

As residents of a property accessed from the A272 between Kent Street and Cowfold for over 30 years, we were puzzled by the highways' response, at the ISH on Thursday, to the Rampion Kent Street Traffic Management Plan.

We and other residents have on several occasions asked WSCC to reduce the speed limit on this stretch of road for safety reasons, because of the high number of accidents, and have always received the same replies: it is not WSCC policy, and there haven't been enough fatal accidents.

It seems remarkable therefore that WSCC can so readily agree to the reduction in speed to 40mph proposed by Rampion, especially as this proposal is far more complicated than just a speed limit reduction.

We feel it is not possible to be sure on the evidence provided whether/this will road users./

On the one hand, if permanent, it would address our concerns, and may assist the Parish Council's hopes of getting a 20mph speed limit in the village. It would also mean that the size of the visible site entrance, could possibly be reduced./

However, to agree to this without proper consideration of the consequences is quite incomprehensible. Usually, reducing the speed limit simply reduces the gaps between vehicles. But proper modelling needs to be undertaken as to whether this will cause backing up along the A272 towards Bolney as the stretch of road is continuous with the congestion point at the Cowfold mini roundabouts. Traffic already regularly backs up from Cowfold to Kent Street.

Also, whether it will cause backing up into/the/AQMA in Cowfold as traffic heads get away.

As it is, there is a continuous stream/of traffic/coming from this direction in the get out of side roads onto the A272. This is particularly relevant given the huge numbers of vehicles slowing to turn in and out of Kent Street and the two compounds, all so close together, and the use of banksmen to stop traffic on the A272. All of these need to be factored in to any assessment of traffic flow.

In addition, will it simply increase the accident rate in the derestricted areas between Cowfold and Buck Barn (another highly congested junction), and between Cowfold and Bolney, as frustrated drivers put their foot down to make up for the delay on this part of the road?

As we live on the stretch of road opposite this location, we know how terrifying it is to stop on the road as you fear someone will run into the back of you. Indeed, this has happened to visitors to our property on several occasions. It is even more dangerous going into Kent Street from the east as there is a dip in the road. A driver could be sitting there for several minutes whilst waiting for an HGV to come all the way up Kent Street. Banksmen are also in danger; crossing that part of the A272 as a pedestrian is particularly alarming.

There is also the danger of getting in and out of Picts Lane and the access road to Coopers Farm, Wealden Barn and Applecross.

We understand that Rampion have now decided to control the movements of HGVs and low loaders in to Kent Street by holding them at the western compound. This means that the numbers of vehicle movements overall will be increased. It will also mean that drivers entering the A272 from side roads between Kent Street and the western compound risk being trapped in the section between.

There are several access roads on the north side of the A272 near Oakendene, properties. We will not be able to see past the queuing traffic as it waits for vehicles to turn in or out of Kent Street or the A63 compound and will have to leap out blind from our driveways, and from Kent Street to turn right onto the busy road, unaware of whether the traffic is still moving in the opposite/direction/or not.

Rampion give instances of serious accidents occurring near the Oakendene Industrial estate. All of which illustrate very clearly why this stretch of the A272 is dangerous and traffic lights are needed; they show that the bend is dangerous, visibility is poor, and people do not expect vehicles to be slowing down to turn on this stretch of road. All these accidents took place in daylight, and with good weather conditions. Many more, less serious, accidents occur on this part of the A272, clustered at Kent Street, and the A63 and A62 compound entry points. The complicated traffic movements of the construction vehicles will make accidents far more likely to happen. Only a few days ago, another, unreported accident took place at this point.

Traffic lights must be used for safety reasons, but the queues may be worse as a result.

This is a fundamental problem of choosing this site for the substation.

We know that these concerns are shared by many other Cowfold residents and the Cowfold Parish Council.

We hope you will be able to consider/this information further.