

# Upper Haysden Lane, Tonbridge Proposed traffic calming scheme



## Consultation Report May 2022

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# Upper Haysden Lane, Tonbridge

## Proposed traffic calming scheme



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### 1. Introduction

From 19 January to 22 February 2022, Kent County Council (KCC) carried out a consultation on proposals to install a traffic calming scheme involving a series of raised cushions along Upper Haysden Lane in the vicinity of the Nexus School.

In 2020, we were asked to investigate an extension to the existing 40mph speed limit on Upper Haysden Lane to provide a 'buffer zone' on the approach to access Nexus School. This would have involved moving the start of the existing 40mph speed limit approximately 50 metres further south of the Tonbridge bypass bridge with upgraded signage and lining.

During the consultation period, which ran between 6 and 30 November 2020, there were a large number of objections to this proposal particularly from the school and parents / guardians of pupils. They stated that this was insufficient and that Upper Haysden Lane outside the school grounds should be made 30mph.

A second consultation took place between 29 January and 22 February 2021, which proposed a 30mph speed limit to start just south of the Tonbridge bypass bridge and to extend north along Upper Haysden Lane to the junction of Masefield Way. However, to safely install a 30mph speed limit some form of road engineering (traffic calming) is required.

Since the speed limit consultations, detailed discussions have taken place with Nexus School, local elected officials and the Tonbridge and Malling Joint Transportation Board (JTB). Reports were taken to the JTB on 7 June and 22 November 2021. During the various discussions it was agreed that a traffic calming scheme should be explored.

We have now completed the public consultation on the proposed traffic calming scheme (raised cushions). The consultation was held to understand if there was support from the local community for the traffic calming measures.

If the traffic calming proposal is approved by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, following discussion and a report to the Tonbridge and Malling Joint Transportation Board (JTB), then this will make it possible to install the 30mph speed limit along the upper section of Upper Haysden Lane.

This report provides information on the consultation process and summarises the responses received. It also provides information on the next steps for the project.

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### 2. Consultation process

The following promotional activities were undertaken to support the delivery of the public consultation:

- promotion through Nexus School and Tonbridge library
- email to stakeholder organisations
- press release
- consultation posters displayed in local area
- invite sent to 867 people registered with KCC's engagement platform, who had expressed an interest in transport and road consultation in the Tonbridge and Malling Borough.
- local KCC Members distributed paper copies of the consultation leaflet to nearby residents.

A webpage [www.kent.gov.uk/upperhaysdenlane](http://www.kent.gov.uk/upperhaysdenlane) was created for the consultation on [Let's talk Kent](#). Copies of the consultation material could be downloaded from this webpage or posted on request.

During the consultation there were:

- 394 unique visitors to the consultation webpage
- 177 downloads of the consultation leaflet
- 10 downloads of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)
- 21 downloads of the Word version of the consultation questionnaire.

People were asked to provide feedback via a consultation questionnaire, which was available online and in a paper version on request.

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### 3. Equality and accessibility

To help ensure that we are meeting our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 we prepared an initial Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) for the proposed scheme. An EqIA is a tool to assess the impact any proposals would have on the protected characteristics: age, disability, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, religion, and carer's responsibilities.

We asked for comments on our equality analysis and if there was anything else we should consider relating to equality and diversity. The responses to this question are summarised in section 4.

The following steps were taken to help ensure that the consultation was accessible:

- in addition to the consultation being available online, paper copies of the consultation leaflet were
  - made available at Tonbridge library
  - hand delivered or posted to residents upon request and by the local KCC Members.
- all publicity and consultation material included a phone number and email address for people to request hard copies, alternative formats and languages.
- a telephone number and email address were provided for queries regarding the consultation.
- a Word version of the consultation questionnaire was available for anyone who could not or did not want to complete the online questionnaire. Emails and letters received during the consultation were also accepted.
- the consultation webpage and documents were fully accessible for people using audio transcription software.

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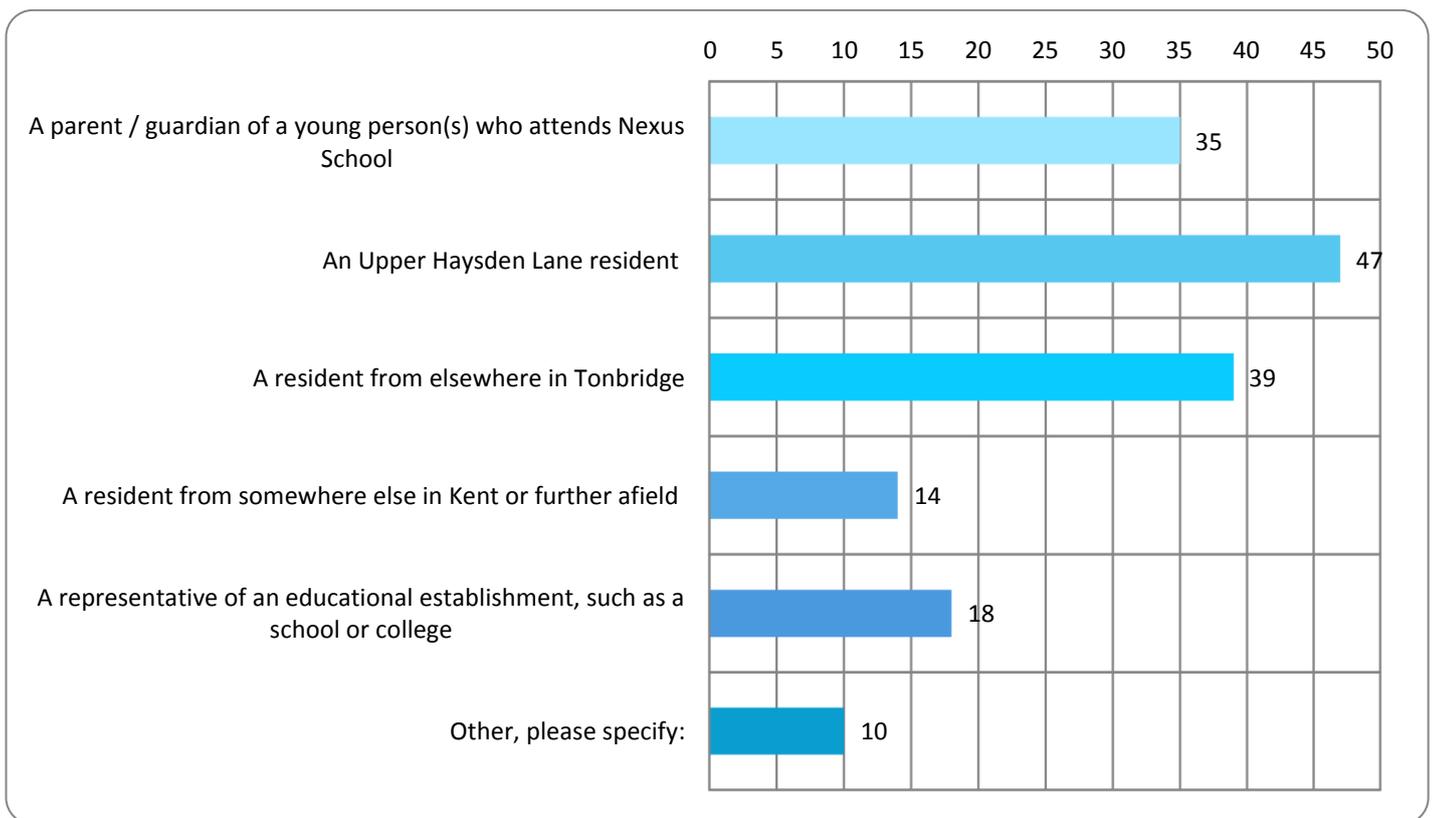
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### 4. Summary of responses

There was a total of 163 responses to the consultation. All 163 respondents completed the online questionnaire. Below is a breakdown of some of the responses.

#### Q1. Please tell us in what capacity you are completing this questionnaire:



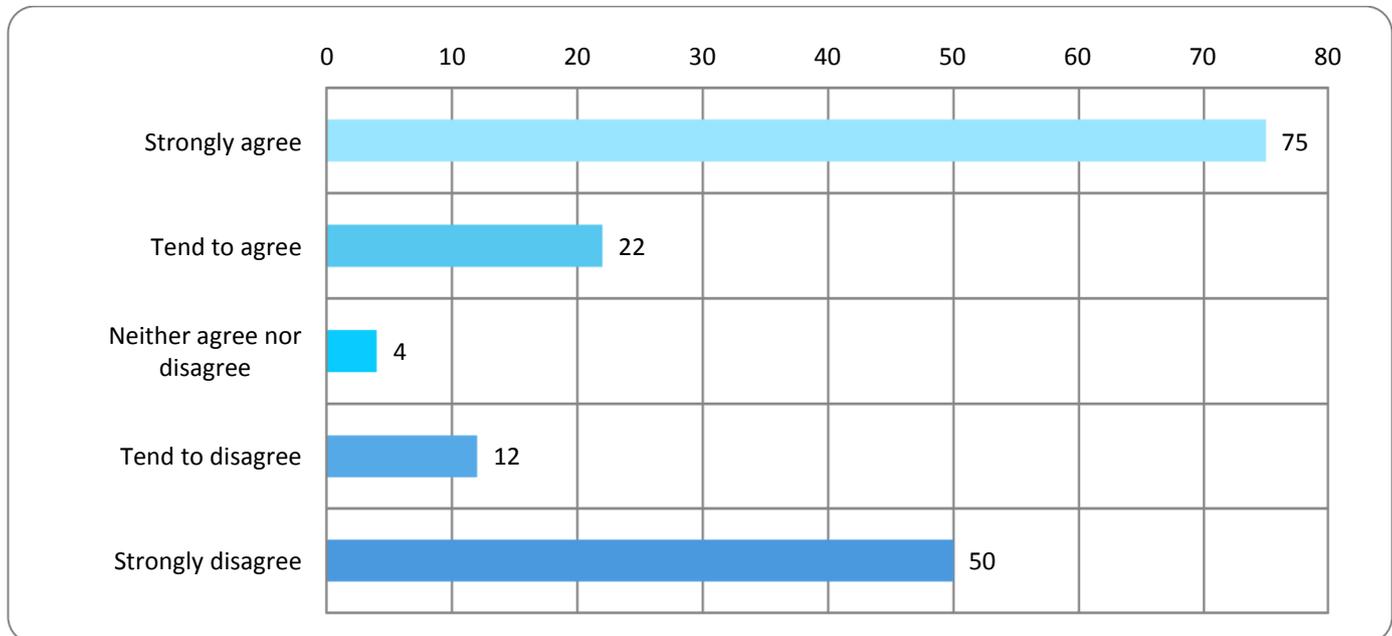
Many of the respondents were parents / guardians of children attending the Nexus School (35 in total) and there were another 18 respondents from another nearby educational institution. There are various other educational establishments in the nearby area including The Judd School and the Hayesbrook Academy.

5 of the 10 respondents who stated they were responding as 'Other' were staff or governors from Nexus School. 3 were residents in the nearby area and the remaining 2 respondents were residents or visitors to Brook Street and the wider area.

47 people responded to the consultation as residents of Upper Haysden Lane and nearby areas, and 39 residents from elsewhere in Tonbridge.

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## Q3. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposed Upper Haysden Lane Traffic Calming scheme?



- 75 respondents strongly agree to the proposed traffic calming, and a total of 97 respondents (59%) agree overall.
- 50 respondents (31%) strongly disagree with the proposed traffic calming, and a total of 62 respondents (38%) disagree overall.
- 4 people said that they neither agreed nor disagreed with the proposed scheme.
- 49 of the 50 people (98%) who strongly disagreed with the proposed traffic calming were responding as residents of Upper Haysden Lane, or residents from somewhere else in Kent.
- 49 of the 75 people (65%) who strongly agreed with the proposed traffic calming were responding as A parent / guardian of a young person(s) who attends Nexus School or as a representative of an educational establishment.

From the feedback received there were some residents who raised concerns about noise and potential damage to vehicles which may occur through the introduction of humps / cushions on Upper Haysden Lane.

Supporters of the scheme mentioned that measures to reduce the speed of vehicles is vital to improve highway safety and encourage active travel (walking and cycling) in the area.

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**Q3a. Following on from Q3 we asked respondents to please tell us the reason for their answer.**

This was an open question, so a summary of the types of responses received is shown below:

Reasons in support of the proposed scheme:

- Speeding is an issue on Upper Haysden Lane.
- There is a school located in this part of the lane which does not benefit from any highway features (crossings, low speed limit) or protection which other schools in the area do.
- Will make the road safer for other cars on the road, and for those turning in and out of the various junctions and accesses.
- Improvements are needed to improve the safety of adults and special needs children when crossing.
- Measures are needed to ensure the safety of pupils and families.
- There are no signs showing that the school is there, and traffic goes past very fast.

Reasons against the proposed scheme:

- Too many artificially low speed limits are being proposed throughout the county.
- Too many speed cushions are proposed, why do they need to be placed all the way along Upper Haysden Lane to Brook Street?
- Speed cushions are known to cause damage to vehicles.
- The proposals will generate noise when vehicles travel over them which will cause mental health problems for those who live nearby.
- A speed camera should be explored instead.
- The school should not have been built without the highway infrastructure in place, despite these concerns being raised previously the school went ahead anyway.
- Cushions will encourage drivers to constantly increase and decrease speeds which lead to increased vehicle emissions.
- The proposed scheme is inappropriate for the type of road and will be detrimental to the environment.

As stated in the summary of question 3 there is a strong theme from representatives from the school raising concern about traffic speeds and difficulties experienced when crossing Upper Haysden Lane.

A large number of people feel that the use of cushions is an extreme measure and that other forms of traffic calming, or perhaps a safety (speed) camera should be used instead, or in many cases no traffic calming at all.

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### **Q4. We welcome your views on our equality analysis and if you think there is anything we should consider relating to equality and diversity, please add any comments below:**

There were 38 responses to this question. A sample of the comments received covering the main themes are shown below:

- They [traffic cushions] are incompatible with the elderly and infirm occupants of all vehicle types that are pitched sideways in their aspect while traversing.
- Any disabled person or carer with a reliance on a car is being penalised.
- There is no reference in the EqlA that the students who attend Nexus are disabled with profound, complex, severe needs and require additional support to move around. They are not independent. The plans are a step in the right direction but to offer complete equality a pedestrian crossing should be installed.
- Sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, race, religion have no impact on road cushions. age, disability, carer's responsibilities - do. Don't club all EIA criteria into one group as it creates alienation.
- Students at Nexus School all have a protected characteristic under the equalities act as disabled children.

Some concerns were raised that physical traffic calming penalising drivers, including those who are disabled or are carers for individuals with impairments. This is likely due to concerns in relation to driver / passenger comfort when travelling over the cushions.

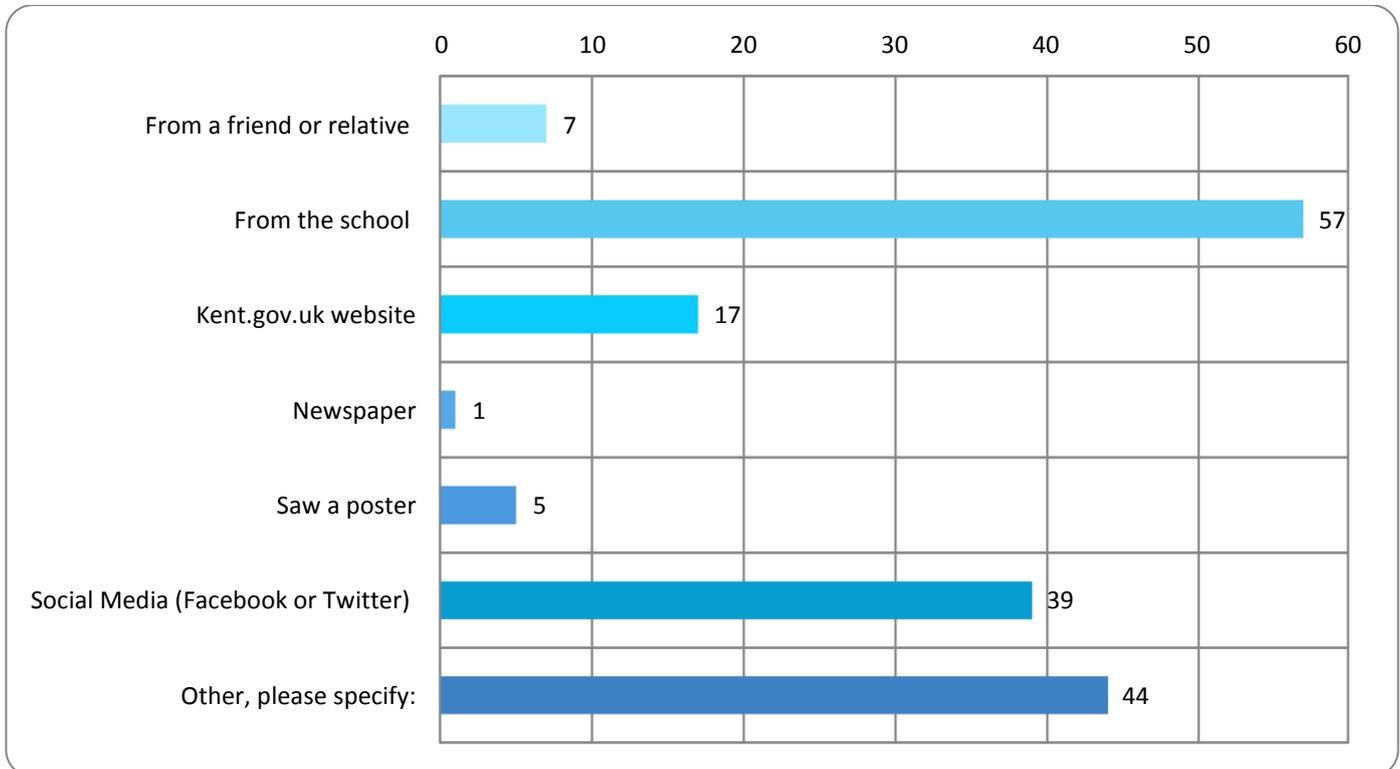
As detailed in the report there were a number of people who responded highlighting that the Nexus School caters for children with protected characteristics so there is a high proportion of people using the highway in this area with some form of impairment.

Many respondents replied using the same statement outlined in bullet point 3 above that the EqlA does not make direct reference to the Nexus school, and that the traffic calming proposals are a step in the right direction, but there needs to be a pedestrian crossing installed near the school. Based on current data vehicle speeds are too high to safely install a zebra crossing, and there is insufficient pedestrian / cyclist crossing demand for any form of controlled crossing point (zebra / pelican / puffin) in the vicinity of the Nexus School. If the traffic calming measures proposed in this consultation are approved, then this may help to reduce vehicle speeds sufficiently on Upper Haysden Lane and encourage more walking and cycling which may in turn make the site a viable location for a controlled pedestrian crossing.

11 of the 38 people who provided a response to this question answered either N/A, nothing to add, or similar rather than leaving the question blank.

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## Q5. How did you find out about this consultation?

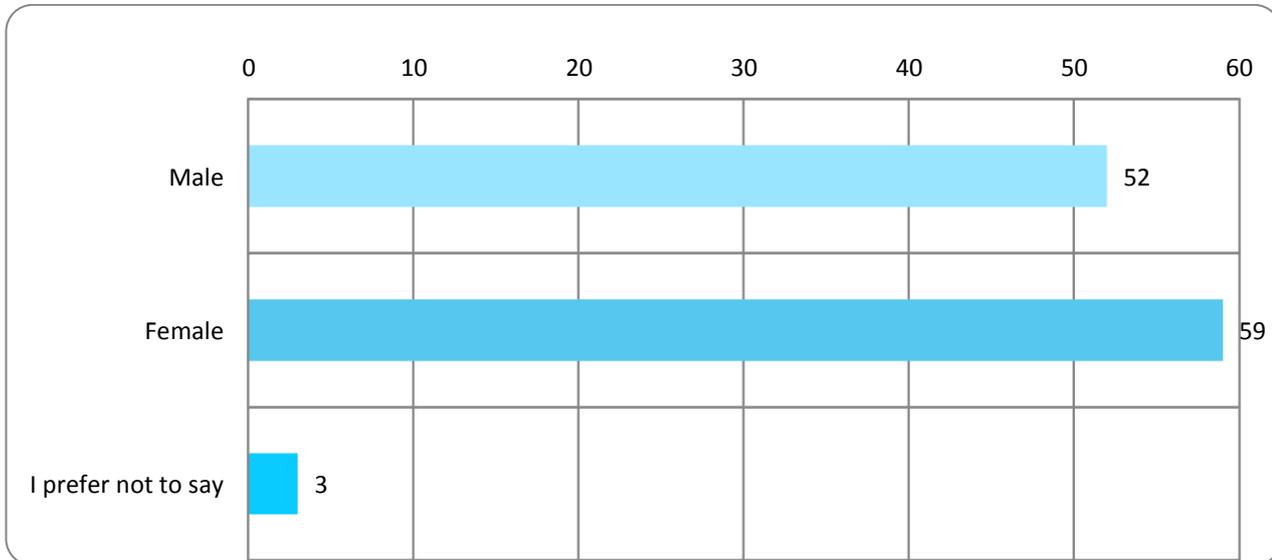


- Most respondents heard about the consultation from the school – a total of 57.
- Social media accounted for 39 of the respondents who responded to the questionnaire.
- 44 people responded to the consultation after hearing about it from other sources not listed above. This included a large number of people who received a direct email from KCC as they are registered to receive consultation notifications for their local area from KCC’s engagement website. Other respondents advised that they had also been notified of the proposals by their MP or from communications (door to door and leaflets) from their local KCC Members.

The school have been campaigning for a reduced speed limit and highway safety improvements on Upper Haysden Lane for some time. This is where the proposed scheme was initially raised. The school has promoted the consultation through various methods which is why there has been a high number of people made aware of the scheme via The Nexus School.

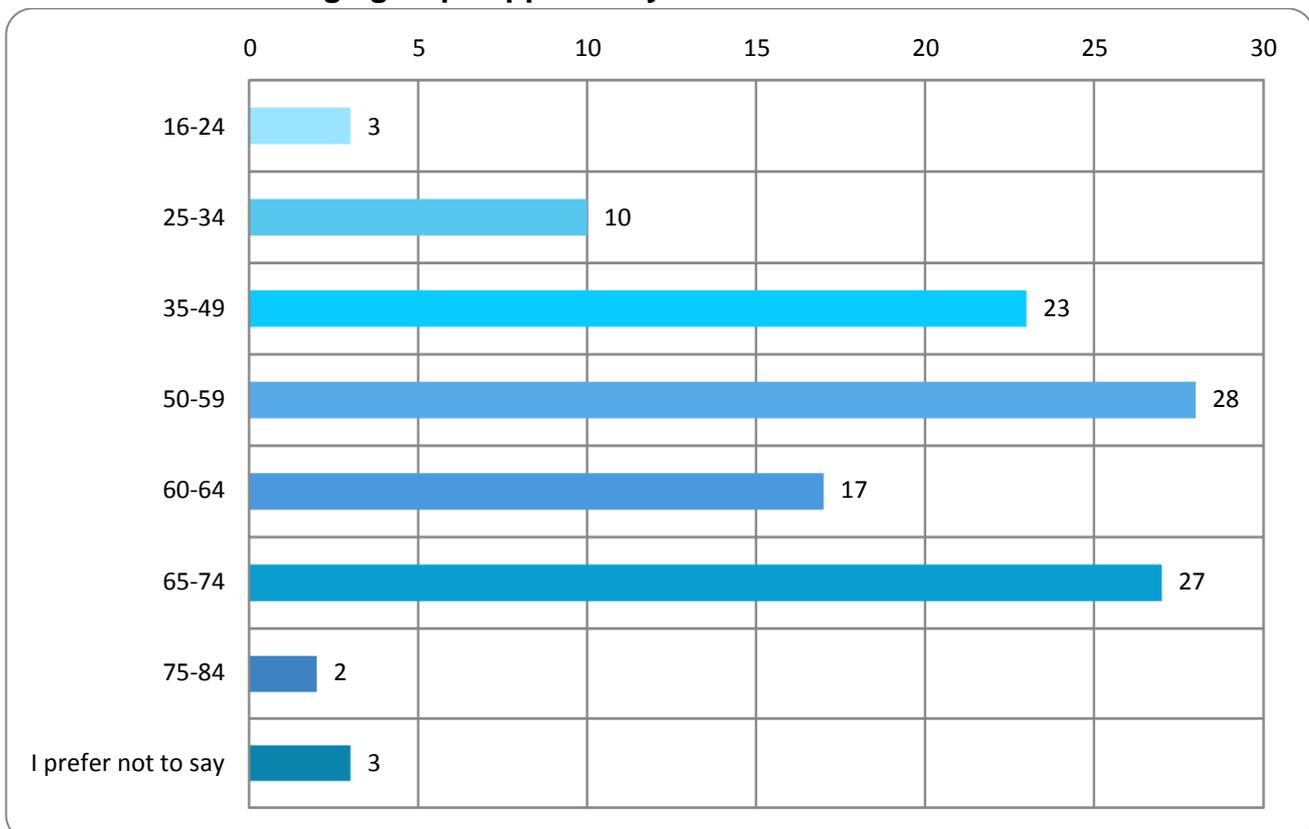
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## Q6. Are you....?



114 people answered this question. 59 of respondents are female and 52 are male.

## Q7. Which of these age groups applies to you?

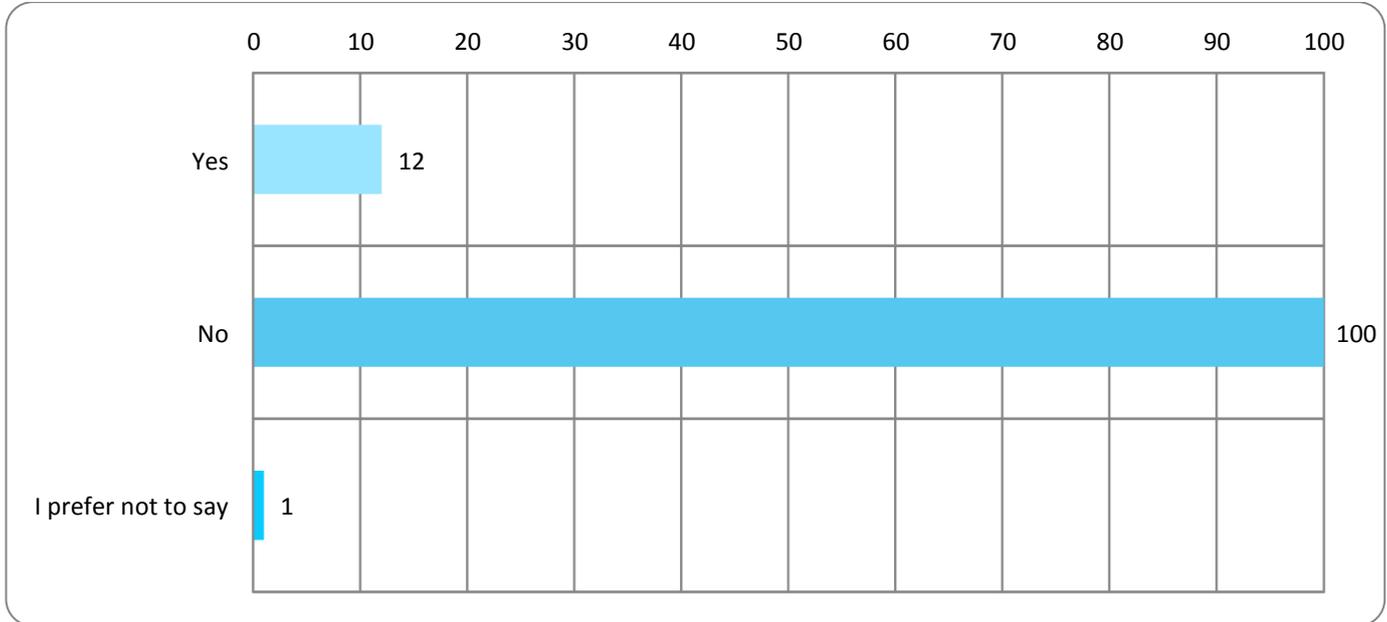


113 people answered this question. The highest proportion of respondents are aged 50-59 (28), followed by 65-74 (27), 65-74 (18) and 35-49 (23).

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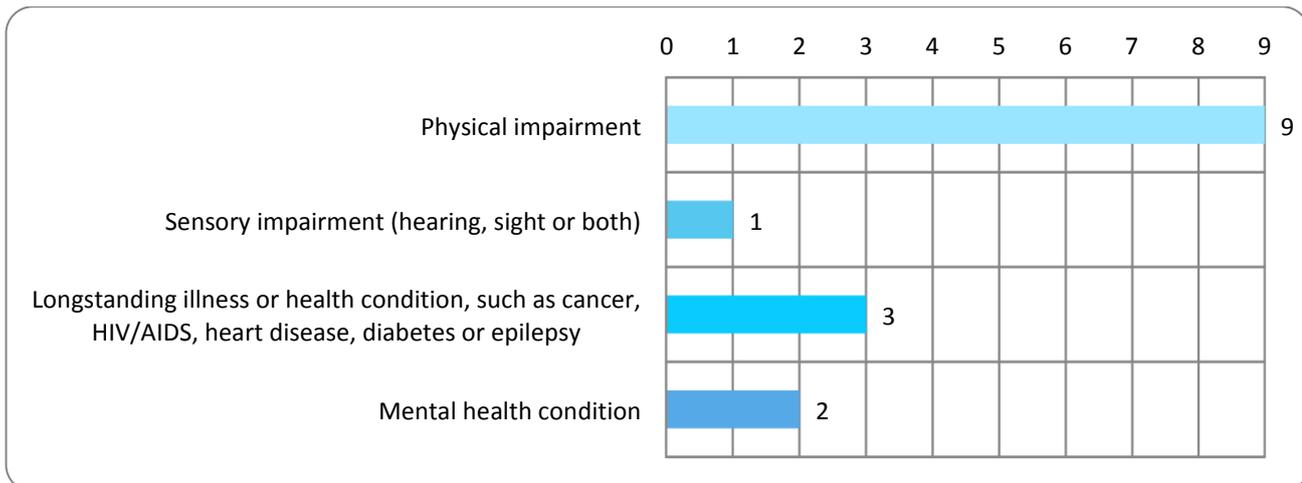


## Q8. Do you consider yourself to be disabled as set out in the Equality Act 2010?



113 people answered this question. 100 said that they do not consider themselves to be disabled. 12 said they did.

## Q8a. Please tell us the type of impairment that applies to you? You may have more than one type of impairment, so please select all that apply.

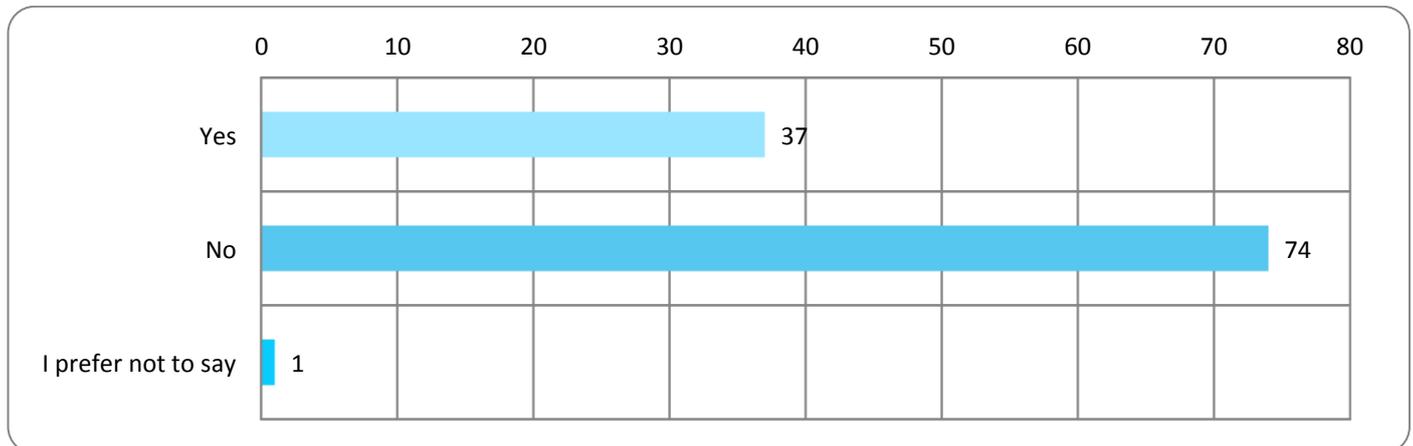


Of the 15 people who said they have some form of impairment, 9 said they had a physical impairment, 3 have a longstanding illness or health condition, 2 have a mental health condition and 1 has a sensory impairment.

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**Q9. A Carer is anyone who cares, unpaid, for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction cannot cope without their support. Both children and adults can be carers. Are you a Carer?**



There were a high number of respondents who are carers, 37 in total, which is likely due to the presence of the Nexus school which specialises in catering for children and young people with profound, severe and complex needs, many of whom are on the Autistic Spectrum.

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### 5. Conclusions and next steps

Pedestrian and vehicle surveys along with a road safety audit were carried out on Upper Haysden Lane in addition to the public consultation. Automated traffic counts (ATC's) were undertaken to ascertain actual driven speeds to evidence if there is a notable speeding issue.

KCC commissioned a weeklong ATC survey, from Thursday 11 March to Wednesday 17 March 2021, to ascertain actual speeds on Upper Haysden Lane in the vicinity of Nexus School.

The results show that average driver speeds are 37.4mph (37.5mph northbound and 37.4mph southbound), this demonstrates that the current speed limit of 40mph generally appears to be adhered to.

This data also shows that Upper Haysden Lane would not be a suitable candidate for a speed limit reduction to 30mph without a substantial traffic calming scheme being implemented. All speed limit changes in the UK must be installed within the current national standards for setting local speed limits in England (Setting Local Speed Limits DfT circular-01-2013). Without physical measures in place to support a speed limit reduction drivers would become desensitised and confused by the artificially low speed limit which could then lead to more driver frustration and dangerous overtaking and other manoeuvres.

Road safety audits involve a review by an independent highways professional to analyse the safety implications of highways improvements and new road schemes. Through site inspections and reviews of proposed scheme plans auditors identify potential road safety problems from the perspective of all highway users.

The Upper Haysden Lane audit identified some concerns with the location of some of the proposed cushions due to the proximity of side roads and accesses, these concerns could be easily overcome by slightly altering the positioning of some of the cushions.

Based on the feedback during the consultation there appears to be a majority of respondents who want the traffic calming scheme to proceed, and an even greater number of people who have said that they would support a speed limit reduction.

From reviewing some of the detail in the responses many people did not understand why physical traffic calming measures were needed and why the speed limit could not just be reduced to 30mph; hopefully the additional information above will help to answer that question.

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The next stage in the process is for this scheme proposal and the outcomes of the public consultation to be discussed by the Tonbridge and Malling Joint Transportation Board (JTB) on the 6<sup>th</sup> June 2022. At that meeting members of the Board will make a recommendation as to whether or not the scheme should proceed and if any amendments need to be made. The final decision as to how, or if, the scheme should proceed will be made by the KCC Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport.

This report will be available on the [consultation webpage](#) and [Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council's](#) website. Consultees who have selected to be kept informed when registering to take part in the consultation will receive email notification when this report is published and when a decision is made. The consultation webpage will also be updated with details of the decision.