
PROPOSED Left turn only restriction Station Road Charing, Ashford

To: **Ashford Joint Transportation Board – Tuesday 7th June 2022**

By: **Tim Read, Head of Transportation, Kent County Council**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Ward: **Charing, Ashford District**

Summary: **This report gives details of a proposed left turn only restriction for traffic exiting Station Road onto the A20 Maidstone Road in Charing.**

For Recommendation

1.0 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 Station Road is situated within the parish of Charing in the District of Ashford and is a single carriageway local distributor road. The crossroads junction of Station Road with the A 20 Maidstone Road/Ashford Road and High Street is located centrally within the village envelope. The current posted speed limit on Station Road and High Street is 30MPH. The posted speed limit on the A20 Maidstone Road and Ashford Road is 40 MPH.
- 1.2 The crossroads junction has been identified as a casualty cluster site as part of KCC's annual review of personal injury collisions on the County's adopted highway network.
- 1.3 Personal injury collision data has been reviewed for the prevailing five-year period up to 30th September 2021 and has identified that eleven reported personal injury crashes occurred within that period. Of the reported crashes, one resulted in fatality, three resulted in serious personal injury and seven resulted in slight personal injury. Details of recorded personal injury collisions are given in the table below.

Date	Severity	Collision details
17/08/2017	SLIGHT	Veh 1 (car) turned right into path of Veh 2 (car)
02/08/2018	SLIGHT	Veh 1 (car) failed to Give Way at junction and collided with Veh 2 (car)
19/11/2018	SERIOUS	Veh 1 (quad bike) failed to Give Way at junction and collided with Veh 2 (car)

28/03/2019	SLIGHT	Veh 1 (LGV) waiting to turn right was struck in the rear by Veh 2 (car)
10/10/2019	SLIGHT	Veh 1 (car) turned right into path of Veh 2 (car)
29/02/2020	SERIOUS	Veh 1 (car) collided with Veh 2 (m/cycle) which was travelling in the opposite direction.
24/07/2020	SERIOUS	Veh 1 (m/cycle) swerved and fell off whilst avoiding collision with wild animal in road
15/10/2020	SLIGHT	Veh 1 (car) turned right into path of Veh 2 (car)
23/04/2021	SLIGHT	Veh 1 (car) turned right into path of Veh 2 (m/cycle)
15/05/2021	SLIGHT	Veh 1 (LGV) turned right into path of Veh 2 (LGV)
08/07/2021	FATAL	Veh 1 (car) failed to Give Way at junction and collided with Veh 2 (car)

- 1.4 The proposed left turn only restriction for traffic exiting Station Road has received support for its introduction from Kent Police.
- 1.5 Traffic volume turning data has been obtained for the crossroads junction as part of a survey undertaken between the 9th to the 15th September 2021 and the results are given in the tables below.

Daily vehicle movement (24 hour)

Movement	Thurs 09/09	Fri 10/09	Sat 11/09	Sun 12/09	Mon 13/09	Tues 14/09	Wed 15/09	Average daily movement
Station Road to A20 eastbound	681	716	511	382	695	706	648	620
Station Road to A20 westbound	2107	2122	1630	1353	1922	2026	2240	1914
A20 Eastbound to Station Road	1948	2036	1558	1363	1853	1977	2190	1846
Station Road to High Street	281	262	225	210	259	261	271	253

Hourly vehicle movement (24 hour)

Movement	Thurs 09/09	Fri 10/09	Sat 11/09	Sun 12/09	Mon 13/09	Tues 14/09	Wed 15/09	Average hourly movement
Station Road to A20 eastbound	28.4	29.8	21.3	15.9	28.9	29.4	27	26
Station Road to A20 westbound	87.8	88.4	67.9	56.4	80.1	84.4	93.3	80
A20 Eastbound to Station Road	81.2	84.8	64.9	56.8	77.2	82.4	91.3	77
Station Road to High Street	11.8	10.9	9.4	8.8	10.8	10.9	11.3	11

Typical Peak hour flow (Thursday 9th September 2021)

Movement	Time	Volume
Station Road to A20 eastbound	08.00 to 09.00	39 vehicles
Station Road to High Street	08.00 to 09.00	17 vehicles
Station Road to A20 eastbound	17.00 to 18.00	51 vehicles
Station Road to High Street	17.00 to 18.00	20 vehicles

- 1.6 based on the traffic survey data provided in the tables above it is predicted that the additional traffic load (per average hour) on Charing roundabout will be in the region of 37 vehicles which equates to 1 extra vehicle every 1.6 minutes. At peak periods this figure is likely to increase to 1.2 extra vehicles per minute.

2.0 The Proposal

- 2.1 To make an order to allow vehicular traffic to turn left only when exiting Station Road Charing onto the A20 Maidstone Road except for emergency vehicles when on a call and pedal cyclists. This aspect of work forms part of a larger scheme to change the current road layout at the crossroads junction with the aim of improving road safety.

3.0 Consultation and Traffic Regulation Order

- 3.1 The advert for the Traffic Regulation Order was placed in the Kent Messenger and on the KCC Highways Consultations website the 18th March 2022 with a closing date for comments by 12 noon on Monday the 11th April 2022.
- 3.2 The County Member and local Councillors were notified of the consultation. Notices were placed on site with a minimum of one notice per street. An advert was placed in

the Kent Messenger newspaper and the notice of intends published on the KCC website.

3.3 30 responses were received as a result of the consultation. These are summarised as follows:

Support	22	76%
Object	8	24%

3.4 A number of comments were made by both those supporting the proposal and objecting to it. The main concerns are summarised below.

Comment	KCC response
<p>You are still allowing for traffic to come out of the High Street and go straight across into Station Road. There has been a number of accidents and near misses from traffic coming from that side. The junction will continue to be an accident blackspot.</p> <p>When cars turn into Station Road, coming from Ashford, vehicles coming out of Station Road will just pull out without looking to see if there is vehicles still continuing on the A20. I have had this happen to me on more than one occasion.</p> <p>Putting the speed down to 30 won't work because vehicles don't slow down to 40 and if someone in front of them is doing the speed limit they just come up to your bumper and push you to go faster.</p> <p>You are making all traffic to turn left and to go to the roundabout to come back on themselves to go into Ashford. There is 3 other roads, 2 that are busy roads, that will have to wait until it is clear. The traffic will not wait forever and they will take a chance to get out. You will be making another accident blackspot.</p> <p>I have used that junction numerous times to get home or to go into Ashford at various times of day and night and what it needs is traffic lights. Instead of putting the pedestrian lights up, you should have put the lights on the junction</p>	<p>All traffic exiting Station Road will be required to turn left onto the A20. The current right turn and straight ahead movement of traffic exiting Station Road will be prohibited.</p> <p>Traffic wishing to access the A20 eastbound or the High Street will be required to do so by turning at the roundabout junction of the A20 and A252 Charing Hill.</p> <p>We have undertaken an assessment of traffic flows in the area, specifically at the Charing Hill roundabout, the results of which have shown a minimal impact on increased flow and congestion.</p> <p>A number of options have been considered when developing a road safety improvement at the crossroads junction. These have included changes to the current junction layout to either a roundabout or full traffic signal control. The roundabout option was discounted due to a lack of available land to construct a roundabout to current design standards. The change to full traffic signal control was also discounted due to the restricted carriageway width on Station Road which would likely result in lengthy delays as large vehicles would not be able to safely pass each other and a lack of suitable forward visibility to a traffic signal head on Station Road.</p>

<p>and used them for both traffic and pedestrians.</p> <p>This will continue to be a dangerous junction and the accidents will continue.</p>	
<p>This seems like change for the sake of change. There are pedestrian crossing lights to the right so if you wanted to make it easier to come out of Station Rd, you could make those lights proper traffic lights.</p>	<p>A change of junction control to full traffic signal control has been considered and discounted due to the restricted carriageway width on Station Road which would likely result in lengthy delays as large vehicles would not be able to safely pass each other and a lack of suitable forward visibility to a traffic signal head on Station Road.</p>
<p>It is a step in the right direction but will not work effectively unless the A20 speed limit is reduced to 30mph. It is known that vehicles travel at well over 40mph through Charing and removing the barriers may well put pedestrians at risk. A more comprehensive plan needs to be put in place.</p>	<p>The current environment and design of the A20 through Charing is not conducive to a speed limit reduction from the current 40MPH limit to 30MPH in line with guidance on setting speed limits issued by the Department for Transport. Current average vehicle speeds on the A20 at the junction have been recorded at 43MPH. Therefore, there are no plans to lower the speed limit in this area as it would be unlikely to see full driver compliance as speed limits need to be self-enforcing.</p>
<p>Firstly, I commend the spirit of this measure; too many have been injured or killed at this junction over the years and one more should be considered 'too many'.</p> <p>Now to the downside...</p> <p>Almost all of my journeys, and of those who live locally, would be to our nearest large town for either shopping, work, travel on train services that are not served by the village station such as HS1, etc, which is Ashford, not Maidstone which this measure would point us towards, so this is a fundamentally mistaken solution that would be a disservice to the community and to its road users.</p> <p>Whilst this may be a cheap and fast solution to accident mitigation, the far greater impact over time would be to those day-to-day activities, and it does not take a psychic to realise that with an unmonitored road junction that allows emergency vehicles to turn right, plenty of road</p>	<p>The left turn only restriction is being proposed as part of a wider package of road safety improvements at the crossroads junction. A number of recent personal injury collisions have been attributed to vehicles turning right out of station Road onto the A20. The prohibition of the right turn movement will address this pattern of personal injury collision.</p> <p>Traffic survey data has been obtained for the A20 through Charing and average speeds were recorded at slightly above the posted speed limit of 40MPH. This data shows that the current speed limit is receiving good driver compliance. Officers have investigated the options for a lower speed limit, in line with the Department for Transport guidance on setting local speed limits, and have assessed the current 40MPH limit to be in line with the recommendations set out by the DfT in circular 01/2013.</p>

<p>users will chance it and turn right at quiet times or if they are running late or if there is a big traffic queue leading to the roundabout.</p> <p>One thing that would not be tackled by this measure is the excess speed exhibited by those on the A20 already, which I feel sure, would be borne out as a leading causal factor in the severity of accidents here in their respective police investigations, something that I would look to investigate and substantiate myself using Fol requests should you ignore objections to this measure.</p> <p>For the few accidents, this measure would also increase miles driven, against any sane decarbonisation measure, and most likely result in traffic queueing back from the roundabout as you just quadrupled the volume approaching it from the east.</p> <p>I suggest you think again and perhaps perform a traffic survey that includes weekends to better understand the need before proposing a solution.</p>	
<p>I do not object to making the exit from Station Road left turn only but I do object to doing it without any means of enforcement or any physical change to the road layout to encourage a left turn only. I suspect there will be drivers who disregard it adding to the likelihood of an accident or some who will turn left and then attempt a U turn. I understand that in the past the exit from the Charing Green development (Tatchell Drive) was left turn only but that this was so widely disregarded that it was changed to enable a right turn. At the least why not place Cameras?</p> <p>More generally I believe the whole passage of the A20 through Charing village needs to be considered in view of all the additional housing, with attendant road junctions, that is coming and that there needs to be a plan to reduce speed to 30mph. I</p>	<p>Enforcement of moving traffic offences is a matter dealt with by the Policing Authority. Whilst Kent County Council make traffic Regulation Orders under its powers as the Highway Authority and with full consultation with the Policing Authority, KCC do not have legal powers of enforcement of moving traffic offences.</p> <p>It is not possible to “engineer” the road layout at the crossroads junction to physically prevent traffic from turning right out of Station Road as any physical measures will then restrict the right turn into Station Road from the A20 for large vehicles.</p>

<p>appreciate that the necessary road changes will cost money but there needs to be a plan first and then funding can be sought.</p> <p>Finally can I point out that the wording in this consultation is confusing. Some of it refers to prohibiting a right turn only and some to making the exit left turn only. There are vehicles that travel straight across into the High Street,</p>	
<p>A "left turn only" out of Station Road is not sufficient. It absolutely needs to be a "no right turn". Restrict the bottom of The High Street by extending the existing island (creating a left turn only onto the A20, or indeed no exit and use Old Ashford Road) to remove all straight across movements so that a "no right turn" can be applied to Station Road and additionally signed on the extended High Street island</p>	<p>A left turn only restriction for traffic exiting Station Road includes the prohibition to turn right onto the A20 eastbound.</p> <p>It is not possible to extend the existing traffic island as this will compromise right turning traffic from the A20 into Station Road</p>
<p>This change is totally unnecessary and not only is it another clear anti-vehicle move but it is it an environmentally unsustainable proposal. The current layout works very well and there are already arrangements in place at that junction that is biased towards the pedestrian in the form of a pedestrian crossing. By forcing traffic unnecessarily to travel a significant extra distance rather than allowing them to continue turning right will increase emissions, fuel consumption and also push additional traffic onto an already busy stretch of road and major roundabout. This is unnecessary and unwanted 'tinkering' and instead of leading to improvements, it will inflict significant detriment on many residents and also motorists. It is about time that the war against motorists was eased off. Virtually everybody uses a vehicle and these constant interferences in the smooth and steady flow of traffic are causing untold inconvenience and anger to motorists and those people who are trying to go about their business in a transport-efficient manner.</p>	<p>This is a necessary highway improvement to address a pattern of right turn personal injury collisions at the crossroads junction.</p>

<p>Firstly there is no need to prevent right turns by vehicles- I have done it many times and it is not any more dangerous than any right turns along the A20 - particularly at this junction as there is an island in the middle and the speed limit is only 40mph. There are many more junctions on the A20 where the speed limit is greater than 40mph and vehicles will be able to turn right.</p>	<p>A high proportion of recorded personal injury collisions at the crossroads junction have been attributed to vehicles exiting Station Road to turn right in an eastbound direction on the A20 who have then come in to collision with traffic already heading eastbound on the A20. By prohibiting the right turn exit from Station Road we expect road safety to be significantly improved at the junction.</p>
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Members can see a copy of responses upon request.

4.0 Corporate Implications

4.1 Financial and VAT

4.1.1 None for Ashford Borough Council.

4.2 Legal

4.2.1 None for Ashford Borough Council.

4.3 Corporate

4.3.1 None for Ashford Borough Council

5.0 Recommendation

5.1 That Members agree to the implementation of the proposed left turn only restriction for traffic exiting Station Road onto the A20 in Charing as part of a wider package of road safety improvement at the crossroads junction for delivery in late Summer 2022.

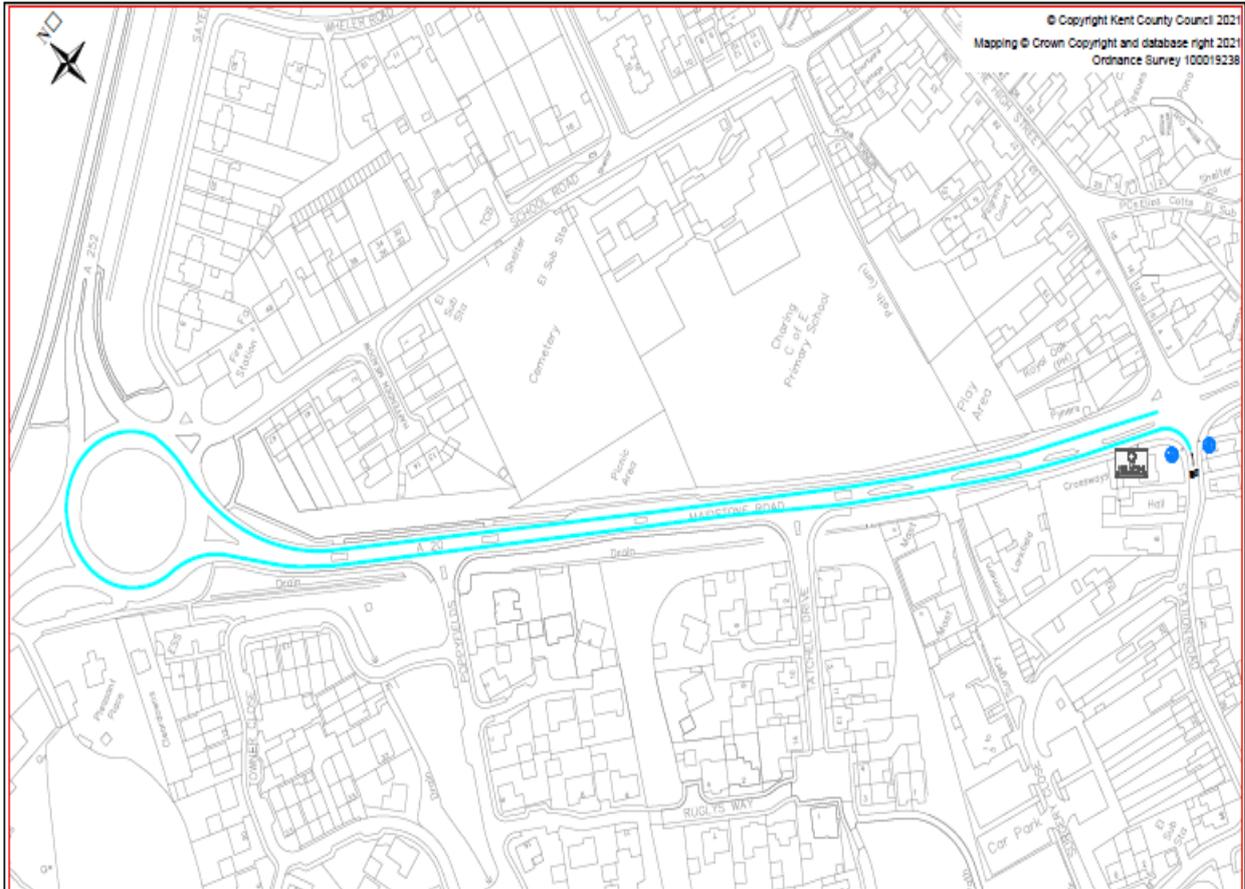
Contact Officer:	Darren Hickman, Schemes Project Manager, Kent County Council, 03000 418181
Reporting to:	Tim Read, Head of Transportation, Kent County Council, 03000 418181

6.0 Referencing

6.1 Department for Transport Circular 01/2013 – Setting local speed limits

6.2 Traffic Signs & General Directions 2016

Appendix A – Proposed left turn only restriction – Station Road junction A20 Maidstone Road/Ashford Road, Charing, Ashford



		<p>Kent County Council Ashford Highway Dept Hemsted Industrial Estate Ashford TN24 8RD Tel: 03000 419191</p>	Project 2122 CRM Scheme Ashford District		This drawing is not to be used in whole or part other than for the intended purpose and project as defined on this drawing. Refer to the contract for full terms and conditions.												
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Appendix B – Proposed changes to existing junction layout – Station Road junction A20 Maidstone Road/Ashford Road, Charing, Ashford

