllr. Burgess (Chairman);

Mr M A Wickham (Vice-Chairman);

Cllrs. Mrs Blanford, Clarkson, Claughton, Clokie, Cowley, Ellison, Heyes, Woodford.
Mr M J Angell, Mr R E King, Mr S J G Koowaree, Mr J N Wedgbury.

Apologies:

Cllr Taylor, Mrs E Tweed

Also Present:

Paul Jackson (Head of Environmental Services – ABC), Ray Wilkinson (Engineering Services Manager – ABC), Phil Gilbert (Local Transport and Development Manager – KHS), Tara O’Shea (Transportation Engineer - KHS), Kirstie Horton (Jacobs), Gareth Williams (Jacobs), Kirsty Liddell (Member Services and Scrutiny Support Officer – ABC).

392 Declarations of Interest

Councillor	Interest	Minute No.
Claughton	Code of Conduct – Personal but not Prejudicial – as he knew one of the speakers, Mr Williams, personally.	394

393 Circular 01/2006 – Setting Local Speed Limits

Mr Gilbert advised the Board that Kent County Council had commissioned Jacobs to undertake an independent review of the speed limits on all A and B roads in the County in regards to Circular 01/2006 Setting Local Speed Limits. The review was being undertaken by a small Speed Limit Review Team to ensure that a consistent approach was taken throughout the County. A study on the speed limit of the A28 was undertaken in March 2004 with improvements made to the road conditions in July 2004. The road was re-examined in May 2007 with further representations being made raising concern over the speed limit of the A28. A meeting between the Speed Limit Review Team and Bethersden Parish Council was held in December 2009 where the Parish Council put forward their concerns over the speed limit. He introduced Kirstie Horton from Jacobs who would provide a presentation to Members on the work being carried out on the speed limit review.

Ms Horton advised Members that she was the Project Manager of the County wide speed review that was being carried out by Jacobs. She started her presentation by explaining that the Government had demanded that a review of the speed limits of all A and B roads be completed by 2011 and she was pleased to confirm that they were on target to complete the County wide review by 2011. There was a requirement that speed limits should be obvious to drivers with consistent road signage being maintained throughout the County. New guidance had been issued which provided clear statements relating to the 'look' of a road in relation to its speed, for example a 60 mile per hour (mph) road would be of high quality and wide with few hazards present, a 50 mph road would have a few houses along it and would have junctions along it, a 40 mph road would be narrower with driveway accesses along it, a 30 mph road would be highly residential potentially with a mix of shops. 50 to 60% of the roads in the County would retain their current speed limits with some being changed downward; there were a handful of limits that might be increased but in this instance it would be where there would be clear benefits for doing so.

Ms Horton explained that there was a seven-step process to the review. The first stage was a desk top survey which was carried out by the initial review team followed by an initial site review which involved a team visiting the site at various times to ensure that they experienced the activity on the road that residents would during their day to day lives. The third step would be an adjudication review which would be carried out by someone appointed on behalf of Kent County Council who would decide if they agreed with the findings of the initial review. This was followed by a statutory review whereby the Police would carry out a similar review to that of the adjudicator. There was a Parish Council representative who 'policed' the review. The sixth step was to ensure that all Joint Transportation Boards were kept informed and consulted. The seventh step was to ensure that all Town, Parish Councils and District Councils were kept informed and consulted during the process. Once the consultations had been carried out the adjudicator would review the information alongside the initial review and make a final decision. Subject to funding improvements would be made which could include improved signage and line design and the issue of Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs). She concluded the presentation by explaining the timescales that they were working to, to ensure that the review was carried out by 2011.

In response to questions from Members Ms Horton advised that Jacobs were appointed as an independent adjudicator and that the use of an independent adjudicator would help to ensure that consistency was maintained throughout the County. There had been occasions where speed limits had been increased on some roads due to the limit having been set too low originally. Mr Gilbert advised that the review was a mammoth task and it was correct for it to be carried out by a small dedicated independent team which would enable consistent standards to be implemented throughout the review. He could not comment on the payment made to Jacobs as he was not aware of the figures involved. Ms Horton advised that current signage would be looked at during the review process and admitted that a more consistent use of signage was needed.

A Member felt that there was an alarming number of signs in the countryside at present and was concerned that this number would be increased and as a result

drivers would be inundated with signs and not comply with them at all. Ms Horton advised that there was a need to de-clutter roads and replace the current signage with larger signs placed further apart.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

394 A28 Speed Limit Review

Ms Buckley of Bethersden Parish Council advised the Board that the Parish Council had welcomed the opportunity to review the speed limit of the A28. They had campaigned for a reduction in the limit for the safety of the residents of the Parish. The A28 was a major through-road which consisted of 12 miles of road with several deceptive bends through the village. A working group had been formed which consisted of Parish Councillors and residents of the village, upwards of 200 man hours had been put into producing the A28 Speed Limit Review Report, and she had copies available should Members wish to see them. She introduced Mr Williams who was part of the working group and would present the Board with an overview of the report and answer any questions they may have.

Mr Williams advised the Board that the findings of the Jacobs report had been received with concern as the report stated that the use of the road by vulnerable road users was low which the working group believed to be untrue. He explained what the definition of a village was for the purposes of a speed review and advised how Bethersden compared to the definition. The A28 was a major through-road that was used by residents as part of their daily lives. He advised that during a site visit by Jacobs he had witnessed two lorries attempting to pass each other which had resulted in one having to drive on the pavement to ensure that there was enough room to pass. He showed the Board photographs of the 'hotspots' of the A28 where accidents occurred on a regular basis. The nature of the road was narrow with lots of bends and major junctions along it. There was concern over the safety of pedestrians attempting to cross the road, there was no provision for a pedestrian crossing and it was difficult to see where one could be placed.

Mr Williams felt that it was interesting to note that 15% of accidents were caused by speed alone. There had been 30 reportable crashes on the Bethersden stretch of the A28 in the last 5 years with over 100 non-reportable crashes in the same period. BBC national news had visited the village in December 2009 to do a report on traffic speed. With the aid of PowerPoint slides Mr Williams showed the Board the current and proposed speed limits along the stretch of the A28 in question and explained that alternative measures such as traffic engineering would also assist with the reduction of speed in the area such as vehicle activated signs and bus stops.

Members congratulated Mr Williams on a compelling presentation which had clearly been based on evidence not assumption. They were concerned that a review of the A28 had taken so long to come about considering the dangers presented to the centre of the village by the current speed limit. Mr Gilbert advised that they would look at the speed limit of the A28 on this particular stretch independently of the speed limit review and report back to the Joint Transportation Board in June 2010.

There was strong support for the arguments made by the working group and the Board looked forward to receiving the report of Kent Highway Services in June 2010.

Resolved:

That

- (i) the report be received and noted and;**
- (ii) the Board request a report from Kent Highway Services responding to the request for a speed limit review of the Bethersden stretch of the A28 at the meeting to be held in June 2010.**



Speed Limit Review

JTB Presentations

November / December 2009



Kirstie Horton

**Project Manager
Kent Highway Services**



Speed Limit Review

- It is a requirement for all Local Authorities to review all A and B roads by 2011 in line with Circular 1/2006 – Setting Local Speed limits.



- **Circular 1/2006**

Speed limits should:

- Be consistent across the country
- Be self explaining
- Evidence led
- Reinforce people's assessment of what is a safe speed to travel
- Encourage self compliance



- **Circular 1/2006**
- Whats new?
- How are our existing speed limits looking?



What this process does:-

- Provides a snapshot assessment of the speed limit of the road
- Provides a consistent network of speed limits across the country
- Provides a clear guidance on setting speed limits on all types of roads
- Identifies additional highway works to enhance or support a speed limit

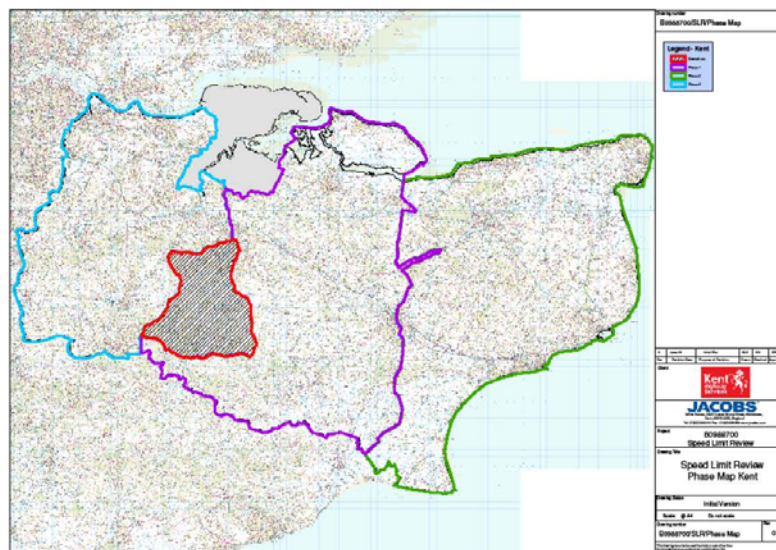


What this process does not do:-

- Target local non speed related issues
- Predict too far into the future
- Recommend speed limits that are not enforceable or achievable
- Assess roads other than A or B roads



Phasing of review





The process – 7 key stages

1. Desk top review
2. Initial site review
3. Adjudication review
4. Statutory review – Police
5. Parish Council Rep – John Wilson
6. Transportation and development
7. Parish and Town councils



Consultation – The role for Parish and Town Councils

- Parish and Town Councils are the key contact
- Responsible for informing local residents
- Responsible for collating feedback and presenting this to the adjudicator.
- The adjudicator **does not** enter any consultation with individuals



Training for Parish and Town Councils

- Training Sessions
 - Understanding the concept of setting speed limits*
 - What comments you can make*
 - How to put together a response*



Final review

- Responses received from the Parish and Town Councils
- Adjudicator assesses if any valid comments have been made
- Sites are revisited
- Any changes to the original recommendations are assessed by the review Panel
- Revision Report issued to Parish and Town Councils



What's Next?

*Subject to funding

- Signs and Lines design
- Traffic Regulation Orders
- Installation



Timescales

Demonstration Area

- TROs advertised
- Signs and lines installed by end of March 2010

Area 1

- Review Panel meeting – Final report before Christmas
- TROs to be advertised by end of March 2010



Area 2

- Initial review complete
- Adjudication review currently taking place
- Police and Parish Council Rep consultation before Christmas
- Available to Parish and Town councils after April 2010

Area 3

- Initial review to commence April 2010

A28 speed limit review: Bethersden



Bethersden Working Group

Presenters: Graham Williams, Caroline Buckley

January 2010

Jacob's report

A28 Site 5 (Bethersden):

'Use of the site by vulnerable road users was identified as low'



Survey and research

1. Density of traffic
2. Questionnaire, to identify:
 - i. Profile of resident
 - ii. Number of vehicle movements
 - iii. Deliveries
 - iv. Social activities, e.g. Horse riding, walking
 - v. Use of village: amenities, shops, pub, churches, etc
 - vi. Businesses and associated vehicle movements
 - vii. Comments from residents
3. Photographs
4. Movements relating to schools
5. Accidents
6. Previous action by residents

3

Government directive on speed review (DfT Circular 01/2006)

Balance the need to travel with the need to improve the quality of life:

- Reducing road traffic collisions and injuries
- Overcome social exclusion and strengthening rural communities
- Develop safer environments for all road users

4

Methodology

Speed limits for single carriageway roads in rural areas (DfT Circular 01/2006)

Speed limit (mph)	Characteristics
60	For most high quality strategic A and B roads with few bends, junctions or accesses.
50	For lower quality A and B roads which may have a relatively high number of bends, junctions or accesses. Also where mean speeds are below 50mph, so lower limit does not interfere with traffic flow.
40	Where there is a high number of bends, junctions or accesses, substantial development, strong environmental or landscape reasons, or where there are considerable numbers of vulnerable road users.
30	Norm in villages.

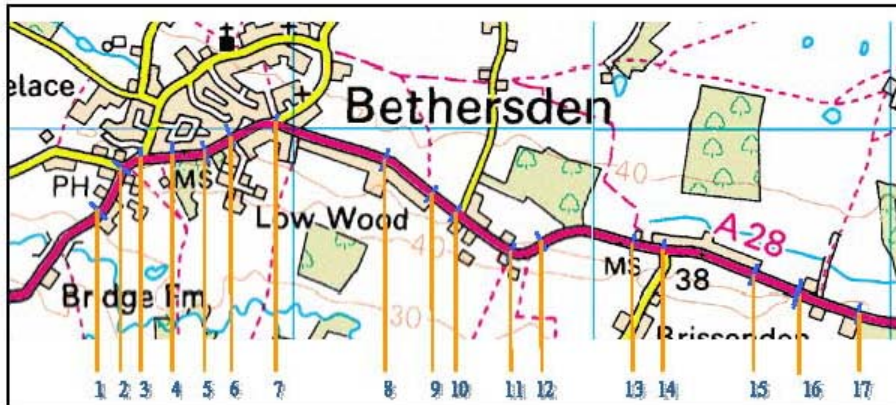
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A village

- A village is a community of people living in a group of houses in a rural area which has a church.
- A community is a group of people with common interest, interacting and sharing.
- Per Traffic Advisory Leaflet 01/04 (DfT, 2004), a village is:
 - 20 or more houses (on one or both sides of the road), and
 - a minimum length of 600 metres.

6

The village of Bethersden



From Western to Eastern Gateways (1 to 12):

- 69 houses (on both sides of the road)
- 1.7 km
- 4 junctions
- Numerous bends
- Accident hotspots
- Limited visibility

7

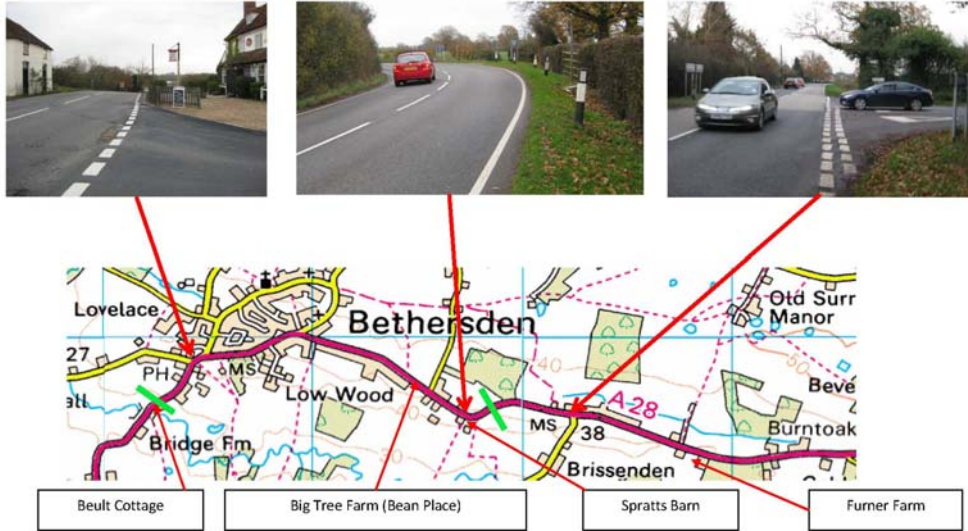
Use of the road

A28 passes through an integral part of the village



8

Character of the road – hot spots



9

Character of the road - vulnerability

- Narrow A road (6.85m)
- Numerous sharp and deceptive bends
- 5 major junctions
- Poor visibility
- High density of access points
- Bridleways, footpaths and pavements



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Travelling to School

- Local village schools
 - 150 attendees
 - 34% walk, many from A28
- Secondary schools, pick up and drop off points on A28



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Impact of speed

- Fatalities: 62% occur on rural roads
- 15% of accidents are caused by speed alone
- 85% are caused by speed plus another factor
- Government figures: 40mph speed limit results in an average speed of 43mph
- Pedestrian hit by car
 - At 40mph has 9 in 10 chance of being killed
 - At 30mph has 2 in 10 chance of being killed
- Reduction in the quality of life for a local community and a sense of vulnerability

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Hazardous – impact of speed

Accidents

- 30 reportable in last 5 years
- Over 100 major non-reportable at key places
- Fatalities and life changing accidents
- BBC national news (Dec '09)



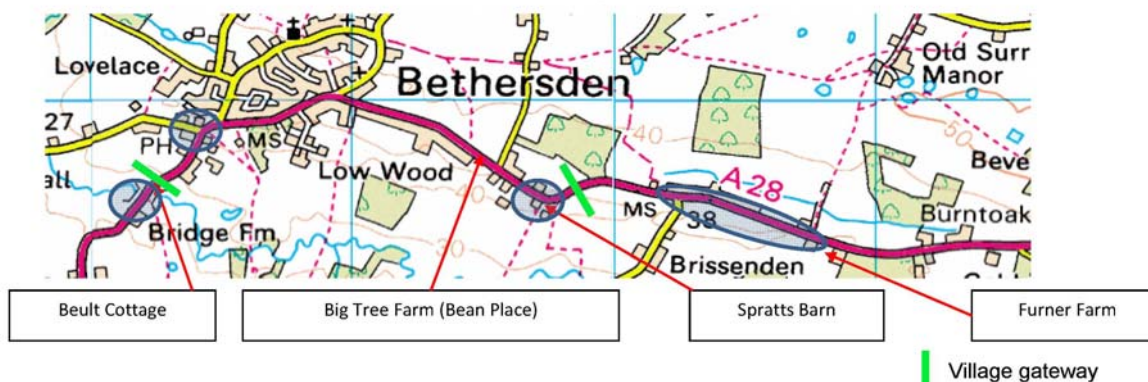
13

Reportable accidents



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Non-Reportable accidents: Hot spots



Accident hot spots, from left to right (shaded in blue):

- Beult bridge
- Bull Lane / School Lane junctions
- Spratts Barn corner
- "The Bungalows"

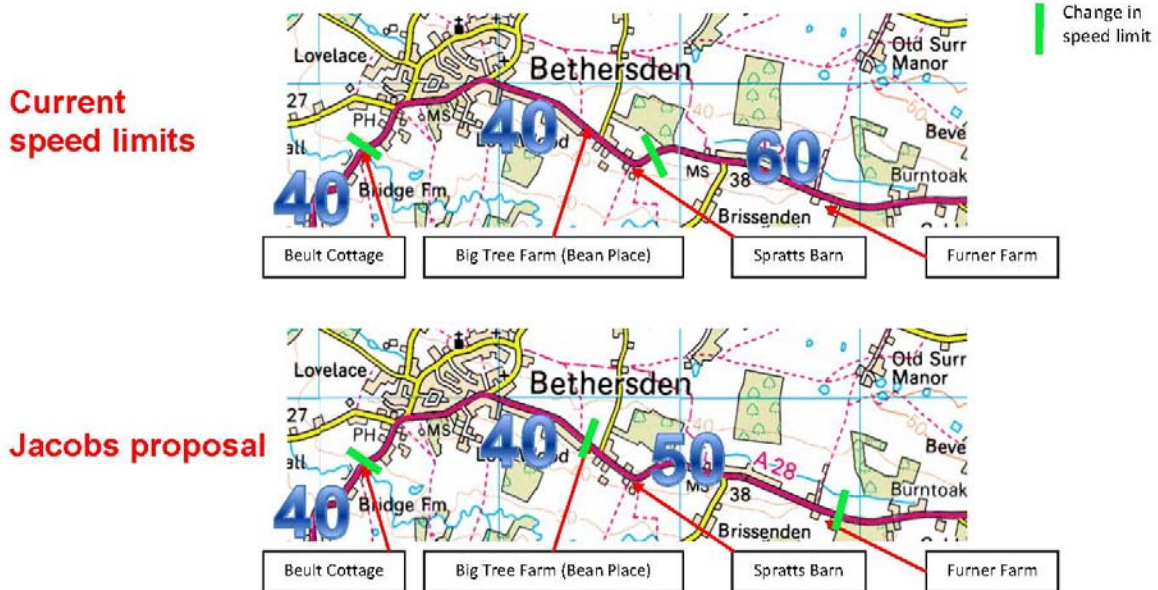
15

Selection of the findings from the Working group

- Density of traffic
 - One vehicle every 4.8 secs
 - Major junctions used every 18 secs
 - Narrow A road, full of bends, limited pavements
- Use by villagers and businesses
 - 22% of residents
 - Of which 90% use village facilities
 - Generate 8,000 vehicle movements per week

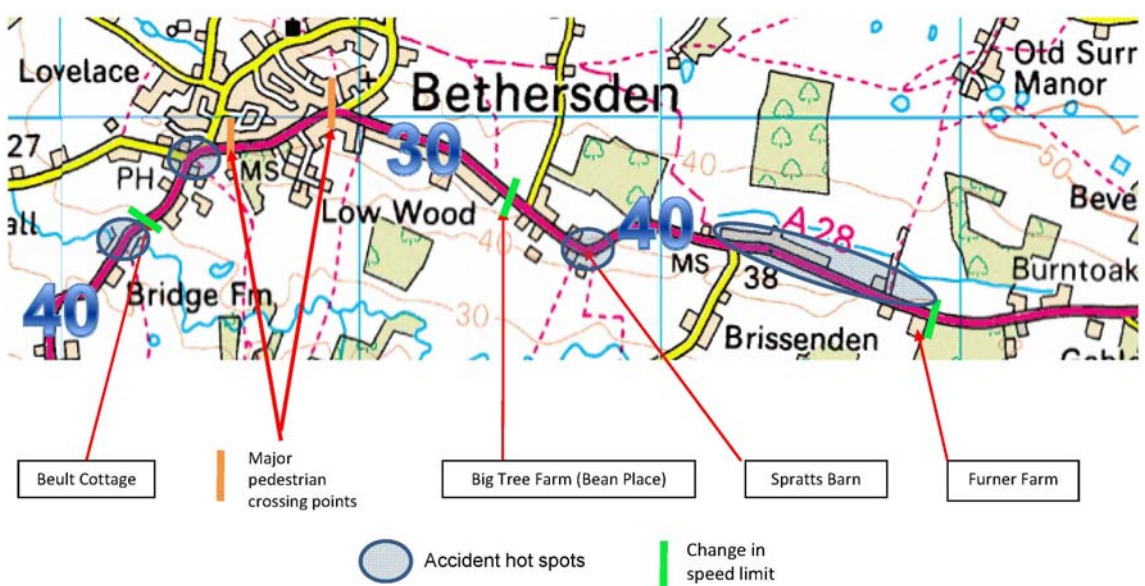
16

Current and proposed speed limits



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Suggestion from Bethersden Parish Council



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Alternative engineering measures

- Vehicle-activated sign
- Centre hatching
- Pedestrian crossing
- Road island
- Narrowing
- Pavement
- Signage
- Gateway
- Bus stops
- By-pass

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Core findings

- Jacobs recommendations do not take adequate note of:
 - Character of the road
 - Use of the road
 - Vulnerability of residents
- Bethersden conforms to the government definition for a 30mph area.
- High level of speed and accidents impacts on vulnerability.
- Risks need to be mitigated.
- Reducing the speed is a cheap option.

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Working Group findings in detail

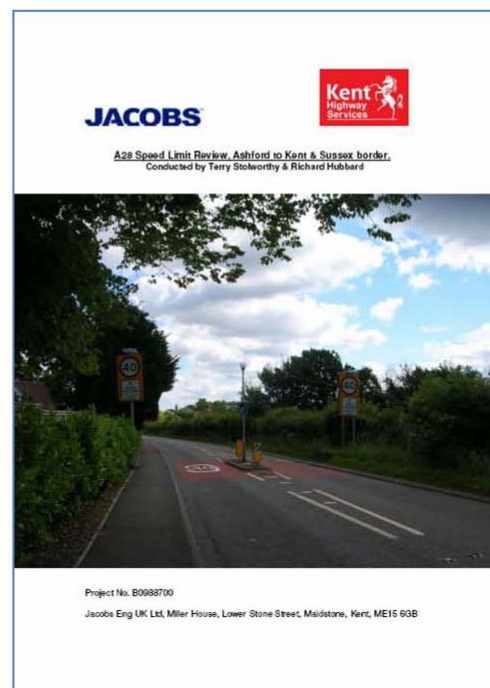
Working group

Formation at request of BPC

- 7 residents of the A28
- 2 parish councillors

Purpose:

- Review Jacobs proposals re the A28 through the Parish of Bethersden relating to Site 5 (all), and part of Sites 4 and 6.
- Produce a response, either:
 - Supporting the proposal, or
 - Counter proposal.



Major thoroughfare

- A28 passes through an integral part of the village
- Joins Kent with East Sussex



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Findings: Density of traffic

- 9 x 1 hour counts of the traffic movements.
- Identified types of vehicles.
- Included number of crossings by pedestrians at Forge Corner
- The vehicle movements entering Forge Hill, School Road and Bull Lane

The general results relating to density of traffic per hour were:

- Total vehicles **749.4** (One vehicle every **4.80** seconds)
- Vehicles using Forge Hill **85.8** (One vehicle every **42.0** seconds)
- Vehicles using Bull Lane **194** (One vehicle every **18.5** seconds)
- Vehicles using School Road **198** (One vehicle every **18** seconds)
- **15%** were artic lorries, rigid lorries or large vans

The junction of the A28 with Forge Hill (Forge Corner) is of significant concern as this is a major crossing for pedestrians.

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Findings: Questionnaire (1)

- 302 occupants in 116 houses
 - 133 **(44%)** are “vulnerable”:
 - 62 under the age of 18
 - 64 over the age of 65
 - 7 disabled
- 322 vehicles,
 - Generating **3,979** vehicle movements per week, i.e. 35 per occupied house per week
- 26% of properties without facility for vehicles to turn round within the grounds
- 53% of properties do not have facilities for visitors/delivery vehicles to park off-road

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Findings: Questionnaire (2)

- Poor visibility for vehicles entering / exiting properties:
 - **75% on exiting**
 - 43% on entering
 - 3 properties have installed mirrors on the road side to facility leaving their properties
- Post is delivered by bicycle to 56% of these properties
- Doorstep deliveries:
 - 24% have regular deliveries from supermarkets
 - 22% have regular milk deliveries
 - 10% have regular newspaper deliveries: all by bicycle

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Findings: Questionnaire (3)

- Support for the village amenities is high:
 - **89% use the village shops**
 - 51% walk to the shops
 - 43% use the shops daily
 - 61% use the pubs
 - 58% use the village hall
 - 44% use the recreation ground
 - 28% use the churches
- 17 houses have children at the village schools (Primary or Play school)
 - **59% walk to school**

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Findings: Questionnaire (4)

- Social habits of these residents indicate enjoyment of their surroundings:
 - 69% enjoy walking
 - 42% enjoy cycling
 - 40% enjoy dog walking
 - 10% enjoy caravanning
 - 7% enjoy horse riding
- Businesses along the A28
 - 13 residential properties run businesses from them
 - 1,230 additional vehicle movements are generated from these
 - 7 other businesses
 - 2,925 additional vehicle movements are generated from these

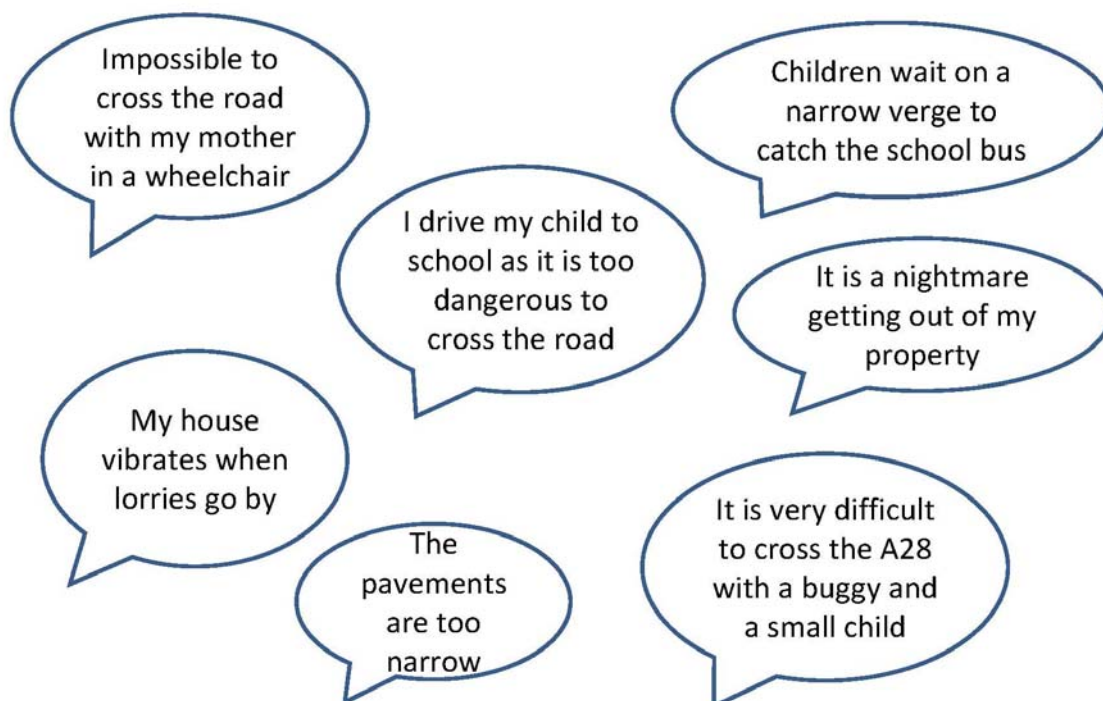
30

Findings: Questionnaire (5)

- 73% of the residents made a comment concerning the A28 and the impact it has on their lives:
 - **43 are concerned by the speed of the traffic**
 - **27 residents were concerned about crossing the road**
 - **26 expressed concern over the number of accidents**
 - 18 have issues when entering/exiting their properties
 - 16 believe the density/speed of traffic on the A28 has impacted their quality of life
 - 14 had concerns on pedestrian safety
 - 3 have written directly to the KCC/police/local MP
 - 1 petition has been raised asking for reduced speed in the vicinity of “The Bungalows”

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Testimonies



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Findings: Photographs

- From Little Surrenden workshops to Bull Bridge
- Clearly show the issues that residents and users of the A28 face on a daily basis.
 - Their quality of life is impacted by the traffic on this road.
 - Residents feel vulnerable: from crossing the road as pedestrians or on horse-back; driving into/out of their properties; and, deliveries, such as the postman cycling on the pavement.
 - Residents risk their lives each day!

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Findings: Accidents

- Numerous accidents, including
 - Over 30 reportable accidents from last five years
 - 27, mostly non-reportable, at Spratts Barn since May 2004
 - 31, mostly non-reportable, at “The Bungalows” in vicinity of Woodchurch turning, including four fatalities in recent years
 - Bull Bridge: various including three fatalities
 - Beult Cottage: eight in 18 months
 - Gascoigne Corner: 32 in a four month period

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Findings: Movements relating to schools

- Bethersden Primary and Play Schools
 - High proportion travel from outside the parish
 - Children living along the A28 walk to school where possible
- Homewood Comprehensive School, Tenterden
 - Bus takes children to school
 - Several stops along the A28 and either side of the church
- Ashford secondary schools: Highworth and Norton Knatchbull
 - 2 buses take children to school
 - Several stops, all along the A28

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Findings: Other information

- 124 houses in Bethersden are on the A28
- 302 residents live in the targeted houses
- Correspondence with KCC / KHS / Police / MP
- Joint Transportation Board meetings 30th June 2009, 20th January 2010
- Site meetings with KHS and Jacobs

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Working group findings

- Previous actions by residents
 - Petition
 - Letters to MP/KCC/Police
 - Parish Council
- Reason
 - High level of accidents
 - Fear
 - Negative impact on quality of life

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