

Speed bumps in Gadby Road and Sandford Road

This report was presented to the Sittingbourne and Swale West Area Forum on 27-11-2007, and it was agreed there to pass it to the Swale Joint Transportation Board.

However, note that the recommendations section has been clarified to avoid ambiguity and possible misunderstanding. The clarified recommendations were explained verbally in the meeting and agreed.

In mid-2004, Gadby Road and Sandford Road received an extraordinarily large number of speed bumps, going from zero to 34 (17 pairs each way) in one go. Strong objections were raised by many residents, as the original consultation had only included the small minority of people living directly alongside the road, and had completely ignored well over 1000 people whose access goes via that road. The shape of the speed bumps also caused objections, as cars are thrown to one side unless they cross exactly in the middle.

For residents of Hilton Drive and its adjoining roads (roughly a third of the total, or 500 residents), their previous access route now included a grand total of 10 consecutive speedbumps each way, even though speed surveys at the time showed that speeding was not an issue.

Other problems that have been raised repeatedly by residents include:

1. Cars having to drive on the wrong side of the road (sometimes going head to head) whenever a parked car obstructs the straight path over a speed bump.
2. Noise complaints due to braking and reaccelerating.
3. Damage to vehicles (especially shock absorbers), even at slow speeds.
4. Cars driving on the pavement to avoid speed bumps.
5. The fact that the shape of the bumps does nothing to slow motorbikes, and little to slow vans and wide vehicles.
6. Traffic has naturally diverted through Kenilworth court, rather than face 8 consecutive bumps along the eastern end of Gadby Road.

In August and September 2007 a survey was distributed which allowed each resident to answer "Remove", "Keep" or "Don't Care", for each speed bump on a map of the estate. All properties in the estate (about 700) were supplied with a copy of the survey. Over 120 survey responses were returned, mostly by hand, which corresponds to a high response rate of about 17%. This illustrates how strongly residents feel about this issue.

The results show a clear pattern. Objections ("Remove") significantly outnumber support ("Keep") for every location, but 4 consecutive bumps (near the shops) have significantly more support, and fewer objections, than the others. It is also understood that original requests for traffic calming came from residents in this small area, suggesting that these were the only speed bumps ever justified in the first place.

While a substantial number of residents favour complete removal of all bumps in the entire scheme, it is nevertheless known that requests were made for some form of traffic calming in the vicinity of the shops. As an aside, it is also acknowledged that KHS has limited budget, so finding funding for complete removal is likely to be challenging.

It is worth restating that speed surveys performed at the time showed no issue with speeding, and that the topography of the road makes it very clear that speeds will be substantially different depending on which section of the road cars are travelling. Consequently, guidelines about "maximum separations" should not be considered to apply to the entire length of Gadby Road and Sandford Road.

Recommendations:

Considering these survey results, it is recommended that the following requests be made to Kent Highway Services:

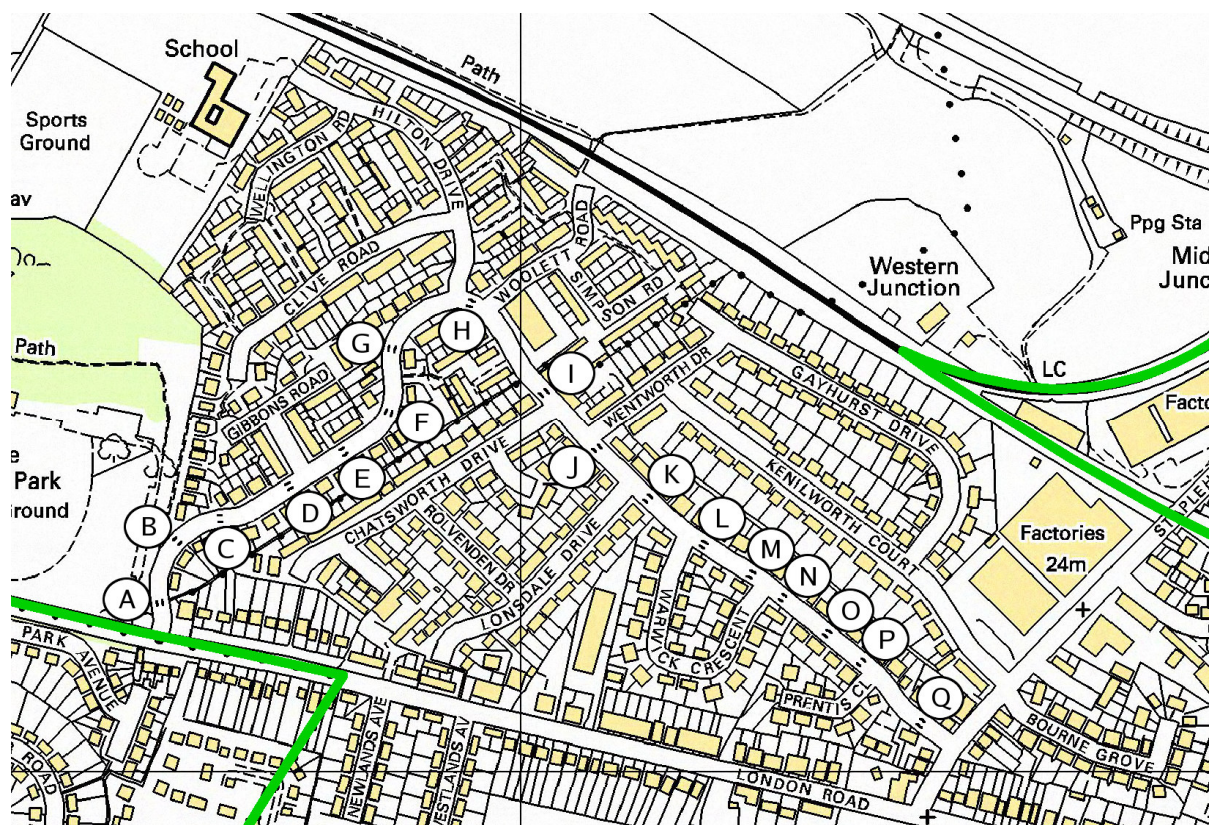
1. It is requested that the 13 most disliked speed bumps be removed. (These are: A, B, C, D, E, F, then K, L, M, N, O, P, Q.)
2. The remaining 4 speed bumps (G, H, I, J) clearly have above-average levels of public support and should be kept.

However, if and only if available budget presents an insurmountable problem to removing all 13 above, the following is requested as the most preferable alternative:

The following 8 speed bumps be removed: 'E', plus everything east of 'K', inclusive. That gives: E, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q. (Note that this list includes the top 7 most disliked speed bumps.) The reasons for giving priority to the eastern end of Gadby Road are:

- (i) The speed bumps along Gadby Road are the most unpopular.
- (ii) Action in Gadby Road will substantially reduce traffic diverting through the previously little-used Kenilworth Court, hence solving another issue at the same time.

Map of the area



Responses to Local Residents' Survey

Net votes for removal																
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q
57	47	53	54	64	54	42	24	31	44	66	55	73	58	64	56	61
Votes for removal																
87	82	85	85	90	86	80	71	74	80	92	86	95	89	90	87	90
Votes for keeping																
30	35	32	31	26	32	38	47	43	36	26	31	22	31	26	31	29

