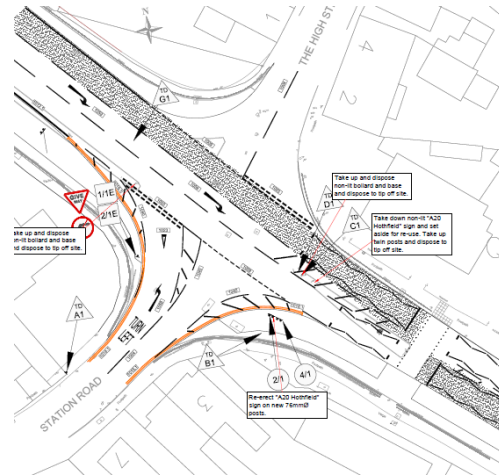


### A20 junction improvements at the Station Road and Charing High Street crossroads

- A20 road works are scheduled to begin on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2022
- Charing High Street will be closed at the A20 junction for up to 10 weeks
- Station Road is expected to be closed for three nights around 15<sup>th</sup> August



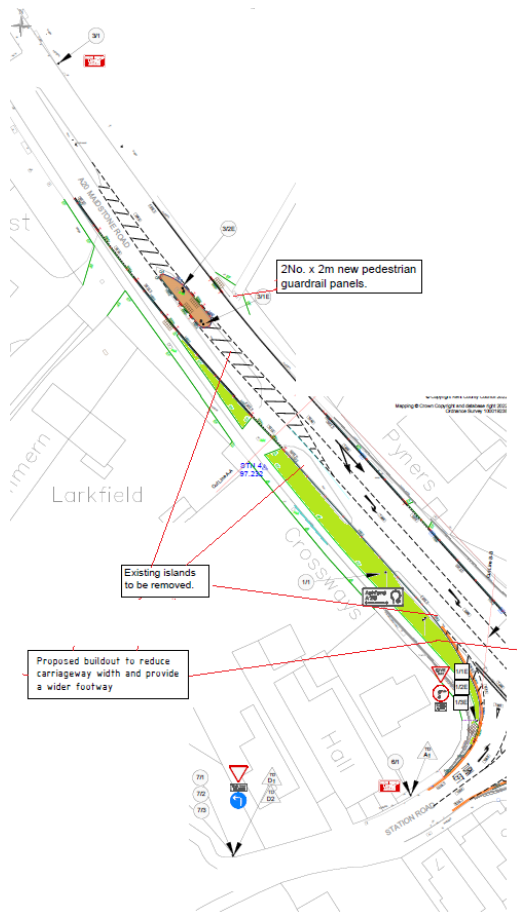
We have been informed by KCC Highways that work will begin around Monday 18<sup>th</sup> July and will last for an estimated 10 weeks. The High Street, at its junction with the A20, will be closed to traffic for the entire duration as it will be used to provide a secure works compound.

It is expected that Station Road will be closed for 3 nights commencing the 15<sup>th</sup> August to allow for its resurfacing.

We currently understand that the 'left turn only' restriction for vehicles exiting Station Road, which was raised in a separate traffic regulation order (TRO), will be included in this construction scheme.

- Major narrowing of the A20 with all the traffic islands removed
- Left turn only out of Station Road onto the A20 (except pedal cycles and emergency vehicles on call)
- Removal of all crash barriers and pedestrian guardrails
- Significant additional pavement width and new grass verges
- New crossing island and pedestrian guardrail at the surgery to playground footpath
- New junction signage and road markings
- High friction tarmac surface for the existing puffin crossing approaches

To meet their core function of improving road safety at known crash sites, Kent County Council Highways department have been legally obliged to address this junction due to its poor safety record. KCC have spent 2 years looking at possible improvements for this crossroads during which time they have talked with the Charing Parish Council Highways group, despite not being under any obligation to consult over a safety specific scheme. Several alternatives, including a roundabout and traffic lights, have been investigated but ultimately eliminated due to limited space, lack of visibility or other negative effects on road safety.



We are informed that the main strategy of this achievable scheme is to reduce speeds along the A20 by considerably narrowing the main road and making it less 'highway' and more 'village centre'. It also attempts to reduce the conflict created when HGVs are turning right into Station Road whilst vehicles are turning right out of Station Road. This is a busy turning with nearly 40% of all vehicles using the crossroads entering or leaving Station Road.

However, this does not address the steadily increasing number of heavy goods vehicles which are turning at this junction and using Pluckley Road. The latest surveys show that 5.3% of vehicles at this junction were heavy goods vehicles, of which 34% turned into or out of Station Road, mostly 27% to/from Maidstone and 7% to/from Ashford. It was also noted that the traffic using Station Road has increased by 20% since 2017 and by almost 50% over the last ten years (compared to the Kent wide average increasing by just over 10% between 2012 and 2019).

The CPC Highways group are disappointed with this limited scheme but understand that this is a very awkward junction with significant constraints. We accept that overall this scheme will make some improvement to safety. We have appreciated being consulted and having our opinions considered, but we hope that more might be able to be done in the future to improve the safety of the Station Road and High Street junction with the A20.

Going forward we will continue to push strongly for a reduction in the 40mph speed limit on the A20 through Charing. We will also monitor the new 'left turn only' out of Station Road to see if it should be further strengthened with physical restrictions applied to turning out of the High Street thereby limiting the number of permutations across this junction further.

