

Maidstone Joint Transportation Board

**17
January
2018**



A274 Sutton Road Maidstone

Decision Making Authority	Kent County Council/Maidstone Borough Council
Lead Director	Roger Wilkin
Lead Head of Service	Tim Read
Lead Officer and Report Author	Russell Boorman/Mary Gillett
Wards and County Divisions affected	Wards: Shepway South/Parkwood County Divisions: Maidstone South East
Which Member(s) requested this report?	Committee

This report makes the following recommendations:

For Information. The Board are asked to note the contents of the report, and support the recommendation to proceed with the junction improvements on the A274 Sutton Road Maidstone.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Maidstone Joint Transportation Board	17 January 2018

A274 Sutton Road Maidstone

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report provides an update and recommendation following further public engagement on the 1st December 2017 in respect of the proposed A274 Sutton Road Maidstone junction improvements.
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2. A274 SUTTON ROAD/WILLINGTON STREET/WALLIS AVENUE

- 2.1 The first public engagement was held on the 18th August 2017 which allowed the project team the opportunity to engage with the local community on the proposed junction realignment and understand their concerns with this essential scheme.
- 2.2 Feedback from the engagement event combined with responses to the dedicated project email address was assessed accordingly and four common themes of concern were identified, please refer to 3.9.
- 2.3 Additional design work was carried out to address and mitigate these concerns where possible in conjunction with other mitigation measures of points raised.
- 2.4 A further engagement event was held on the 1st December 2017 to communicate the proposed mitigation measures and welcome further feedback.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In 2014 three separate planning applications were granted for the following sites:
- Land North of Sutton Road Otham Kent - Planning permission granted on 6th February 2014
 - Land at Langley Park Maidstone – Planning permission granted on 6th February 2014
 - Land West of Bicknor Farm Cottages Sutton Road – Planning permission granted on 6th February 2014
- 3.2 Maidstone Borough Councils' Local Plan was adopted in October 2017 and there are an additional **2,651 homes** to be built in the South East Strategic Development area.
- 3.3 Unilateral Undertakings by deed under Section 106 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 were signed in relation to these developments by Kent County Council, Maidstone Borough Council and respective developers.
- 3.4 All three Unilateral Undertaking agreements identified the need for mitigation measures at the Willington Street and Wallis Avenue junction to the A274 Sutton Road comprising:

'the widening of the Sutton Road on the southern side to accommodate two lanes of traffic in both directions on the link between Willington Street and Wallis Avenue; the widening of the westbound Sutton Road approach arm to provide three lanes at the stop line; the widening of the eastbound Sutton Road approach arm to accommodate the additional westbound lane; and the linking of the controllers of the two junctions to improve the efficiency of the whole intersection.'

3.5 In October 2015 the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board agreed to progress work at the following locations which were identified jointly by Kent County Council and Maidstone Borough Council as suffering from existing congestion; these schemes are collectively known as the **Maidstone Integrated Transport Package**. This package of measures aims to reduce congestion and improve journey time reliability across the Borough.

- **A274 Sutton Road junction with Willington Street**
- A20 Ashford Road junction with Willington Street
- A274 Sutton Road junction with A229 Loose Road 'Wheatsheaf junction'
- A229 Loose Road junction with Cripple Street/Boughton Lane
- A229 Loose Road junction with Armstrong Road/Park Way
- A20 London Road junction with Hermitage Lane
- M20 Junction 5
- B2246 Hermitage Lane junction with St Andrews Road
- A20 Coldharbour roundabout
- A26 Tonbridge Road junction with Fountain Lane

3.6 In March 2016 approval was given by the Cabinet Member for Planning, Highways, Transport and Waste to deliver the junction improvement at both ends of Willington Street Maidstone.

3.7 The layout that received the Key Decision in March 2016 also required the removal of highway vegetation (the existing Cherry Trees) to accommodate the widening on the southern side of the A274 Sutton Road fronting Bell Meadow.

3.8 However, during the development of this scheme this initial layout design for the A274 Sutton Road junction with Willington Street was found to reach saturation point in the first year after construction, i.e. it would be operating beyond full capacity (**see appendix 1**), therefore a re-design was necessary to ensure the scheme delivers the required benefits, i.e. increased capacity and reduced congestion. The initial layout was optimised in 2016/17 to give a solution that both addressed the congestion issue and offered high value for money.

3.9 This revised layout was presented to the residents in August 2017 and four main themes were identified as follows:

1. Concerns that the scheme may not achieve the benefits that is sets out to do,

2. Concerns that the scheme will impact the vegetation fronting Bell Meadow and Sutton Road service roads,
3. Concerns that the scheme may increase noise and air pollution, and;
4. Concerns that the scheme may result in a devaluation of property.

3.9.1 Extensive design work has been undertaken following the public engagement with a view to addressing the concerns whilst still demonstrating a value for money scheme. **See appendix 2:**

4. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

4.1 Two Public Engagement Events were held, details of the attendance and responses can be seen on the table below:

Summary Table:

	Leaflets Delivered	Signed in Number	No Responding
Engagement 1	900	85	144
Engagement 2	95*	33	9

* This lower number of leaflets delivered reflects the more targeted engagement required for affected residents.

4.2 The second public engagement event was held on the 1st December 2017, at St Martin’s Church Hall, Northumberland Road, Maidstone. KCC officers gave a presentation to local residents which detailed the above mitigation measures. Questions were welcomed following the presentation. Residents were also invited to send in their comments on the proposals and options to the dedicated project email address by the 8th December 2017.

4.3 Responses received have been appended to this report (**see appendix 3**). The majority of concerns remain the loss of highway vegetation in order to construct the junction improvement, it must be noted that an increased number of trees will be re-planted in both landscaping options.

5.0 MITIGATION MEASURES

5.1 Concern Number 1 – Scheme will not achieve the benefits

These concerns have been carefully considered and further design work has been undertaken in relation to mitigation measures, however, it must be noted that not all concerns can be fully designed out.

The benefits that will be realised by the completion of the junction improvements can be seen in the table below; it can be seen that on the two predominant routes, travelling east to west and west to east on the main A274 Sutton Road, a maximum of **14 minutes** and **13 minutes** journey time saving are predicted to be achieved respectively.

5.2 Concern Number 2 – Loss of Vegetation

Kent County Council understands the concerns raised by local residents in relation to the loss of vegetation.

A landscape architect was engaged and challenged to produce a sympathetic planting regime that compliments the overall scheme.

Two options were proposed to the local residents at the engagement event that have incorporated a landscaping design on the Sutton Road and Bell Meadow service roads that offer mitigation to the noise/air pollution concerns as well as screening from the A274 Sutton Road.

The landscaping option fronting the Sutton Road service road is identical in both 1 and 2. It incorporates a noise bund (1m in height) constructed from materials excavated from the A274 widened sections. This will then be landscaped using native flowering tree species (Quercus Robur, Carpinus Betulus Fastigiata and Pyrus Calleryana Chanticleer) and a mixture of amenity planting. (**See appendix 4**)

Option 1: Bell Meadow service road was more challenging to incorporate a landscaping design due to the limited space available once the A274 Sutton Road carriageway widening has been constructed. Therefore a planting regime has been proposed for the majority of the Bell Meadow service road, unfortunately a section cannot be planted as there is insufficient remaining width. This section will have the acoustic fencing (1m high) between the A274 Sutton Road and Bell Meadow service road. (**See appendix 5**)

Option 2: To increase the available space to incorporate additional planting over and above option 1, the proposal is to construct passing bays between numbers 5 – 25 Bell Meadow service road. This will allow vegetation to be incorporated along the frontage of Bell Meadow Road, offering screening of the acoustic fencing, whilst providing a more attractive street scene. The disadvantage of this proposal is that a Traffic Regulation Order is required for ease of vehicular movement. (**See appendix 6**)

5.3 Concern Number 3 – Scheme may increase noise & air pollution

Air quality diffusion tubes are located in the vicinity of the junction improvement; one is directly on the junction of A274 Sutton Road and Willington Street.

Following advice taken from a Senior Scientific Officer, they have confirmed the following;

'Based on recent measurements of NO₂ (Nitrogen dioxide), combined with dispersion modelling, we are confident that area of exceedance of the Air Quality Objective (40 µg/m³-micrograms per cubic m) does not extend beyond the edge of the carriageway at present and decreases rapidly the further the distance away from this'

'Under the current scheme, the façade of the house closest to the carriageway is c. 25m. Using DEFRA's NO₂ fall-off with distance calculator (version 4.1) this suggests a level 22.5 micrograms per cubic metre in that location'

'Under the new scheme, the edge of the carriageway to the façade of the same house would be an estimated 16m (worst case scenario). The

calculator indicates that the level of NO₂ will increase to 23.9 micrograms per cubic metre, which is still well below the Air Quality Objective'

Therefore it can be concluded that the scheme will not have a significant impact on air quality and it well below the standard set in the air quality objective.

An environmental **sound survey** was undertaken on Friday 14 July 2017 in order to determine the existing sound climate surrounding the A274 Sutton Road.

Using the results of the environmental sound survey, a computer acoustic model has been produced, using computer software SoundPLAN v7.4. The model has been used to inform the assessment of noise levels as a result of the road widening works and to calculate the effectiveness of any potential mitigation measures.

'This initial assessment concluded that the change in sound level associated with the widening of the A274 Sutton Road is likely to result in an increase of less than 3 dBA at dwellings on Old Sutton Road, described as a negligible impact. The works are likely to result in an increase of greater than 3 dBA at dwellings on Bell Meadow, described as a minor impact'.

An acoustic fence has been incorporated into the design for the southern Bell Meadow side of the A274 Sutton Road.

'It is understood that a retaining wall is to be built to the south of the road, replacing the existing earth bank. It is recommended that an acoustic fence is erected on top of the proposed retaining wall, located along the southern edge of the A274 Sutton Road and parallel to the pathway edge. This is likely to reduce the magnitude of impact to negligible'. The acoustic fence can be extended beyond the retaining wall if required.

Therefore it can be concluded that the scheme will have a negligible impact on the noise pollution on both sides of Sutton Road.

** NB. The above assessment figures and calculations do not include the planting options and therefore it can be assumed will be improved upon.*

5.4 Concern Number 4 – Property de-valuation

The final common theme regards devaluation of property. This was communicated in the second newsletter and was covered at the engagement event on the 1st December 2017. It was agreed that an information leaflet would be distributed to all affected residents giving guidance on how they may claim through the *Land Compensation Act 1973 Part 1*.

6.0 Conclusion

In order to achieve the traffic benefits in terms of reduced congestion and increased capacity in mitigation for the new housing developments, this scheme needs to be implemented.

Mitigation for the loss of vegetation can be achieved via 1 of 2 options:

Option 1 – This option has reduced opportunity to provide an enhanced planting regime. A section of Bell Meadow will not have sufficient space for planting to be incorporated, and therefore the retaining wall with the acoustic fence (1m high) will be visible.

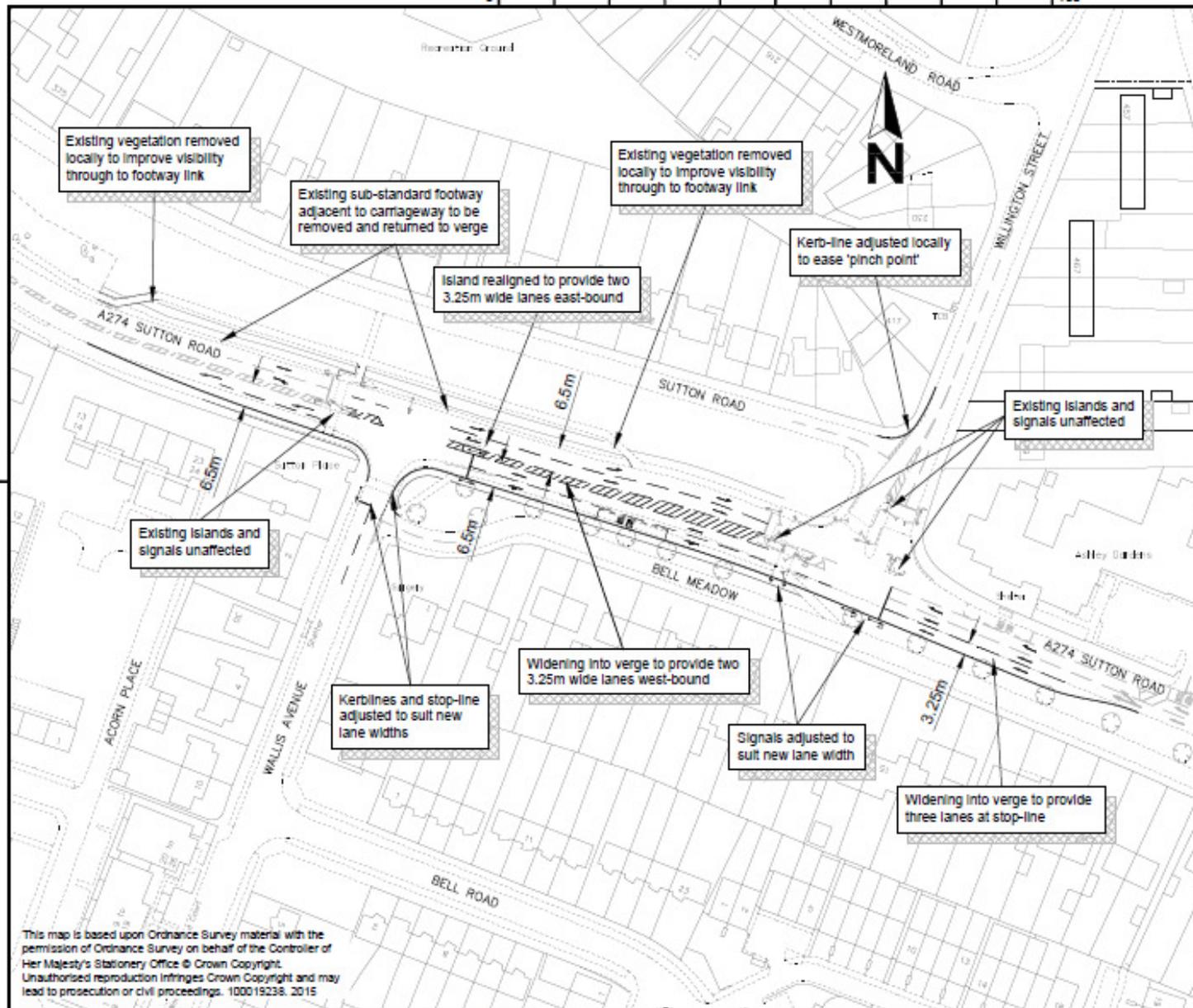
Option 2 – This option reduces the width of Bell Meadow to provide passing areas which will act as natural traffic calming. This will allow a full planting regime that will screen the acoustic fencing and A274 from the properties in Bell Meadow. This option will require a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to provide double yellow lines to keep free passage for vehicular traffic. All frontages affected by the TRO have off street parking provision.

Following the recent public engagement event, **9** responses were received of which **3** have responded they do not wish to see **Option 2** implemented.

7.0 Recommendation

- 7.1 Kent County Council recommends the progression of this essential junction improvement. Unilateral undertakings have been signed by Kent County Council, Maidstone Borough Council and respective developers, and mitigation measures identified in the approved planning applications for this specific location.
- 7.2 The four common concerns of the local residents have been mitigated as much as practicable whilst retaining the required traffic benefits.
- 7.3 KCC recognises the emotive nature of this scheme, in particular to the surrounding residents. The improvement is to address the current congestion and future growth and benefit all highway users.
- 7.4 Based on the feedback received to the dedicated email address following the second engagement event, it is recommended that the junction improvement with the inclusion of **Option 1** is progressed to the next stage of construction.

Appendix 1



Rev	Revision details	Chkd	Appd	Date
Drawn: JR			Preliminary	✓
Design: -			For comment	
Chkd: RBF			For tender	
Appd: RJHF			For construction	
Date: 30.09.2015			As constructed	
			Other	



Project Name
MAIDSTONE INTEGRATED TRANSPORT PACKAGE

Drawing Title
**~ INDICATIVE LAYOUT ~
 WILLINGTON STREET /
 A274 SUTTON ROAD JUNCTION
 PROPOSED WIDENING**

Original Drg Size : A4 Dimensions : -
 Scale : Not To Scale Copyright © Amey

Drawing No
4300390/000/12 Rev
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Appendix 3

Hello

Thank you for your presentation, and for taking the time to meet with residents on Friday.

Whilst I wasn't able to attend myself, I have been told by those who did attend that your presentation was of interest.

Although, it was unfortunate that you started the meeting before the advertised time, so quite a few missed the start of the presentation.

Thank you for the clarification on the traffic calming measures for the Sutton Road service road, that now makes more sense than on the leaflet.

It was very helpful to see the computer generated pictures of the proposed new layout, although as you already knew Option 2 was an insult to the residents of Bell Meadow, and completely unacceptable.

The meeting has of course brought some more questions, on top of those which I asked in my email on Thursday 30 November

(Please let me know if you require another copy of that email for you to respond to those questions).

- You gave residents a 7 day deadline for submitting our comments on the project changes.
 - However, you have not yet published the new documents and presentation on your website, so those who would like to check the plans over before commenting are not yet able to even look.
 - I assume therefore that our 7 day deadline for comments will only commence once all the documents are available?
- Why were residents not informed of the proposed plans, when they were first designed in 2015?
- How often is the bus stop outside No.6 Bell Meadow used? Does its level of use warrant the cost of constructing it?
- Your presentation showed the estimated NO2 pollution levels for residents. I would like to see the data behind this, please could it be made available on your website?
 - What will the pollution level be at the Care Home once the project is complete?
- Your presentation highlighted (I believe) a 3 minute faster journey time when travelling North East on Sutton Road. Please can you confirm the estimated improvement in journey time for the other 8 combinations of use of the junction please. There are many other uses of this junction, other than those travelling from the new developments.
- At night, vehicles traveling South East on Bell Meadow will have their headlights shining directly into the vehicles travelling North West on Sutton Road at the point the roads are just a footpath apart. In the UK, vehicle headlights are directed towards the near side and at this point, vehicles are on the wrong side of each other. What analysis (or previous precedent) has been implemented into the safety and accident risk of this?

- Your representative said that the plans should have been highlighted in standard house buying searches since 2015.
 - Those searches were completed for me in late 2016, and for the new owners of No. 6 and 8 Bell Meadow early this year.
 - I can confirm that we all used different solicitors, and that all 3 were not aware of the project, why would this be? I could accept that one firm of solicitors missed it, but not all three.

Once all of the materials from the meeting have been made available online, I will have more questions, so I very much look forward to being able to view the updated plans and presentation.

Further to the most recent public engagement on 1st December I should like to add the following comments to my original message which I stand by.

I found the presentation weak and unconvincing and the mitigation measures little improved. When the junction was last 'improved' we were given secondary glazing, blinds and acoustic ventilators all of which are now out-dated.

How strange then that your latest acoustic survey concludes no appreciable noise levels will be generated? Perhaps this is because the survey was carried out in the school holidays when all the trees and hedges were fully in leaf.

It was perfectly clear at the meeting that all you were concerned about was spending the money you have been allocated.

Firstly I must say that I do object to the scale of the Sutton Road work.

Points I would draw to your attention as follows are.....

· A longer lane into Willington Street towards town yes and agree some slight widening of the road on Bell Meadow side but preserving all of the trees whose appearance enhances this area.

· If this work goes ahead as you plan it to then I do not think it unreasonable for all Bell Meadow houses to be offered triple glazing as the increased volume and capacity of traffic and it being bought closer to homes will be louder.

· Given there will be heavy plant during roadworks and more traffic afterwards do you have insurance against weakening or fracturing our homes underground utility pipes?

· At present the grass areas offer safety for wildlife to cross Sutton Road safely. What provisions are in place where the walls and screens are for them to cross and not be trapped on the road?

· The grass areas allow rainfall to soak in. Have you taken in to account the extra rainfall needing to be drained away in Bell Meadow because of the loss of the green.

· On the proposed plans it seems to show double yellow lines the whole length of Bell Meadow. I do not think that is necessary. There is not a problem here with road parking. The existing double yellow lines are adequate. It is usually only folk using the dentist that park along the road.

· It is difficult for pedestrians to cross Wallis Avenue because you just do not know if traffic will turn in from up or down Sutton Road when traffic exiting Wallis Avenue is at a red light. Many folk start to cross because the traffic stops and can see the red light but are caught unaware because other traffic turns into the road and there is not a time when it is safe to cross. Increased and faster traffic will

make this crossing very hazardous to cross. I have given up trying and have to walk further up Wallis Ave to cross where I have a longer view.

I feel that when other works are carried out for instance at the Wheatsheaf junction and on the Loose Road it will alleviate traffic now and in the future at Sutton Road/ Willington Street junction so eliminates the need for it to be changed anymore than with minimum widening on its existing verges.

It seems the journeys of most traffic in this area is making its way to the M20 and it is this problem that needs addressing more than destroying established neighbourhoods for the sake of faster traffic flow. Faster traffic will likely also increase accidents.

I would like to say that I would not like a pathway put in as this just creates a focal point for people to congregate and create a social nuisance for the neighbourhood. Also we do not want double yellow lines anywhere on the road. If they are only put towards the top end by the dentist then all cars for there will have to park outside our premises. Also lines anywhere on the street will stop people having any visitors as not all houses have a huge driveway. The whole project is such a waste of funding and should be used in a better way. Like the millions spent on maidstone bridge it now takes me longer to get to work. So work that one out as it doesn't take a genius to see what a waste this Work will achieve in the end.

Dear Project Team,

I write with regard to the widening of the A274 Sutton Road at Bell Meadow as follows.

I take issue with the following statements :

(1) 'the widening of the westbound Sutton Road approach arm to provide three lanes at the stop line'

(a) We do not need to have three lanes at the stop line. At the Willington Street junction we need one lane to turn right and one lane to continue along Sutton Road; these we have. Further along, we need one lane for turning into Wallis Avenue leading to Park Wood, and the other lane to continue along the Sutton Road towards and past Morrisons and Police Headquarters. We currently have these also. Why do we need three lanes? There are very few cars, even at peak times, that turn into Wallis Avenue from this direction at this junction to warrant them needing their own lane for almost the whole length of Bell Meadow, and hardly any during the school holidays. I can tell you this as a pedestrian who has walked this route to and from my place of work every day for fourteen years and as a passenger in my husband's car whenever we go into town or turn left at Wallis Avenue to cut through Park Wood to reach our allotment at Loose, rather than going all the way down to the Wheatsheaf and back up the Loose Road. If any more cars were using this junction coming from the direction of Sutton Road (south) and turning into Wallis Avenue, I would never be able to cross the road before the lights changed to let the line of cars coming from the direction of Morrisons turn into Wallis Avenue, and we would have to sit and wait for two changes of lights. In our fourteen years of using this junction, we cannot remember a single time when this has ever happened.

(b) Where are the traffic survey facts and figures that were taken, showing dates and times? I presume that this was done over a substantial length of time to include peak times and school terms and school holidays, in order to present a properly balanced view? I understand from the meeting last Friday that this was done by Amey, am I right? Where can we see these figures - that apparently disprove what I have seen with my own eyes over many years? Should I ask Amey direct, or are they available on your website or to send us

by email? Until we see the evidence, we will never believe that widening the road to the detriment of our trees is or was ever necessary and we will state this fact far and wide to whoever will listen.

(2) Air Quality

There are a lot of numbers quoted on the PowerPoint slide. I would like to know how the air quality has been 'estimated' to fall below the Air Quality Standard when the trees that currently soak up most of the emissions have been removed. Has this been added into the estimated equation? Have you read this -

<http://www.arborenonvironmentalalliance.com/carbon-tree-facts.asp> ? It states that one tree soaks up 48lbs of CO2 emissions each year. And you're planning to cut down at least 20 of ours in Bell Meadow. This will mean that 960lbs of CO2 will be floating around in the air which otherwise would have been soaked up by our trees. And have you read this? <https://www.forestry.gov.uk/forestry/infd-88nfn2> - please do. Please!! Then maybe you will understand why we need our trees, why we are so passionate about trying to persuade you not to chop them down.

(3) Noise Impact

Whereabouts is the 'Old Sutton Road' please, that is mentioned on the slide that talks about the 'negligible' increase of 3 dBA?

(4) 'It is understood that a retaining wall is to be built to the south of the road, replacing the existing earth bank'

I have seen the artist's impression of this retaining wall that replaces the trees and grass bank in Bell Meadow, which at one point shows it as being higher than the car beside it. I presume that the wall is concrete? If I was in a car travelling so close to this wall and was involved in an accident and pushed into it by another vehicle, I wouldn't rate my chances of survival very highly.

(5) Loss of the Trees

This is our Number One concern but I've deliberately left it until last, apart from referring to them under (2) Air Quality above.

Over 400 people have signed a petition to try to save them. These particular trees are a much loved part of our town. They provide value to the area - and not just monetary value, i.e. the prices we paid for our houses because the trees are here.

Whatever is planted along here will never replace the beautiful cherry trees that are a delight to see on this approach road to our County Town, once known as the Garden of England. The 'vegetation' shown in the replanting is shown at the height it will be in five years' time, and even then it is negligible compared to the magnificent trees that we now have.

Please, do not destroy them for the sake of a lane that we all know that we do not need now and will not need in the future!

Alternative Suggestion

I accept that there is currently no immediate funding yet available for the Relief Road. I also know that the money earmarked for the Sutton Road widening scheme cannot be put towards the relief road instead.

However, we have read that the Councils are further ahead with this now than they have ever been, and I am sure that it will become reality before 2029. Therefore, much of the estimated traffic will not be coming anywhere near the Sutton Road / Willington Street junction then, and we will have lost our trees for nothing. Why should we lose our trees and

have our road widened now in anticipation of estimated needs twelve years in the future, when those needs might never materialise?

So how about considering the following ... why not undertake the replanting now, while leaving the Bell Meadow trees where they are? During the next five to ten years the 'vegetation' will have grown to such a height that residents of Bell Meadow will gain some benefit from it. If the Relief Road has materialised by then, thus relieving Sutton Road / Willington Street of much of its current traffic so that the anticipated increase hasn't taken place, Bell Meadow can be left untouched. But, if the Relief Road is still being discussed and is twenty or more years in the future by then, we might be less opposed to the idea of widening this road than we all are at present if we have some mature screen in place by then.

Why should we, our trees, our wildlife, our quality of air, our beautiful road, our environment, our quality of life, suffer when there truly is no need to rip away our trees and grass in order to extend the Wallis Avenue turning lane and/or add an extra lane to the other side of Sutton Road?

Come and spend a day with us. Watch the traffic; see how it moves. I'll provide the tea and coffee.

Stand with us and count the 20 seconds when traffic that could turn into Willington Street has to wait because the lights are against it even when nothing else is crossing in front of it. Try changing the sequence of the lights to alleviate any potential (and I mean potential) buildup - don't just tell us that the sequence has been changed to the maximum, because you might think it has, or might have been told that it has, but believe me, it hasn't.

Put some mitigation measures in place and revisit the scheme in five years to see whether it actually is necessary.

It is NOT an 'improvement' scheme. It is an utterly devastating one.

Please think again.

Please listen to us and realise what we're saying! Thank you.

Firstly I am vehemently apposed to these alterations.

I feel improvement could be achieved by the following:

1. Taking out the bus stop completely at the Bell Meadow, dentist end, because there is a bus stop outside the old senacre school site that could be used.
2. Having smart traffic lights.
3. Removing completely the bus stop outside nursing home, because there is one at the other end of Bell Meadow.

Option 2 in my opinion is the worse option. The reduction in the width of the road and double yellow lines would be a nightmare when people visit. The dentist traffic would push to the other end of Bell Meadow, which is already busy as the car lot uses this as an overspill car park. I also cannot see the need for the path there.

I really don't think you have accounted for the people who live here. I live along the other end, but I would hate to live at the dentist end where the bus stop would feel like it's right on top of them .

Hi,

Having read through the revised proposal PDF I think a dedicated right turning lane would be much more effective at the junction with the BP garage than simply a 'Keep Clear' marking. I appreciate this would cost more due to the vegetation that would need to be cleared however from a reducing congestion perspective this is very much needed to reduce unnecessary bottlenecks.

Moreover, at the start the report mentions work to the A20-Willington Street junction. When will this be commencing? This is urgently needed along with work to widen the road at the Hermitage Lane junction to create a dedicated right turn lane so that Maidstone bound traffic can continue freely. Every day there are mile long tail backs in each direction.

I await your response accordingly.

Thank you for taking the time to respond to some of our concerns.

In direct response to your emails today:

- Please can you supply copies of the literature communicated to residents in 2014 when these plans were first considered. No resident I have spoken with has any knowledge of any communication prior to 6 August 2017.
- My question regarding the bus stop on the southern side of Sutton Road outside No.6 Bell Meadow related to the number of people who get on or off at this stop, not the

number of buses using it. I am aware there will be more buses using this route in the coming years serving the new developments, but I do not understand the continued need for this stop, when there is another, much larger stop a short distance away outside the old Senacre Technology School and on Wallis Avenue only a few metres away. Do you know the number of people who use this stop daily?

- Thank you for trying to clarify the “3 minute” comment, although your table has done little to answer my question regarding journey times through the junction.
 - Are the timings you have used current timings, or those estimated for 2030?
 - I understand you have extended your timings to include from the Wheatsheaf to Langley. Do the timings take into account delays at the Wheatsheaf or Morrisons junction as well?
 - How were the “Do Nothing” timings calculated? In 20 years living on Bell Meadow, we have never had queues of 15 minutes plus to get through the junction, so I would very much like to know your source for this.
- Yes, residents of Bell Meadow do wish to see more vegetation, being directly on the Sutton Road, staring at a fence, or into a passing bus are not at all desirable given the current pleasantness of the cheery tree lined road.
 - I can understand your suggestion of narrowing Bell Meadow to accommodate some vegetation, but I am sure you are well aware this will not be supported by residents.
 - I feel the plans are half-baked due to the road narrowing extending past the extra vegetation, specifically at the southern side bus stop, where an extra section of path will be used to narrow Bell Meadow. This can only be an oversight in an unchecked plan?
- I understand that all junctions will need to be upgraded to see the full benefit, but it seems very much like you are trying to solve all the issues with one development, which as a resident, I can assure you, you will not do with your current suggestion.
- Your comment regarding access to properties is very vague. I am quite sure you will not be able to find a suitable alternative location for charging an electric car, or chilling/cleaning/restocking an ice cream van. This needs to be considered.
- I am still baffled by the suggestion of Keep Clear markings for the BP garage. I can see no benefit to this at all. I implore you to research this before wasting any money on it.

The following are questions or concerns, previously submitted to you, that have not yet been responded to:

1. Your presentation showed the estimated NO2 pollution levels for residents. I would like to see the data behind this, please could it be made available on your website?
 - What will the pollution level be at the Care Home once the project is complete?
2. At night, vehicles traveling South East on Bell Meadow will have their headlights shining directly into the vehicles travelling North West on Sutton Road at the point the roads are just a footpath apart. In the UK, vehicle headlights are directed towards the near side, and at this point, vehicles are on the wrong side of each other. What analysis (or previous precedent) has been implemented into the safety and accident risk of this?
3. It is well known to all users, that the right turn slip road for Willington Street begins directly after the traffic island outside Sutton Heights, although the road markings don't show this. What is the distance from this traffic island to the start of the new slip road? It appears that as soon as an extra 4 cars (or one commercial vehicle) join the queue, your new two lanes will be completely blocked?
4. What was the estimated time saving for the initial 2015 plans?

1. Based on the small picture in your presentation, I'd like to note that if these plans were being put to us, I would be fully supportive of them. They appear to aid the flow of traffic without as much un-necessary destruction and extra pollution.
1. You said that your 2015 plans would be fully saturated with a year. Would this still be the case once Morisons junction, Wheatsheaf and Willington Street/A20 works have been completed? Or once there is a South Maidstone bypass?

Residents including myself very much feel that this is a done deal, and that KCC Highways have no intentions of listening to our concerns above those that you can easily cater for. I very much hope that is not the case.

This is my second email to this address, the first being at the end of August after the first meeting.

I have lived on the service Rd in Sutton Rd for the last eighteen years and I love the fact that we have very beautiful very old trees and shrubs full of wildlife and birds to be able to see every day. Some of these trees are, I am told, at least a hundred years old. I have been told by councillors that even a tree preservation order can be pushed aside as long as you plant a replacement, if this is true then what is the point of a preservation order when it can be swept aside. What can the birds do with these stupid puny little saplings you planted four months ago? By the time these "trees" are big enough the birds will all be dead!!

Not only have thousands of creatures and birds already been wiped out when all these new houses were built it will just go on, more and more of them will be destroyed.

Then of course what about the residents? Some old and not very mobile some young with small children, why must we all suffer because councils want to build more houses? Why are we not being listened to, we all pay our taxes, why are old residents not as important as new ones?

The traffic along Sutton Rd is very seldom at a stand still with very little problems unless there is an accident, that holds everything up but that will still happen if you have six lanes of traffic won't it?

The biggest traffic problem we have is the amount of very huge, very heavy lorries and that's why we really need a bypass or a relief road to take some of the traffic away from here, there is a nasty rumour that one of the top people on the council lives in Coxheath and that's why the proposed relief road couldn't go ahead, surely this cannot be true??

We all know that the trees are our protection against the traffic fumes as well as the noise, as for the ugly fences you are planning to put up, the fumes will just waft over the top. I cannot believe experts when they say the air pollution will not rise significantly when four lanes of traffic become six lanes of traffic and the trees are removed. We will probably all end up with lung and chest disease.

As a resident of Bell Meadow I would like to make the following comments regarding the Sutton Road improvement scheme:

1. I am very disappointed in the way this scheme has been approached. To only receive notification of the plans through our letter box on a Sunday, the day before the surveying began was totally unacceptable.
2. We purchased our house in January 2017 and the proposal did not show up on our local searches. However at the recent meeting it became clear that the 2015 plans should have been publicly

available. I do not understand how this is possible, when we had formal searches carried out only a year ago.

3. My family have lived along this road for 30 years (we currently own 4 houses along here) and I am deeply disappointed that you feel that it is acceptable remove the tree lined street that we are all very fond of and move the traffic, noise and pollution closer to our homes.

4. I am concerned that by moving the Sutton Road closer to Bell Meadow the glare of the headlights could become a hazard. In the UK headlights are pointed towards the kerb.

5. I do not understand the need for a bus stop outside no. 7. Having grown up along this road using the bus route, residents have always used the bus stop along Wallis Avenue, as the 82 bus route runs every 10 minutes. There is also a large bus stop a short distance away outside the old senacre school site if the 12 bus route (or possible new Langley Park service) is required. If the bus stop outside no. 7 was removed there would be space to keep the existing trees (or replanting at least).

4. I commute into Maidstone town centre during the rush hour using the newly 'improved' one way system. My journey now takes 10 minutes longer than it did previously. I am concerned that these 'improvements' will make matters worse. Adding further lanes for such a short distance is likely to cause a bottle neck, and a risk of increasing accidents due drivers trying to overtake each other.

5. Willington Street is becoming increasingly congested. 'Improving' the junction at each end will not greatly expand the physical capacity of the road as there is not space here to build a dual carriage way. If the traffic increases as you are suggesting no amount of changes to the junction will stop Willington Street becoming gridlocked. I can see the only way to relieve this would be to build a relief road.

6. Although I believe the trees along Bell Meadow should not be felled without suitable replacement to provide privacy for the residents along Bell Meadow. However, option 2 is simply not feasible. The road is used as overspill parking during the day for the dentist. I also feel that the road would become very tight for residents parking their vehicles on driveways.

7. Option 1 includes a fence (without vegetation) for a number of metres. This will be very unsightly for the residents of Bell Meadow. This could also become a hotspot for graffiti.

8. I believe the junction could be improved by simply using smart traffic lights, improving the position of the bus stops and extending the turning lanes. This would reduce the impact on local residents and the cost of these currently dramatic plans.

I look forward to receiving your comments as I have found this process extremely stressful and upsetting. I am under the impression that the residents have not been considered when producing these plans.

I have a few points that I'd like to add to my email of yesterday, please, for you to consider when weighing up the consequences of taking our trees away in order to make the lane into Wallis Avenue longer and add a lane on the opposite side.

Firstly, the lane on the opposite side (Ashley Gardens heading towards Headcorn) doesn't need an extra lane there, because all the traffic on that side has already gone past the Willington Street junction and heading out of Maidstone.

Secondly, we all have to wait at traffic lights, wherever we go. Sp extending the turning lane for Wallis Avenue on the Bell Meadow side - and equally extending the Sutton Road lane coming up from Morrisons to the Willington Street turning - will have absolutely no impact on waiting at the lights unless the sequence of traffic lights is changed to be in favour of the turning. Which is surely hardly appropriate, as the bulk of the traffic on the Sutton Road is NOT turning into Wallis Avenue; it's going towards Morrisons, the Wheatsheaf and the Town Centre. So however long you make the Wallis Avenue turning lane, presumably for the purpose of splitting the traffic further back, by taking our trees and bank away, traffic turning into Wallis Avenue will still have to wait at the traffic lights the same as everyone else. Would they rather wait for the lights to change while sitting beside a concrete wall topped with a fence or wait beside a grassy bank with crocuses, daffodils and cherry trees on it?

And lastly - I know that the money allocated to this has been given to the Council(s) in order to improve junctions in Maidstone. I have worked for a Govt department for long enough (nearly 50 years) to know the familiar cry of "If we don't spend it we'll lose it! And they won't let us save it until next year! And they won't give us any next year if we don't spend what they've given us this year! So we'll all buy new desks and chairs and throw out the old ones, even though we don't need new ones and the new ones are flimsy and not so well made as the ones we already have."

But why spend it at all if it is not only unnecessary but utterly and irreversibly detrimental to the area, the people who live there and the people who pass through it?

I do get it. Being given £4m and being told that you must spend it must be hugely tempting. But in some cases it is really better not to when what you spend it on will make things so much worse. That's rather like me saying "I'll give you a million pounds but you can only have it if you send your children abroad to live with someone else, and then have your left leg and right arm cut off." Um - thanks but no thanks!

Please re-think, and scale down this project so that you leave our trees where they are. They mean so much to us; they are part of our lives, and we love them. We will be devastated to lose them.

Thank you.

To Whom It May Concern,

As a resident currently residing on the A274/Sutton Road and likely to be directly affected by the proposed changes to the road I am writing to express my views. I have attended both the poorly publicised 'public engagement' meeting in August and more recently, the public consultation meeting. I have taken the liberty of including my original email with this one for completeness.

Bearing in mind the previous public relations fiasco regarding the project I was immediately concerned that it was felt appropriate for the meeting to start at 430pm when many residents were likely to be at work. Ultimately I had to arrange annual leave from my job in order to attend, unfortunately my husband was not able to do the same. I would suggest that our situation was not unique and the number of attendees at this important meeting was likely to have been adversely affected by the timing of the meeting. At the meeting we were asked to provide feedback via this email address within the week, this is a very short interval particularly if one assumes that information needed to be cascaded to individuals unable to attend and that time was also required to upload the presentation onto the website.

The meeting itself was not presented terribly well, members of the panel were not introduced and with the exception of Russell, failed to introduce themselves when responding to questions, they

were not wearing any means by which they could easily be identified. Detail on the presentation was extremely hard to see even when seated near the front of the hall. As there was no clear chair to the meeting or microphone unfortunately it became a 'free for all' on more than one occasion and was perhaps therefore not as constructive and informative as it might have been.

Overall my initial concerns about the project remain, one of the main issues being the lack of information and cohesion about the schemes being proposed for the remaining two pinch points along the length of the road, namely 'The Wheatsheaf' and the junction with South Park/ Armstrong Road. It is impossible to envisage any improvement in traffic flow when looking at this element of the scheme in isolation.

Despite the slightly distracting and possibly slightly deceptive graphic of two cars travelling along an 'improved' and 'as is' road simultaneously I don't believe I was the only person present who was shocked at the revelation that the aspect of the scheme affecting us so greatly would result in a potential gain of approximately 3 minutes in journey time at peak time in 2029. I can only presume that a 3 minute gain is actually a best case scenario as it was the only figure presented when the actual figure was queried.

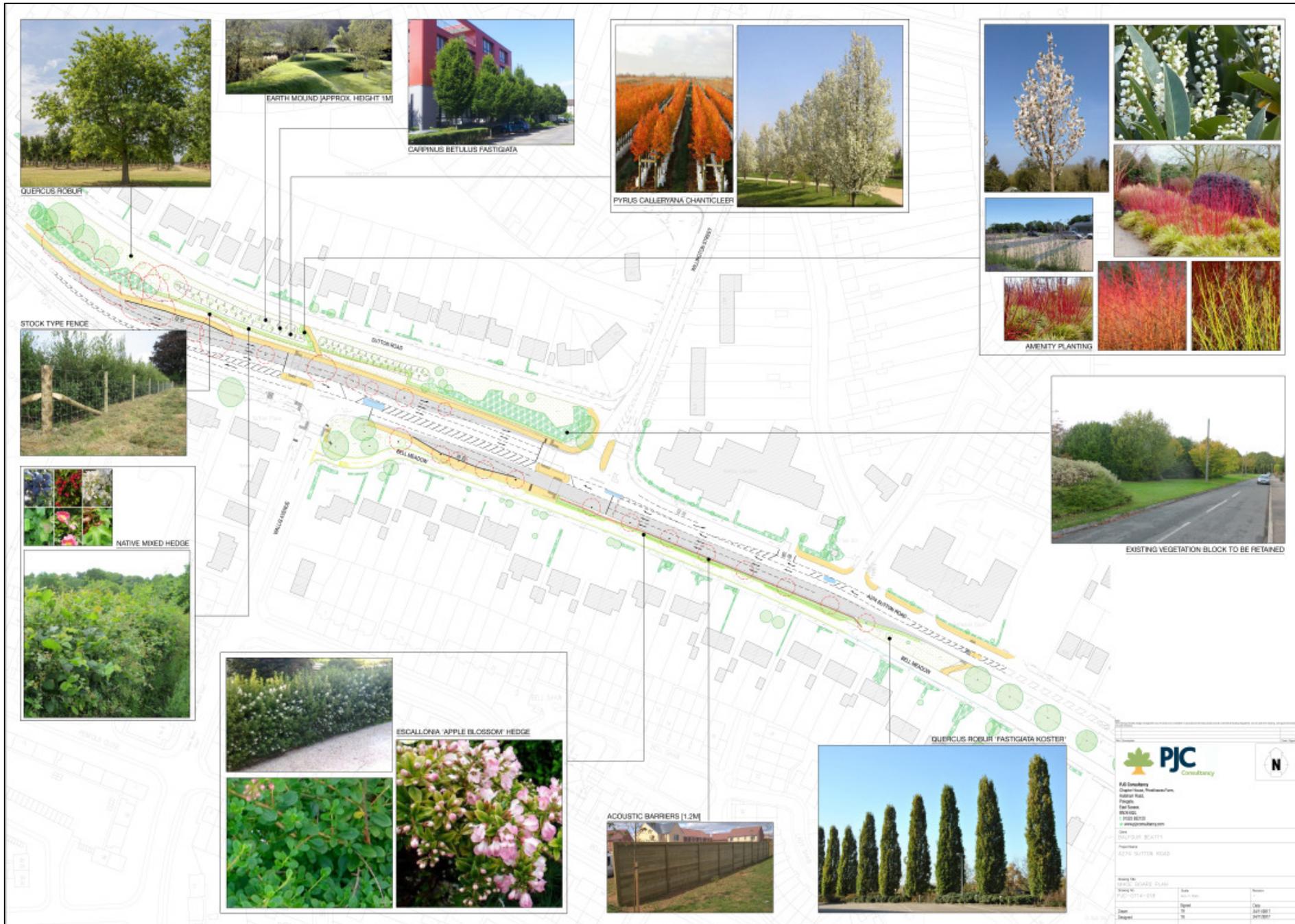
One of the concerns previously raised was the issue of the service road we live on being used as a 'rat run' between the sets of traffic lights. This already happens on a frequent basis with cars frequently travelling at unacceptably high speeds on what is a residential street and is likely to increase during the period of works. The suggestion that traffic management measures could be implemented both during and following works was well received by myself however, this was tempered by the suggestion that these would initially be a temporary measure and would only be permanently installed if residents felt that they were beneficial, at the points and frequency where residents wanted them. It seems quite incredible to me that planners who can predict traffic flow up to 12 years hence, instigate and recommend a scheme such as this apparently cannot inform and influence the number and position of traffic calming measures. Furthermore, as there is such little confidence in the handling of information regarding the proposal and our ability to influence it thus far it is hard to take any consolation from the prospect of further consultation regarding this element of it.

Finally, I am concerned that the time interval between the final decision in January and scheduled commencement of works in February is extremely short when taking into account that no information regarding the logistics of implementing the proposed scheme have yet been proposed or presented to us.

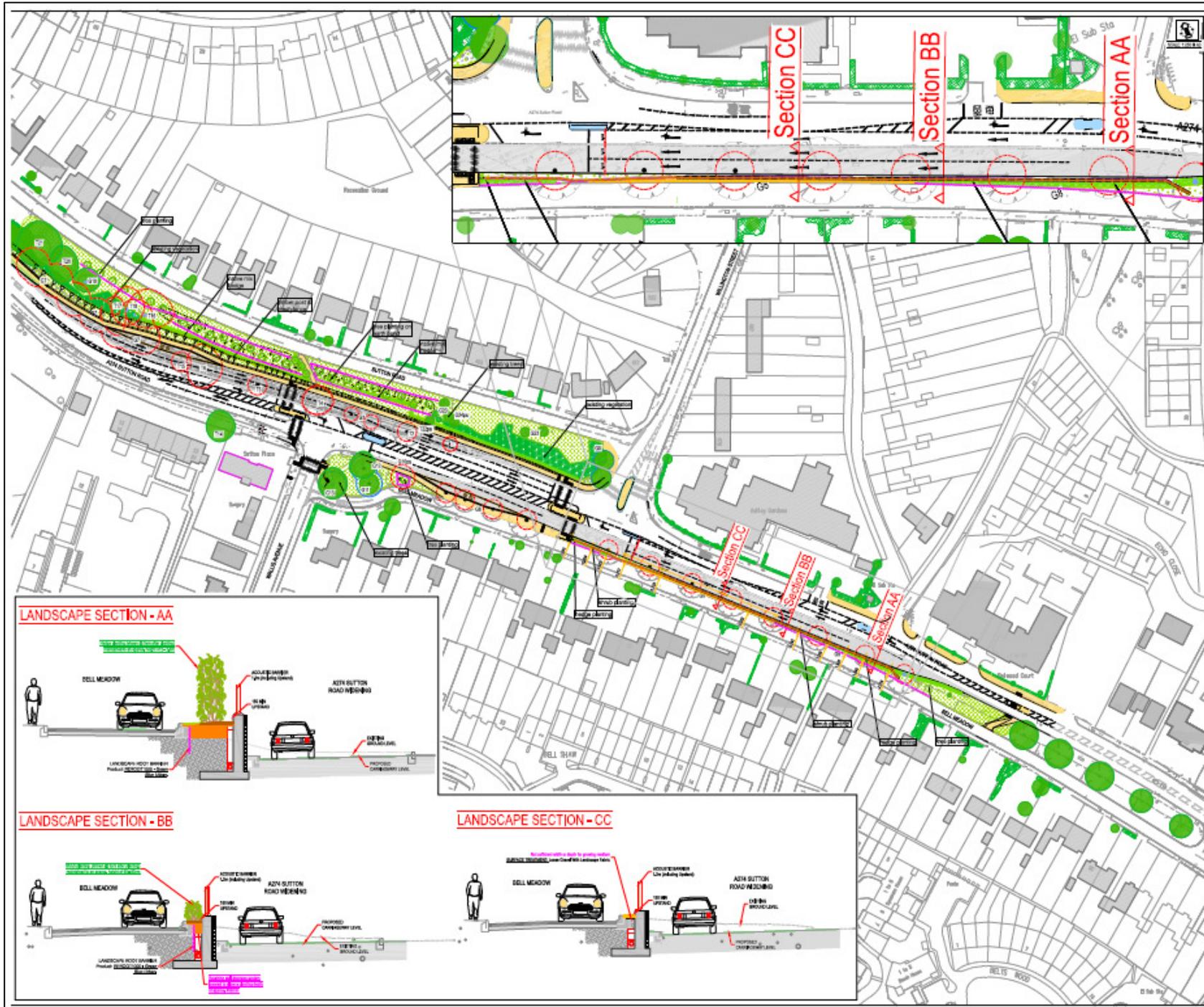
Unfortunately we find ourselves in a unique and increasingly difficult position in that we already have our property on the market due to the breakdown of our marriage. We have no real financial alternative other than to sell the property but we are extremely concerned that there will be significant financial implications with the sale taking longer than anticipated as a direct result of the potential works or with the property's value being adversely affected as a direct result of the project. My understanding is that it is the owner of the property one year post-completion of the project who is able to apply for compensation, this is unlikely to be us and would feasibly be a risk for anyone purchasing the property at it's current market value.

I urge you to give full and due consideration to the tremendous impact that this scheme is likely to have on the local residents for what appears to be extremely limited benefit.

Appendix 4



Appendix 5



Appendix 6

