



Kent County Council Keep Maidstone Moving Consultation Written Report

Prepared by Lake Market Research for Kent County Council

June 2020



"This report complies to ISO 20252 and any other relevant codes of conduct."

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RESEARCH CONTEXT

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Kent County Council (KCC), as a Highway Authority, has a responsibility for transport planning to ensure the appropriate road networks are in place to support growing communities. KCC's Local Transport Plan 4: Delivering Growth without Gridlock (2016-2031) sets out how KCC will work towards their transport vision over the coming years. One of the plan's key aspirations is:

'To deliver safe and effective transport, ensuring that all Kent's communities and businesses benefit, the environment is enhanced, and economic growth is supported.'

The Maidstone Integrated Transport Package is a package of schemes intended to reduce traffic congestion in the Maidstone area. These schemes have reached a stage where they could potentially be delivered within the next few years. As such, KCC outlined each proposed scheme in the form of a consultation document to obtain feedback before the designs are finalised.

CONSULTATION PROCESS AND ACTIVITIES

On the 29th January 2020 a six-week consultation was launched and ran until the 11th March. The consultation provided the opportunity for residents and other stakeholders to:

- see more detailed information on the proposals being put forward at each site, either via the consultation document as well as a number of consultation events;
- consider the layout, designs and facilities being proposed and their impacts and benefits;
- feedback on the proposals being presented.

The proposals presented in the consultation were:

1. A20 Coldharbour Roundabout
2. A229 Loose Road: Armstrong Road / Park Way
3. A229 Loose Road: Wheatsheaf junction
4. A229 Loose Road: Cripple Street / Boughton Lane
5. A20 Ashford Road junction with Willington Street
6. A274 Sutton Road junction with Willington Street

Consultees were asked to provide feedback on their agreement with the proposals outlined for each of those listed above and were given the opportunity to provide comments in their own words for each proposal.

As well as residents of Maidstone, the surrounding area and individuals who travel in and out of Maidstone regularly, the consultation also received feedback from:

- North Loose Residents Association
- Maidstone Action Group for Infrastructure Change

- PRPF Communications Limited
- Apollo Private Hire Ltd
- Nu Venture Coaches
- CPRE, the Countryside Charity Kent
- Bearsted & Thurnham Society

The proposals were presented at three face to face events via presentations and scheme plans detailed below. The events provided the opportunity to ask the team questions and to discuss the proposals in more detail.

- Saturday 8 February at The Tudor Park Marriott Hotel from 10am to 1pm
- Wednesday 12 February at The Village Hotel from 5:30pm to 8:30pm
- Monday 17 February at Sessions House from 1pm to 7pm

218 people attended the consultation events, there were 8,395 visits to KCC's website, and the consultation material was downloaded 14,279 times.

Feedback was captured via a consultation questionnaire which was available on the KCC website and in hard copy at the consultation events and libraries and via comment cards at the events.

A consultation stage Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was carried out to assess the impact these proposals could have on those with protected characteristics (race, age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, religion or belief and carer's responsibilities). The EqIA was available as one of the consultation documents and the questionnaire invited respondents to comment on the assessment that had been carried out. The responses to the consultation will be used to review and update the EqIA, which will be considered along with the consultation responses before any final decision is made on any proposals.

CONSULTATION PROMOTION

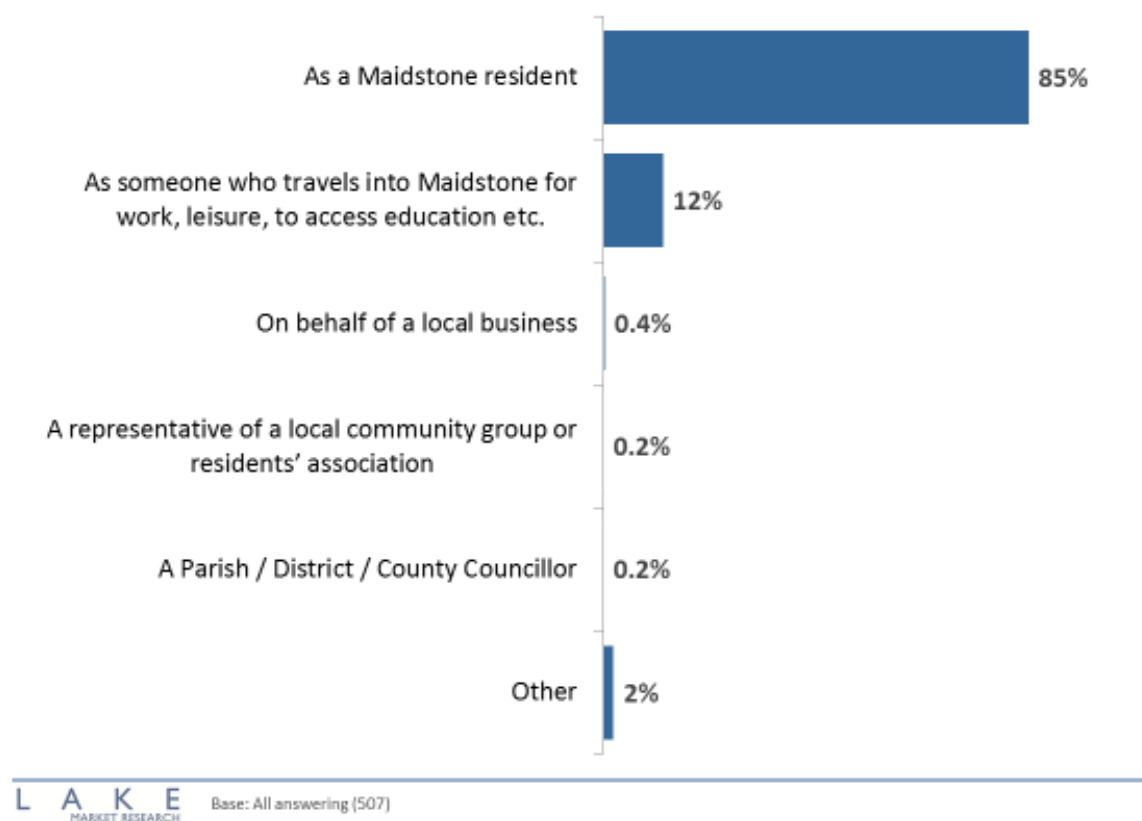
To raise awareness of the consultation and encourage participation, a thorough promotional campaign was carried out. This included:

- Postcard drop to residents and business in immediate vicinity of the schemes
- Email to stakeholders and partners
- E-mail invitation to those registered with the Consultation Directory who have expressed an interest in traffic, transport and roads
- Two press releases, the first on the launch of the consultation and a second two weeks before the end
- Roadside VMS signs
- Segment on KMTV's Kent Tonight programme
- Poster and postcards and copies of consultation document displayed in Maidstone libraries

- Advert in Parish Council newsletters
- Organic and paid for Facebooks posts
- Twitter and LinkedIn
- Banner on kent.gov homepage and roads and travel page
- Articles on KCC's internal staff communication channels

The consultation questionnaire asked consultees to indicate how they found out about the consultation. A range of means were used by consultees; however, the most common are social media (Facebook or Twitter) at 22% and a newspaper article. 18% referenced an 'other' means – this included digital road signage and word of mouth including the North Loose Residents Association and neighbouring residents / friends / family.

Capacity in completing the questionnaire



ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

It should be noted that a proportion of residents and stakeholders participated in this consultation rather than all residents of the area / stakeholders involved. The self-selecting nature of participating in the consultation should also be considered. People choose to take part as opposed to a representative sample of the population. The results are therefore subject to sampling error, which means that not all differences are statistically significant.

No weighting has been applied to the data received and all open questions were reviewed and coded into “themes” to provide quantitative analysis in this report, alongside free text comments.

For the purposes of reporting a true reflection of views, all elements of the question scales have been included in our reporting. In addition, questions have been reported in the order in which they were asked in the consultation document.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank all those who took the time to take part in the consultation.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Consultation Profile

538 people completed either the paper or online consultation questionnaire, or a comment card at one of the face to face public events held by KCC. The responses from all comment cards have been incorporated within each scheme's feedback and presented within the statistics in this report.

Of the 507 people who completed the consultation questionnaire and identified themselves, the majority are residents of Maidstone at 85%. The age profile of those answering is skewed towards an older age group compared to local area population statistics (although it should be noted that 21% did not identify their age in the questionnaire). The vast majority of consultees travel to and around Maidstone by private car (93%). Over half (51%) walk and 38% travel by bus. 14% travel by bicycle and 8% travel by taxi.

Response to the proposals are contrasting with low proportions using the 'neither agree nor disagree' or 'don't know' components of the agreement scales posed.

A20 Coldharbour Roundabout Proposals

- Equal proportions agree and disagree with the proposals – 46% agree and 46% disagree. 37% strongly disagreed with the proposals.
- 45% of consultees answering made at least one positive comment on the proposals. Positive comments made include:
 - Agreeing with the removal of traffic lights
 - The need for dedicated filter / turning lanes
- 85% of consultees answering referenced at least one concern on the proposals. Concerns raised include:
 - The proposals not improving matters / causing more congestion
 - Disagreeing with the removal of traffic lights
 - Perception of the proposals being unsafe / more dangerous

A229 Loose Road: Armstrong Road / Park Way (including Sheal's Crescent) Proposals

- A higher proportion agreed with the proposals at 55%; 42% disagreed. 26% strongly disagreed with the proposals.
- 48% of consultees answering made at least one positive comment on the proposals. Positive comments made include:

- Improving traffic flow / easing congestion
- The need for dedicated filter / turning lanes
- Agreeing processes need to be made better for turning right
- 81% of consultees answering referenced at least one concern on the proposals. Concerns raised include:
 - The proposals not improving matters / causing more congestion
 - Disagreeing with proposals concerning the lane no longer widening to two travelling north of the A229
 - Bus stop positioning

A229 Loose Road: Wheatsheaf Junction Proposals

- In contrast to the previous two proposals, disagreement with the proposals is significantly higher at 67%; 47% strongly disagree. 26% agree with the proposals.
- 26% of consultees answering made at least one positive comment on the proposals. Positive comments made include:
 - Agreeing with the closure of Cranborne Avenue
 - Improving traffic flow / easing congestion
- 93% of consultees answering referenced at least one concern on the proposals. Concerns raised include:
 - The proposals not improving matters / causing more congestion
 - Disagreeing with the closure of Cranborne Avenue
 - Perceptions congestion will merely move further away and those wanting to turn right will be an issue / creating tailbacks
 - Preference to not lose the pub
- Response to the two landscape options reflects the high level of disagreement with the proposals overall. Half (50%) indicated they did not like either option. Just under a quarter (23%) indicated they did not have a preference out of the two landscape options.
- Option 2 achieved a higher proportion selecting it at 16% but this proportion is low in comparison to the proportion who do not like either option.
- The most common concern raised with the two landscape options presented is a

perception the bench area would not be utilised, as no-one would want to sit between traffic lanes nor surrounded by pollution.

A229 Loose Road: Cripple Street / Boughton Lane Proposals

- A higher proportion disagree with the proposals at 52% compared to the proportion agreeing (32%). Just over a third (35%) strongly disagreed with the proposals.
- 25% of consultees answering made at least one positive comment on the proposals. Positive comments made include:
 - The proposals being an improvement to the current layout / structure
 - Improving traffic flow / easing congestion
- 88% of consultees referenced at least one concern on the proposals. Concerns raised include:
 - The proposals not improving matters / causing more congestion
 - Perceptions the turn into Boughton Lane isn't an issue
 - Pedestrian crossing changes
 - Cripple Street junction / turning being an issue / needs improving.

A20 Ashford Road junction with Willington Street Proposals

- A marginally higher proportion disagree with the proposals at 49%, compared to the proportion agreeing (40%). 32% strongly disagreed with the proposals.
- 42% of consultees made at least one positive comment on the proposals. Positive comments made include:
 - The proposals being an improvement to the current layout / structure
 - Agreement the number of lanes should be increased
 - Perceptions of improving traffic flow / easing congestion
- 88% of consultees referenced at least one concern on the proposals. Concerns raised include:
 - The proposals not improving matters / causing more congestion
 - Perceptions congestion issues are caused by vehicles turning right into Willington Street
 - Perceptions two lanes for going straight on are not needed

A274 Sutton Road junction with Willington Street Proposals

- A significantly higher proportion disagreed with the proposals at 52%, compared to the proportion agreeing (30%). 39% strongly disagreed with the proposals.
- 22% of consultees made at least one positive comment on the proposals. Positive comments made include:
 - An improvement to the current layout / structure
 - Perceptions of improving traffic flow / easing congestion
- 87% of consultees referenced at least one concern on the proposals. Concerns raised include:
 - The proposals not improving matters / causing more congestion
 - Perceptions proposals do not go far enough / are short term and traffic would only get worse in the future.
- Response to the two landscape options reflects the high level of disagreement with the proposals overall. 35% indicated they did not like either option and 35% indicated they did not have a preference out of the two options.
- Of those remaining, preference for the options is broadly equal. The most common concern raised refer a preference for not losing trees / wildlife habitats.

CONSULTATION PROFILE

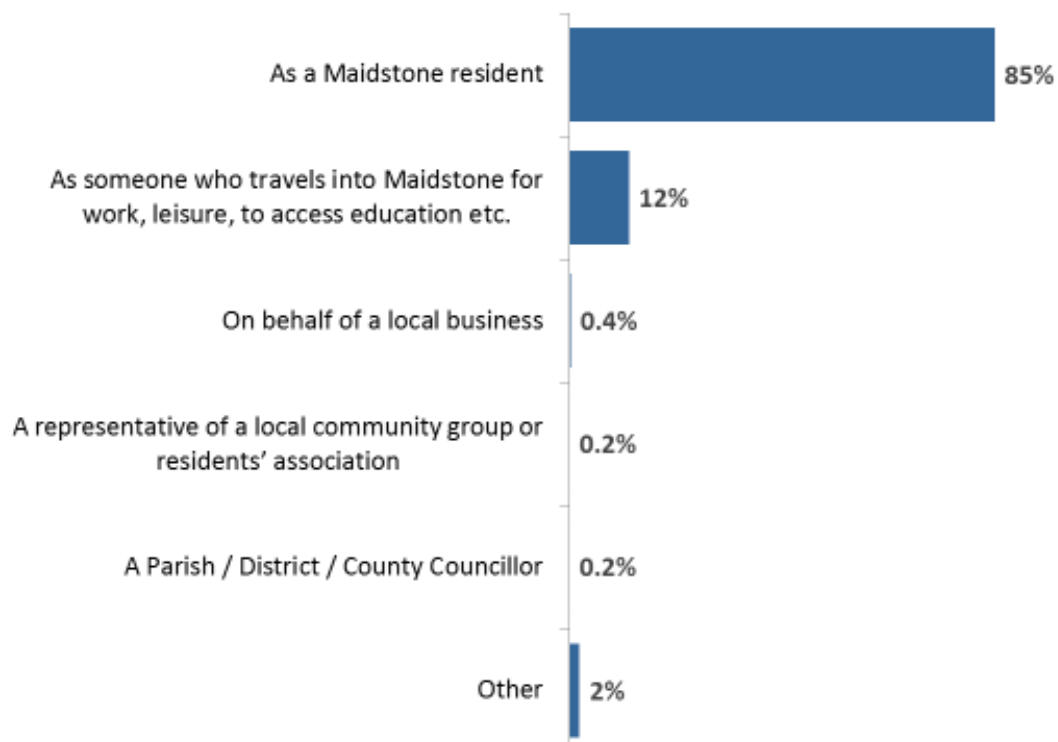
In total, 538 people completed either the paper or online consultation questionnaire or a comment card at one of the face to face public events. Of the 507 people who completed the consultation questionnaire and identified themselves, the majority are residents of Maidstone at 85%. There is also representation from other stakeholder groups.

Focusing specifically on the profile of Maidstone residents or those who travel through Maidstone, we can see that both gender groups are represented. The age profile is skewed towards an older age group compared to local area population statistics (although it should be noted that 21% did not identify their age in the questionnaire).

5% indicated they are disabled as set out in the Equality Act 2010. 43% of those who indicated they are disabled have a physical impairment and 35% indicated they have a long-standing illness or health condition; 22% have a sensory impairment and 22% have a mental health condition.

The majority indicated they are White British (67%). 29% preferred not to disclose this information.

Capacity in completing the questionnaire



Resident / travel through Maidstone profile

Residents of Maidstone/someone who travels to Maidstone for work/leisure/education only

Gender	
Male	46%
Female	33%
Prefer not to say / not answered	21%

Age	
24 and under	1%
25 – 34	9%
35 – 49	18%
50 – 59	17%
60 – 64	8%
65 and over	34%
Prefer not to say / not answered	21%

Carer	
Yes	8%
No	69%
Prefer not to say / not answered	23%

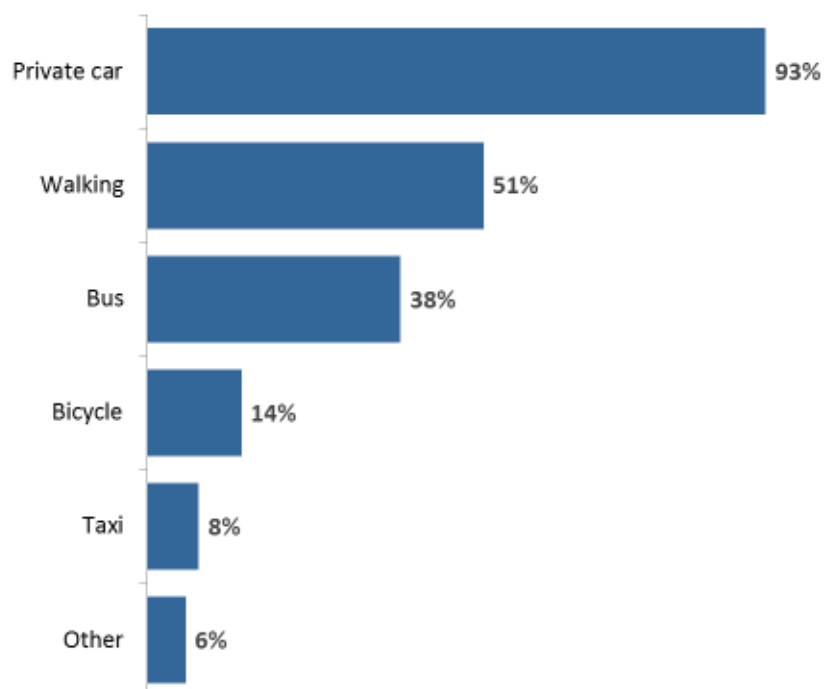
Ethnicity	
White English	67%
White Irish	1%
White Other	2%
Asian	0.2%
Black or Black British	0.2%
Prefer not to say / not answered	29%

Disabled as set out in Equality Act 2010	
Yes	5%
No	73%
Prefer not to say / not answered	22%

Type of impairment applies for those answering yes *	
Physical impairment	43%
Long standing illness or health condition	35%
Sensory impairment	22%
Mental health condition	22%
Learning disability	4%

The vast majority indicated they travel to and around Maidstone by private car (93%). Over half (51%) walk and 38% travel by bus. 14% travel by bicycle and 8% travel by taxi.

Method of travel in to and around Maidstone



A20 Coldharbour Roundabout Proposals

The first proposal featured in the consultation concerned the A20 Coldharbour roundabout. A summary of the proposals featured in the consultation document can be found below or on the [Keep Maidstone Moving webpage](#):

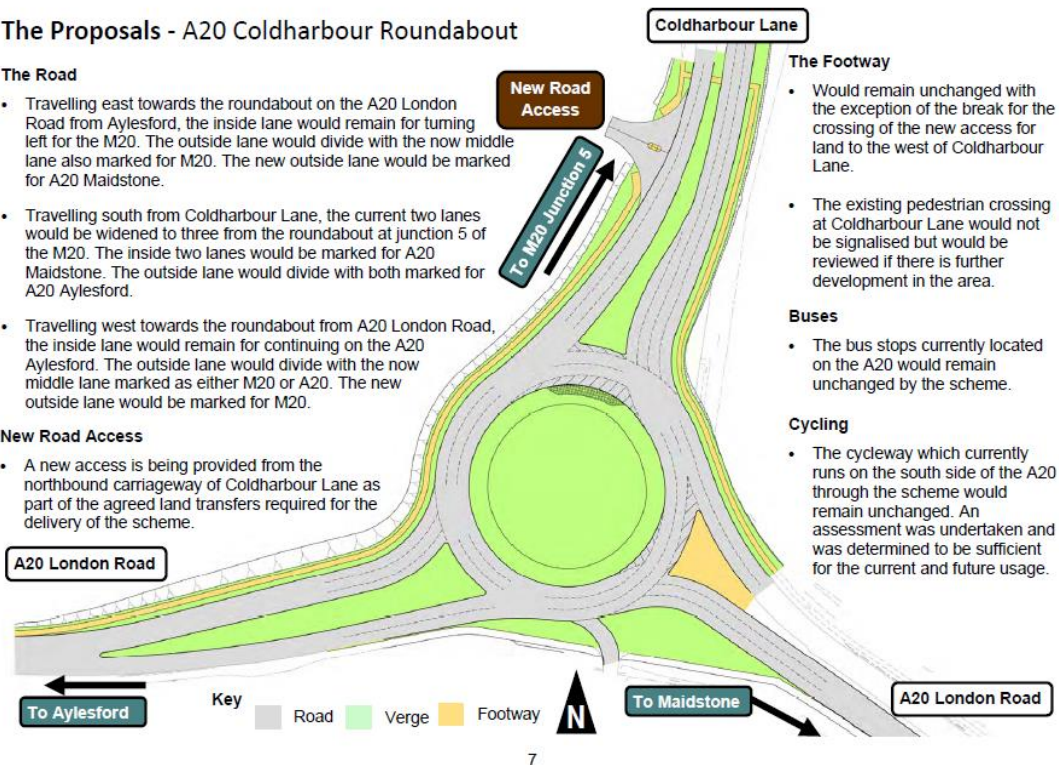
The Proposals - A20 Coldharbour Roundabout

The Road

- Travelling east towards the roundabout on the A20 London Road from Aylesford, the inside lane would remain for turning left for the M20. The outside lane would divide with the now middle lane also marked for M20. The new outside lane would be marked for A20 Maidstone.
- Travelling south from Coldharbour Lane, the current two lanes would be widened to three from the roundabout at junction 5 of the M20. The inside two lanes would be marked for A20 Maidstone. The outside lane would divide with both marked for A20 Aylesford.
- Travelling west towards the roundabout from A20 London Road, the inside lane would remain for continuing on the A20 Aylesford. The outside lane would divide with the now middle lane marked as either M20 or A20. The new outside lane would be marked for M20.

New Road Access

- A new access is being provided from the northbound carriageway of Coldharbour Lane as part of the agreed land transfers required for the delivery of the scheme.



The Footway

- Would remain unchanged with the exception of the break for the crossing of the new access for land to the west of Coldharbour Lane.
- The existing pedestrian crossing at Coldharbour Lane would not be signalised but would be reviewed if there is further development in the area.

Buses

- The bus stops currently located on the A20 would remain unchanged by the scheme.

Cycling

- The cycleway which currently runs on the south side of the A20 through the scheme would remain unchanged. An assessment was undertaken and was determined to be sufficient for the current and future usage.

The Roundabout

- Would be enlarged to allow three lanes to go round the roundabout.
- Hatched lane markings would be used to reduce this to two lanes where appropriate for vehicle movements.
- The traffic signals are to be completely removed with give way lines to indicate entry to the roundabout and the required sightlines maintained.

Traffic Signals

- A well designed roundabout with good visibility and reasonably balanced flows, would have more capacity for traffic than a signalised junction using the same amount of highway space. Therefore a normal give way roundabout would have greater capacity than if it were signalised.
- By enlarging the roundabout it would provide bigger gaps on each of the entries as natural gaps occur on a roundabout as vehicles accelerate at different speeds.



M20 Junction 5

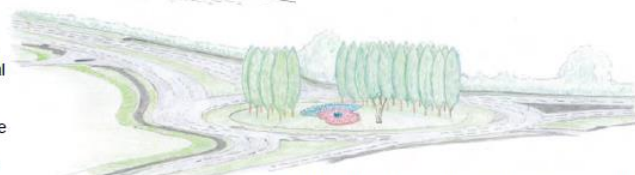
M20 Junction 5

- The scheme extends up to junction 5 where the road would be widened from two to three lanes.
- The current footway within the scheme which links junction 5 to East Park Road would remain.

Coldharbour Lane

Environment

- A recent survey showed that the trees on the roundabout are not in good condition therefore they will be removed. We are working with local Councillors on landscaping proposals, which would have a memorial feature for World War One. The colours of the Royal British Legion are to be reflected in the planting, which would complement the sculpture of a 'Tommie' at the centre.



Sketch of the landscaping on the new roundabout

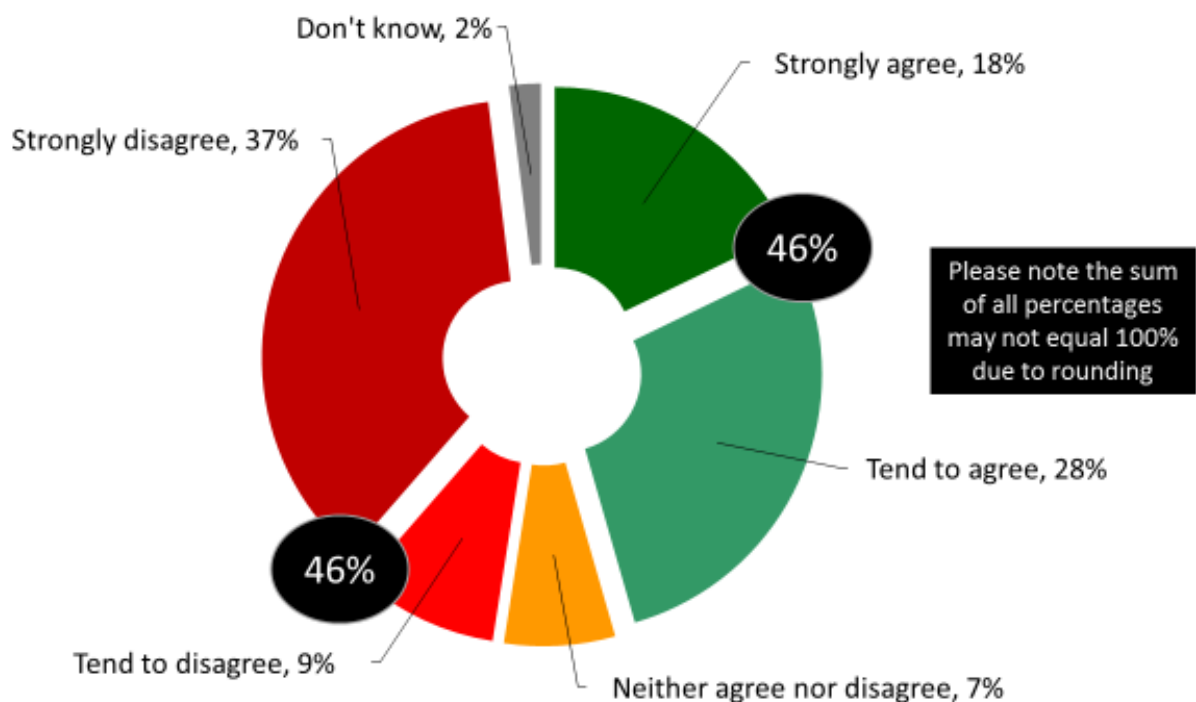
Agreement with A20 Coldharbour Roundabout Proposals

Consultees were first asked to indicate their level of agreement with the proposals outlined in the consultation document; on a five-point semantic scale. 186 of the consultees taking part in the consultation answered this question.

Equal proportions agreed and disagreed with the proposals (46% for each). The proportion strongly agreeing with the proposal is lower than the proportion strongly disagreeing with the proposal (18% and 37% respectively).

Agreement with A20 Coldharbour Roundabout proposals

186 Consultees responding



L A K E
MARKET RESEARCH Base: All answering (186)

Subgroup significant differences:

Whilst base sizes are relatively low, there are significant differences in response as follows:

- A significantly higher proportion of consultees aged up to 49 **agree** with the proposals – 59% of 46 consultees in this age group;
- A significantly lower proportion of consultees aged 50 to 64 **agree** with the proposals – 38% of 50 consultees in this age group.

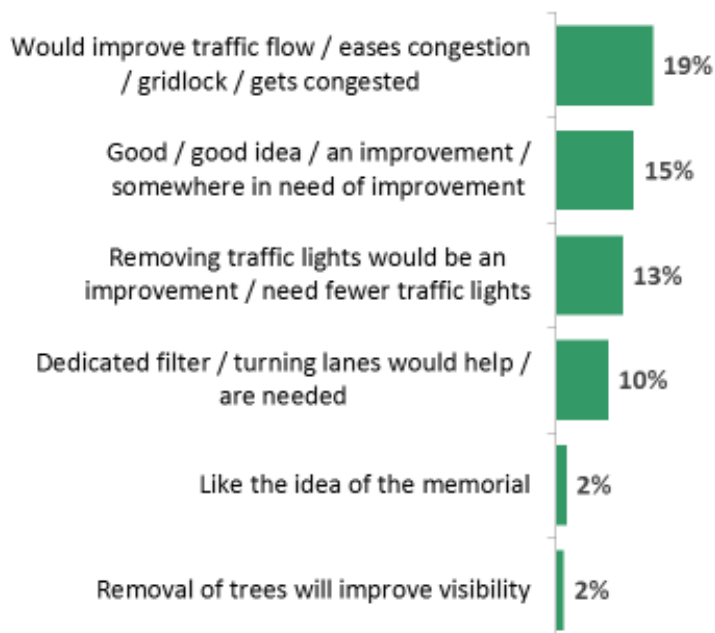
Comments on the A20 Coldharbour Roundabout Proposals

Consultees were then asked to provide any comments they had in their own words concerning the A20 Coldharbour Roundabout Proposals. For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed consultees comments and have grouped common responses together into themes. These are reported in the next two charts. The first chart summarises the positive comments made and the second chart summaries the concerns raised.

45% of consultees commenting made at least one positive comment on the proposals. Just under one in five (19%) believe the proposals would improve traffic flow / ease congestion. 13% commented the removal of traffic lights at the roundabout would be an improvement and 10% commented the dedicated filter lanes / turning lanes would help.

Positive comments made on A20 Coldharbour Roundabout proposals

POSITIVES (NET) – 45% of consultees made at least one positive comment



L A K E
MARKET RESEARCH

Base: All answering (183)

85% of consultees commenting raised at least one concern on the proposals. A number of concerns were referenced but the most common are as follows:

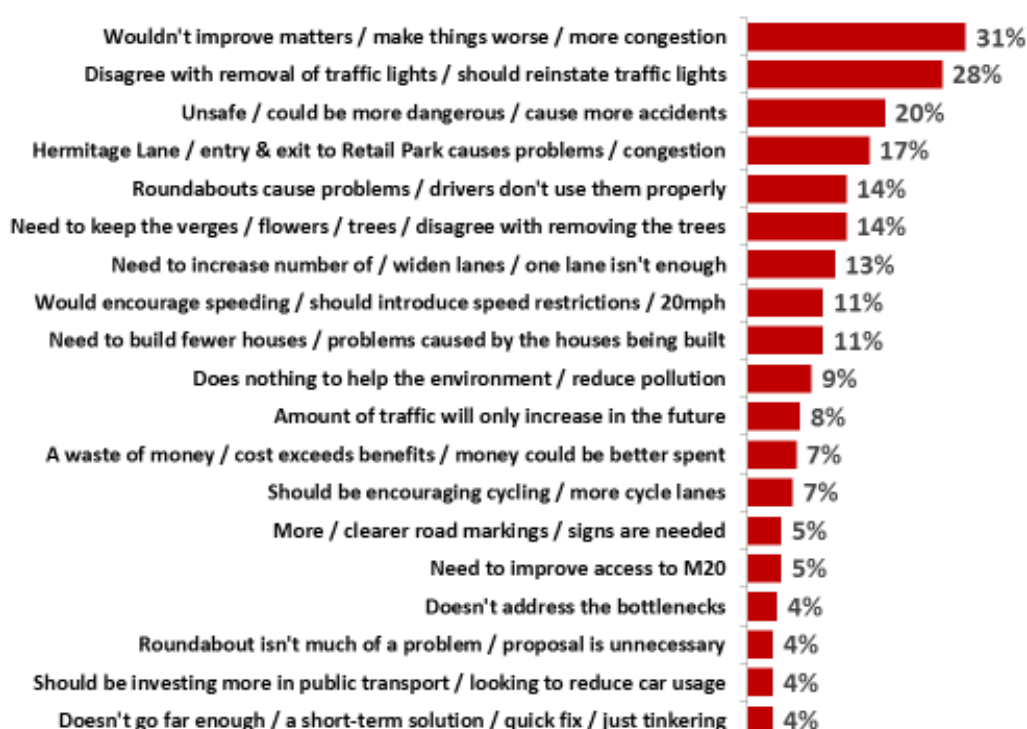
- The proposals wouldn't improve matters / make things worse / cause more congestion – 31%
- Do not agree with the removal of traffic lights / should reinstate traffic lights – 28%
- Perceptions of being unsafe / more dangerous / causing more accidents – 20%
- A preference to keep the verges / trees / flowers – 14%

- Need to increase the number of lanes / widen lanes – 13%
- The proposals would encourage speeding and speed restrictions need to be considered – 11%

In addition to the proposals specifically, consultees refer to nearby congestion to the area as well as concerns with regards to road user behaviour and housing development. 17% of consultees commented on congestion and traffic issues at Hermitage Lane and the entry / exit to the Retail Park. 14% commented on road user behaviour on roundabouts more generally and a belief that they are not used properly.

Concerns with A20 Coldharbour Roundabout proposals

CONCERNS (NET) - 85% of consultees noted at least one concern



L A K E
MARKET RESEARCH
Base: All answering (183)

Example verbatim comments made on the most common concerns of congestion, traffic light removal and safety can be found below:

I use the roundabout every day in morning rush hour entering from M20 and travelling towards Maidstone. I do not believe that removing the traffic signals will improve the situation. Unfortunately, in peak periods road users in Maidstone block up roundabouts which leads to frustration and drivers more inclined to make risky decisions. Very concerned that this will lead to a higher risk of accidents.

Widening this roundabout will not prevent the level of congestion since the A20 cannot be widened for the majority of its length where build up of traffic occurs, and generally the traffic flows to the M20 if the M20 is not congested. I think the money could be better spent buying land up both of those roads to properly widen them or maybe just don't build further housing when the infrastructure cannot take it.

Removing the traffic lights will be a disaster. The traffic coming from the motorway will just be continually moving around the roundabout not allowing traffic from other directions to pass.

A229 Loose Road: Armstrong Road / Park Way (including Sheal's Crescent) Proposals

The second proposal featured in the consultation concerned the Armstrong Road / Park Way roundabout. A summary of the proposals featured in the consultation document can be found below or on the [Keep Maidstone Moving webpage](#):

The Proposals - Sheal's Crescent

The Road

- Travelling south on the A229, the inside lane would remain dedicated for traffic continuing up towards the Armstrong Road / Park Way junction. The outside lane would also remain for traffic continuing towards the Armstrong Road / Park Way junction with a filter lane splitting off to enter Sheal's Crescent. This filter lane would no longer have give way lines. Instead traffic would flow freely to become the outside lane of Sheal's Crescent.

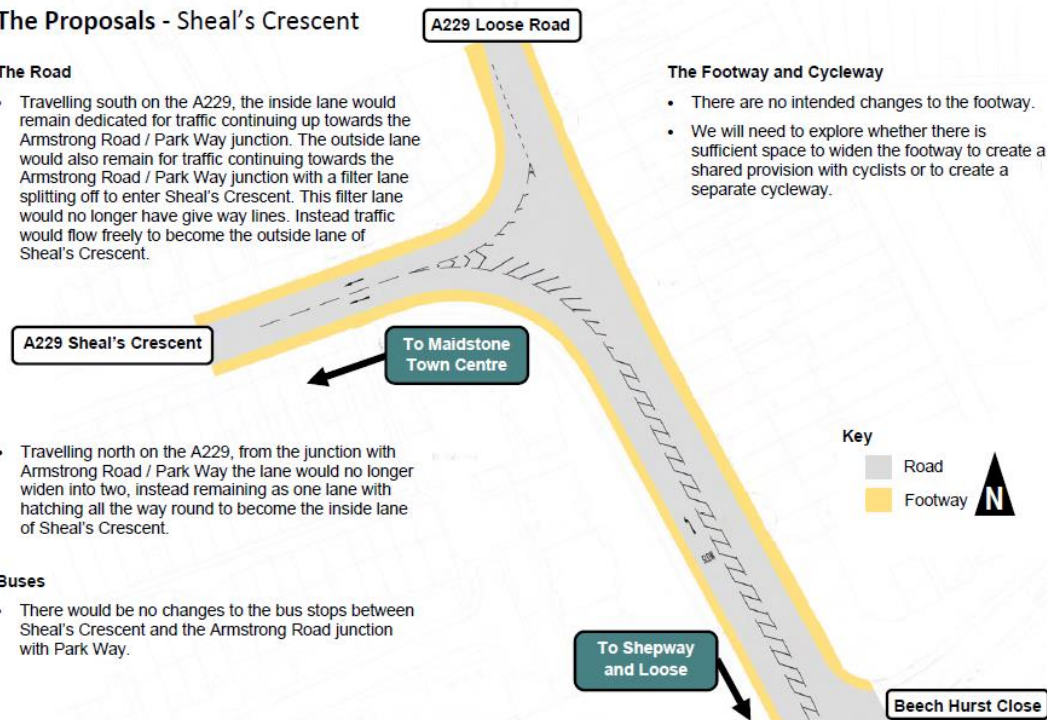
- Travelling north on the A229, from the junction with Armstrong Road / Park Way the lane would no longer widen into two, instead remaining as one lane with hatching all the way round to become the inside lane of Sheal's Crescent.

Buses

- There would be no changes to the bus stops between Sheal's Crescent and the Armstrong Road junction with Park Way.

The Footway and Cycleway

- There are no intended changes to the footway.
- We will need to explore whether there is sufficient space to widen the footway to create a shared provision with cyclists or to create a separate cycleway.



12

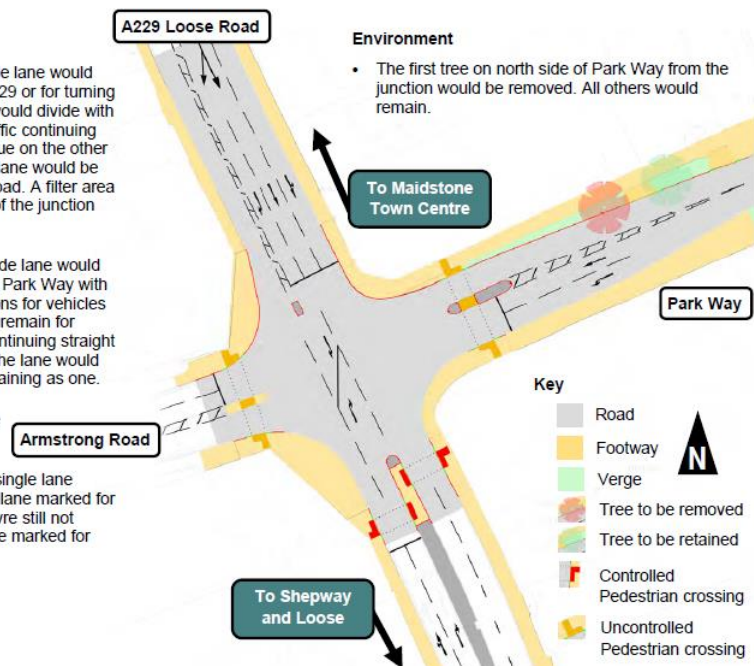
The Proposals - Armstrong Road junction with Park Way

The Road

- Travelling south on the A229 the inside lane would remain for traffic continuing on the A229 or for turning left into Park Way. The outside lane would divide with the now middle lane remaining for traffic continuing on the A229. Both lanes would continue on the other side of the junction. The new outside lane would be just for turning right into Armstrong Road. A filter area would remain available in the centre of the junction for cars waiting to turn.
- Travelling north on the A229 the outside lane would remain dedicated for turning right into Park Way with a filter area in the centre of the junctions for vehicles waiting to turn. The inside lane would remain for turning left into Armstrong Road or continuing straight into town. Once through the junction the lane would no longer widen into two, instead remaining as one.
- Travelling from Armstrong Road there would be no change.
- Traveling from Park Way the current single lane would divide into two with the outside lane marked for straight on and the right turn manoeuvre still not allowed. The new inside lane would be marked for turning left on to the A229.

Environment

- The first tree on north side of Park Way from the junction would be removed. All others would remain.



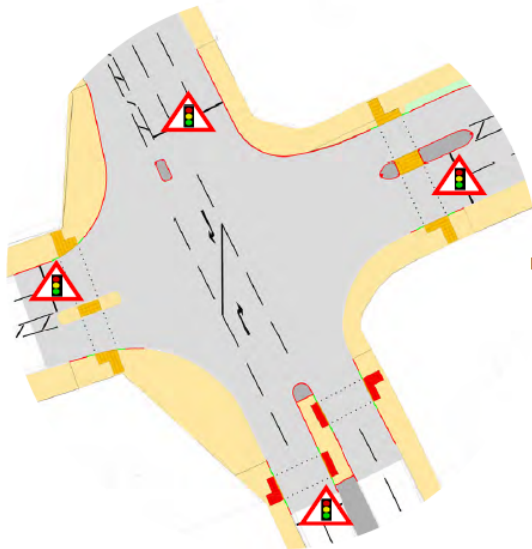
13

The Footway

- There would be widening in places in line with proposed new kerb lines. However, there is insufficient room to widen the footways throughout the scheme.

Cycling

- There are no plans to add any specific cycling provisions.



Traffic Signals

- The traffic signals would remain much as at present with the exception that the request pedestrian crossing on the north side of the junction would be removed and the traffic signals to the south of the scheme would be upgraded to provide this facility instead.
- Pedestrians would be routed south rather than north of the junction with pedestrian guardrails added to both northern corners to discourage people from still crossing the road at this location.
- Pedestrians would still be able to cross at the other three points with the Armstrong Road and Park Way crossings remaining the same type as at present - uncontrolled pedestrian crossings with a pedestrian island in the middle.
- The pedestrian crossing on the south side of the A229 Loose Road would be upgraded to a signalised request crossing. The pedestrian island is only one metre wide as there is no capacity to widen. However, there would be the potential to remove the guardrails and use flat islands with raised kerbs to gain space.

Key

-  Traffic Signal Stop Line
-  Controlled Pedestrian crossing
-  Uncontrolled Pedestrian crossing
-  Pedestrian Guardrail

Pedestrian Crossings

Uncontrolled have features such as dropped kerbs and tactile paving and may even be adjacent to traffic signals but rely on pedestrians to determine when it is safe to cross.

Controlled, such as a Pelican crossing, are where pedestrians can push a button and wait for the green signal (usually a figure) to illuminate indicating that vehicles are being shown a red light.

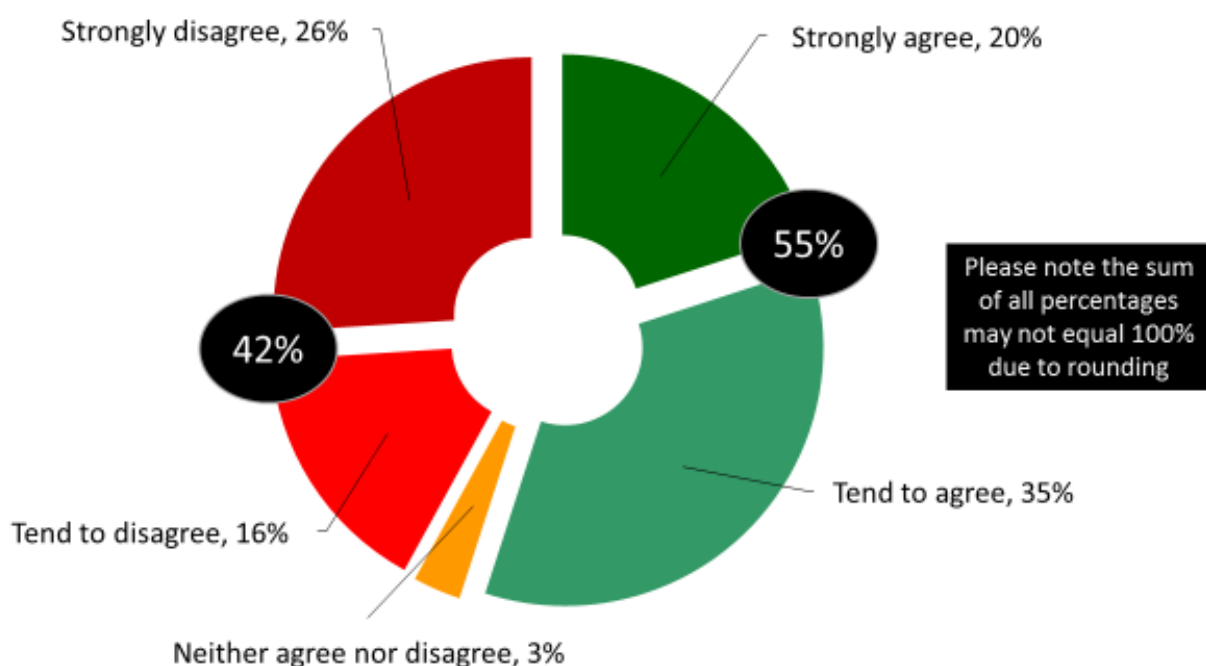
Agreement with Armstrong Road / Park Way (including Sheal's Crescent) Proposals

Consultees were first asked to indicate their level of agreement with the proposals outlined in the consultation document; on a five-point semantic scale. 262 of the consultees taking part in the consultation answered this question.

A higher proportion agreed with the proposals for the Armstrong Road / Park Way at 55%; 42% disagreed with the proposals. The proportion strongly agreeing with the proposal is lower than the proportion strongly disagreeing with the proposal (20% and 26% respectively).

Agreement with Armstrong Road / Park Way proposals

262 Consultees responding



L A K E
MARKET RESEARCH

Base: All answering (262)

Subgroup significant differences:

Whilst base sizes are relatively low, there are significant differences in response as follows:

- A significantly higher proportion of consultees aged up to 49 **strongly agreed** with the proposals – 31% of 68 consultees in this age group.
- A significantly lower proportion of consultees aged 50 to 64 **strongly agreed** with the proposals - 17% of 66 consultees in this age group.
- A significantly lower proportion of consultees aged 65 and over **strongly agreed** with the proposals - 15% of 71 consultees in this age group.

Comments on the Armstrong Road / Park Way (including Sheal's Crescent) Proposals

Consultees were then asked to provide any comments they had in their own words concerning the Armstrong Road / Park Way proposals. For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed consultees comments and have grouped common responses together into themes. These are reported in the next two charts. The first chart summarises the positive comments made and the second chart summaries the concerns raised.

48% of consultees commenting made at least one positive comment on the proposals. Just under one in five (18%) believe the proposals would improve traffic flow / ease congestion. 19% commented that dedicated filter lanes / turning lanes would help. 14% agreed that things need to be made better for turning right into Armstrong Road.

Positive comments made on Armstrong Road / Park Way proposals

POSITIVES (NET) – 48% of consultees made at least one positive comment



81% of consultees commenting raised at least one concern on the proposals. A number of concerns were referenced but the most common are as follows:

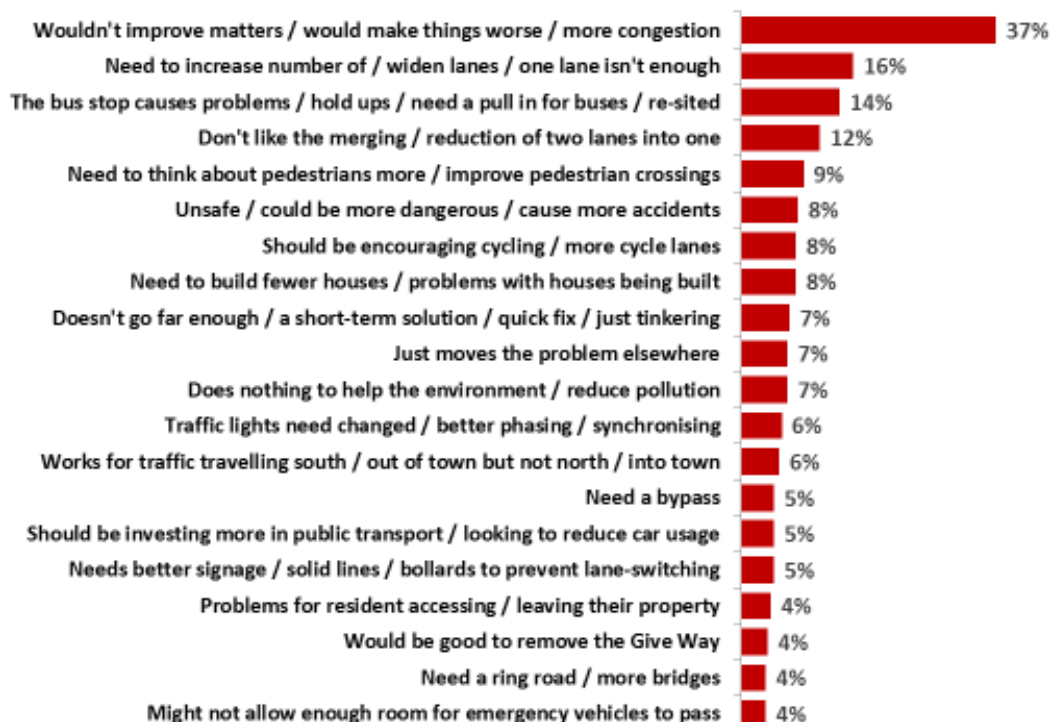
- The proposals wouldn't improve matters / make things worse / cause more congestion – 37%
- Need to increase the number of lanes / one lane isn't enough – 16%; Don't like the merging / reduction of two lanes into one – 12%; both referencing the proposals concerning the lane no longer widening to two travelling north on the A229

- The retention of bus stops will cause problems / hold ups and needs a pull-in particularly in single line traffic – 14%

In addition to the proposals specifically, consultees refer to a perceived lack of cycling provision (8%) and housing development (7%).

Concerns with Armstrong Road / Park Way proposals

CONCERNS (NET) - 81% of consultees noted at least one concern



L A K E
MARKET RESEARCH

Base: All answering (251)

Example verbatim comments made on the most common concerns of congestion, lane routing and bus stop positioning can be found below:

My main concern is it will do nothing to improve the congestion from A274 and A229 heading from the Wheatsheaf, where you have 3 lanes of traffic mainly having to combine into one lane between the Wheatsheaf and Armstrong Road. One of the big causes of congestion is traffic being in the right hand lane, either from the right hand lane of the A274 entrance to the Wheatsheaf junction, or moving out from the single A229 lane, but then forcing its way back to the left lane to go straight ahead at Armstrong road. Similar issues occur from traffic entering from Plain s Avenue.

Traffic regularly backs up from the South, heading North towards Sheal s Crescent with two lanes. By removing a lane, this will only increase the back up of traffic at the Wheatsheaf junction.

My concern is the decision to keep the bus stops on the north bound carriageway between Armstrong Road and Sheal s Crescent, because the road is reduced to a single lane. There are a large number of buses from both Sutton Road and Loose and the stop nearly opposite Heather Drive would have the possibility of backing traffic up beyond Armstrong Road if we are not able to overtake the parked bus.

A229 Loose Road: Wheatsheaf Junction Proposals

The third proposal featured in the consultation concerned the Wheatsheaf Junction. A summary of the proposals featured in the consultation document can be found below or on the [Keep Maidstone Moving webpage](#):

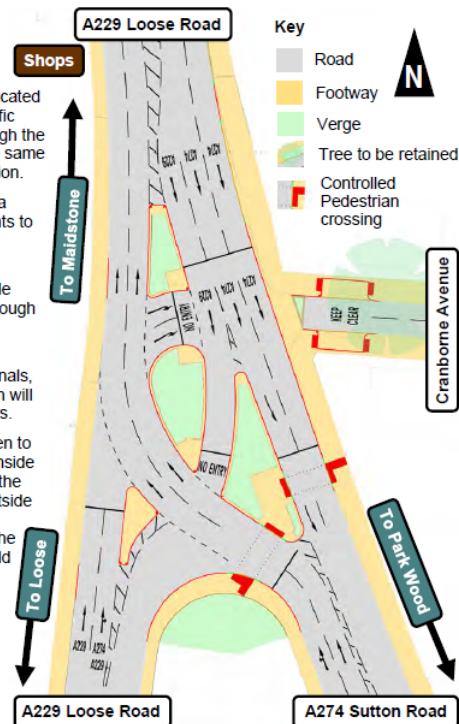
The Proposals - The Wheatsheaf Junction

The Road

- Travelling south to the A274 Sutton Road, the inside lane would remain a dedicated lane and marked for the A274. The outside lane would split just before the traffic lights with the now middle lane marked for straight on to the A274. Once through the traffic lights there would be a pedestrian request crossing in approximately the same location as currently. The two lanes would reduce to one just passed the junction.
- Travelling south to the A229 Loose Road, the now outside lane would remain a dedicated lane marked for the A229. The lane joins the junction with traffic lights to cross the traffic travelling northbound from the A274.
- Travelling north from the A274 Sutton Road, the inside lane would remain for straight on to the A229 north or for turning left onto the A229 south. The outside lane would remain a dedicated lane for straight on to the A229 north. Once through the traffic lights there would be a new request pedestrian crossing north of the junction.
- Plains Avenue is being assessed for traffic signals that will be linked to the signals, at the Wheatsheaf junction and Armstrong Road junction with Park Way, which will mean they can work more efficiently. This would make it safer for all road users.
- Travelling north from the A229 Loose Road, the current single lane would widen to two lanes but would stop at traffic lights further back than they currently. The inside lane would remain a dedicated lane for straight on to the A229. Once through the traffic lights it would join the A229 before the new pedestrian crossing. The outside lane would be marked for either continuing with the inside lane on the A229 or joining the junction. It would divide into two lanes before traffic lights to cross the traffic travelling southbound on the A229. Once through the traffic lights it would join the A274 just before the pedestrian crossing.

Buses

- The bus stop on the A274 Sutton Road just south of Cranborne Avenue would need to be re-sited further south and we would aim to keep this in the area before it narrows back to one lane. Liaison with the bus company would be undertaken as part of the detailed design process.



16

Traffic Signals and the Footway

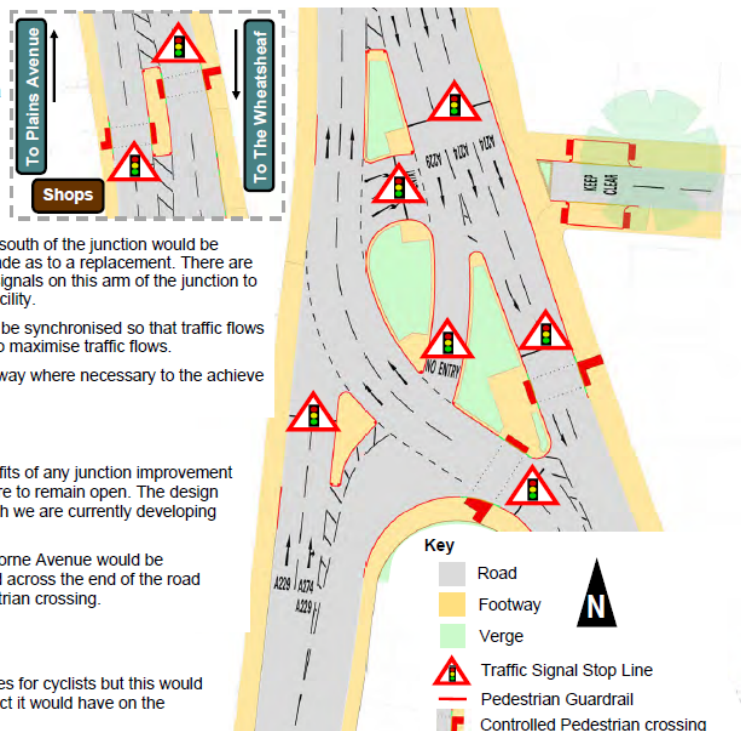
- The current traffic signals on the A229 north of the junction would have the pedestrian crossing facility removed with a new signalled pedestrian crossing created on the A229 further north outside the parade of shops.
- The current signalled pedestrian crossing on the A274 Sutton Road would be slightly repositioned.
- The pedestrian refuge island on the A229 south of the junction would be removed and no decision has yet been made as to a replacement. There are no plans however to upgrade the current signals on this arm of the junction to include a controlled pedestrian crossing facility.
- The new signals within the junction would be synchronised so that traffic flows freely and all the signals would be timed to maximise traffic flows.
- There would be some widening to the footway where necessary to achieve the desired alignments.

Closure of Cranborne Avenue

- Traffic modelling has shown that the benefits of any junction improvement at this location are greatly reduced if it were to remain open. The design creates a child friendly cul-de-sac for which we are currently developing additional landscaping plans.
- The current pedestrian crossing on Cranborne Avenue would be removed, with the footway being extended across the end of the road removing the need for a formalised pedestrian crossing.

Cycling

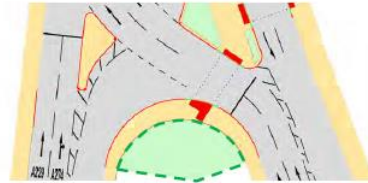
- There is the possibility of advance stop lines for cyclists but this would require further investigation as to the impact it would have on the proposed junction.



17

Environment

- The Wheatsheaf Public House would be demolished to create the space required for the improvements. This would leave an area of land to the south, not required for the road, which would be landscaped and include a sculpture of a 'Sheaf of Wheat' in reference to the pub which stood there, with the expectation that the junction would continue to be known as The Wheatsheaf.
- The planting strategy aims to create a colourful palette with year-round interest of grasses and natural planting to aid in the reduction of air quality in the area.
- We have a couple of landscaping options for the area illustrated below:



Potential landscaping area to the south



Option 1

- Indicative public art inspired by Wheatsheaf Public House forms the centre of the square.
- Planting design focuses on strong vibrant colours as a foreground to the public art element.
- Multi-stem trees create an enclosure as a buffer from surrounding traffic.
- 2 metre wide pedestrian path.



Option 2

- Indicative public art inspired by Wheatsheaf Public House sits at the top of the site.
- Planting design focuses on strong vibrant colours as a foreground to the public art element.
- Clear stem trees create clear views across planting to the wider area.
- 2 metre wide pedestrian path.

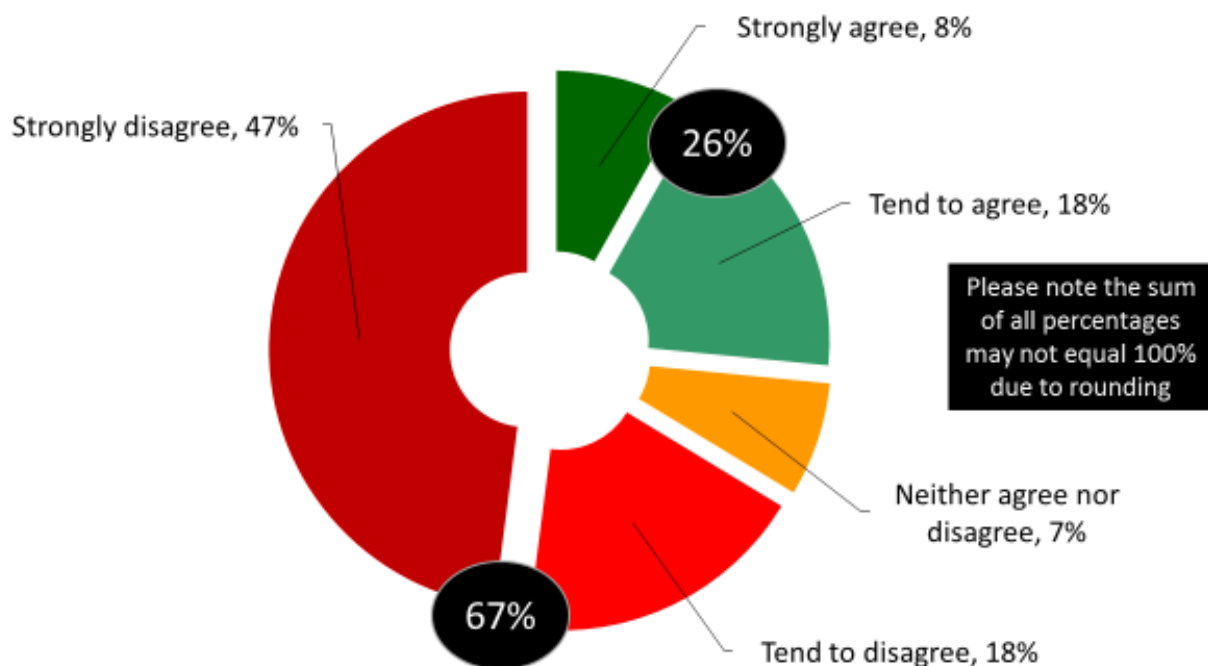
Agreement with Wheatsheaf Junction Proposals

Consultees were first asked to indicate their level of agreement with the proposals outlined in the consultation document; on a five-point semantic scale. 351 of the consultees taking part in the consultation answered this question.

In contrast to the previous two proposals, disagreement amongst those answering is significantly higher at 67%; 47% strongly disagree with the proposals. 26% agree with the proposals for Wheatsheaf Junction.

Agreement with Wheatsheaf junction proposals

351 Consultees responding



L A K E
MARKET RESEARCH

Base: All answering (351)

There are no significant differences observed by demographic subgroups.

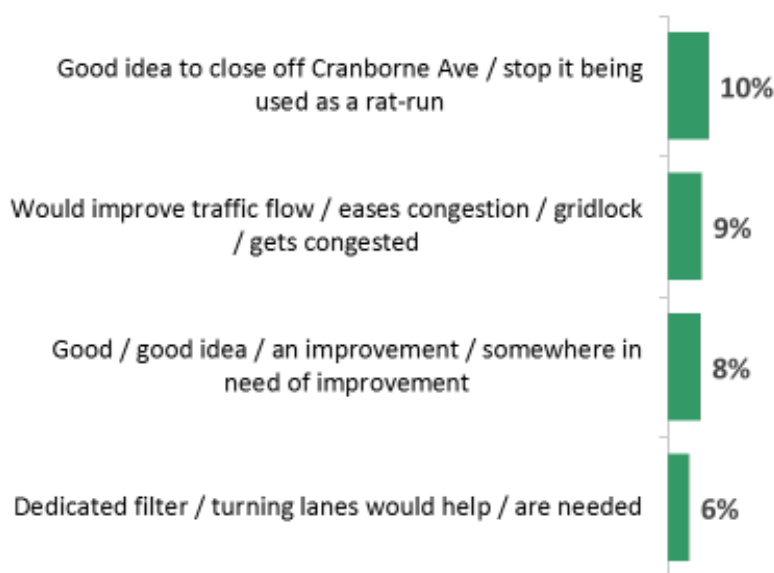
Comments on the Wheatsheaf Junction Proposals

Consultees were then asked to provide any comments they had in their own words concerning the Wheatsheaf Junction proposals. For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed consultees comments and have grouped common responses together into themes. These are reported in the next two charts. The first chart summarises the positive comments made and the second chart summaries the concerns raised.

26% of consultees commenting made at least one positive comment on the proposals. 10% commented that it is a good idea to close off Cranborne Avenue and to stop it being used as a rat run. Just under one in ten (9%) believe the proposals would improve traffic flow / ease congestion.

Positive comments made on Wheatsheaf junction proposals

POSITIVES (NET) – 26% of consultees made at least one positive comment



93% of consultees commenting raised at least one concern on the proposals. A number of concerns were referenced but the most common are as follows:

- The proposals wouldn't improve matters / make things worse / cause more congestion – 47%
- Disagreement with the closure of Cranborne Avenue / would make access to the A229 difficult – 22%
- Perceptions the proposals will move the congestion further away / down the road – 21%
- Perceptions turning right will be a problem / will create tailbacks / filter lane is too short – 20%

- Do not want to lose the pub – 17%
- Concerns the proposals are unsafe / will cause accidents – 11%
- Perceptions traffic lights are needed at Plains Avenue – 11%

In addition to the proposals specifically, consultees refer to housing development (12%), the perceptions of the proposals being a waste of money (11%).

Concerns with Wheatsheaf junction proposals

CONCERNS (NET) - 93% of consultees noted at least one concern



L A K E
MARKET RESEARCH

Base: All answering (344)

Example verbatim comments made on the most common concerns of congestion (both overall and creating further congestion in the immediate area) and the closure of Cranborne Avenue can be found below:

Two lanes into one heading south on to A274 is going to create a bottle neck effect which will increase queues. The bus stop just after the junction has always been poorly positioned (too close to the junction) so to leave it where it is, is a mistake. The queues in this direction are more from traffic travelling to the right continuing on A229 and yet this remains one lane past the junction. The proposed sequence for traffic travelling north from Loose to turn right is going to result in queues blocking traffic coming from Sutton Road towards Armstrong Road. This is just moving the current problem with that queue from one part of the road to another.

Looks to add more stop and start traffic. This complex junction will solve nothing as the traffic queues solid from the town centre one way all the way up Loose road and past the Wheatsheaf so therefore that is where the issue is and needs resolving.

The closure of Cranborne Avenue will only lead to added congestion at the Plains Avenue/Loose Road junction and Park Way/Armstrong Road junction. This will also make exiting Plains Avenue junction onto Loose Road more difficult with proposed plans. The merging of lanes heading South on Sutton Road will create a bottleneck.

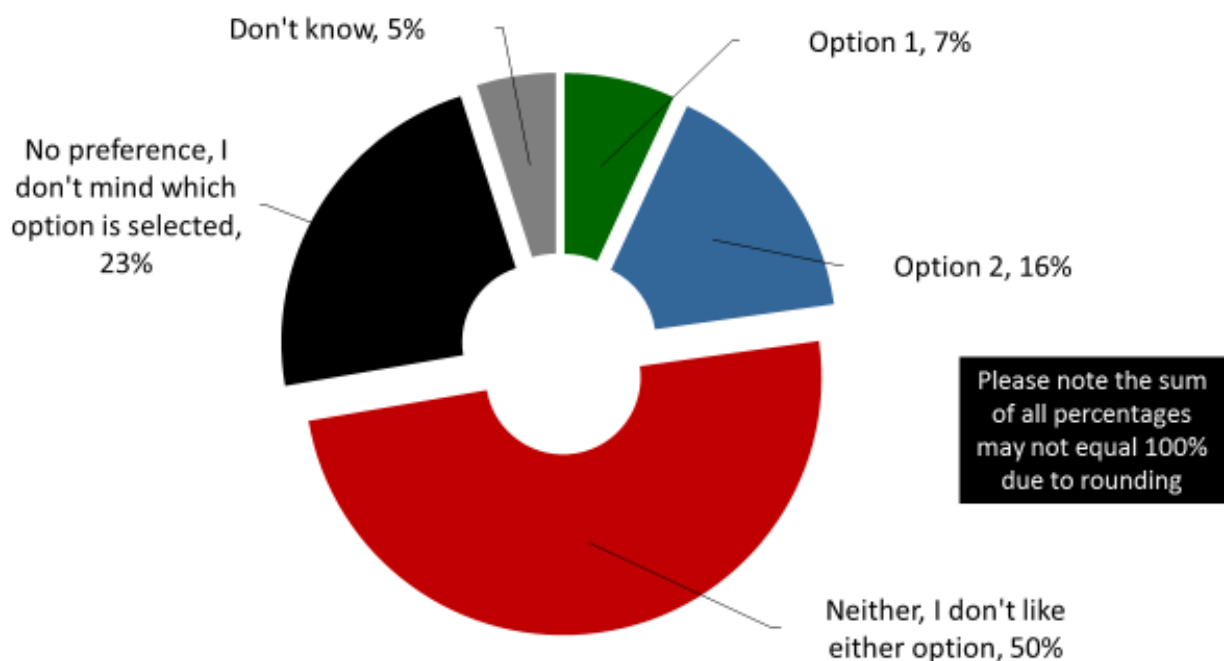
Preference for Wheatsheaf Junction Landscape Option

Consultees were then asked to indicate which of the two proposed landscape options they preferred, as well as any comments they had in their own words concerning the landscape options. For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed consultees comments and have grouped common responses together into themes. Response to the landscape options are reported in the next three charts. The first chart summarises preference, the second summaries the positive comments made and the third chart summaries the concerns raised.

348 of the consultees taking part in the consultation indicated their preference. Half of consultees (50%) answering indicated they did not like either option. Just under a quarter (23%) indicated they did not have a preference out of the two options. Option 2 achieved a higher proportion selecting at 16% but this proportion is low in comparison to the proportion who do not like either option.

Preference for Wheatsheaf junction landscape

348 Consultees responding



L A K E
MARKET RESEARCH

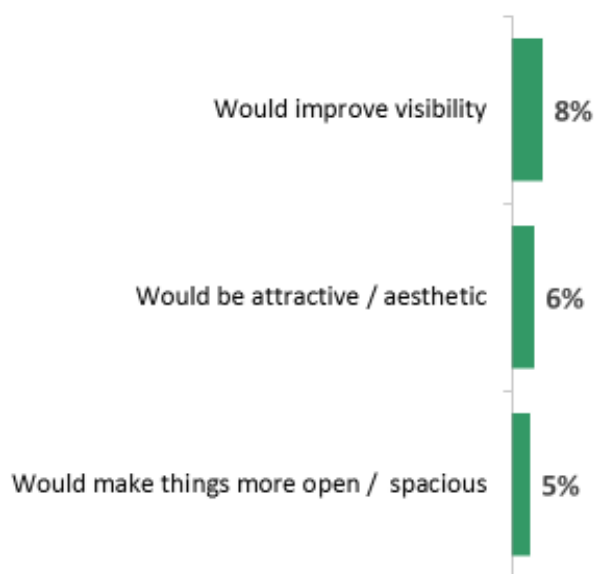
Base: All answering (348)

Consultees were then asked to provide any comments they had in their own words concerning the landscape options for the Wheatsheaf Junction proposals. These are reported in the next two charts. The first chart summarises the positive comments made and the second chart summarises the concerns raised.

17% of consultees commenting made at least one positive comment on the landscape options proposed. 8% commented that it would improve visibility, 6% believe they would be attractive and 5% believe it would make things more open / spacious.

Positive comments made on Wheatsheaf junction landscape options

POSITIVES (NET) – 17% of consultees made at least one positive comment



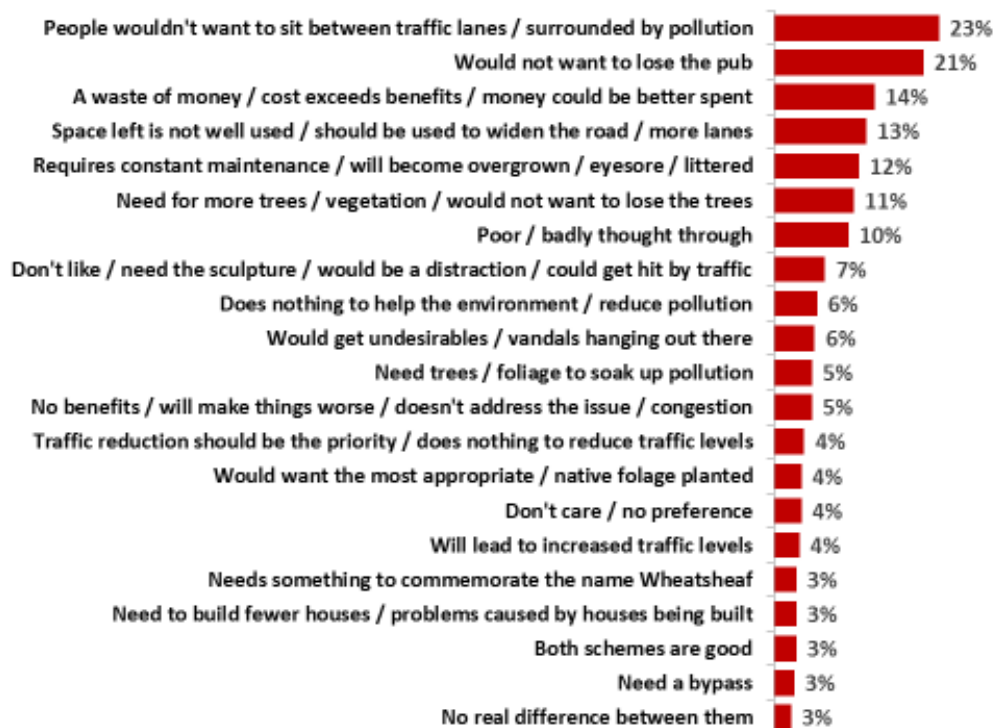
90% of consultees commenting raised at least one concern on the landscape proposals. A number of concerns were referenced but the most common are as follows:

- Perceptions the bench area would not be utilised as no-one would want to sit between traffic lanes nor surrounded by pollution – 23%
- A preference to not lose the Wheatsheaf pub – 21%
- Perceptions they would be a waste of money / money could be better spent elsewhere – 14%
- Perceptions space is not well used / should be used to widen road / create more lanes – 13%
- Perceptions constant maintenance would be required / become overgrown / littered – 12%

- A preference to not lose the trees / vegetation – 11%

Concerns with Wheatsheaf junction landscape options

CONCERNS (NET) - 90% of consultees noted at least one concern



L A K E
MARKET RESEARCH

Base: All answering (277)

Example verbatim comments made on the most common concerns of the seating being used amongst traffic and pollution, not wanting to lose the pub and better use of the space can be found below:

Multi stemmed trees or standard trees?? is that different options? In a couple of years, it will become a patch of weeds as it will not get maintained. All looks a bit silly to me. Nobody will want to sit there in the traffic fumes. A sculpture depicting the Wheatsheaf is likely to be a nonstarter, I assume that is nothing like the intended thing in the pictures.

I don't think this is a place many people will want to linger in as it will be surrounded by traffic noise and fumes.

I'd like to see as much space given to plants and trees as possible. I can't imagine many people would like to spend too much time sitting at the Wheatsheaf junction to make the seating area necessary.

A landscape area in the middle of a multitude of heavily congested roads is not an area anyone is going to want to sit and try and enjoy. Surely this could be used in a better way re road lay out if you really must knock down the Wheatsheaf pub which is an iconic landmark of Maidstone.

A229 Loose Road: Cripple Street / Boughton Lane junction Proposals

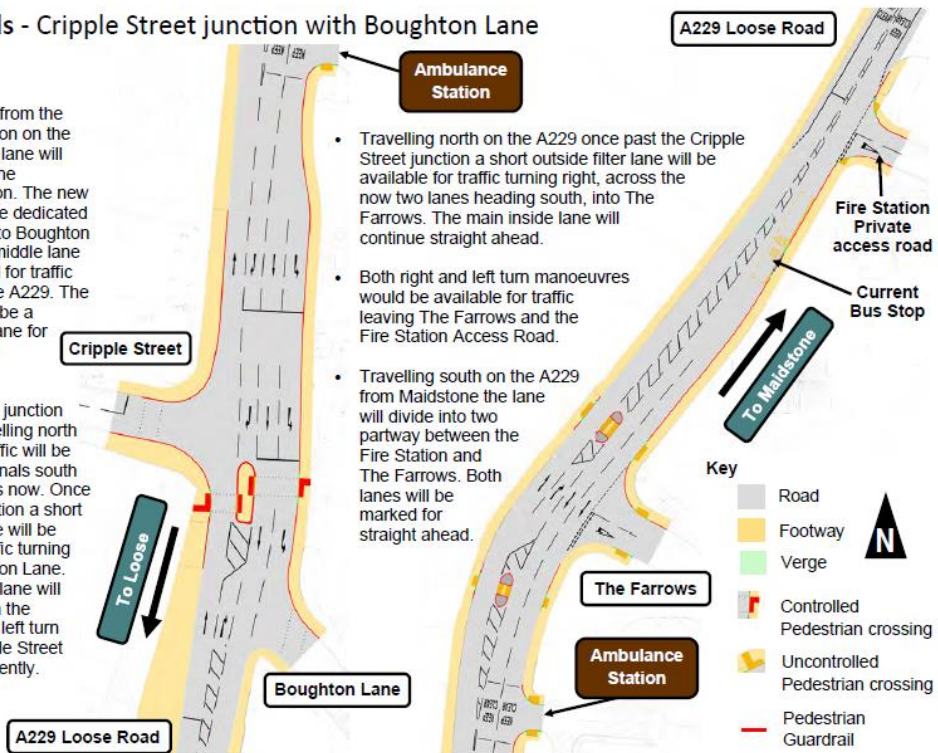
The fourth proposal featured in the consultation concerned the Cripple Street / Boughton Lane junction. A summary of the proposals featured in the consultation document can be found below or on the [Keep Maidstone Moving webpage](#):

The Proposals - Cripple Street junction with Boughton Lane

The Road

- Travelling south from the Ambulance Station on the A229, the inside lane will divide just past the ambulance station. The new inside lane will be dedicated for turning left into Boughton Lane. The now middle lane will be dedicated for traffic continuing on the A229. The outside lane will be a dedicated filter lane for turning right into Cripple Street.
- Approaching the junction from Loose travelling north on the A229, traffic will be held at traffic signals south of the junction as now. Once through the junction a short outside filter lane will be available for traffic turning right into Boughton Lane. The main inside lane will continue through the junction with the left turn option into Cripple Street available as currently.

- Travelling north on the A229 once past the Cripple Street junction a short outside filter lane will be available for traffic turning right, across the now two lanes heading south, into The Farrows. The main inside lane will continue straight ahead.
- Both right and left turn manoeuvres would be available for traffic leaving The Farrows and the Fire Station Access Road.
- Travelling south on the A229 from Maidstone the lane will divide into two partway between the Fire Station and The Farrows. Both lanes will be marked for straight ahead.



20

Traffic Signals

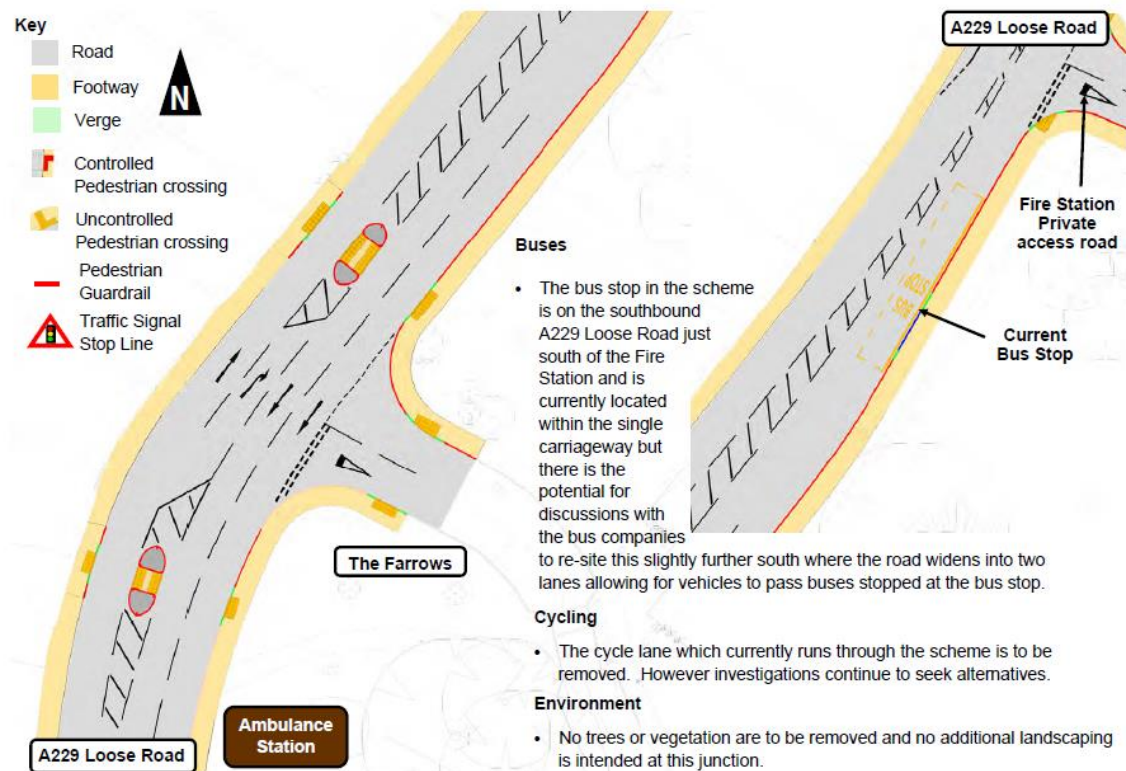
- The current traffic signals on the A229 north of Cripple Street will have the pedestrian crossing facility removed. The traffic signals will remain, although slightly north of their current location as well as the signals just south of the Cripple Street junction. This would allow for greater control of traffic flows to keep traffic moving.
- The current traffic signals on the A229 south of the Boughton Lane junction will have their pedestrian crossing facility removed. The stop line for traffic travelling north through the junction on the A229 will remain at its current location to allow for the turning circle of larger vehicles turning south out of Boughton Lane.

The Footway

- There will be widening in places in line with proposed new kerb lines. However, there is insufficient room to widen the footways the whole length of the scheme.
- Pedestrian guardrails will be added around the junction to discourage people crossing the road other than at the designated crossing routes.
- A new request pedestrian crossing will be created across the A229 Loose Road south of Cripple Street and north of Boughton Lane.
- Traffic signals will be co-ordinated to maximise pedestrian and traffic flow.
- The pedestrian crossings north of the Cripple Street junction, either side of The Farrows on the A229 Loose Road, will remain unchanged as shown on the plan on the opposite page.
- The pedestrian crossings on Cripple Street and Boughton Lane will remain unchanged.



21



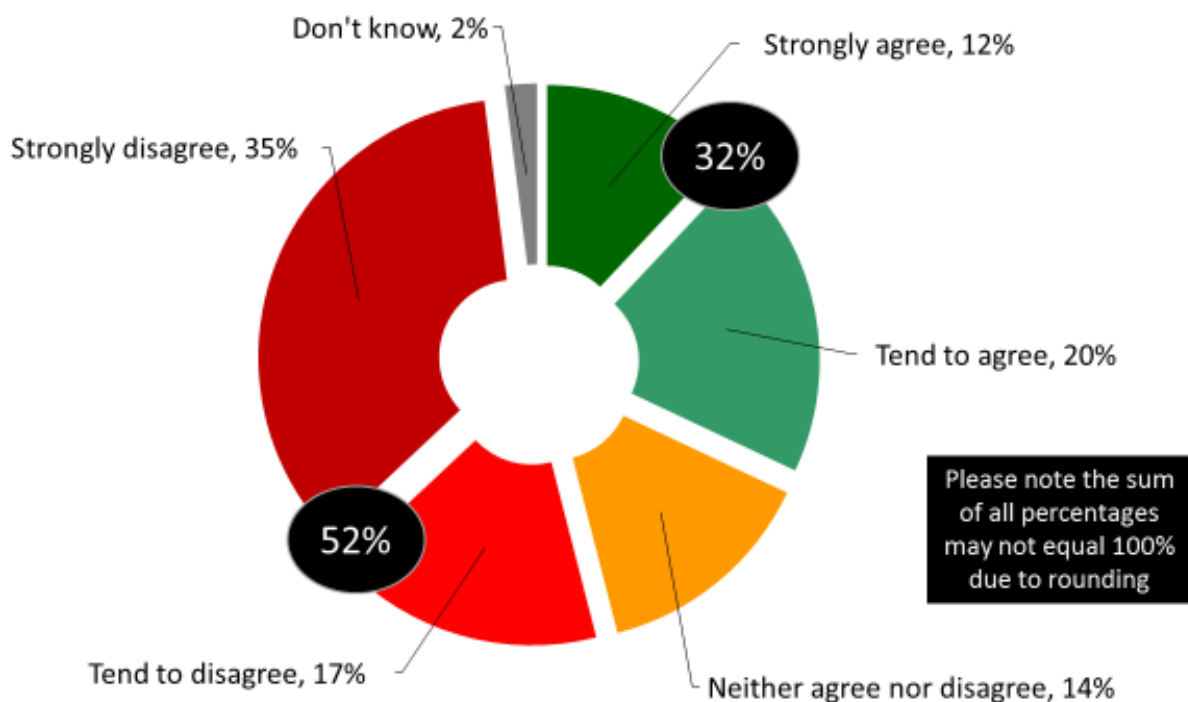
Agreement with Cripple Street / Boughton Lane Proposals

Consultees were first asked to indicate their level of agreement with the proposals outlined in the consultation document; on a five-point semantic scale. 186 of the consultees taking part in the consultation answered this question.

A higher proportion disagreed with the proposals for the Cripple Street / Boughton Lane at 52% compared to the proportion agreeing at 32%. Just over a third (35%) strongly disagreed with the proposals.

Agreement with Cripple Street / Boughton Lane proposals

186 Consultees responding



L A K E
MARKET RESEARCH

Base: All answering (186)

Subgroup significant differences:

Whilst base sizes are relatively low, there are significant differences in response as follows:

- A significantly higher proportion of consultees aged up to 49 **agree** with the proposals - 46% of 50 consultees in this age group.
- A significantly lower proportion of consultees aged 50 to 64 **agree** with the proposals – 30% of 56 consultees in this age group.
- A significantly lower proportion of consultees aged 65 and over **agree** with the proposals – 28% of 69 consultees in this age group.

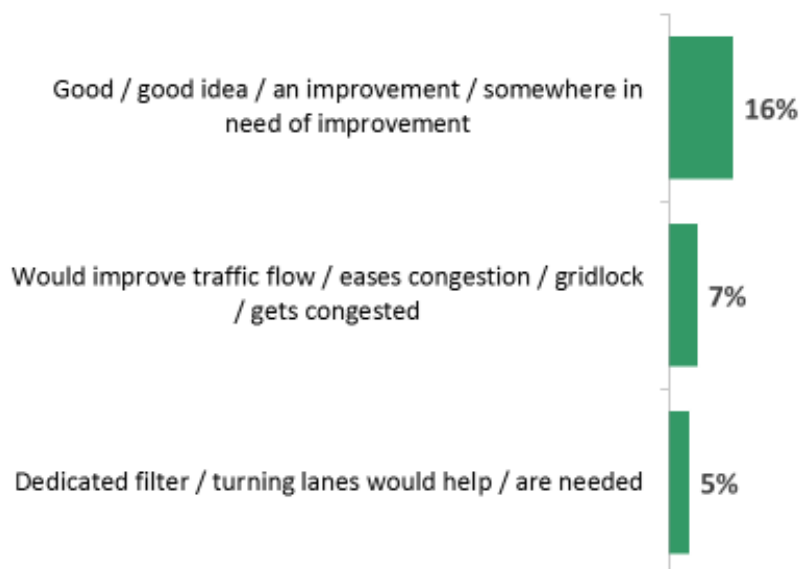
Comments on the Cripple Street / Boughton Lane Proposals

Consultees were then asked to provide any comments they had in their own words concerning the Cripple Street / Boughton Lane proposals. For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed consultees comments and have grouped common responses together into themes. These are reported in the next two charts. The first chart summarises the positive comments made and the second chart summaries the concerns raised.

25% of consultees commenting made at least one positive comment on the proposals. 16% commented that it is a good idea and an improvement to the current layout / structure. Just under one in ten (7%) believe the proposals would improve traffic flow / ease congestion.

Positive comments made on Cripple Street / Boughton Lane proposals

POSITIVES (NET) – 25% of consultees made at least one positive comment



L A K E
MARKET RESEARCH
Base: All answering (195)

88% of consultees commenting raised at least one concern on the proposals. A number of concerns were referenced but the most common are as follows:

- The proposals wouldn't improve matters / make things worse / cause more congestion – 26%
- Perceptions the turn into Boughton Lane isn't an issue / the proposal is unnecessary – 20%
- Need to think about pedestrians more / do not agree with changes to crossings – 18%
- Perceptions the Cripple Street junction / turning is an issue / needs improving – 12%

- Perceptions the traffic lights need changing / better phasing / synchronising – 12%
- The retention of bus stops will cause problems / and will need to be re-sited as suggested in the plans – 12%
- Perceptions the Farrows junction is difficult / need improving / the filter lane is too short – 10%.

In addition to the proposals specifically, Consultees refer to housing development (12%), and the need to encourage cycling (10%).

Concerns with Cripple Street / Boughton Lane proposals

CONCERNS (NET) - 88% of consultees noted at least one concern



L A K E
MARKET RESEARCH

Base: All answering (195)

Example verbatim comments made on the most common concerns of congestion, changes to the Boughton Lane turning and pedestrian crossings can be found below:

The biggest problem with this junction is the 3 way signalling requiring the main A229 traffic to be stopped for so long to allow for the side roads to complete their manoeuvres. If you sit at a red light at this junction, you'll notice for much of the time there are no cars crossing the junction at all. For safety, one set of lights can only change once the junction area is completely clear and this requires long gaps as the signals change.

Cripple Street, Boughton Lane and Loose Road all need safe controlled pedestrian crossings. All areas quoted have residential, commercial and schools with a vast amount of children using these roads to get to and from their daily routine.

There is currently a dedicated right turn into Cripple Street from the Wheatsheaf. There is no need for a left hand turn and the majority of traffic continues along the Loose Road. A lot of traffic travels from Cripple Street to Boughton Lane for school drop off. The main problem is exiting from Boughton Lane in rush hour. The existing yellow box isn't big enough and cars pass the traffic light heading towards the Wheatsheaf and therefore prevent cars leaving Boughton Lane.

If the object of the exercise is to keep Maidstone moving, then this junction, with its 3 phases does the opposite, causing adverse knock on effects for traffic on A229, particularly travelling south.

A20 Ashford Road junction with Willington Street Proposals

The fifth proposal featured in the consultation concerned the A20 Ashford Road junction with Willington Street. A summary of the proposals featured in the consultation document can be found below or on the [Keep Maidstone Moving webpage](#):

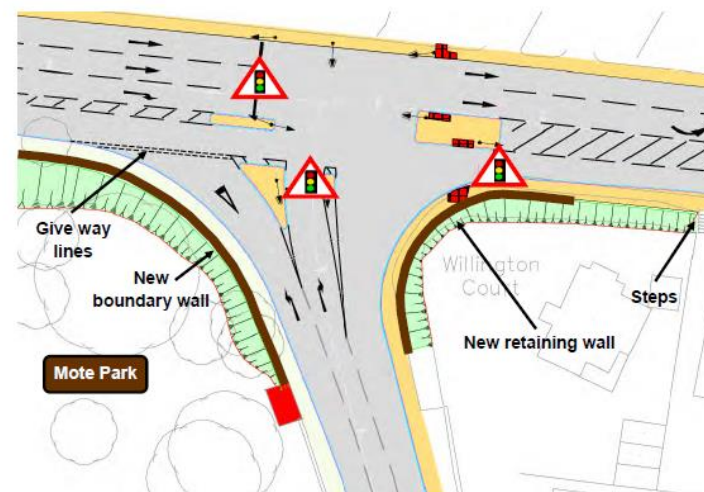
The Proposals - A20 Ashford Road junction with Willington Street

The Road

- Travelling east on the Ashford Road the lane would divide into two further back (west) from the junction than currently, with the inside lane for continuing east on the A20. The outside lane would divide in two with the now middle lane also for continuing east on the A20. Once through the crossing the two lanes on the A20 would filter down to one. The new outside lane would remain a dedicated lane for Willington Street.
- Travelling west on the Ashford Road there would be no change other than the upgrading of the traffic signals to incorporate a signalised pedestrian crossing.
- Travelling from Willington Street the inside lane would no longer be controlled by traffic signals but have give way lines instead. The outside lane would remain unchanged.



25



Traffic Signals

- The traffic signals turning left from Willington Street to the A20 would be removed and replaced with give way lines.
- The traffic signals east of the junction would be upgraded to become a request pedestrian crossing.
- The other two junctions; turning right out of Willington Street and the Ashford Road east would keep their current traffic signals.

The Footway

- The existing footway widths would remain the same.
- A new signalised pedestrian crossing facility would be installed to allow safe passage between the south and the north side of the A20 with the island in the middle being widened.

Cycling

- Advanced stop lines would be provided prior to the traffic signalised junctions for on road cycling. Further investigation will be undertaken on cycling provision requirements.

Environment

- The current ragstone boundary wall of Mote Park would be removed and rebuilt slightly further towards the park by approximately 4m. Where possible, the existing stones would be re-used. Approval would need to be given by Historic England on construction methods.
- A new retaining wall would be built on the opposite side of Willington Street. Details of the materials that will be used are still to be decided but it is the intention to at least face the wall in ragstone.
- The steps just east of Willington Court on the south side of the A20 would remain.
- We have yet to draw up landscaping proposals in detail. However, our emerging proposal is to remove some small trees, which would be replaced nearby. The current verge on the south side to the east of the junction would probably be removed and paved owing to the difficulty of maintaining it.



Image of current retaining wall

26

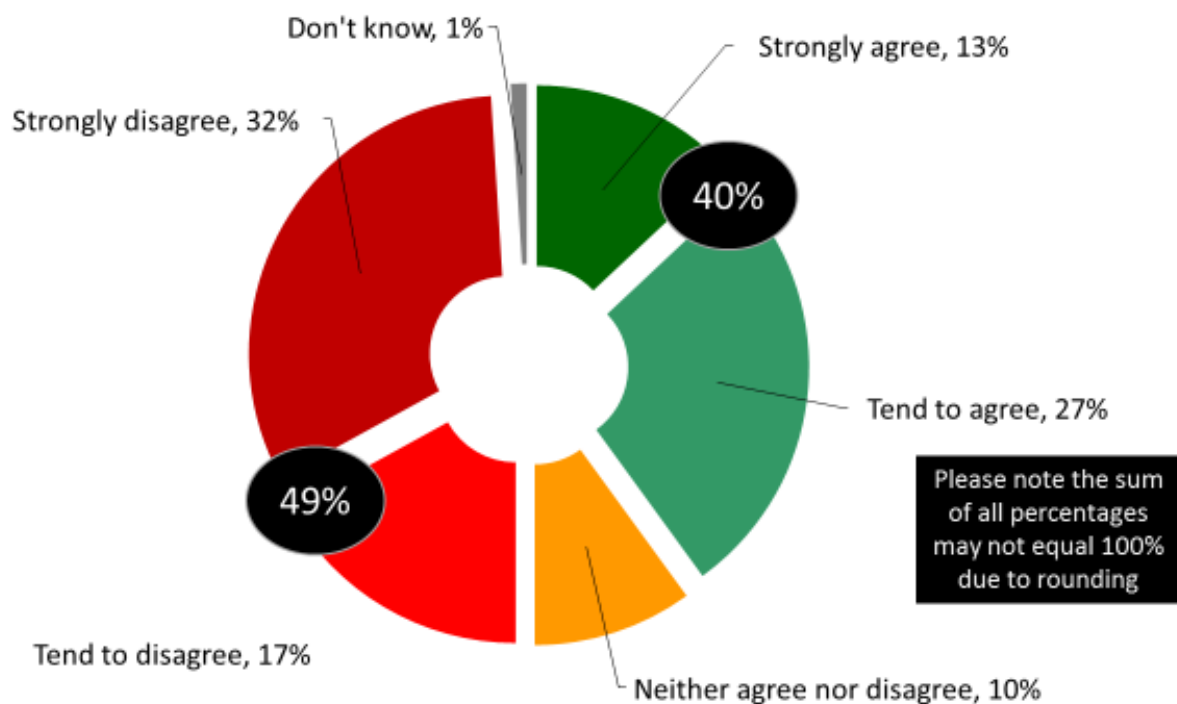
Agreement with A20 Ashford Road with Willington Street Proposals

Consultees were first asked to indicate their level of agreement with the proposals outlined in the consultation document; on a five-point semantic scale. 208 of the consultees taking part in the consultation answered this question.

A marginally higher proportion indicated disagreement with the proposals for the A20 Ashford Road junction with Willington Street at 49%, compared to the proportion agreeing at 40%. Just under a third (32%) strongly disagreed with the proposals.

Agreement with A20 Ashford Road junction with Willington Street proposals

208 Consultees responding



L A K E
MARKET RESEARCH

Base: All answering (208)

Subgroup significant differences:

Whilst base sizes are relatively low, there are significant differences in response as follows:

- A significantly higher proportion of consultees aged 65 and over **agree** with the proposals - 51% of 57 consultees in this age group.
- A significantly lower proportion of consultees aged 50 to 64 **agree** with the proposals - 35% of 57 consultees in this age group.
- A significantly lower proportion of consultees aged up to 49 **agree** with the proposals - 41% of 56 consultees in this age group.

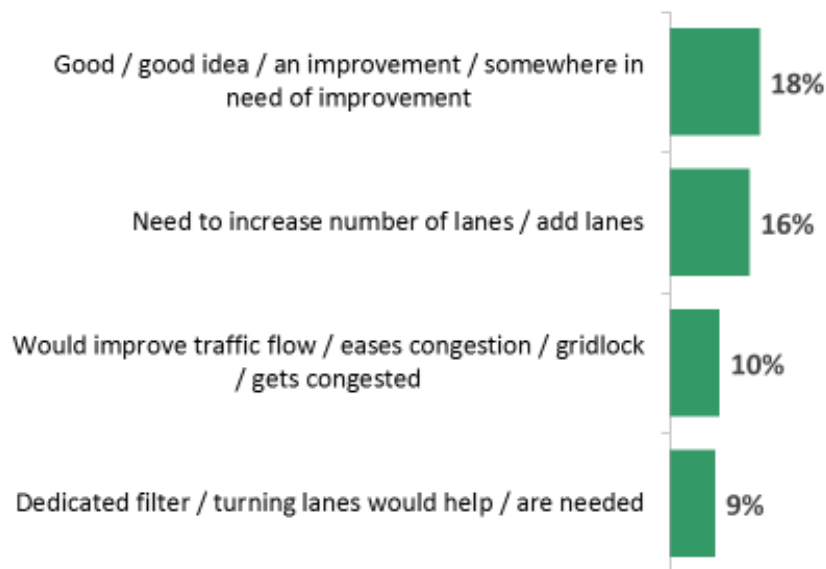
Comments on the A20 Ashford Road with Willington Street Proposals

Consultees were then asked to provide any comments they had in their own words concerning the A20 Ashford Road with Willington Street proposals. For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed consultees comments and have grouped common responses together into themes. These are reported in the next two charts. The first chart summarises the positive comments made and the second chart summaries the concerns raised.

42% of consultees commenting made at least one positive comment on the proposals. 18% commented that it is a good idea and an improvement to the current layout / structure. 16% believe the number of lanes should be increased and one in ten (10%) believe the proposals would improve traffic flow / ease congestion.

Positive comments made on A20 Ashford Road with Willington Street proposals

POSITIVES (NET) – 42% of consultees made at least one positive comment



86% of consultees commenting raised at least one concern on the proposals. A number of concerns were referenced but the most common are as follows:

- The proposals wouldn't improve matters / make things worse / cause more congestion – 33%
- Perceptions that congestion issues are caused by vehicles turning right into Willington Street and this needs addressing – 18%
- Perceptions two lanes going straight on aren't needed / two lanes needed for turning right –

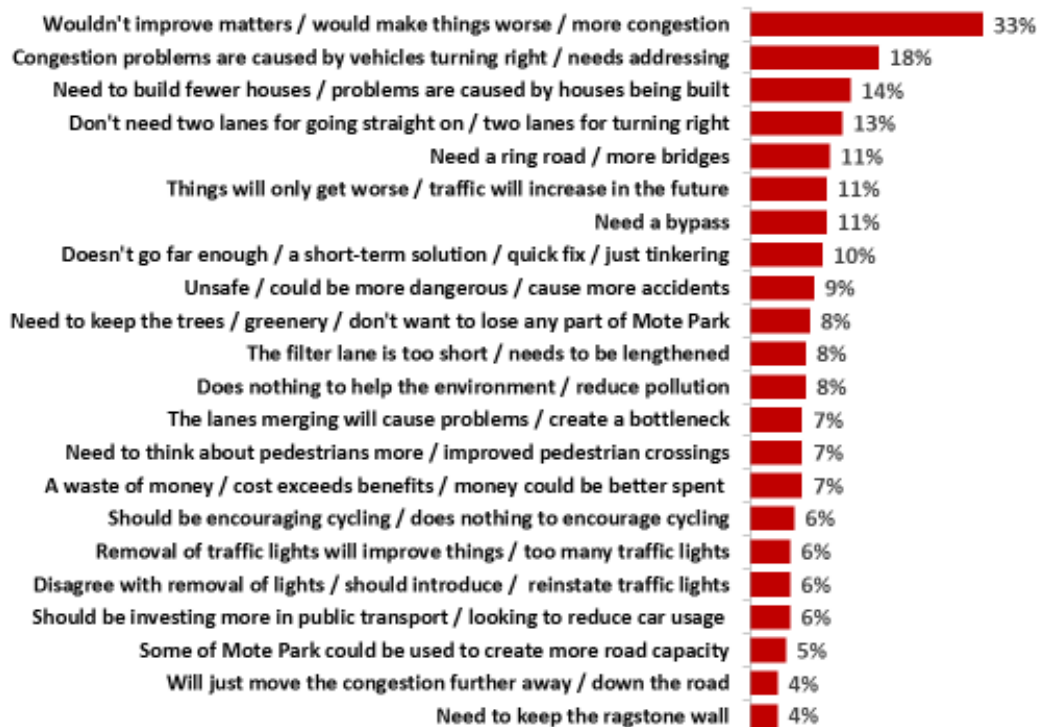
13%

- Perceptions of needing a ring road / more bridges – 11%
- Perceptions traffic will only get worse in the future – 11%

In addition to the proposals specifically, consultees refer to housing development (14%), and preferences for a bypass (11%).

Concerns with A20 Ashford Road with Willington Street proposals

CONCERNS (NET) - 86% of consultees noted at least one concern



L A K E
MARKET RESEARCH

Base: All answering (177)

Example verbatim comments made on the most common concerns of causing more congestion and the proposals not addressing the traffic issues turning right can be found below:

This proposal increases capacity for traffic carrying on east at this junction when actually the right hand turn needs the help. Queues in the easterly direction are caused by volume of traffic wishing to turn onto Willington Street. As the rest of the junction seems to be staying much the same with the exception of the left turn out of Willington Street, I don't see how this proposal is much of an improvement.

Traffic from Willington Street turning left onto Ashford road will now have a give way as opposed to a green light. This will slow traffic flow. I have never been stopped at a red light without traffic from the Bearsted direction crossing the junction.

There is a pinch point between the New Cut traffic lights and Willington Street which prevents traffic going along the A20 to Bearsted due to the majority of the traffic turning into Willington St. There is no requirement for two lanes to Bearsted which then has to reduce to one lane past the lights. Two lanes to turn into Willington St would reduce the length of the queuing traffic back to New Cut.

The proposal offers no improvement, as the current volume of traffic is far too great for this junction. Save the money until a suitable relief road can be funded from Langley to Hollingbourne. A signal controlled roundabout would be a better option, but current volumes are just too great.

A274 Sutton Road junction with Willington Street Proposals

The sixth proposal featured in the consultation concerned the A274 Sutton Road junction with Willington Street. A summary of the proposals featured in the consultation document can be found below or on the [Keep Maidstone Moving webpage](#):

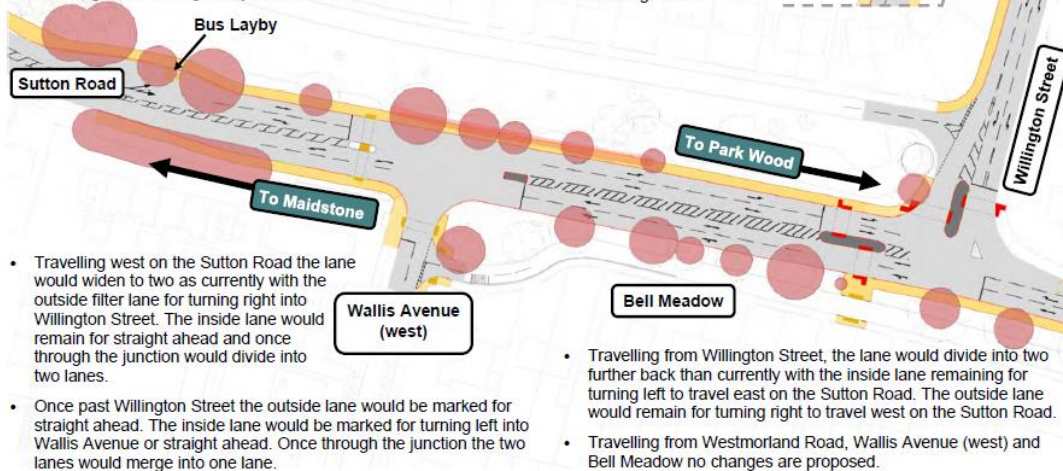
The Proposals - A274 Sutton Road junction with Willington Street

The Road

- Travelling east on the Sutton Road, a bus layby would be created shortly before the Wallis Avenue (west) junction. The lane would widen from this point onwards, dividing into two lanes with the inside lane for straight ahead and the outside lane for turning into Wallis Avenue.
- Once past Wallis Avenue the inside lane would remain for turning left into Willington Street with the outside lane continuing straight ahead as a single lane through the junction.

Traffic Signals

- All the existing traffic signals would remain in their current locations.
- The request pedestrian crossing would remain although there would be some slight changes to their alignment.

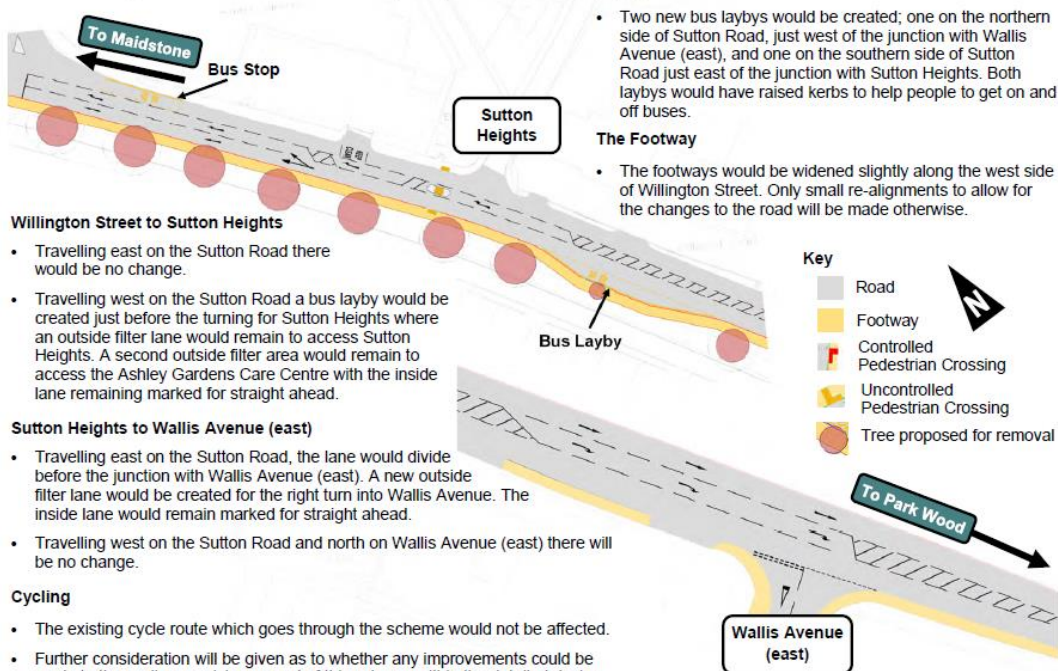


- Travelling west on the Sutton Road the lane would widen to two as currently with the outside filter lane for turning right into Willington Street. The inside lane would remain for straight ahead and once through the junction would divide into two lanes.
- Once past Willington Street the outside lane would be marked for straight ahead. The inside lane would be marked for turning left into Wallis Avenue or straight ahead. Once through the junction the two lanes would merge into one lane.

- Travelling from Willington Street, the lane would divide into two further back than currently with the inside lane remaining for turning left to travel east on the Sutton Road. The outside lane would remain for turning right to travel west on the Sutton Road.
- Travelling from Westmorland Road, Wallis Avenue (west) and Bell Meadow no changes are proposed.

29

Sutton Heights and Wallis Avenue (east)



Buses

- Two new bus laybys would be created; one on the northern side of Sutton Road, just west of the junction with Wallis Avenue (east), and one on the southern side of Sutton Road just east of the junction with Sutton Heights. Both laybys would have raised kerbs to help people to get on and off buses.

The Footway

- The footways would be widened slightly along the west side of Willington Street. Only small re-alignments to allow for the changes to the road will be made otherwise.

Key

- Road
- Footway
- Controlled Pedestrian Crossing
- Uncontrolled Pedestrian Crossing
- Tree proposed for removal

Willington Street to Sutton Heights

- Travelling east on the Sutton Road there would be no change.
- Travelling west on the Sutton Road a bus layby would be created just before the turning for Sutton Heights where an outside filter lane would remain to access Sutton Heights. A second outside filter area would remain to access the Ashley Gardens Care Centre with the inside lane remaining marked for straight ahead.

Sutton Heights to Wallis Avenue (east)

- Travelling east on the Sutton Road, the lane would divide before the junction with Wallis Avenue (east). A new outside filter lane would be created for the right turn into Wallis Avenue. The inside lane would remain marked for straight ahead.
- Travelling west on the Sutton Road and north on Wallis Avenue (east) there will be no change.

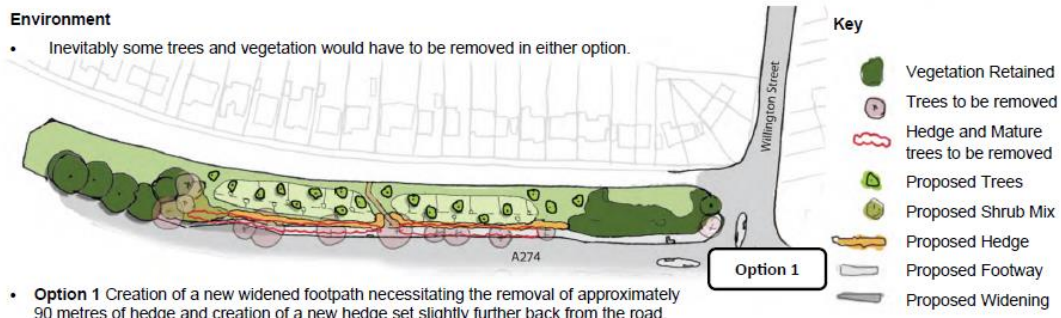
Cycling

- The existing cycle route which goes through the scheme would not be affected.
- Further consideration will be given as to whether any improvements could be made to the cycling provision as part of this scheme within the detailed design.

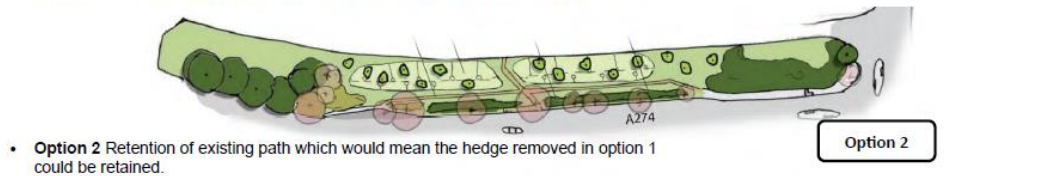
30

Environment

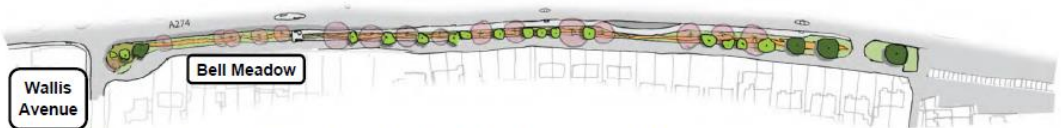
- Inevitably some trees and vegetation would have to be removed in either option.



- Option 1** Creation of a new widened footpath necessitating the removal of approximately 90 metres of hedge and creation of a new hedge set slightly further back from the road.



- Option 2** Retention of existing path which would mean the hedge removed in option 1 could be retained.



- Both options are the same for the area of land fronting Bell Meadow proposing a hedge with intermittent tree planting.

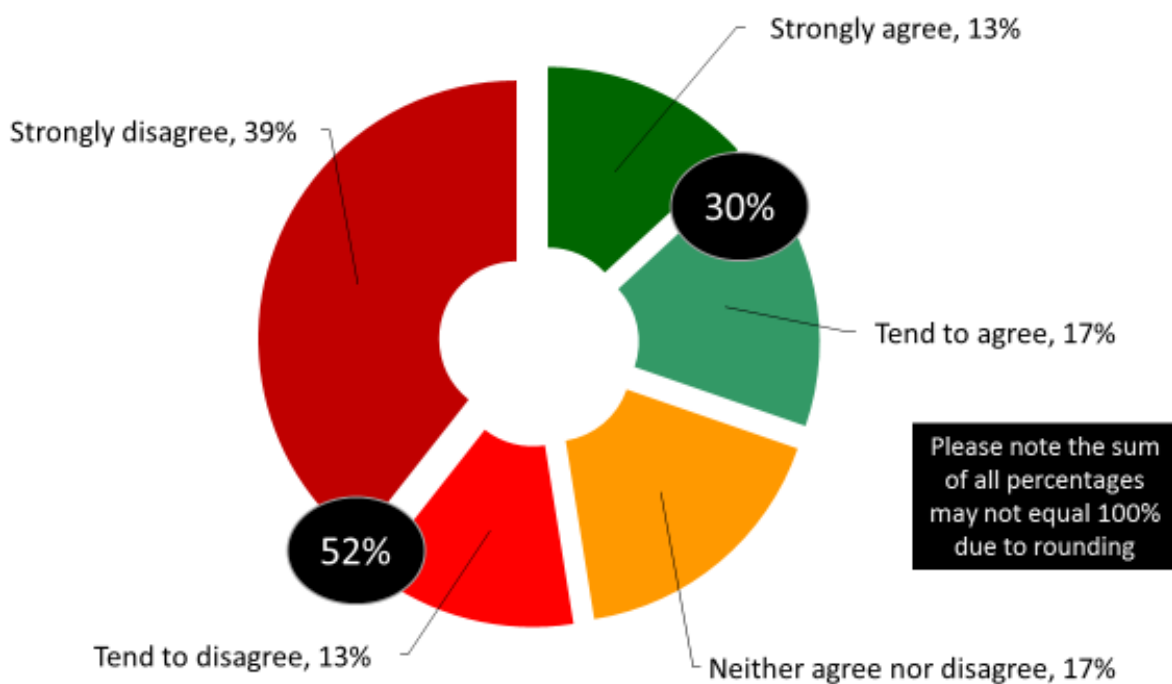
Agreement with A274 Sutton Road with Willington Street Proposals

Consultees were first asked to indicate their level of agreement with the proposals outlined in the consultation document; on a five-point semantic scale. 180 of the consultees taking part in the consultation answered this question.

A significantly higher proportion disagreed with the proposals for the A274 Sutton Road with Willington Street at 52%, compared to the proportion agreeing at 30%. Just under four in ten (39%) strongly disagreed with the proposals.

Agreement with A274 Sutton Road junction with Willington Street proposals

180 Consultees responding



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MARKET RESEARCH

Base: All answering (180)

There are no significant differences observed by demographic subgroups.

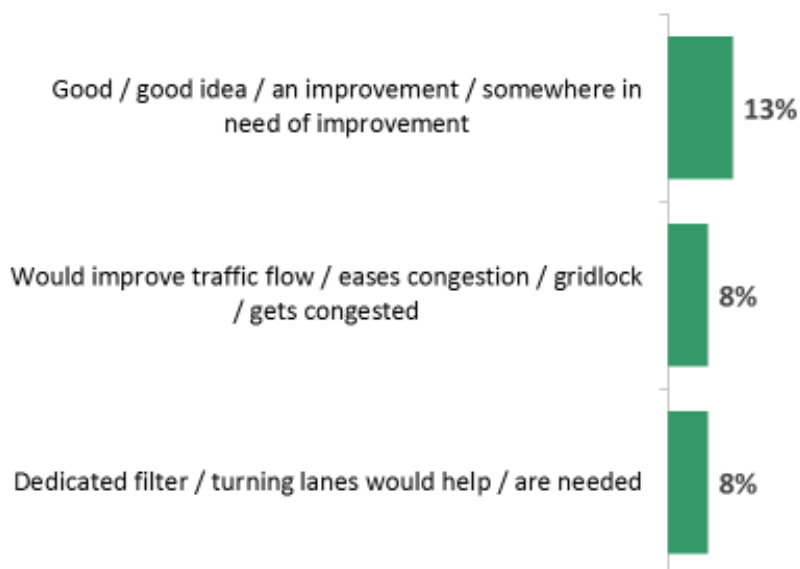
Comments on the A274 Sutton Road with Willington Street Proposals

Consultees were then asked to provide any comments they had in their own words concerning the A274 Sutton Road with Willington Street proposals. For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed consultees comments and have grouped common responses together into themes. These are reported in the next two charts. The first chart summarises the positive comments made and the second chart summaries the concerns raised.

22% of consultees commenting made at least one positive comment on the proposals. 13% commented that it is a good idea and an improvement to the current layout / structure. Just under one in ten (8%) believe the proposals would improve traffic flow / ease congestion and dedicated filter / turning lanes would help.

Positive comments on A274 Sutton Road junction with Willington Street proposals

POSITIVES (NET) – 22% of consultees made at least one positive comment



87% of consultees commenting raised at least one concern on the proposals. A number of concerns were referenced but the most common are as follows:

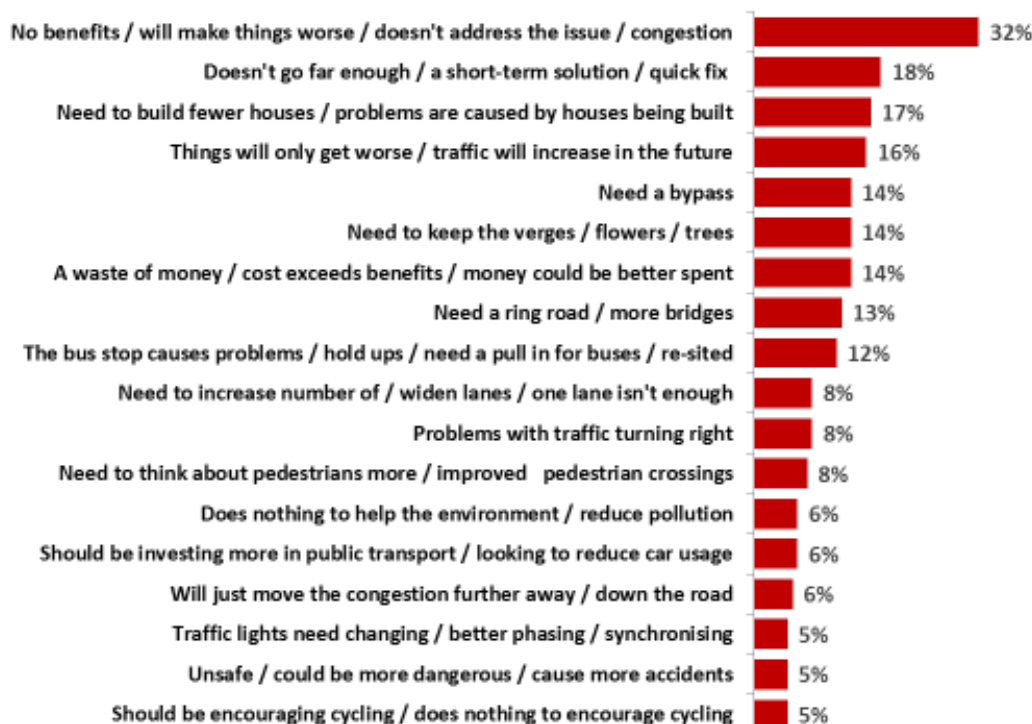
- The proposals would be of no benefit / doesn't address the issue / cause congestion – 32%
- Perceptions the proposals don't go far enough / a short term solution / quick fix – 18%
- Perceptions traffic will only get worse in the future – 16%
- A preference to keep the verges / flowers / trees – 14%

- Perceptions proposals are a waste of money / the cost exceeds the benefits / money could be better spent – 14%
- Perceptions of needing a ring road / more bridges – 13%

In addition to the proposals specifically, consultees refer to housing development (17%), and preferences for a bypass (16%).

Concerns with A274 Sutton Road junction with Willington Street proposals

CONCERNS (NET) - 87% of consultees noted at least one concern



L A K E
MARKET RESEARCH

Base: All answering (143)

Example verbatim comments made on the most common concerns of the proposals not addressing congestion issues and not going far enough can be found below:

Only a minor benefit of extending the filter lane for traffic turning right into Wallis Avenue west and for traffic turning right into Willington Street; the work/cost involved is disproportionate if not prohibitive; cannot see any real benefit.

The scheme does not provide sufficient capacity to justify itself. It will be full again in no time. Instead, traffic relief to the area should be provided through the long awaited and much needed Leeds Langley bypass scheme. This element of the package should be re thought.

The 'modest improvement' doesn't seem worthwhile for all the disruption the work will cause in the interim, particularly when the benefits will be obsolete within a year. What is needed is a Leeds relief road that allows better access to the M20 and thereby reduces the volume of vehicles needing to travel via Sutton Road / Willington Street. Unfortunately, this is one example where simple junction improvements won't be a

Short term solution for a long term problem. Not going to help traffic is going to increase due to the housing estates built or being built at Langley & Headcorn. Coming up Willington Street to the junction has not been solved as the current traffic lights block. Try a bypass.

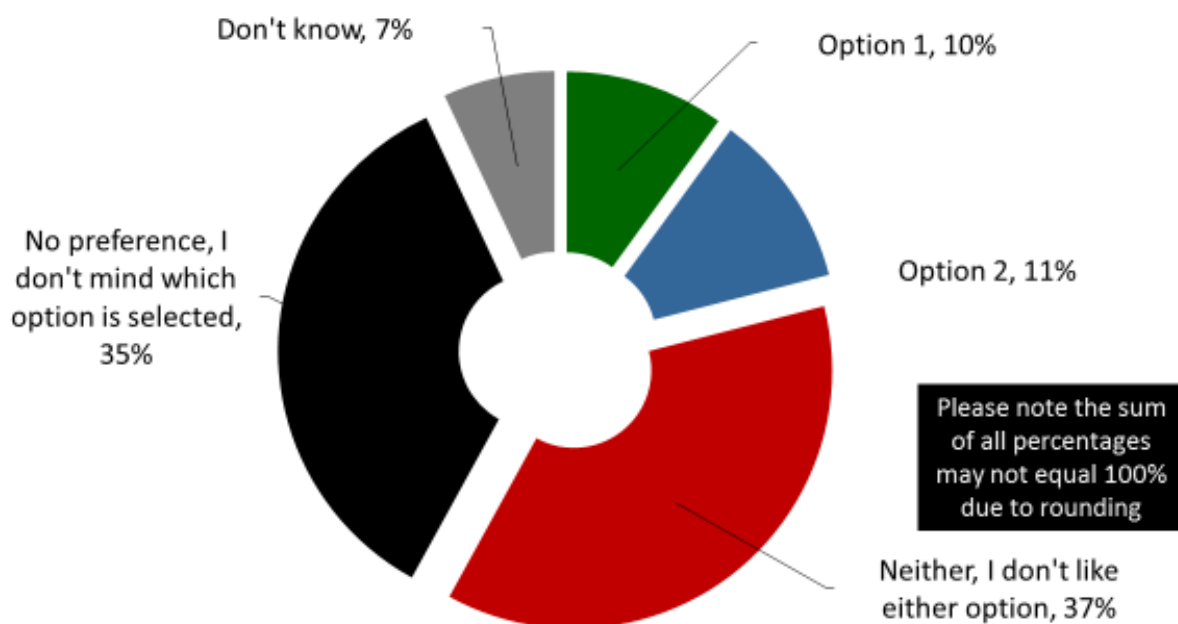
Preference for A274 Sutton Road with Willington Street Landscape Option

Consultees were then asked to indicate which of the two proposed landscape options they preferred, as well as any comments they had in their own words concerning the landscape options. For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed consultees comments and have grouped common responses together into themes. Response to the landscape options are reported in the next three charts. The first chart summarises preference, the second summaries the positive comments made and the third chart summaries the concerns raised.

175 of the consultees taking part in the consultation indicated their preference. Just over a third of consultees (37%) answering indicated they did not like either option. Just over a third (35%) indicated they did not have a preference out of the two options. Broadly equal proportions selected Option 1 and Option 2 but both proportions were low in comparison to the proportion who do not like either option.

Preference for A274 Sutton Road junction with Willington Street landscape

175 Consultees responding



Consultees were then asked to provide any comments they had in their own words concerning the landscape options for the A274 Sutton Road with Willington Street proposals. These are reported in the chart below.

Only 11% of consultees commenting made at least one positive comment on the landscape options proposed. Whilst the base sizes are very small, those selecting Option 1 commented on the provision of a wider footpath and those selecting Option 2 commented on not wanting the lose the existing hedge / trees. 9% commented that they did not have a preference between either landscape option.

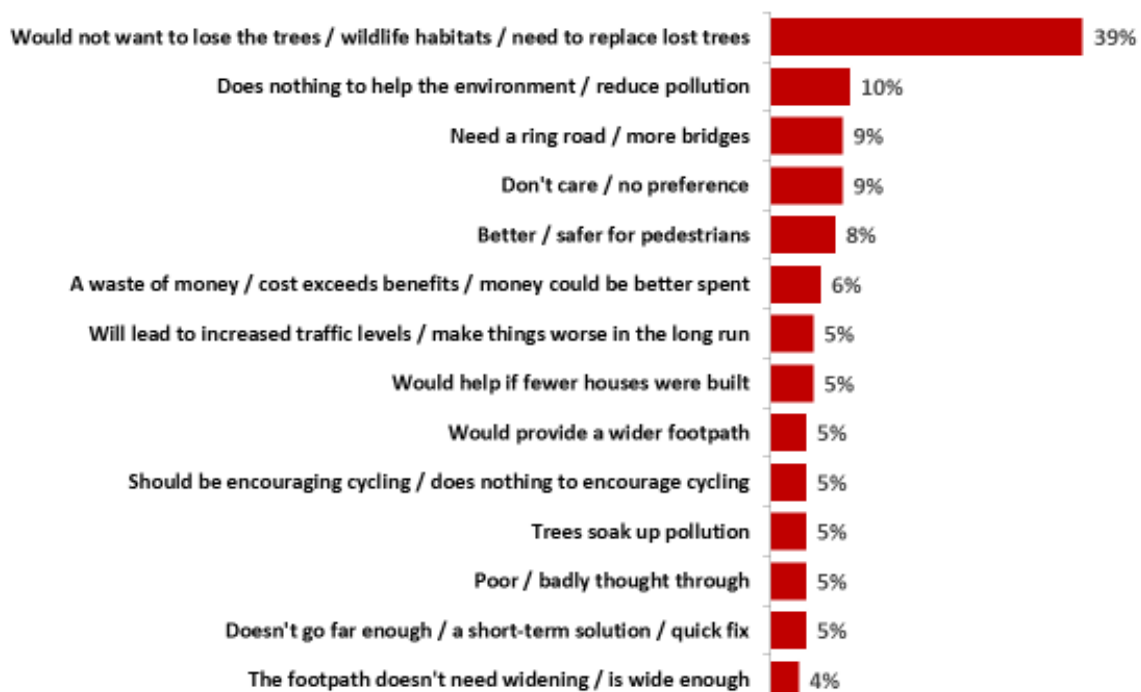
96% of consultees commenting raised at least one concern on the landscape proposals. A number of concerns were referenced but the most common are as follows:

- Preference not to lose trees / wildlife habitats – 39%
- The landscape options do nothing to help the environment / reduce pollution – 10%
- Perceptions they are a waste of money / money could be better spent – 6%

In addition to the proposals specifically, consultees refer to needing a ring road / more bridges (9%).

Concerns with A274 Sutton junction with Willington Street landscape

CONCERNS (NET) - 96% of consultees noted at least one concern



Example verbatim comments made on the most common concern of not wanting to lose trees / wildlife habitats can be found below:

The footpaths are already of a good size so do not need widening. Also, it is always better to keep existing hedgerows (which have established wildlife) rather than plant new ones which take a long time to establish.

WHY? Widening the junctions is not going to improve traffic movements, so no need to remove the hedges / trees.

There is no need to do anything with this junction. It does get congested at rush hour, no question, but anything done at this junction only moves the traffic problem a couple of hundred yards down the road. Removal of the cherry trees would not be tolerated.

I use this junction regularly and have never witnessed an issue with the width of the footpath. Seeing as the junction improvements don't seem to require a widened path, I'd prefer to retain as much of the existing vegetation as possible.

Overall comments on approach to reducing congestion

Consultees were then asked to provide comments on KCC's approach to reducing congestion in Maidstone. For the purpose of reporting, we have reviewed consultees comments and have grouped common responses together into themes. A number of consultees made comments relating to more than one theme and this is evident in the percentages reported for each theme in the chart below.

The majority of comments made did not reference the consultation proposals specifically. Just over four in ten (41%) commented there is a need to reduce house building / development in the area because of its impact on congestion. 36% referenced a need for approval of a bypass / ring road and 24% commented that there needs to be a focus on diverting traffic away from the town centre / not through it.

Comments concerning the proposals specifically focus on consultees concerns with regards to perceptions of them being a waste of money (18%) and not going far enough / too short term (18%). Open comments made supporting the proposals are relatively low at 7%.

Improvement and promotion of alternative / more sustainable means of transport, i.e. public transport, cycling and walking, is also referenced as an area of improvement (16% public transport, 15% cycling / walking).

Comments on approach to reducing congestion in Maidstone

