



Hearing Statement from Pembury Parish Council for Local Plan Examination Stage 3 Hearings

28 June 2024

Matter 7 – Issue 1 – Strategic and Local Road Networks – Q2 and Q3.

Pembury Parish Council (PPC) endorses the comments made by Brenchley and Matfield Parish Council in their letter of 12 January 2023 (Appendix 1) about the latest plan for the Kippings Cross Roundabout on the A21.

We also have concerns that the proposal to narrow the B2160 down to one lane of traffic entering the roundabout onto the A21 will increase traffic on the A228. This will also have a detrimental impact on roads serving Pembury village either by an increase in the traffic travelling through the village at peak times and/or the increase in traffic entering the Pembury Road travelling towards Tunbridge Wells, making access from and egress to the village even more difficult than it is at the present time.

We understand from a meeting between National Highways (NH) and Horsmonden Parish Council in February 2023 that NH were also "not comfortable with the proposed scheme" citing the impact on safety and traffic flows on both the A21 and B2160 as the main issues of concern. With the permission of Horsmonden Parish Council we attach a copy of the letter from Duncan Smith, Executive Director of Operations, NH which highlights these concerns (Appendix 2).

Duncan Smith confirmed "we were not comfortable with the proposed scheme submitted to mitigate the impact of the Local Plan and that any alternative scheme proposed must not be detrimental to the SRN. It seems that the only alternative that would maintain safety and traffic flows on both the A21 and B2160 would be to convert the roundabout to signals but doing that we would also need to consider the impact on the Blue Boys Services roundabout and the wider Kipping's Cross area."

PPC would also like to submit the findings of the A21 rat run residents' group – report prepared by Ruth Alston attached (Appendix 3). The narrow rural lanes are currently dangerous to all users including cyclists, walkers and horse riders. The proposal to

narrow the B2160 will exacerbate the existing rat running that occurs on the rural lanes in Pembury, particularly Kings Toll Road, Romford Road and Woodside Road.

PPC are a keen supporter of the Kent County Council (KCC) Infrastructure First Policy detailed as "Priority 2 Infrastructure for Communities" in the 'Framing Kent's Future Our Council Strategy 2022-2026' (copy attached – Appendix 4). However, this strategic policy appears to be in conflict with an Advisory Report prepared by David Brazier Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport KCC and submitted for noting to the TWBC Joint Transportation Board (JTB) on 17th April 2023. This report, Agenda Item 4 pages 7-9, is attached for reference (Appendix 5).

The JTB report covers the subject of KCC's involvement in the highway aspects of planning applications. The key subject areas of the report highlighted in **RED** are relevant to the Kippings Cross highway issue and in PPC's opinion helps to explain why an impasse appears to have been reached in agreeing a 'common ground' solution on the Kippings Cross subject.

The KCC Highways response to the Kippings Cross Roundabout matter in planning terms appears to be that "it is not the position of the Highway Authority to come up with better ideas, suggest alterations or to attempt to change the mindset of a developer who has presented a workable solution whether or not that solution is popular with local residents and businesses."

Rather than pursuing alternative solutions the JTB report appears to confirm that KCC Highways "... are **NOT** now looking to amend the network to accommodate more cars. Instead, they are looking to see how people could travel more sustainably from new development sites and are asking developers to provide the infrastructure to make this happen". This contradicts the NH alternative solution approach as defined in Duncan Smith's response as well as KCC's own strategic objectives as set out in the 'Framing Kent's Future Our Council Strategy 2022-2026' document. Equally as important local residents do **NOT** want to be at the mercy of more sustainable travel options to deal with the ongoing congestion issues at this major hotspot which will only get worse as more development schemes are granted planning permission and transport budgets become more constrained.

PPC also notes the results, conclusions and recommendations of the latest Strategic Transport Assessment – Modelling Appraisal (Appendix 6) completed by SWECO. The body of the report relevant to the Kippings Cross junction issue confirms:

1. The addition of the Local Plan development on the highway network, without mitigation, is forecast to have a **significant impact** on this major hotspot location.
2. The analysis identifies the need for **additional local highway improvements** at Kippings Cross Roundabout (Junction 35) to increase capacity beyond what is currently provided, and
3. The results from the LPMS scenario show that delivering sustainable transport schemes with high levels of modal shift can contribute to bringing about the congestion relief required.

It is again of concern to PPC that the various mitigations options evaluated are either unlikely to resolve the capacity issues at this junction or have not been acceptable to key stakeholders for various reasons including the need for ongoing funding. We therefore await the outcome of the Stantec study of junctions on the Pembury Road corridor to determine whether capacity can be increased along this corridor to enable traffic to be rerouted away from the Kippings Cross Roundabout hotspot.

Helen Munro

Clerk

For and on behalf of Pembury Parish Council