

The Highways Group met on 8th September and further to the August report from the meeting with KCC Highways Community Engagement Officer, the following is still on track;

- ✓ 2 traffic surveys for Maidstone Road (Danaway) will be carried out W/C 11th September for a period of 7 days.
- ✓ The Assistant Project Manager – Major Capital Programme Team at KCC, has contacted the Clerk to arrange a meeting with the Highways Group regarding the Key Street roundabout junction improvement scheme, to discuss Borden's questions/concerns and update the Parish Council on the programme and delivery of the scheme. This meeting will likely be held from the end of September and reported on in our October report.
- ✓ KCC Highway's on-site visit to Borden is planned for 7th September, and we have sent a list of things for them to particularly look out for on their tour of Borden, as shown below.

1. The poor condition of road markings throughout the parish.
2. The condition of the road, absence of footways, inappropriate speed limit and parking in Bannister Hill. High speeds and no footways in populated areas of Wrens Road.
3. Obstructive pavement parking and high speeds in Borden Lane and The Street,
4. Poor safety, high traffic volume, and inappropriate speeds in School Lane during School hours.
NB The pre-school lies beneath a steep bank on the bend opposite the primary school. The edge of the road is marked by partially obscured wooden bollards. There is an adverse camber at this location so anything travelling downhill from Borden could lose the road on the corner and land on the pre-school. Heavy vehicles could overturn and that has already happened to an agricultural trailer on the junction. The wooden bollards need to be replaced by an Armco barrier and the speed limit reduced to 20 mph to reduce the high risk of injury to preschool children.
5. The lack of pavement width through Chestnut Street and the broken flashing sign when approaching from Danaway. Frequent use by over-width vehicles.
6. Absence of signs warning drivers they are about to enter a built-up area and occasional very fast driving in Danaway.
7. Absence of formal road signs at the new junction between Maidstone Road and Oad Street.
8. Design of signage and traffic calming in Oad Street. The chicanes are no obstacle to SUVs and 4WD pickups so are ignored. They are however dangerous to cyclists since they are pushed onto uneven, slippery cobbles by oncoming traffic.
9. Absence of footways in a populated area with many footpaths and bridleways.
10. Uneven road surface in Hearts Delight and used as a Sittingbourne -Tunstall - Oad street rat run by traffic avoiding the A2. Tunstall has extensive traffic calming and low-speed limits, where are the equivalent in Borden Parish?
11. Opportunities for joint working with NH and BPC to enable safe active travel, particularly on Oad Street, Maidstone Road and Borden Lane to facilitate meeting National, County and local policies. (Vision Zero, KCC Active Travel Strategy, NH designated funds - " Building new infrastructure and enhancing existing facilities to encourage sustainable, non-motorised forms of transport"

KCC has advised that Items highlighted in yellow in the above list under items 1, 2, 5, and 10 are maintenance issues and should go through their Operations Team, which we have done in previous years but that the condition of the road surface, signs painted on the road and the speed indicator sign have not been improved, however, they will still look at them on their Borden tour. These can also be reported online by anyone at [Report a problem on a road or pavement - Kent County Council](#).

There is also little they can do regarding vehicles causing obstruction as KCC has no enforcement powers and this would be a Police matter.

On 16th August, Councillor Bolas cycled around Borden with the Swale Active Travel Officer, so that he could familiarise himself with the highway situation in Borden. Starting at the Tudor Rose, School Lane, Borden Street and Lane to Adelaide Drive, return to Bannister Hill, Wrens Road, Sutton Barron Road, Oad Street, Maidstone Road back to the Tudor Rose. From this, the Active Travel Officer has produced a document of his findings (see appendix A)

The Borden HIP has been updated and shared with Full Council for review, if there are any questions or queries regarding this can Councillors please make the Highways Group aware, as this will be published on the Borden website at <https://www.bordenparishcouncil.gov.uk/> after the September Parish Council meeting.

The Clerk contacted the school regarding the flashing lights, and they responded to say that they were not aware of these.

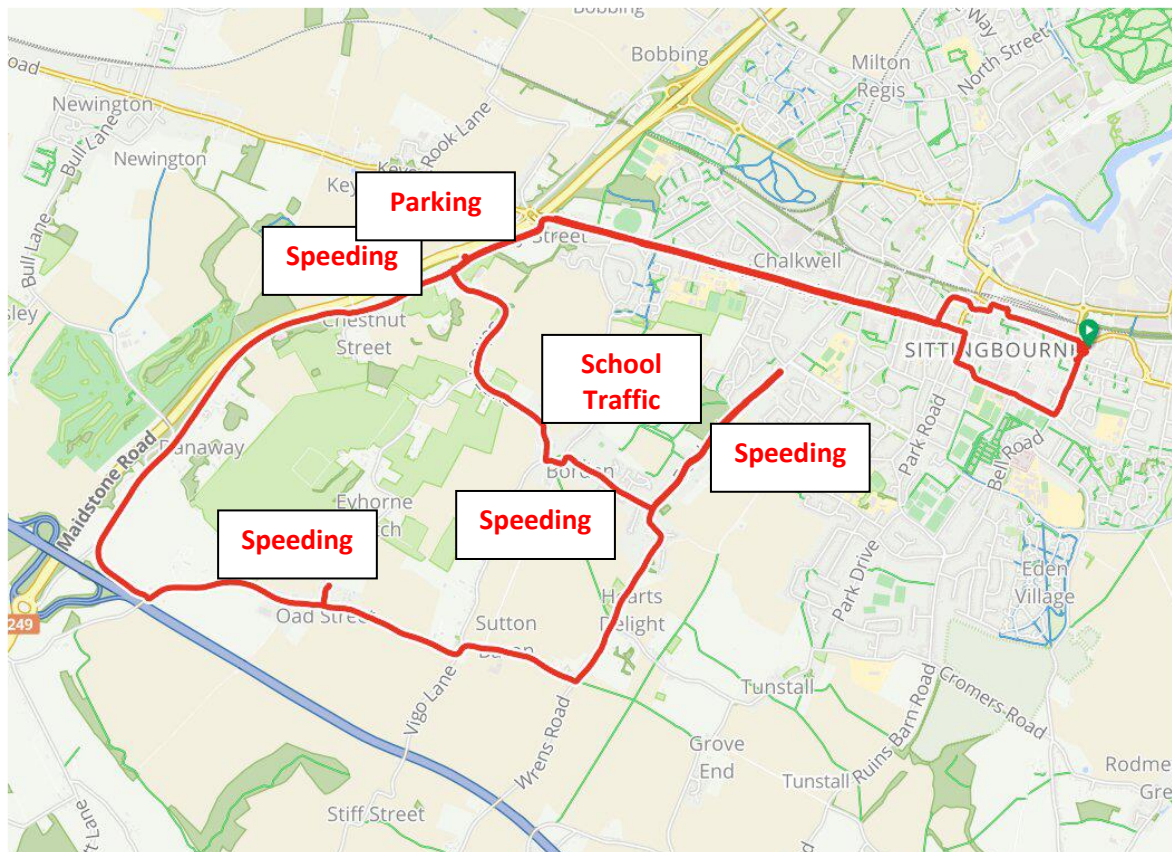
As per the July parish council item ... the Clerk on 11th September has put a message out to residents to ask them how they have been affected by the stopping of the bus service through Borden, any responses received will be brought to a subsequent meeting to discuss if further action is required by the Parish Council.

An email has been received from DHA regarding Highway Improvement Plans (HIPs), which has been sent to all Cllrs, titled 'Supporting Parish Councils', which offers support in preparing Parish Council HIPs. The Highways Group would ask that this item be brought back to a future meeting to be discussed by the parish council once we have sight of the KCC Highways report.

APPENDIX A

Borden Highways Issues Review

This is a brief note following a ride around the parish of Borden with the Chairman of the Parish Council, to look at various traffic situations and gain a better understanding of the problems being faced by residents and businesses. The route taken is highlighted in red below.



Background

The Borden area has suffered from a significant volume of inappropriate traffic using the rural lanes, at speed, to enable drivers to avoid perceived delays on the A2 and A249. This has been exacerbated by National Highways' ongoing work on Junction 5 of the M2. This has meant that rural settlements such as Oad Street, Chestnut Street, Danaway and Borden have been blighted by traffic.

Consequences

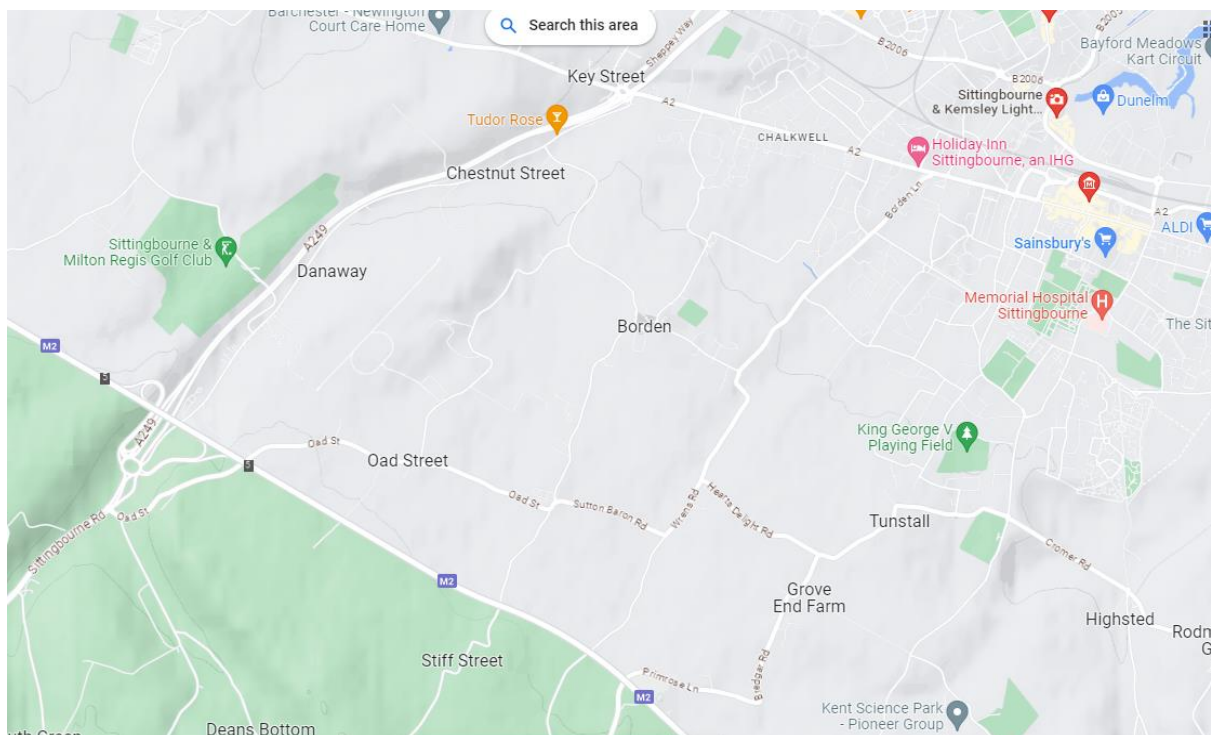
Large volumes of speeding traffic on rural lanes across Borden has multiple impacts:

- Danger - Unlike roads designed for significant traffic volumes at speed, these rural lanes do not generally have footways and when they do, they are rarely continuous.
- Harming and reducing vulnerable road users – These rural lanes are utilised by a wider range of users, walkers, mobility aid users, cyclists and equestrians. All of whom are now prioritised above motorists in the Highway Code. A fact that is currently not reflected in Highways spending, design or usage.

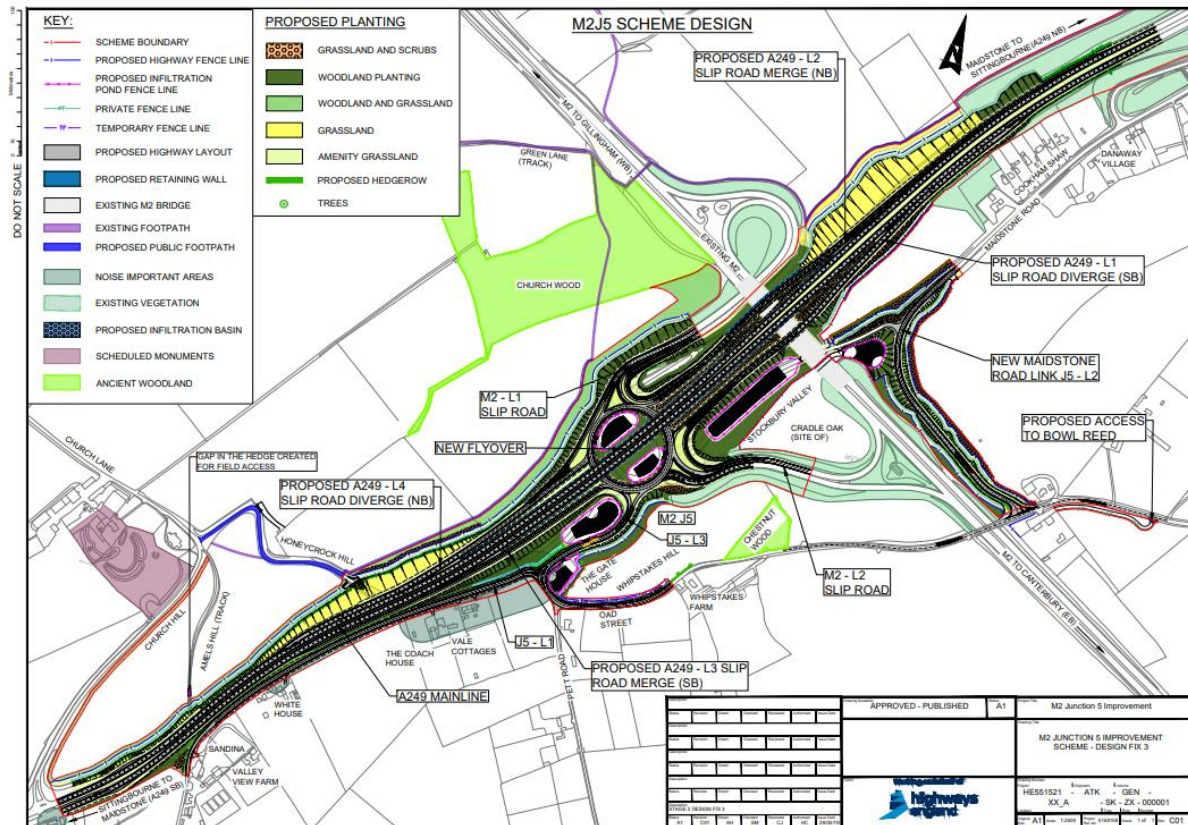
- Speeding – Most of the rural lanes in Borden are “unrestricted”, giving drivers a green light to drive at whatever speed they feel appropriate – which is often inappropriate.
- Fear – living in a rural environment should not be fearful, but this traffic induces fear
- Farm Operations Interference - For farms, and there are several in this area, rural lanes are operational environments, faster higher volumes of traffic impede their work.
- Infrastructure Damage - More damage to rural lanes due to increased weight as well as speed of vehicles leading to increased degradation of road surfaces and undermining road margins and verges
- Noise - The increased noise, especially at speed, impacts residents’ mental health
- Property damage – as many properties are close to rural lanes, often right on the roadside – which was fine when the passing traffic was originally the occasional horse and cart – not a 36 tonne truck or 2.5 tonne SUV.
- Ecological damage – air pollution, noise pollution, run off pollution, as well as physical harm to flora and fauna
- Economic damage – we should be celebrating the glorious countryside of the Borden area, opening it up to nearby urban residents and visitors from further afield. This cannot be fully realised whilst inappropriate traffic dominates the landscape, suppressing the visitor economy.

Current and Future Road Layout

Below is the current road layout across Borden. Works are being undertaken at Junction 5 of the M2 and are planned at Key Street roundabout and the Wisers Lane development includes a new road and a roundabout on Chestnut Street (diagrams below). Despite this large amount of concentrated Highways work, no study has been commissioned on the cumulative impact of these improvements on the rural road network and the residents & businesses of Borden. It is obviously hoped that all these junction improvements will make life better for the rural residents. However, because the research has not been undertaken, despite the vast sums of public money required to undertake them, we simply don't know. On the face of it, without further rural road traffic management, it

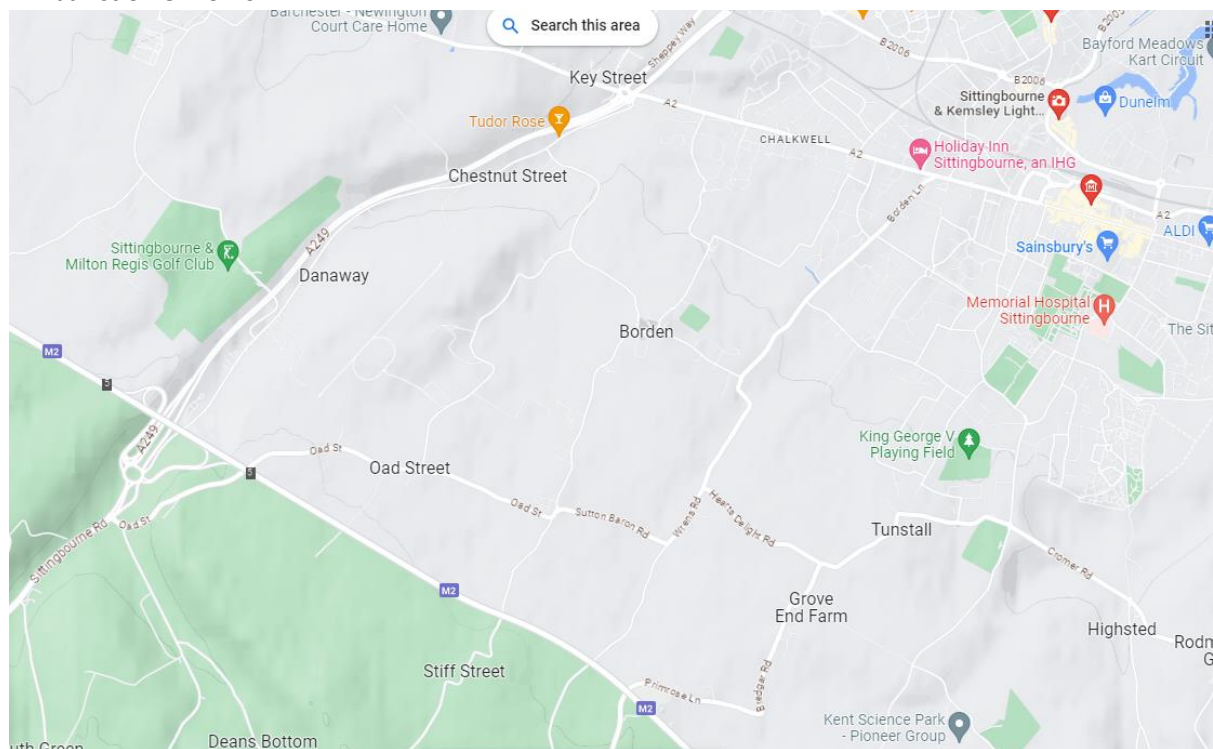


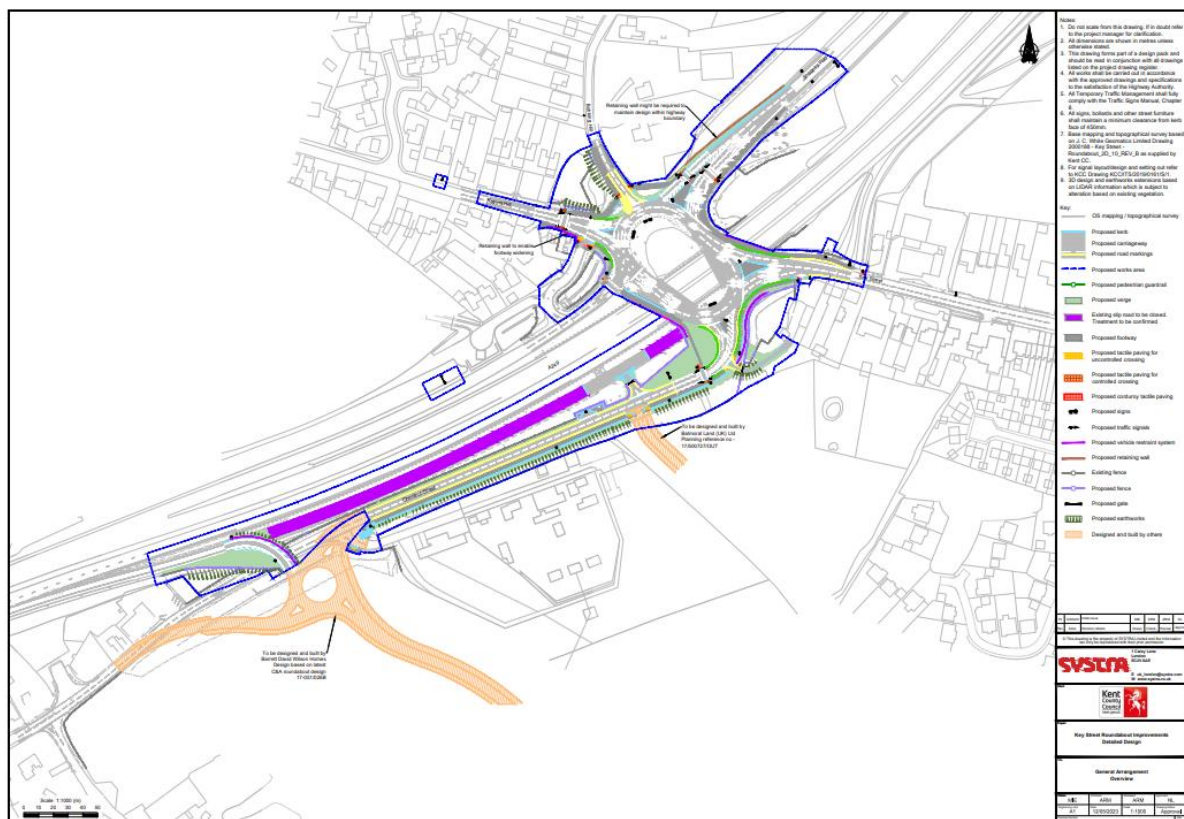
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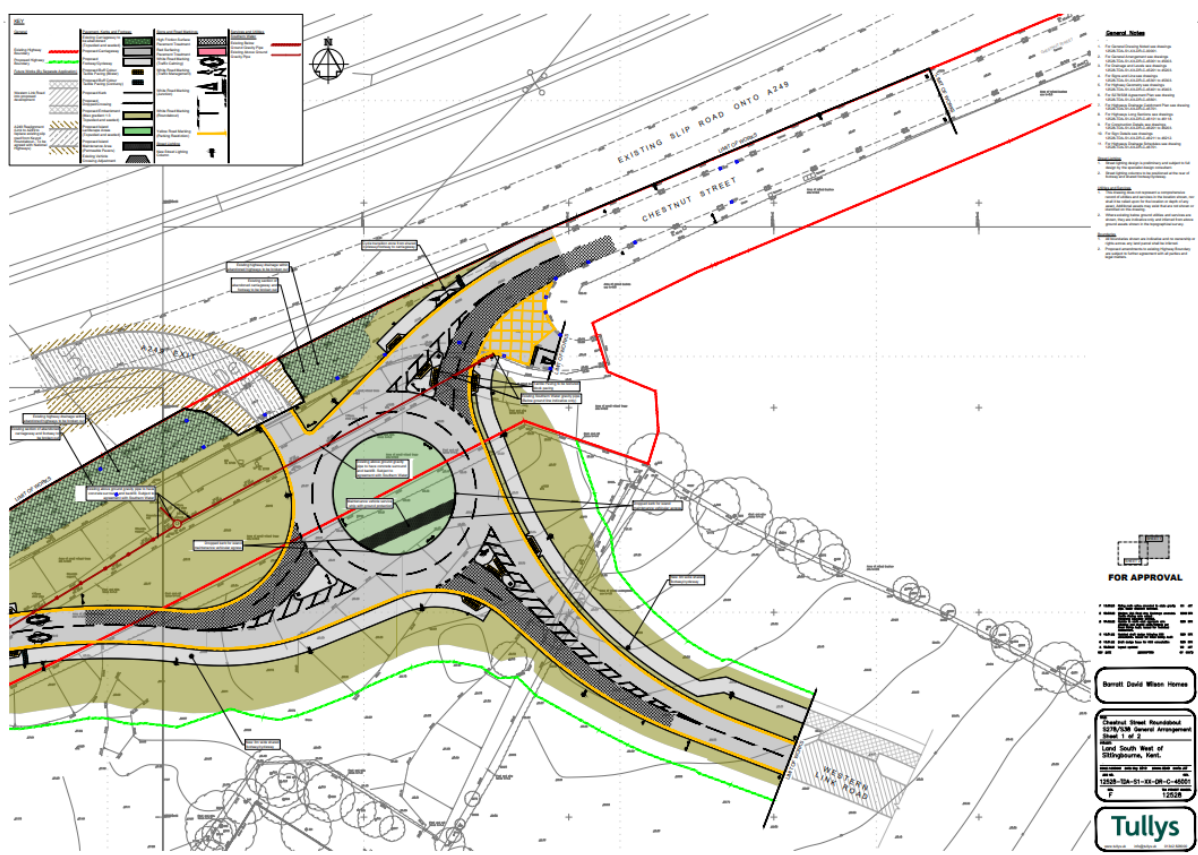


appears that the strategic highways improvements will make utilising the rural lane network more attractive, further increasing the flow of motorised traffic Northeast & Southwest.

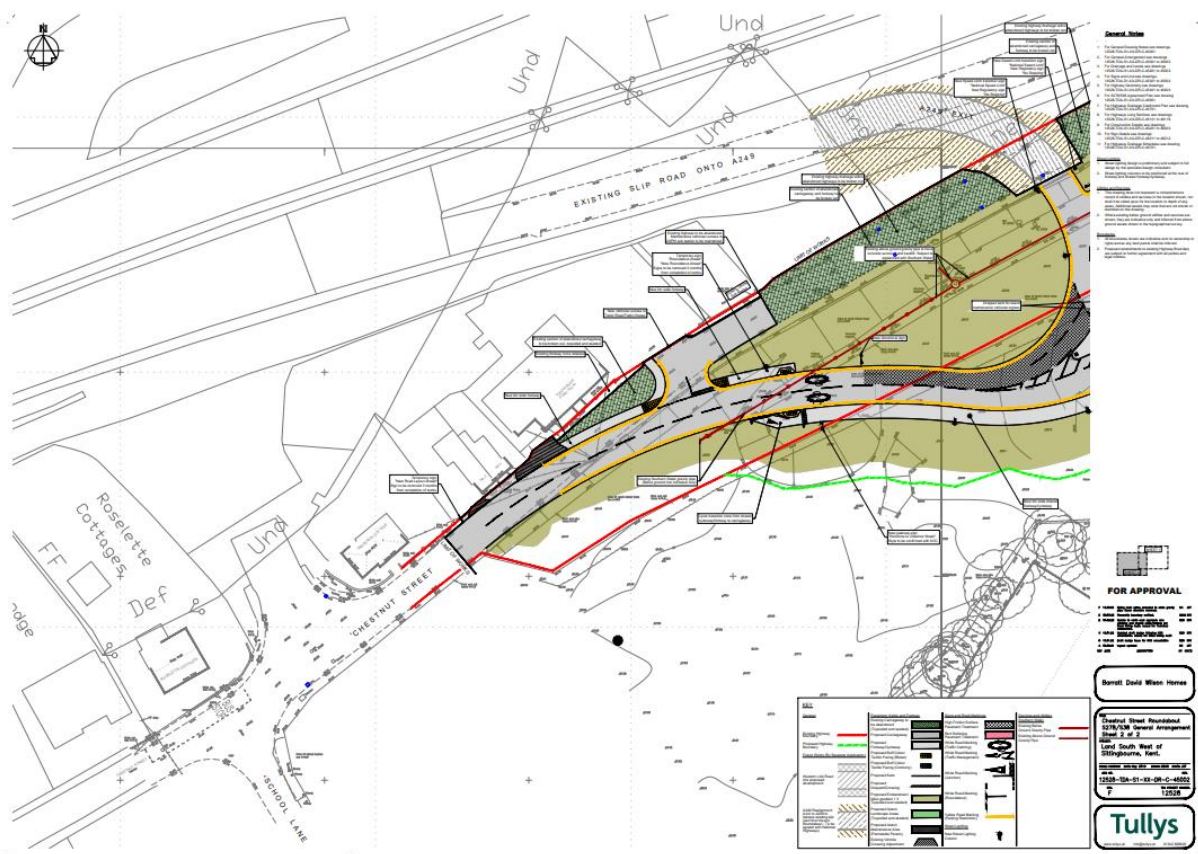
M2 Junction 5 works

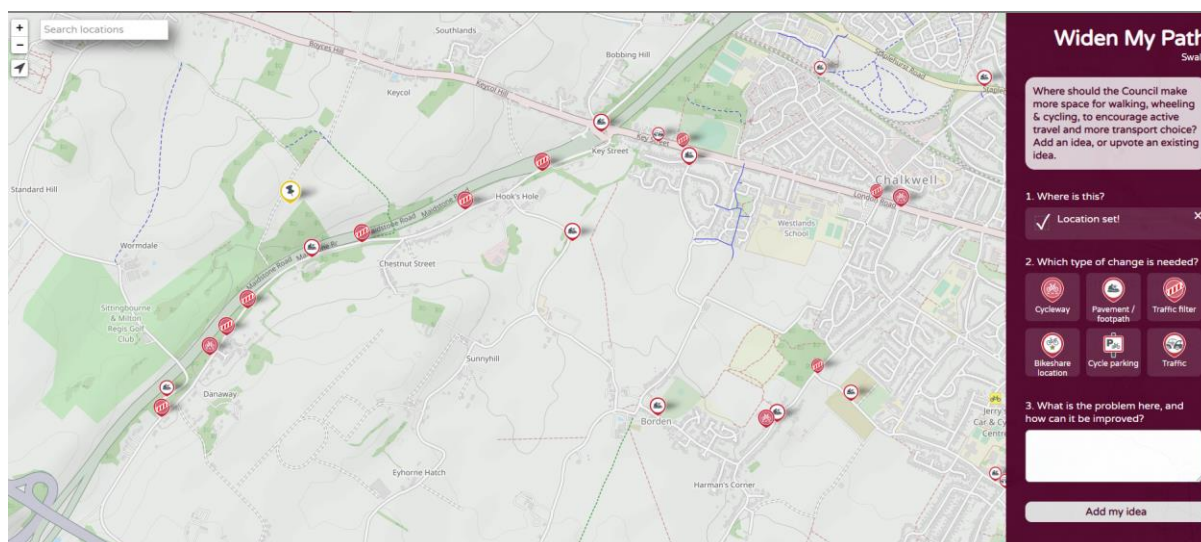






Widen My Path/Swale





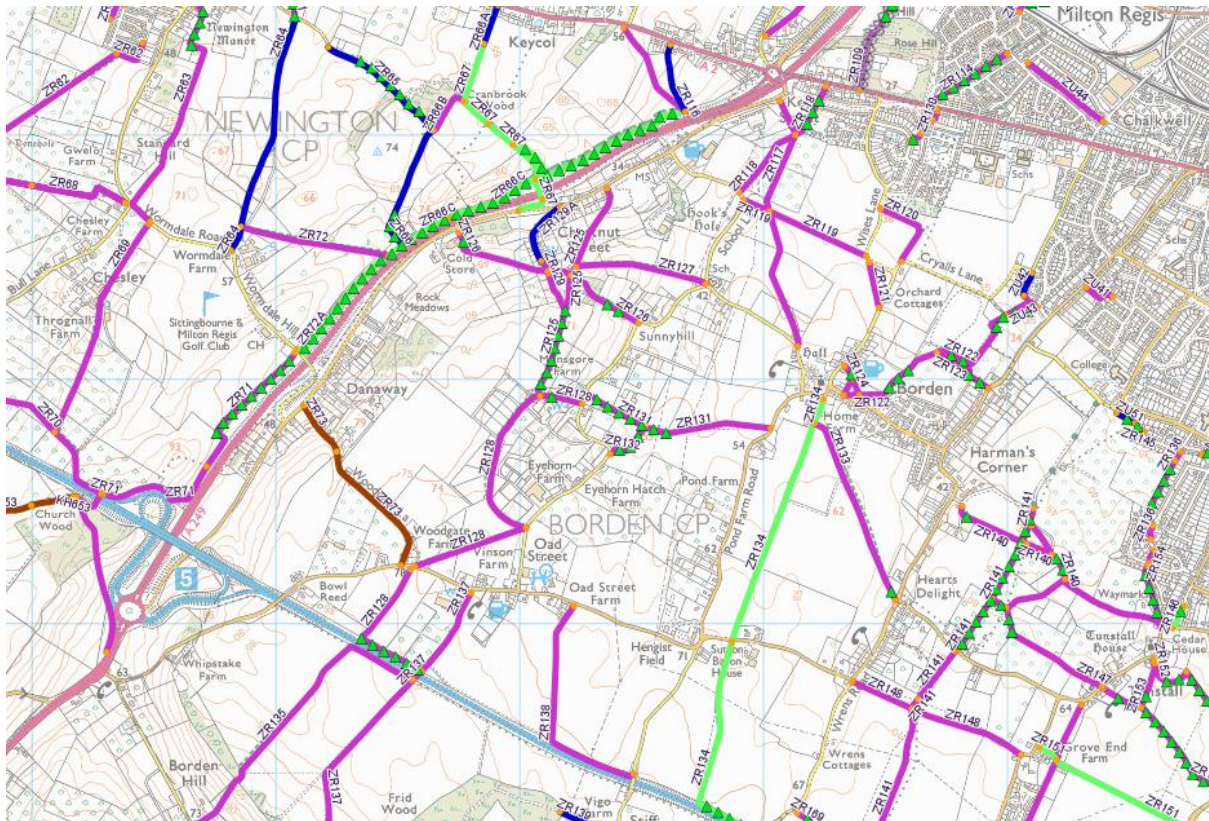
Since summer 2022 we have been collecting comments on www.widenmypath.com/swale on where residents think the Council should make more space for walking, wheeling & cycling, to encourage active travel and more transport choice. Below are the comments specifically relating to the Borden area.

Comment	Category	Likes
Speed of traffic through narrower part of Borden Lane in the village needs reducing. Speeds frequently exceed 30 mph.	Closure	0
Wide road with space for cyclepath. Rat run with ignored 30 mph limit. Main route to station and town centre.	cycleways	7
Narrow pavements on upper end of Borden Lane, fast moving traffic a danger	track	8
Traffic calming needed. Can't slow down to pull onto my driveway (southbound) without people overtaking me heading towards the junction of Wormdale/Maidstone at speed.	closure	7
Crossing needed to allow safe access to park and the Maypole.	track	7
Nowhere for pedestrians to shelter safely from passing traffic. This route is used by many including the elderly, parents with prams/buggies and school children daily. There is no pavement.	track	2
Foliage needs cutting back, footpath is becoming very narrow.	track	4
Poor visibility when accessing Borden Lane from Riddles owing to parked cars	closure	1
Road usually has a 50 mph speed limit which is too high. Current 30 mph widely ignored. Site of several accidents. Main cycle route to get to Maidstone or Newington to avoid main A249.	cycleways	9
Speeding and rat running which makes it very dangerous. Our car was hit parked on Maidstone Road by a speeding driver.	closure	9
This is a rat run and leads to a primary school. Speeds are too high, traffic volume too high. Pavements disappear and pedestrians need to cross the road several times to access the school.	closure	8
No pavement! Near primary school	track	9

Public Rights of Way Network

The Borden area is quite well served by the PROW network. There are potentially some useful everyday trip routes such as:

- Hearts Delight-Borden (ZR133/ZR134) – 15-minute walk
- Chestnut Street-Borden Primary School (ZR125/ZR127) – 10-minute walk
- Danaway-Oad Street (ZR73) – 15-20 minute walk
- Borden-Westlands School (ZR122/ZU43/ZU42) – 25 minute walk



Questions that need answers

1. What traffic management is being put in place to deter traffic from using Chestnut Street and the Maidstone Road? Weight limits? Access Only? Speed Limits?
2. Why is the proposed cycling provision on Chestnut Street and the new Western Link Road shared use?
3. Why are cycle tracks/footways not continuous at junctions, giving priority to vulnerable road users?
4. How do cyclists from the Borden area (and Sittingbourne) cross the Key Street roundabout towards Rainham and Bobbing and vice-versa?
5. Some effort has been made to provide pedestrian facilities at the new Key Street roundabout, but what origin and destination points are within walking distance of the roundabout? Particularly when the footways are taking such a convoluted route?
6. Why do cyclists get directed onto the slip road north of the proposed Chestnut Street roundabout?
7. Where do transport planners believe the Western Link Road cycle path is taking riders, what network connections are envisaged?
8. How is traffic going to be managed to deter it from utilising J5-L3 to and from Sittingbourne and the Science Park through inappropriate rural lanes?

9. What interventions can be utilised to successfully implement a 20mph limit through Borden and Oad Street?
10. What additional interventions are being planned along Chestnut Street to ensure compliance with the 30mph speed limit?
11. Would KCC support a School Street at Borden Primary School?
12. Have any of the team behind the new major works read section 14.4 of LTN1/20 or any part of LTN1/20?
13. What plans are in place to improve traffic flows and therefore drivers' perceptions, on the A2? Parking restrictions? System traffic light management? Junction improvements /reductions? Traffic reduction measures?
14. Has anyone commissioned a study of the cumulative impact of these major Highways improvements on the wider road network? Does anyone understand the impact on traffic flows beyond the A249 and the M2? Or are we going to be stuck with another B2006-St. Paul's scenario?
15. What analysis has been undertaken to understand the level of risk to future Highways funding for providing inadequate active travel facilities with major highways improvements?
16. What improvements can be made to the PROW network to make it a viable option for everyday trips?