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**PROPOSED 40 MPH Speed limit reduction, Chart Road and Long Length,  
Ashford**

To: **Ashford Joint Transportation Board – 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021**

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

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Ward: **Kingsnorth, Ashford District**

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**Summary:** **This report gives details of a proposed speed limit reduction to 40 MPH to be implemented on Chart Road and Long Length in Ashford**

**For Recommendation**

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## **1.0 Introduction and Background**

- 1.1 Chart Road and Long Length are situated within the District of Ashford and are single carriageway urban distributor road. The current speed limit on Chart Road and Long Length is National speed limit (60 MPH). The posted speed limit on the roads that link to Chart Road is 30 MPH (the first section of Long Length and Britannia Lane). Pound Lane which links to Chart Road and Britannia Lane is National speed limit (60 MPH).
- 1.2 The section of Chart Road subject to a speed limit reduction to 40 MPH is approximately 200M in length and the section of Long Length is approximately 100M in length.
- 1.3 Speed survey data was obtained prior to the advertising of the Traffic Regulation Order which showed average speeds were 35 MPH. The data gives us confidence that a 40MPH speed limit reduction will achieve good compliance.
- 1.4 The proposed speed limit reductions have received support for their introduction by Kent Police.

## **2.0 The Proposal**

- 2.1 The proposal is to reduce the current speed limit on Chart Road and Long Length from 60 MPH to 40 MPH

### 3.0 Consultation and Traffic Regulation Order

- 3.1 The advert for the Traffic Regulation Order was placed in the Kent Messenger on the 8<sup>th</sup> October 2021 with a closing date for comments on the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2021.
- 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 24 responses were received as a result of the consultation. These are summarised as follows:

Support	18	75%
Object	6	25%

- 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
Those that speed will continue to speed and who's going to enforce it? There are insufficient resources at Kent Police to deal with issues at present	We have undertaken a traffic survey and the average speed of traffic during the week long survey was identified at 35MPH. This gives us confidence that a reduction in speed limit to 40 MPH will have good compliance and will require minimal enforcement by Kent Police.
This has to be the flimsiest of excuses for reducing speed limits yet submitted as it could be applied equally to any road in the county or the UK. It will also be largely unenforcable and, as a result, like most other roads in Kent with pointless speed limits, will be largely ignored. Kent Highways occasionally run an advertising campaign insisting that the limit isn't a target. Sadly, imposing these pointless limits means that they become targets. In turn that reduces driver competency because they are no longer required to read the road and judge the safe speed for themselves. The result of that is that drivers will "go for it" when they see that rare derestriction sign and assume it is safe. As a result, Kent's roads are becoming more, not less, dangerous. In taking this action Kent Highways has become the problem rather than the solution.	We have undertaken a traffic survey and the average speed of traffic during the week long survey was identified at 35MPH. This gives us confidence that a reduction in speed limit to 40 MPH will have good compliance and will require minimal enforcement by Kent Police.  Speed limit reduction is an important tool in Kent County Council's aspirations for a vision zero policy of no road deaths on the County's road network by the year 2050.
Existing speed limits are appropriate.	The current speed limit is not appropriate for the local environment. Chart Road and Long

	Length link two areas of dense urban population where there is a high number of walkers and cyclists.
I think the existing speed limits meet all the requirements of the local people and motorists.	The current speed limit is not appropriate for the local environment. Chart Road and Long Length link two areas of dense urban population where there is a high number of walkers and cyclists.
I believe the roads should be reduced to 40 miles per hour however currently the order states that only 10 metres of Pound Lane will be affected. This will only cover the entrance to around three properties. In order for the families of Pound Lane to also be protected by this order via the reduction of speed of cars, I feel the whole length should be included in the order. There are many families with young children living in the section beyond what the order states who walk them to local nurseries and schools without a pathway available. There is also a public pathway crossing that poses a threat due the speed of cars and the blind corner nearby. With this in mind as previously stated I would be in favour of this order if it was extended to include the entire of Pound Lane.	Pound Lane is not currently being considered for a speed limit reduction. This road has a good record of road safety. We will continue to monitor road safety in this area as part of our annual casualty reduction strategy.
<p>I find it baffling that the general consensus is to only include 10 metres of poundlane. You justify the changes for the following reasons;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-for avoiding danger to persons or other traffic using the road or any other road or for preventing the likelihood of any such danger arising</li> <li>-for preserving or improving the amenities of the area through which the road runs</li> </ul> <p>On the first point, there are numerous families along Poundlane that have children around the age of five or lower who do not have any kind of pathway to walk on when taking their children to the local amenities. Coupled with the blind curves and the fact that this one road will be sandwiched between two 40mph zones, surely it makes sense to extend the speed limit along the length of poundlane as well? Otherwise this only serves to encourage speeding along this</p>	Pound Lane is not currently being considered for a speed limit reduction. This road has a good record of road safety. We will continue to monitor road safety in this area as part of our annual casualty reduction strategy.

<p>particular lane; we have already seen drivers going as fast as 60/70 mph, only narrowly avoiding accidents while we are backing out of our drives or readying our children for a walk. Its ludicrous, and it shows a callous disregard for the children who live here.</p> <p>To the second point, Poundlane is often host to large vehicles that have to access Keaveney Plant Hire, and drivers who are allowed to travel the length of the road at 60+ mph run the risk of collision with these bigger, slower vehicles. There is also the soft play and nursery on Britannia lane, of which many of the children on Poundlane attend. By not extending the speed limit the length of Poundlane, these children are at risk.</p> <p>I am in favour of a local speed limit and would even venture that 30mph is acceptable, but it must extend to all the roads, Poundlane included and perhaps even more so; we have no streetlights, no pathways, (yet there are crossing points installed?) and we adjoin to many residential areas. To not extend the 40mph limit the length of the lane is to encourage selfish driving that endangers our children and pets, and that is unacceptable.</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(s)**

- 5.1 That Members agree to the implementation of the proposed speed limit reduction on Chart Road and Long Length, Ashford

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 Traffic Signs & General Directions 2016

## Appendix A – Proposed speed limit reduction for Chart Road and Long Length Ashford

