

COUNCIL UPDATE 7/2021

BROCK

Operation Brock legislation was put in place in 2019 in preparation for a potential no-deal departure from the EU and then updated in 2020 in preparation for the end of the EU transition period.

Current legislation, which expires on 31 October 2021, includes provisions requiring heavy commercial vehicles (HCVs) (goods vehicle exceeding 7.5 tonnes) heading for Dover and the Channel Tunnel (the Short Straits) to **proceed only by designated routes** and enables a £300 penalty to be applied to any vehicles breaching those requirements.

It also includes provisions requiring hauliers to ensure they are border-ready before setting off for the Short Straits, including possession of a Kent Access Permit (KAP) and powers enabling the prioritisation of HCVs carrying a strictly limited range of goods to by-pass queues should significant disruption occur.

A consultation puts forward proposals to (i) remove provisions relating to the end of the EU transition period, and (ii) make permanent remaining provisions relating to traffic management, so that Operation Brock can continue to be an effective traffic management response plan in the future. It will only be used in the event of significant disruption at the Short Straits crossings.

The consultation period began on 26 May 2021 and will run until midnight of 20 June 2021. Please send your response OperationBrockSIs@dft.gov.uk. It is my view that the DfT should retain the right to fine lorries using inappropriate routes and fine them £300 due to the impact lorries using inappropriate routes has on residents.

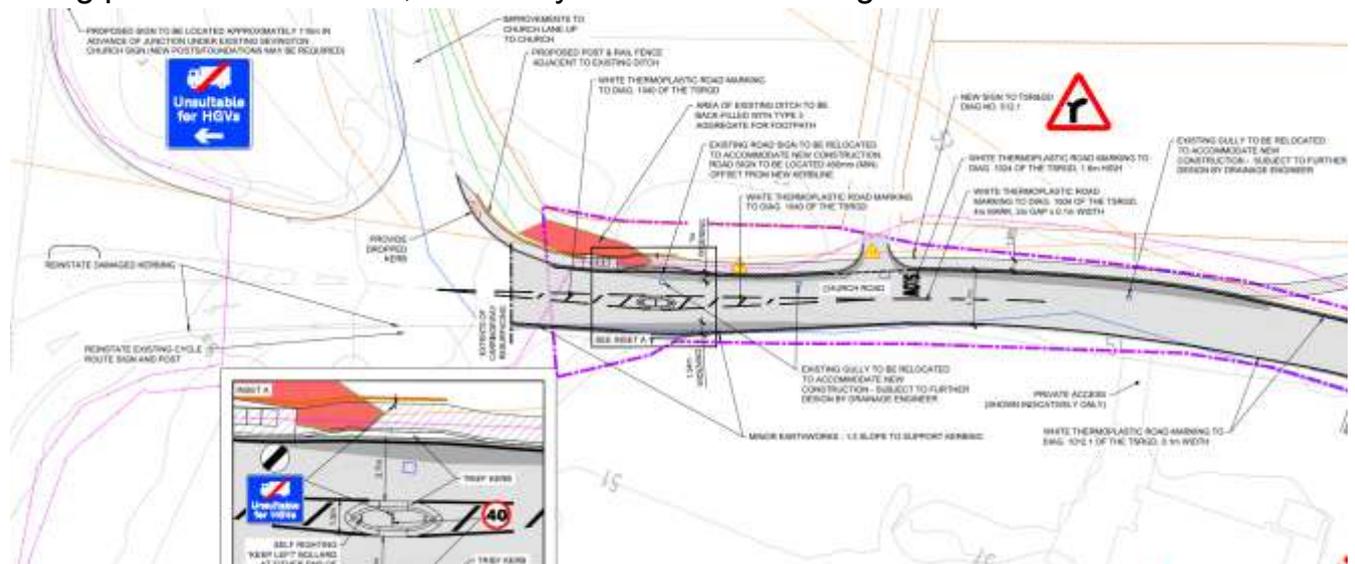
This consultation gives us a further opportunity to advise the "powers that be" that HGVs do use (or attempt to use) inappropriate routes to access the IBF (via Kingsford St). I'm not entirely sure that a £300 fine creates enough pain to prevent this (it might do but we do not know how many more HGVs would "give it a go" without the fine). But we need the fine to continue as it is another weapon in the armoury, it is also an opportunity to remind decision makers that lorries using inappropriate routes is still going on.

HGV UPDATE

Highways England have been asked by KCC and ABC to contact the hauliers responsible for explanations as to why they are trying to accessing the IBF via Mersham. ABC want information including photos loaded on www.ashford.gov.uk/Brexit so the offending hauliers can identified and details passed on to the correct authority. Separately, Highways England are

reviewing the M20 signage and this is a further reason they need to speak to hauliers who are getting it wrong. It could be that the bad information on directions is being issued by one party (previously it was the leaflets issued by the Eurotunnel Kiosk) if Highways England can identify the source of the misunderstanding then action can be taken. Finally, the problem could be out of date satnavs and there is a team at Highways England who work with satnav companies so they have the correct data and postcode (TN25 6GE) on their systems.

Street furniture to dissuade lorries from entering Church Road, Sevington is being put in. If this works, KCC may consider that being used in Mersham.



HIGHWAYS UPDATE

1. Hythe Road closures from railway bridge past Norton Knatchbull to Church Road traffic signals 27 July 2021 to 4 August 2021 for resurfacing.
2. Hythe Road (A20) resurfacing from Bockham Lane to 40mph sign at Sellinge programmed for June 2021.
3. Rothbrook Drive footway resurfacing to be designed and programmed.
4. Investigation and analysis of crash data to develop potential safety improvements at Somerset Road junction with North Street and Somerset Road junction with Mace Lane and the Drivers Roundabout.
5. Provision of formal pedestrian crossing within existing traffic controlled junction at Somerset Road junction with Forge Lane.
6. SGN works at The Pasture, Kennington from the junction with Meadowbrook Road to outside number 14, 26 July to 13 August 2021.

STATION LIGHTING

ABC have had a company called Design for Lighting undertake a survey of the Station underpass (between the station car parks towards the designer outlet) as part of the regeneration of the underpass. Additional lighting is being

installed and ABC are currently working closely with Network Rail so this can be carried out later this year. Network Rail have also got to carry out some minor structural repairs and will be installing a new power supply to a cabinet on the wall at one end of the underpass. Engineers will see if they can get a couple of the old lights up and running for now just to try and make it as safe as possible.

FORSTAL BRIDGE, MERSHAM



KCC were asked if the bridge could not be widened, and the alignment straightened no more than absolutely necessary. This is so there is still a “pinch point” to cause traffic calming on the entrance to the village. It is hoped land take is minimised and damage to, and loss of, trees avoided. The new bridge should be constructed to take into account the setting amongst grade 2 listed properties. Traffic calming measures are expected to be provided either side of the bridge to help remind drivers they are in an area with pedestrians because the pub and the school are just up the road.

IBF

The bridleway around the southern part of the IBF opened on 30 May 2021, Highfield Lane opened on 4 June, ahead of the scheduled opening date of 1 July. The bridleway from Highfield Lane to Blind Lane should open soon. Please note that short closures of Highfield Lane cannot be ruled out as the telegraph poles are to be taken down. I have asked if they can be used for

the barn owl nesting project at Waterbrook, but may need help in moving them!



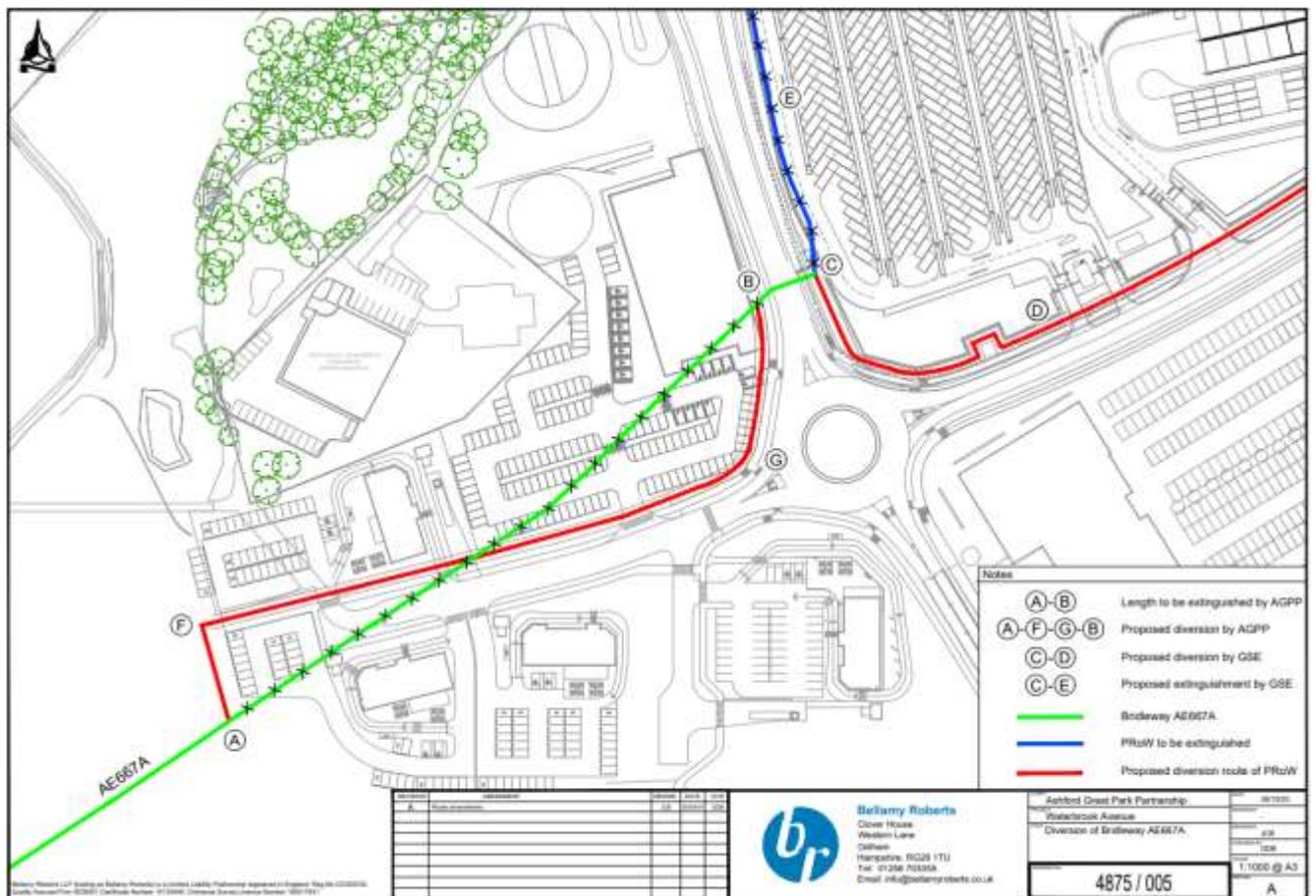
The planting scheme for the boundary running south from the corner of Kingsford Street, down Highfield Road is a good mix of native species that will create a thick block of foliage although the proposed willow may struggle initially in dry periods. Kent Wildlife Trust would like to see more thorny species such as Blackthorn because they are more valuable from a biodiversity perspective. Work has been carried out to reinstate the hedge along Church Road.



There is also a need to reinstate the hedge bordering Kingsford Street. In many places it is very poor and in others, completely removed. A thicker hedge and reinstatement would go some way to obscure the lights, which are clearly very visible from residents' properties in Kingsford Street.

FOOTPATH AE667A, WATERBROOK

An application has been made by the landowner, Ashford Great Park Partnership, to divert part of Public Bridleway AE667A. A planning application (reference: 18/00098/AS) has been submitted for a retail development, through which the current legal alignment of Public Bridleway AE667A runs.



Please send your comments to Emma.Peters2@kent.gov.uk by 2 July 2021.

SEVINGTON CHURCH

Work is close to completion on the new car park and new gate to the churchyard.



HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING CENTRE

Additional booking slots became available from 7 June 2021 increasing the county-wide slots from 39,7660 to 46,400. The April 2021 slots available at Cobbs Wood was 375 slots per day of which 89% was used. Also from 7 June 2021, half hour time slots will be introduced and a reduction in the three-day lead time for booking to allow residents to book the following day should slots be available. Opening hours will be extended to 6pm on Wednesday when planning approval is given for later opening. Once all government restrictions have been lifted consideration will be given by KCC as to whether the booking system will be retained.

COVID-19 TESTING SITES

Home testing kits are now widely available at hundreds of pharmacies and workplaces across Kent and can also be ordered online and delivered to your door. As a result of all the different ways to access testing, and a reduction in the number of people choosing to come and get tested in one of KCC's testing sites, a decision has been made to reduce the opening times from the beginning of June. The testing centres will stay open, but some operating hours are being reduced in line with the number of people using them. From Tuesday 1st June until Wednesday 30th June 2021 the following changes will be taking place to opening times of symptom free testing sites in Kent:

Monday – CLOSED

Tuesday - 9am-2pm
Wednesday – 2pm-7pm
Thursday – 9am-2pm
Friday – 9am – 7pm
Saturday – CLOSED
Sunday – 9am – 7pm

As pubs, restaurants, gyms and events are now open again it is vitally important that people continue take a test twice a week, even if they have been vaccinated, just to check whether or not they are unwittingly carrying the virus. One in three people show no symptoms of COVID-19 and regular testing will ensure we put a stop to the spread of the virus.

ZERO CARBON

ABC are keen to understand how they can best work with residents, business and local organisations to reduce carbon emissions across the borough. Everyone can play a part in tackling climate change, by making personal changes in the way we live or work, or as a business or organisation thinking about products, services and processes and how to reduce environmental footprint.

ABC are interested in your views, what you are already doing or would like to do to reduce your carbon emissions. This is to enable ABC to understand what are the highest priorities and how they can enable everyone to contribute towards climate change.

To sign up to the consultation which runs from June to October 2021 visit <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/environmental-concerns/carbon-neutral-agenda/green-agenda-focus-group-sign-up-form>

DOMESTIC ABUSE

KCC has welcomed the government's landmark Domestic Abuse Act which gives victims and survivors of domestic abuse and their children greater protections under law. The new Act means that councils will have the legal duty to support adults and victims fleeing their homes in safe accommodation and supports access to essential support services such as counselling or therapy services to both adults fleeing and their children. Since 2017 Kent County Council has worked with Partners to commission the Kent Integrated Domestic Abuse Contract (KIDAS) which provides help for survivors across both community and accommodation-based support and continues to work with partners to build, develop and maximise the support available to those experiencing abuse.

Domestic abuse affects over 2 million people a year in England and Wales, which equates to 75,000 to 80,000 adults in Kent and Medway, and makes up 15% of all crime across the region. The Act defines the multiple and varying

ways domestic abuse can be committed by perpetrators, and is inclusive of controlling and coercive behaviour, financial abuse, and emotional abuse. To access specialist Domestic Abuse support through KIDAS please call Victim Support 0808 168 9111 or visit <https://www.domesticabuseservices.org.uk/>, where you can also find information, resources.

HANDHELD RADIOS

New handheld radios were distributed to shops, leisure premises and other businesses in Ashford over the weeks leading up to the 17 May, as part of the ongoing work of the town's crime reduction partnership, Ashford Partnership Against Crime (APAC). The radio network which allows shops, pubs and clubs to instantly report anti-social behaviour to each other, the council's CCTV control room and in turn the police. Individuals who cause repeated problems for businesses can then be flagged to officers in case offences have been committed, or barred from the premises of all of the businesses in the scheme. Often preventing crimes from occurring, it also assists in the arrest of offenders, for example by ensuring that suspects can be tracked by CCTV and stopped by police. Business owners and managers interested in the work of Ashford Partnership Against Crime and joining can find out more at www.ashfordpartnership.org.uk

WEST KENT HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Repton Park is a new accommodation for people over 55 looking to downsize or move to a more accessible property. One and two bedroom secure and accessible apartments are available with on site parking. A communal lounge, kitchen and garden is available for social events. Those interested need to register on kenthomechoice.org.uk and complete an application. Let West Kent Housing Association know so they can keep an eye on the applications by calling 01732 749400 or email help@wkha.org.uk.

TESCO COMMUNITY GRANTS

Registered charities, voluntary and community organisations, schools, parish/town councils and other not-for-profit organisations can apply for grants of £500, £1,000 or £1,500 from Tesco's. They are particularly keen to receive applications from Kent organisations for the following themes:

- Food Poverty - Projects must support food poverty, which could be holiday hunger clubs, school breakfast clubs, food banks, community growing projects that share produce, community food share initiatives and cook and eat clubs etc.
- Stronger Start – Children and Families: focus upon support for children and families. This a wide-reaching focus but the project must align with this wider programme theme of facilitating a 'Stronger Start'.

Visit <https://tescocommunitygrants.org.uk/> for more information.

CROWDFUNDING

KCC will be proposing and allocating pledges over the next couple of weeks for the first tranche of community projects which are using the platform. Each project is assessed using the applicant's project pitch/application against KCC target outcomes.

KCC will fund up to 50% of the crowdfunding target but not more than £20K. For Crowdfunding it is important that the project can demonstrate a range of backers and the more it can raise through multiple backers the stronger the project. Projects need to be supported by the local community.

Please take a look at World in a Tent outdoor Festival Ashford
<https://www.spacehive.com/world-in-a-tent-outdoor-festival-ashford?searchText=Ashford#/backers>

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