

## **Downs Road and Hogg Lane, Northfleet**

A report by the Head of Transport and Development to the Highways Advisory Board on 8 May 2008

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### **Introduction**

1. Downs Road and Hogg Lane are narrow country lanes linking the hamlet of Northfleet Green and Istead Rise (south of A2) with the Pepperhill and Painters Ash estates in Northfleet; linking residents with the primary school at Painters Ash and local shops and doctors surgery. Its location is shown in the attached plan.
2. The use of the road has been limited to cars and small vans by the presence of a low underpass under the A2, with typically a few hundred vehicles per day. However, because of its remoteness and low use there is a history of dumping and unsocial behaviour in the underpass. At other times of congestion on A2 it had become a rat run between villages south of A2 and Gravesend.
3. The section of the route from Northfleet Green Road (just south of the Channel Tunnel Rail link) to just north of the A2 has been realigned in two stages, once for the CTRL and now for the A2 widening works. For the later scheme, the underpass has been replaced by a bridge, hence removing the physical height restriction. The road has been closed since August 2006 and under the A2 widening permission it is due to reopen in October this year with no restrictions as to its use.
4. It was appreciated at the time of the Public Inquiry into the A2 scheme that this was an opportune time to debate the future of the Downs Road/Hogg Lane link and this should be carried out by the relevant Local Authorities.

### **Public Consultation**

5. The attached report, written by the Gravesham Engineering Services Manager, included as Appendix 1, to the Gravesham Joint Transportation Board on 26 March this year explains the options considered and consultations carried out to date.
6. The view of Kent Highway Services is given in paragraph 3.3 of that report, essentially being that the consultation hadn't proved that the highway was no longer required and to the contrary the needs of the local communities were paramount and that the road should therefore remain open but with weight and physical width restrictions on it.
7. The Joint Transportation Board resolved that it recommends to the County Highways Advisory Board that Downs Road/Hogg Lane be closed to all vehicular traffic but remain open to pedestrian, cycle and equestrian traffic
8. To stress the feelings of local residents who would have their most convenient link cut off, there was a 148 signature petition sent to Gravesham Borough Council, an article in the local newspaper of 3 April and a complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman.

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### **Conclusion**

9. Subject to the views of this Board it is proposed to recommend to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste that:
  - (i) approval is given to progress the statutory consultation on Traffic Regulation Orders to place a 3.5 tonne and 7 ft width restriction on the sections of Hogg Lane and Downs Road between Northfleet Green Road and just north of old A2. And, subject to favourable consultation, implement said Orders, appropriate signing and physical width restriction to be in place on the reopening of the road in October this year.

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### **Background Documents-**

Location Plan

Appendix 1 – Report to the Gravesham Joint Transportation Board of 26 March 2008