

Introduction

The A262 High Street and the A274 North Street are the main routes through the village of Biddenden. The village green is situated between the two A roads in the centre of the village. Traffic at this location can be heavy in peak periods and it can prove difficult for pedestrians to access the green or cross the High Street.

Kent County Council (KCC) put forward a proposal to make alterations to the existing road layout and install a T-junction which included changing a section of Tenterden Road from carriageway into an extension of the existing green.

This design meant there would be one entry and exit from the High Street onto the A274, reducing the time pedestrians are in the road when crossing. The reconfiguration of the junction would also reduce the speed of vehicles when turning in.

The proposed scheme included:

- Removing the existing traffic regulation orders for no entry and waiting restrictions
- Converting a small section of carriageway on Tenterden Road to village green
- Installation of a new drainage system
- Installation of new parking bays
- Adjusting a section of the existing village green to allow for the required turning circle for the new T-junction
- Removal and replacement of the existing tree on the village green
- Provision of a new landscaped area
- Relocation of the existing school warning sign in line with the new road layout

Who have we consulted with and how?

The public consultation ran from 11th June to 9th July 2018.

The consultation included a number of elements as follows:

- Publication of the proposals on the KCC Consultation website along with a questionnaire for people to provide feedback
- Leaflet drop to all properties (residential and businesses) situated close to the proposed scheme
- Direct email to a list of stakeholders
- Direct email to Parish Councils, County Members and District Councillors
- Public exhibitions were held on Tuesday 12th June and Tuesday 26th June between 3pm and 7:30pm

Consultation Feedback

121 people and organisations responded to the consultation online or by paper questionnaire. Of these, 109 were residents and the other responses comprised of Parish/District or County Councillors, a charity, a business owner and a representative of the local community and one other response.

The public exhibitions were well attended by residents and members of the local community.

64% of those who responded either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the proposal (77). This compares with 32% of respondents (38) that either agreed or strongly agreed with the proposals and 4% (5) that neither agreed nor disagreed.

Of the 64% of respondents who 'tended to disagree' or 'strongly disagreed' their key areas of concern were:

- It would increase traffic
- Cause congestion
- Make it harder for pedestrians to cross
- Potentially impact access to local businesses and parking
- It would change the way the village looks
- Increase speeding or not reduce speeding
- Would not represent good value for money

Comments in support of the changes included;

- Improved sight lines onto the A274
- It would make it easier to turn right and for large vehicles to negotiate the turning
- T junction will stop competitiveness where the road divides into two at present.
- The proposal will make the junction much safer
- The village green will be expanded
- Would make it easier for pedestrians to cross

Other suggestions made were;

- Make it one way
- Implement a pedestrian crossing
- Put a stop sign in at the junction
- Put in traffic calming measures
- Install traffic lights or a roundabout.

Equality Analysis

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was carried out as part of the development of our proposals. The EqIA provides a process to help us to understand how the proposals may affect people based on the protected characteristics.

The EqIA was available as one of the consultation documents and was used to help shape the consultation process.

Analysis of the questionnaire has been undertaken to identify any other issues raised, however there were no additional impacts highlighted that had not yet been identified in the EqIA.

Next Steps

All consultation responses have been collated, reviewed and considered. The Schemes Programme Manager, Schemes Planning & Delivery Manager, the local County Council Member, Mike Hill and Parish Council representatives have met. Due to the majority of comments being opposed to the scheme we will not be pursuing the scheme as consulted. The Schemes Planning and Delivery Team will work with the local community with a view to redesigning a scheme that meets the agreed objectives and has more support.