

## **Alkham Parish Council**

### **Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) 2026 – Priority Issues**

Alkham Parish Council's 2026 HIP submission recognises that the following issues have been raised previously and that Kent County Council has, at times, decided not to progress them. This submission sets out clearly **why those decisions have not resolved the problems**, and why the issues remain **structural, ongoing, and cumulative**, rather than perception-based.

The Parish Council is not seeking to revisit past decisions for their own sake. However, continued inaction has demonstrable consequences for safety, heritage, and the Kent Downs AONB. The Council therefore expects these priorities to be reconsidered on their current merits and in light of changed conditions on the network.

---

#### **Priority 1 – Physical Speed-Calming Measures**

**Has this issue been raised previously?** Yes

##### **Problem / Concern (Revised):**

Signed speed limits and advisory measures alone have proven ineffective in controlling vehicle speeds through Alkham Village and along the Alkham Valley Road. This is evidenced by sustained community concern, repeated Speed Watch data, and the persistence of inappropriate speeds despite previous reviews.

The absence of physical speed control measures means driver behaviour has not materially changed. Earlier decisions not to progress physical calming have resulted in a situation where speeds remain unmanaged and predictable risks remain unaddressed. Without physical intervention, further monitoring or refreshed signage will not alter outcomes.

##### **Objectives / Options for KCC to Consider:**

Move beyond advisory or sign-only approaches and introduce physical measures that enforce appropriate speeds.

- Convert the existing western village entry island into a build-out, utilising existing street lighting infrastructure. This location has a documented history of serious incidents involving vehicles negotiating the island incorrectly.
- Introduce clear village gateway treatments at both ends of the settlement to signal a change in road character and driver expectation.
- Retain vehicle-activated signage only as a supporting measure, not as the primary intervention.

##### **Key Point:**

Further delay or reliance on monitoring alone will not address the issue. Physical intervention is required to achieve lasting behavioural change.

## Priority 2 – Speed Limit Reduction

**Has this issue been raised previously?** Yes – on multiple occasions

### **Problem / Concern (Revised):**

Vehicle speeds throughout the Alkham Valley remain inappropriate for the road's geometry, visibility, and mixed-use function. Despite previous reviews and limited interventions, speeding continues to be a persistent and unresolved problem.

The presence of pedestrians, equestrians, cyclists, children, and intersecting public rights of way means the risk is **ongoing and cumulative**, not occasional as part of the National Landscape's statutory objectives in providing opportunities for the public to enjoy the area's special qualities in a quiet manner. Since earlier decisions were made, conditions on the network have and will continue to change, including increased background traffic, development pressure, and growing recreational and equestrian use.

Previous refusals to progress further speed reductions have not removed the underlying risk. Especially when combined with appropriate physical speed-calming, revised speed limits are now necessary to reflect the actual use and constraints of the route.

### **Objectives / Options for KCC to Consider:**

Reduce vehicle speeds to levels that take into account of Alkham Valley Road's location within the **Kent Downs AONB**, including impacts on tranquillity, landscape sensitivity, and heritage risk.

- Introduce a 20mph speed limit through the village centre as a safety-led measure.
- Reduce approach speeds to prevent high-speed differentials at village entry points.
- Extend the 30mph limit westwards to include the Pimlico and Meggett Lane junction area.

### **Key Point:**

Previous refusals have not resolved the issue. A different outcome is now required to address a continuing and foreseeable safety risk.

## Priority 3 – 7.5-Tonne Weight Restriction

Has this issue been raised previously? Yes

### Problem / Concern (Revised):

The Alkham Valley road network remains fundamentally unsuitable for routine HGV movements. Past decisions to introduce advisory weight restriction have not prevented continued heavy vehicle use, resulting in recurring safety concerns, verge damage, conflict with vulnerable road users, and impacts on heritage and tranquillity.

Despite “Not Suitable for HGVs” signage installed by Kent Highways, recent planning submissions (including a Transport Statement prepared on behalf of Greenacre Energy) have still identified Alkham Valley Road as an acceptable HGV route, with proposals indicating up to 10 HGV movements per hour and the transport of over 70,000 tonnes of material per annum through the village which was not challenged by Kent Highways in their response

The bridge at Kearsney continues to see multiple strikes requiring a physical inspection before reopening causing delays to the Canterbury east line with two already this year.

The road’s geometry, width, and lack of mitigation mean this issue cannot self-resolve through signage or advisory measures alone.

### Objectives / Options for KCC to Consider:

Introduce a 7.5-tonne weight restriction (except for local access) to reflect the physical constraints of the route and prevent inappropriate through-traffic.

### Key Point:

Without a formal and enforceable restriction, heavy vehicle use will continue. Repeating previous decisions will inevitably repeat the same outcome.

### Overall Position

The Parish Council considers these priorities to represent **an unresolved, cumulative safety issue** within a sensitive rural environment and the Kent Downs AONB. The 2026 HIP submission is therefore presented firmly but procedurally, with the expectation that a different decision-making outcome is now required.