

## COUNCIL UPDATE 14.2021

### TRANSPORT BOARD

The key issues from the meeting on 14 December 2021 are below. The first three are designed to improve walking into the town centre.

- Changes to traffic signal timings, new traffic signs and road markings at Somerset Rd / North St are in detailed design.
- Improvements to existing signals at Somerset Rd / Mace Lane are in detailed design.
- Provision of formal pedestrian crossing withing existing traffic signal-controlled junction at Somerset Rd / Forge Lane are in detailed design.
- Further safety reviews to be carried out in 2022/23 at the Drivers roundabout.
- Improvements at Simone Weil Ave / A28 are in technical audit
- Flood Street / Forstal Bridge reconstruction in design for delivery 2022/23.
- Resurfacing work & work to reinstate traffic calming at The Street & Ulley Rd, Kennington to be carried out 1 February to 30 March 2022.
- Full depth reconstruction of carriageway Church Rd to be carried out Mersham 25 July to 31 August 2022.
- KCC have received funding from National Highways and DfT to carry out repairs and some improvements to Kingsford St, Mersham following problems with rogue HGVs using the road, these works are currently scheduled for the new year. *Note: after the meeting we raised the incident at the shop on 19th December and asked that funding was extended to cover repairs there and at the bottom of Old Rectory Close as well as Kingsford St. I have written to the new Brexit Secretary, Liz Truss and invited her to see the problems.*



- ABC will review the lorry parking in Ashford in the 6 months following the opening of the new truck stop; the results to be discussed at the June 2022 Transport Board meeting; reports of lorry parking to be made to [parkingcustomercare@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:parkingcustomercare@ashford.gov.uk)

## WHH

EKHUFT recently submitted a bid for £460 million to the government's new hospitals programme – vital investment to transform East Kent hospitals for the long term. They urgently need this investment to transform the buildings, the way services are delivered and most importantly, transform the quality of care and treatment for all patients.

I have supported the Trust by writing the following letter to make the case on behalf of Medway Council and KCC for this long overdue investment. It demonstrates strong and united support for the east Kent bid. The national process for assessing bids is underway and it is anticipated that a long list will be confirmed soon, with successful applications announced next Spring.



Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP

Via email  
[sajid.javid.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:sajid.javid.mp@parliament.uk)

Members Suite  
 Kent County Council  
 Sessions House  
 County Hall  
 Maidstone  
 Kent  
 ME14 1XQ

Direct Dial: 03000 418512  
 Email: [HO5C@kent.gov.uk](mailto:HO5C@kent.gov.uk)  
 Date: 2 December 2021

Dear Sajid Javid,

### East Kent NHS Transformation Programme

The Kent and Medway Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) are writing in support of East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust's (EKHUFT's) Expression of Interest for allocation of critical and vital capital funding under the government's Health Infrastructure Plan and New Hospitals Programme. Although we are a cross-party committee, we are united in our view that acute NHS care in east Kent is not sustainable in its current form and the case for investment is undeniable.

Leaders and clinicians across Kent and Medway are in no doubt that to delay capital investment in acute care will have dire consequences for east Kent residents, knock-on effects across the wider health and care system, and result in a worsening of the already apparent situation: not meeting waiting time targets in both A&E and planned care; a lack of capacity which leads to cancelled operations; and difficulty recruiting and retaining staff.

A significant part of east Kent's hospital estate is over 50 years old, has come to the end of its useful life and is no longer fit for purpose. The Kent & Canterbury Hospital and the Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother Hospital in Margate continue to provide clinical services from buildings originally built in the 1930s. Looked at against the backdrop of a health and care system that is in the process of recovering from the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the need for significant investment has never been more urgent.

If the Trust fails to secure adequate capital investment during this round of the HIP, there is a real danger that they will be forced into a series of inefficient, unsustainable and temporary emergency service moves that will serve only to paper over the cracks for a short time, rather than making the long-term and truly transformational changes that will bring huge benefits to staff, patients and the whole community.

This programme has been in discussion for over 20 years, with comprehensive and robust work undertaken over the last five years to develop a compelling investment case to safeguard our hospital services and the wider health and care system in east Kent for current and future generations - there is no easy or immediate plan B. To wait for another round of investment in a few years' time is not an option - the residents of east Kent cannot and should not wait any longer for the funding and clarity that they need and deserve.

Our committee implores you to treat EKHUFT's Expression of Interest with the urgency and responsibility it deserves.

Kind regards,

## NEW TRUCKSTOP

Here is the text of the briefing I gave to Baroness Vere of Surbiton, Minister at the DfT on 3 December 2021. It is on the issue of lorries parking and getting lost in Ashford and the surrounding villages. The Minister was in Ashford to open the new Waterbrook truck stop.

*The purpose of today is to show the state-of-the-art facilities available in Ashford. **But what will make drivers use the facility?** It is important truck stop use is optimised to stop HGVs parking in other parts of the Borough. When HGVs are looking for alternative parking places, they travel through nearby villages of Sevington and Mersham. Both actions impact amenity for residents.*

*There is a **signage issue** from the M20 and A2070 (both HE Roads) to the IBF and truck stops. I live very near to the truck stop and I see vehicles, turning into Church Road, Sevington (which is before the correct turning for the Truck Stop) and then finding other places to stop. I know the DfT are working with SatNav operators but there must be more that can be done.*

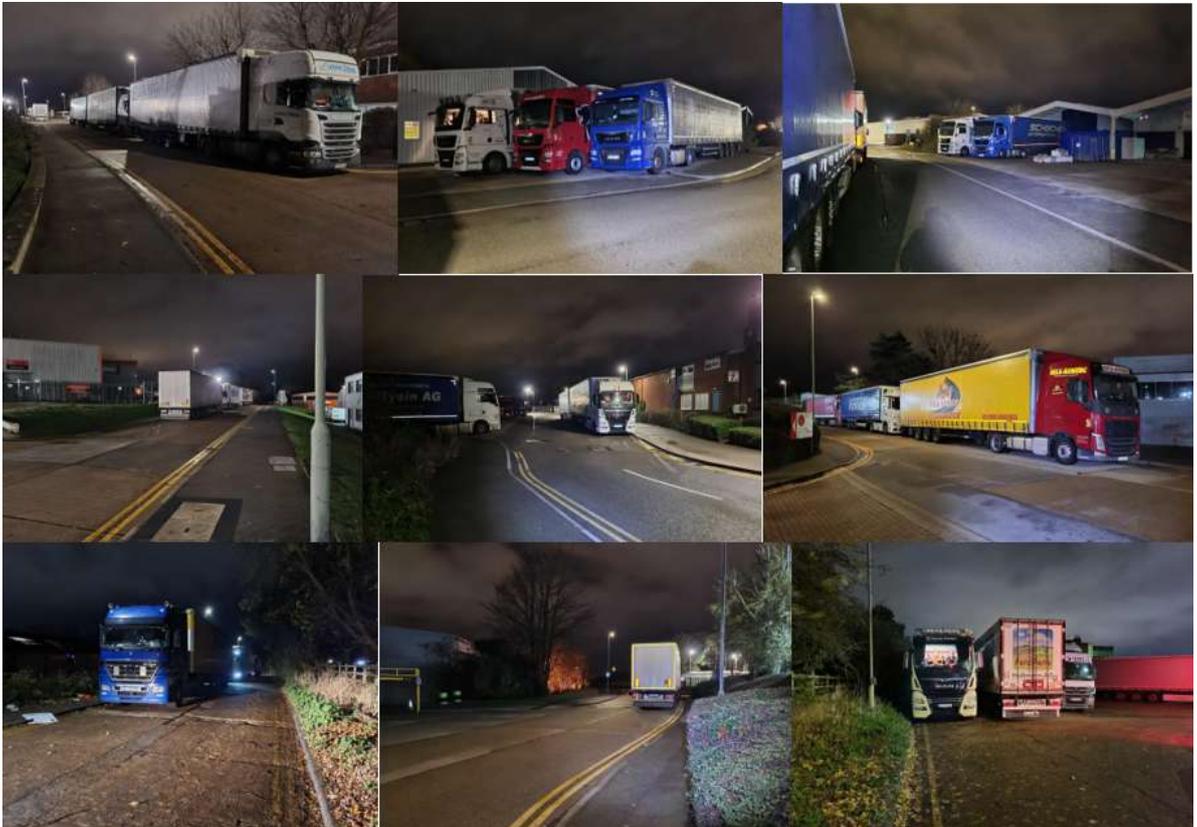
**Pictures of HGVs causing issues travelling through villages looking for the IBF/truck stops**



Current parking rules provide for the Borough Council to fine and clamp lorries parking in certain parts of the Borough. The fine is £165. **Parking restrictions only apply in limited places**, the A20 from Charing to Ashford, Wootton Road, Ellingham Ind Estate, Ashford Business Park and Orbital Trading Estate.

**These powers should be extended to residential areas near to Waterbrook and the IBF plus Cobbs Wood and Henwood Trading Estates in Central Ashford.** Cobbs Wood and Henwood have always been a problem and in the past ABC have tried to get both industrial estates added to their HGV enforcement order. At the moment, ABC can only enforce HGV's seen parking on the double or single yellow lines in these areas when Penalty Charge Notices are issued, but CEO's have no powers to move any vehicles on. **They need the power to move lorries on now we have the largest truck stop in Europe right here in Ashford.**

#### **Photos of HGVs parking elsewhere in Ashford**



We have Customs checks starting in January in Ashford and checks on phytosanitary checks coming in on 1 July 2022 and it will only increase tensions between residents and drivers if they do not know where to go and get in a muddle looking for truck stops and the IBF. **We must act now to ensure the best outcome in 2022.** Now that there are in excess of 1,000 legal and secure lorry parking places in Ashford for HGV's. This is the time to review the operation of Ashford's special off-street parking provisions and M20 signage to the IBF.



Picture at the Truckstop opening, L-R Cllr Clair Bell, me, Cllr Peter Feacey, Damian Green MP

## **SEVINGTON IBF**

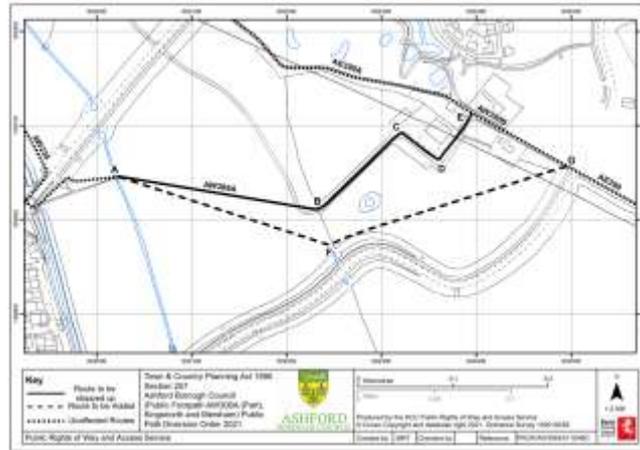
The updated Operating Management Plan (OMP) has been published, deadline for comments was 3 December 2021. The OMP states the operations will cease on 31 December 2025 and that responsibility for the site transfers from DfT to HMRC on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2022. It is expected that BECG and Mott McDonald will remain involved. Here are my submitted comments:

- 1. Para 1.1 refers that no HGVs are expected on site for DEFRA checks. However, the latest Border Operating model that ABC have seen suggests that the vehicles will arrive for documentary, identity and physical phytosanitary checks in July 2022. This is because they will need to present at the BCP with original export health certificates (EHC), common health entry document (CHED) and copies of commercial documents e.g. packing lists invoices.*
- 2. My understanding is the HMRC will start import customs checks from 1 January 2022, if this is correct this will increase movements in/out of the IBF.*
- 3. I do not agree that "there is prominent signage" (para 3.3). Sevington and Mersham villages are still having lorries seeking to access the IBF via inappropriate routes.*
- 4. Biodiversity improvements referred to are welcomed, I know there are plans for further biodiversity gain on land east of the IBF but a timetable on planting etc would be welcomed.*
- 5. The changes referred to mitigate the impact of noise on sensitive receptors is welcomed. Further details would be appreciated.*
- 6. I note the actions taken to monitor air quality and that would be available after 1 year of operation, can you advise if the data will be made public?*

Damian reported a meeting with National Highways when they promised improved signage to the IBF & Truckstop will start in the new year.

## FOOTPATH AW306A

Plans have been submitted to divert footpath AW306A shown below:



## FOOTPATH AU106

Diccon Spain and I are trying to work out how to get the hedges cut back on the "zig/zag" path to Eureka from Cemetery Lane / Bockhanger Lane. This will improve viability for pedestrians. KCC are only responsible when the brambles encroach on the path, its not is ABC's contract so it falls to Eureka the landowner who has been contacted.



## A28 PATHWAY



The brambles are growing on to the footpath on Canterbury Road south of the M20 bridge. KCC report the land is owned by National Highways. KCC are in contact with NH to get them to take action (it's a landowner responsibility).

## QUANTOCK DRIVE



This is a new dropped kerb put in by KCC in Quantock Drive on the footpath to Sainsbury's / Marks.

## NINE ACRES



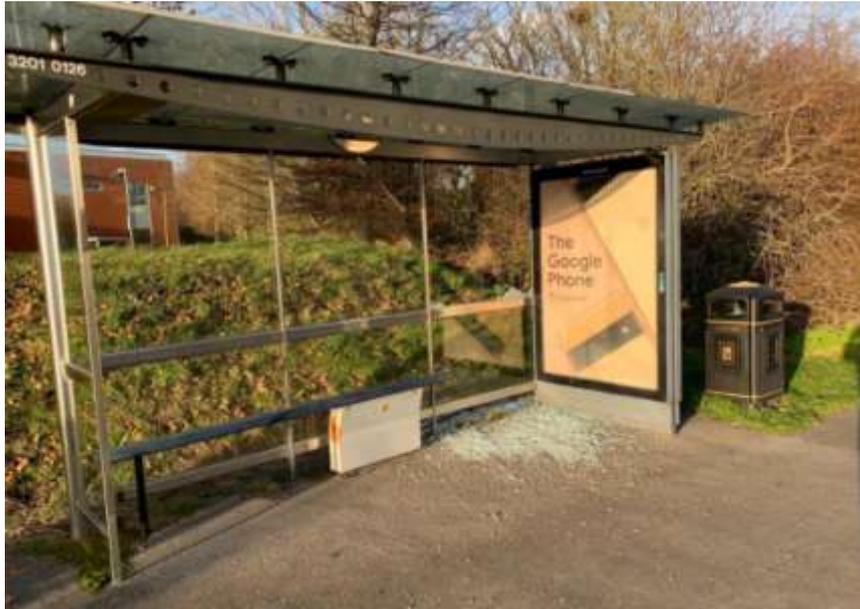
I have asked for a replacement bin to be installed at Nine Acres by ABC.

## FAVERSHAM RD LAYBY



I have asked ABC/KCC to investigate the sudden appearance of the "no-waiting" sign in Faversham Rd near the shops.

## TRINITY ROAD



The Community Council will approach ABC and KCC on how to tackle ASB and damage to bus shelter on Trinity Rd and elsewhere in the Borough from catapult action.

## BRIAR CLOSE



I have been asked to investigate whether a drop-down kerb can be installed between Briar Close and Bockhanger Lane. However, on investigation by KCC the land in question is private. Therefore, KCC cannot instal a drop kerb here.

## **INFILLING IN VILLAGES - POLICY HOU5**

The approval of 5 new properties to be built in Kingsford Street shows the council policy known as HOU5 put villages surrounding Ashford at risk of overdevelopment. The development appeared to me to be contrary to Council policy because:

- The proposed development lies outside of the Mersham boundary and would give rise to unsustainable new homes in the countryside.
- The development proposes an insufficient landscaping scheme and a layout that would be inconsistent with the surrounding grain and pattern of built development and local character. It would represent an incongruous and visually intrusive form of development that would detract from the visual amenity of the street scene and wider landscape.
- The proposed development would harm the setting of the neighbouring properties.

A review of the policy will now be considered to avoid a repeat.

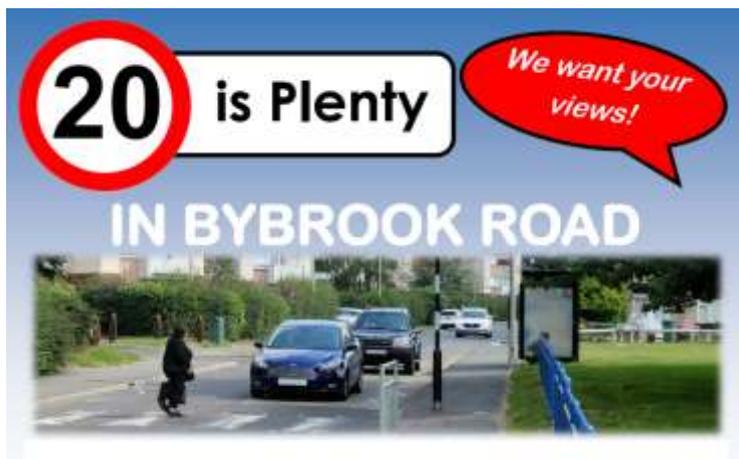
## **BOCKHANGER HALL**

It was agreed at ABC on 16 December that the Bybrook & Bockhanger Community Action Group and some members of the Community Council should have further meetings in the new year to reach an agreed position on how new community facilities will be shaped and operated. Issues the Group have with the emerging proposals from ABC are the size of the hall and the fact that the capital costs would be met by central government affordable housing finance sources.

The Group and the Community Council will agree is what they want and how it will be paid for if affordable housing finance sources are not going to be accessed. This is a significant piece of work which could take time, but the costs are budgeted by the Community Council. I have asked if the Government's Community Ownership Fund might help.



## **20 IS PLENTY**



ABC and the Community Council have both expressed support for the speed reduction measures proposed for Bybrook Road and the surrounding side roads. KCC made an application for funding on 17 December, the results of which will be known in January 2022. If this scheme is delivered successfully further areas for the speed reduction can be considered.

## **ORCHARD HEIGHTS ROUNDABOUT**

There are two pedestrian crossing points on the A20 in the vicinity of Orchard Heights and The Warren. Both are clearly signed to pedestrians by lowered kerbs but lack any warning signs for drivers. I have therefore been in contact with KCC Schemes Engineering Team who agree that pedestrian crossing warning signs would be of value. They have checked the crash data and there has been one slight injury following an incident within the last five years. The work will be completed in 2022/23.

## **VERGE PARKING**

Using the Highways Act (1980) KCC Highway Stewards have notices that they can place on vehicles that are parking on footways and verges causing damage. These can be successful as a deterrent. KCC avoid installing bollards unless absolutely necessary and usually it is to prevent a danger. Although parking on the verge will damage the grass it isn't necessarily a danger and it is KCC's prime objective to avoid danger on the highway and maintain highway safety. A register of verges for refurbishment is maintained for dealing with should funding become available but KCC's priority is always for sites needing work to prevent obstruction or hazards to safety above aesthetics.

## **COBBS WOOD HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRE**

KCC will continue to operate a booking system for customers. After a period of temporary closure to adhere to the government's Covid-19 restrictions,

KCC re-opened the Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs) on 15 May 2020 and used a booking system to safely manage access.

Whilst the booking system was introduced to help manage demand at the HWRCs in response to social distancing and revised workplace rules, it has provided operational benefit and received positive customer feedback. A public consultation was undertaken to gain views from the public and stakeholders on its future use. This exercise did not highlight any new information that would support a withdrawal of the booking system.

The Covid-19 pandemic remains a risk to both operational staff and the public. The system allows demand to be safely managed irrespective of any Covid restrictions which also providing on-going operational benefit to the service. Following its inception, the system has evolved and adapted to customer and operator/contractor feedback. The consultation has highlighted 'on the day' booking opportunities are required which will enhance the customer experience and to make the service more efficient and effective.

**Paul Bartlett**  
**Mersham, Sevington South and Finberry Ward & Deputy Leader, ABC**  
**Ashford Central Division, KCC**  
**Grosvenor Hall Ward, Kennington Community Council**  
**Sevington South Ward, Sevington with Finberry Parish Council**  
**0773 929 3502**  
**[paul.bartlett@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:paul.bartlett@ashford.gov.uk) or [paul.bartlett@kent.gov.uk](mailto:paul.bartlett@kent.gov.uk)**