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B4221/B4215 Through Route Road Safety Study: B4221 Action Group's Submission, 7 October 2002

Introduction

1. The main sources of information in this submission are as follows:
 - a. Our report entitled "Road Traffic Problems on the B4221, 11 December 2001",
 - b. The Gorsley & Kilcot Parish Appraisal 2001, September 2001,
 - c. Herefordshire's Safer Routes to School Study, Gorsley Goffs Primary School, by Ove Arup, April 2000, and
 - d. The House of Commons Transport, Local Government and the Regions Committee report entitled Road Traffic Speed of 19 June 2002.
 - e. Correspondence.

2. Our submission comprises this body of text plus the following enclosures - the three reports at references a, b and c above, a copy of our report on commercial traffic and details of our analysis of through traffic. On the advice of Richards S Waters and John Colyer, Transportation Manager for Herefordshire, I also enclose a letter from Mr Martin Davy who wrote to the Action Group some time ago.

Summary

3. The submission emphasises the B4221 because that is the scope of the action group's concerns. However, we recognise that the B4215/B4221 together comprise a route between the A40 and the M50 and that the problems of the B4221 cannot be separated from those of the B4215. We consider that drivers have simply been allowed to choose their own routes without regard for the interests and rights of residents and those who live and work along the road. As a result, the volume, speed and weight of traffic is both unsuitable for this route and give rise to an unacceptable degree of risk to pedestrians, other road users and those who live and work along the road, particularly in schools. The main points are as follows:
 - a. the total volume of traffic using the B4215/B4221 is high in comparison with the A40 and A417, bearing in mind the difference between "A" and "B" roads and the signing policy (see para 8),
 - b. the signing policies affecting the route adopted by the two local authorities are inconsistent (see para 7),
 - c. the volume of through traffic, which we estimate as about 45% of the total, and the risks arising have not been recognised by the local authorities (see para 10),
 - d. the total volume of lorries over 7.5T on the route are high in comparison with the A40 and A417 (see para 14),
 - e. we estimate that about 60% of these lorries are using the route as a rat run (see para 15),
 - f. official speed surveys do not reflect the reality of the high speeds that people along the route observe daily (see paras 19 and 20),
 - g. speed limits through villages and outside schools are too high,
 - h. there are more accidents not involving people being killed or seriously injured than is

acknowledged in the official record. Many of these could easily have led to fatalities or injury and accordingly are a more accurate reflection of the dangers on the route, and

i. there are a number hazardous locations along the B4221 which we identify in the submission (see paras 29 to 51).

4. We want to see the road engineered to effectively calm the traffic on it and to reduce the speed, volume and weight of traffic using the road. In addition we look for the following from the study:

a. both local authorities to adopt a consistent signing policy which directs traffic along the appropriate routes (see para 11),

b. to establish the facts regarding the volume of through traffic on the route (see paras 10 to 13) and the volume of Medium and Heavy Goods Vehicles using the route as a rat run (see paras 14 to 17),

c. to establish the speeds at which traffic moves along the route, particularly at dangerous points (see paras 19 to 21), and

d. to recommend more appropriate speed limits through villages and outside schools, in line with the recommendations of the recent select committee (see paras 22 to 26).

5. In addition it is a fundamental objective of the action group to get the problems on the B4221/B4215 recognised by the local authority and reflected in the Local Transport Plan. Although our report (reference a. para 1) has been accepted as part of the LTP consultation process, we have yet to see any significant change in the description of the B4221/B4215 in that document. We hope that the outcome of the study will enable that to happen.

Details

6. A flavour of the problems on the route is given in the Gorsley & Kilcot Parish Appraisal (reference b. para 1). The Appraisal was called for at a parish meeting in September 2000 and carried out in February 2001. Of the 107 occupied households in the parish 87 (81%) returned the questionnaire, representing 218 people.” (page 20). It reported (page 7) that “The one subject which caused the greatest concern by a potholed mile was our roads: poorly maintained; made worse by heavy traffic and made dangerous by speeding. As well as the specific questions on the subject, when asked for “any other comments four out of five replies mentioned the roads.

While noise pollution and volume of traffic were frequently mentioned, speed was seen as the greatest danger on both main roads and lanes.

“This road [the B4221] is a race track ...awaiting a serious accident. Big lorries travel so fast our house vibrates.”

“Speed restrictions are not working effectively.”

“[We need] speed cameras along the B4221 through Kilcot and Gorsley and a weight limit to reduce the number of heavy lorries using it.”

“All lanes should have 30/40mph speed limits”

The Signing Policy

7. The signing policy is that traffic between the M50 and Gloucester should use the A417. However, Herefordshire signs the route to Gloucester from Leominster via the B4215. The B4224 at Crow Hill/Upton Bishop is also signed to/from Hereford instead of the next village. This route is known locally as the back route to Hereford. We suggest that Herefordshire’s signing is a contributory factor

to the volume of traffic on the B4221/B4215. It is also clear from traffic flow counts of junction 3 on the M50 that ¾ of the traffic using this junction is heading to and from the Ross/A40 direction. Our analysis suggests that much of this is through traffic.

Volume of Traffic

8. The LTP states that “the B4215/B4221 route to some extent is used as an alternative to the A40”. Comparisons of 24 hour per day traffic volumes (from appendix A LTP) between this route, the A40 and the A417 shows that this is an understatement:

B4215	A40 east of Huntley	A417 (south)
11,600	14,000	7,900
B4221	A40 west of Huntley	A417 (north)
6,400	4,900	4,500

The B4215 carries 83% of the volume of traffic on the A40 east of Huntley and almost 150% of that on the A417 (south). The B4221 carries 23% more traffic than the A40 between Huntley and Ross-on-Wye and 140% of that on the A417 (north). The A40 is built to trunk road standards and is designed to accommodate traffic of all types while the B4221/B4215 is not, the road is not wide enough in some places to accommodate oncoming HGVs and the surface is deformed by the weight of traffic.

9. Gloucestershire’s LTP (7.2) describes the A48(T), the A40(T), the A4136 and the B4221/B4215 as providing the principal means of access to the Forest of Dean and having a residual role as long distance routes. Describing the B4215/B4221 in these terms doesn’t reflect the reality indicated by the traffic volumes above.

Through Traffic

10. Until recently the local authority thought that most of the traffic was generated locally. A traffic flow study of junction 3 on the M50 was carried out earlier this year to help ascertain the volume of through traffic, we await the results with interest. Our analysis¹ of the figures, 12 hour per day flows, suggests that about 45% of the total volume is through traffic (details are enclosed). However, through traffic does travel simply from one end of the route to the other. Of the through traffic to the A40 about 14% is from the M50, 22% is from Herefordshire via the B4215 north of Newent and 6% is from Herefordshire via the B4224 and Crow Hill/Upton Bishop. Similarly, of the through traffic to the M50, about 32% is from the A40 and 16% is from Herefordshire via the B4215 north of Newent.

11. The figures show that the signing policy is failing and the B4215/B4221 is the route of choice for

¹ The methodology is unproven but we think the results are indicative. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss and develop this analysis.

through traffic between the M50 and Gloucester. We want both local authorities to adopt a consistent signing policy which directs traffic along the appropriate routes.

12. The reference in the LTP to the B4215/B4221 having a “residual role as (a) long distance route” is a gross understatement. It may be “residual” in terms of the traffic volumes on the M5 and M50 but not in terms of the volume of traffic using the route as a rat run or in terms of the suitability of the road to carry such a volume of traffic. The B4215/B4221, along with the other routes, is described in the LTP as “relatively lightly trafficked”. An expert source, Ove Arup, flatly contradicts this description. The Ove Arup report (reference c. para 1) describes the B4221 as “heavily trafficked” and that at a point near the M50 where the volume of traffic is much less than elsewhere on the route.

13. The LTP does not acknowledge the through traffic problem, its scale or the risks it poses. The school heads at Picklenash and Gorsley Goffs are among those who have been pointing out the dangers for a long time. The playground adjacent to the B4221 at Gorsley Goffs has been taken out of use because of the dangers caused by traffic. Until the LTP adequately reflects the situation on the B4215/B4221 we have little confidence that appropriate remedial action will be taken. We look to the study to establish the facts.

Lorries

14. Comparison of the 24 hour per day volumes of lorries over 7.5T (details from appendix A LTP) is as follows:

B4215	A40 east of Huntley	A417 (south)
790-600	1,340	310
B4221	A40 west of Huntley	A417 (north)
430-380	460	250

The B4215 carries 59% - 45% of the volume of lorries on the A40 east of Huntley and over double the number of lorries on the A417 (south). The B4221 carries almost as many lorries as the A40 between Huntley and Ross-on-Wye and almost double the number on the A417 (north). The B4221/B4215 is clearly the route of choice for lorries travelling via the West of Severn Corridor.

Through Lorry Traffic

15. Our analysis, of 12 hour per day flows, suggests that about 60% of the Medium and Heavy Goods Vehicles (M&HGV) using the B4215/B4221 is through traffic. Of that heading west to the M50 - 45% is from the A40 and 15% from Herefordshire via the B4215 and Dymock. Of that heading east to the A40 - 42% is from Herefordshire via the B4215 and Dymock, 18% is from the M50 and 4% from Herefordshire via Crow Hill/Upton Bishop and the B4224. Details of the analysis are enclosed.

16. In May of this year our group carried out a survey of commercial traffic, excluding small vans (car-sized), buses and farm vehicles. At Newent Crossroads 62% of commercial traffic and 70% of lorries were ‘through’ traffic, ie did not turn off the B4221. At Kilcot Cross 75% all commercial

traffic and 84% of lorries were ‘through’ traffic. Our report is enclosed. These observations are consistent with the above analysis.

17. The LTP acknowledges that the relatively large volume of “lorries create considerable local nuisance” but fails to identify the volume of through lorries on the route. It is essential that this problem is identified and measured. We take the view that the volume of Medium and Heavy Goods Vehicles using the route as a rat run in itself constitutes a hazard. The route is too narrow for oncoming lorries to pass each other. Ove Arup reported that people are frightened to use the pavements or to cycle along the road. It cannot be acceptable in traffic management or public expenditure terms that ‘B’ class roads are used as through lorry routes instead of those designed and built to carry this type of traffic. Again we hope the study will establish the facts.

Lorries Regularly Using the B4221 as a Short Cut

18. Over the last couple of months an active member of the B4221 Road Action Group has compiled a list of companies whose lorries regularly use the B4221 between the M50 and Gloucester. As a large proportion of these lorries are from South Wales and Hereford we can only conclude that our road is being used as an alternative to the other routes that are available. The companies are as follows:

Gambia Products – a Ross on Wye based potato packing company.

Walton Transport – a haulage company based in Kilkenny, Ireland (these lorries are heading to and from the ferries).

Thoms (Hereford) – a large Hereford based company specialising in the transportation of frozen products (vehicles range in size from light vans to articulated lorries).

Danters Funfair – a Ross-on-Wye based funfair whose extremely large lorries are often seen on this road.

Gerry Jones – a South Wales haulier based in Cross Hands.

Rygor Group – a large transport company with a depot in Newport, South Wales.

Welsh Meat Auctions – use this road as a way home to Abergavenny after trading in Gloucester Market.

Burgoynes – a Hereford company based in Lyonshall.

The British Army – often travelling in large convoys use this road as a route to/from the Brecon Beacons for training operations.

CM Downton – a Gloucester based haulage company who regularly use this road as a short cut from Gloucester to South Wales/Hereford and vice versa.

Glyn Pearce – A South Wales based haulage company who are regularly spotted using the layby

outside Newent to overnight in.

Bulmers – Hereford based brewery whose lorries are regularly seen on this road (Scrumpy Cider, Woodpecker – all their brands have been seen on this road). About 2 years ago on Central TV Bulmers had a project to transfer a lot of its deliveries from the roads to the railways – what has happened to this?

Somerfield – A large UK supermarket chain who have a depot in Ross-on-Wye, most days of the week.

Pembroke straw lorries – a large number of these lorries have been seen on this road transporting straw back from England to West Wales.

The vehicles in the above list are of the 40 ton articulated type, the type that we at the Action Group feel should be discouraged from using this road as they have no official business along it. They travel the route at least once a week.

In addition, “Quickskip”, a waste disposal firm, carries waste from Hereford to Gloucester via the B4221/B4215. At least four or five vehicles are involved, including registration numbers 213 to 216 OWO and S7 JWT. We estimate that the total number of daily return journeys by these vehicles is from 6 to 12.

Speed

19. Official speed surveys do not reflect the experience of people living and working along the route. While conducting our own commercial traffic survey it was evident that the problems encountered at Newent crossroads are largely down the speed of vehicles on the B4221. It was particularly evident that parcel delivery vehicles were exceeding the speed limit by a significant margin as were a number of others. The survey report comments that it would be worth doing our own speed survey of the crossroads.

20. Speeds at other sensitive points on the route, such as Picklenash School, Kilcot Hill and Kilcot Cross, through Gorsley and past the post office are documented in our report of December 2001. In addition, members of the group have carried out sample speed surveys using a borrowed radar gun and the results are as shown overleaf:

**Speed Check Survey Kilcot Cross and Christ Church, Gorsley
Thursday 15, Friday 16 and Saturday 17 August 2002**

Kilcot Cross (speeds recorded by garage)

From Gorsley:

Date	Time	No. Vehicles	40-50mph	50-60mph	60-70mph	% over 50mph
15/8	17.15-17.45	122	114	8	0	6.6%
16/8	08.00-08.30	149	123	24	2	17.5%
16/8	16.30-17.00	88	76	12	0	13.6%

To Gorsley:

Date	Time	No. Vehicles	40-50mph	50-60mph	60-70mph	% over 50mph
15/8	17.45-18.15	120	106	14	0	11.7%
16/8	08.30-09.00	70	61	8	1(lorry)	12.9%
16/8	17.00-17.30	169	158	11	0	6.5%

Christ Church, Gorsley (Glos.) (speeds recorded in 40mph zone at bottom of pitch)

From Gorsley (Herefordshire):

Date	Time	No. Vehicles	40-50mph	50-60mph	60-70mph	% over 50mph
17/8	08.15-08.30	37	28	8	1	24.3%

To Gorsley (Herefordshire):

Date	Time	No. Vehicles	40-50mph	50-60mph	60-70mph	% over 50mph
17/8	08.30-08.45	32	25	6	1	21.9%

All vehicles recorded were doing at least 40mph.

21. Although this is just a sample, it is evident that a large proportion of vehicles observed were exceeding the speed limits by a substantial margin. We understand that “Archer” equipment measures the speed and type of each vehicle on the route. We would welcome the deployment of this equipment to establish the facts.

22. The Select Committee report (reference d. para 1) states that “The largest single contributor to casualties on our roads is driving at either excessive (breaking the speed limit and therefore illegal) or inappropriate (ie speeds which are foolish for the conditions even if within the speed limit) speeds (para 4).country lanes, once enjoyed by those taking a stroll, or riding a horse or bicycle, are now dominated by traffic travelling at high speed.” (para 4). “Children suffer particularly. Road crashes are the single biggest killer of school age children..... The UK’s child pedestrian casualty rate is far worse than many other European countries. It is so bad because of the lack of speed restrictions rather than increased exposure to traffic.” (para 5). “The change from mainly survivable injuries to mainly fatal injuries takes place at speeds between 30 and 40 mph.” (para 11).

23. The report also notes that “There are three main approaches to reducing speed which are conventionally described as enforcement, engineering and education. Some measures can be

implemented quickly; other changes will take many years. The approaches consist of the following:

- more effective enforcement, which can be introduced quickly;
- better engineered roads, linked to changes to speed limits and re-classified roads, which could be widely introduced throughout the country during the period of the Ten Year Plan for Transport;” (see para 46 of this submission).

We want to see recommendations for a B4215/B4221 engineered to achieve effective traffic calming as an outcome of the study.

24. On existing speed limits the report states that “Almost every witness told us that our speed limits are a mess. Speed limits need be lower on many roads, and higher on others. The problems, which witnesses identified, are that:

- driven often do not know what the speed limit is (as we have seen);
- speed limits are often not appropriate for the road and
- the system of road classification is out of date.

The failure to set and enforce the right speed limits is a major factor in deaths and injuries, and in particular the high pedestrian casualty rate in urban areas.” (Para 69)

“Current guidance to local authorities about how to set speed limits does not take sufficient account of safety and has led to higher limits than is safe. The guidance is given in Circular 1/93. It is set by reference to the speed of the traffic travelling along the road, and is based on the speed of the 85th percentile of vehicles, ie the speed up to which 85% of traffic is travelling. The existing classification of roads (A, B, and “C and Unclassified roads”) is, as the Government stated in March 2000, “not appropriate for speed management purposes since those designations define routes rather than the nature or function of the road or its relative safety.” (Para 70).

25. The report continues “According to a significant number of witnesses there are four main types of road which are wrongly classified or where existing speed limits are unsatisfactory. They are those in some villages, in country lanes, on single carriageway A and B roads, and in urban areas. The key issues raised by witnesses in the inquiry were whether the speed limit:

- on urban residential roads should be 20 or 30 mph
- should be a 20 mph limit outside schools
- in villages should be 30 mph
- in country lanes should be 40 mph
- on single carriage A and B roads 50 or 60 mph.” (Para 74)

The select committee recommended “the following guidance on speed limits be issued to local authorities.

- 20 mph in the vicinity of schools in rural areas

- 30 mph in villages
- 50 mph on poorer quality 'A' and 'B' roads in rural areas (para 75)

“Traffic calming can be used both to enforce both 30 mph limits and lower 20 mph limits.” (Para 77). We agree and call for speed limits at these levels and traffic calming to be introduced on the B4215/B4221.

26. We urge 20 mph speed limits outside Picklenash and Gorsley Goffs schools. The Ove Arup report made the same recommendation for Gorsley Goffs but John Colyer the Herefordshire Transportation Manager advised us that it would take 8 years for this to be done under that county's current programme. This is unacceptable. We also urge 30 mph limits through villages on the B4221.

27. We welcome the action to reduce the speed limit from 50 mph through Highleadon and we hope that the local authority will monitor speeds to ensure that the new limits are being observed.

Accident Record

28. One of the problems that bedevils any attempt to obtain remedial action is that the accident record on the route is good. However, this does not mean that the road is safe. We list plenty of examples of hazards on the road in our report of December 2001. In addition we believe the accident record is deficient in that it largely omits accidents in which no-one is killed or seriously injured. We have begun our own accident record to make this point. The headmasters of Picklenash and Gorsley Goffs schools expressed major safety concerns and the Ove Arup report on Gorsley Goffs makes the same point (see para 49 of this submission).

Specific Problem Areas

Ross Road and Picklenash School, Newent

29. On 18 October 2000 Mr and Mrs Collier (my wife and I) wrote to the Newent Town Council about the “surprisingly large volume of traffic, particularly heavy lorries, using the Ross Road and the excessive speeds at which the majority of motorists drive along this stretch of road.

The letter continued “We are concerned on grounds of safety and noise pollution. Safety issues arise from the location of Picklenash School on the Ross Road and from the lack of a pavement on the side of the road on which we live. The risk to pupils from the traffic will be obvious and at various times of the day this is exacerbated by quite severe congestion along this road caused by parked cars when parents are taking children to school and collecting them. Cars are parked a long way down the road and together with the bend in the road at the bottom of the hill, this makes it impossible to see whether the road ahead is clear. Another safety aspect is the lack of a pavement on our side of the road which means that residents have to step straight out onto the road which can be very disconcerting in the face of heavy traffic. Wise or not some people walk down this side of the road at night in the rain with their backs to the traffic this clearly poses a risk.

We believe that the problems we have described, and the attendant risks, would be

considerably reduced by the installation of effective traffic calming measures along the Ross Road. The most effective traffic calming measure we have seen is the traffic camera at Highnam. We therefore ask the Town Council to consider and, if possible, request the appropriate authority to install a traffic camera in the vicinity of Picklenash School pointing east down the hill.”

30. The council “agreed with all of the (above) comments and as such it was resolved to write to the Highways Authority supporting your request for some traffic calming measures to be taken in Ross Road.” (letter of 16 November 2000).

31. We were advised that Mr Whittaker, Area Traffic Manager, Gloucestershire County Council, was “looking into installing a safety camera near to the junction where Picklenash School is located. He states that safety cameras are expensive to install and are done on a priority basis, the priority being set by the accident record of the site and the potential for saving future accidents.” (Letter of 30 November 2000).

32. Subsequently a petition was organised. The covering letter stated “Further to notification from the Town Clerk of Newent Town Council, dated 30 November 2000, advising that the GCC were to look into installing a safety camera near to Picklenash School, I am enclosing a petition signed by residents of the above mentioned stretch of road and the head teachers and staff of Picklenash and Glebe Schools. Additionally, I have obtained the signature of a number of people with children at one or both of these schools. These later signatures were obtained during a short visit to the area outside the Picklenash Junior School which I believe to be representative of a majority of parents.

In drawing up the petition I canvassed views of Ross Road residents and schools staff There was a majority view that a safety camera should be installed without delay. You should be aware that the amount of traffic on this B road, which is on an incline with no pavement on one side, has increased considerably. Part of this increase is reflected in the number and size of HGVs using it. It presents hazards for school users, residents wishing to cross the road (particularly those who are elderly), car driver residents and church-goers moving on to the road, as well as drivers coming on to the road from Glebe Road at the lower end. Some parents collecting and/or delivering their children to and from school have to take considerable risk crossing from the lay by opposite the Junior School.

The signatories of the enclosed petition ask for URGENT action for traffic calming on this busy and potentially dangerous stretch of road where traffic speeds appear to be in excess of the prescribed 30 mph. The installation of a speed camera near to Picklenash School is the favoured option.”

33. The petition was signed by nearly 100 people. Nothing has yet been done.

34. The recently published Newent Transport strategy does not include a speed or safety camera; the Gloucestershire County Council’s AIP committee is still considering the matter. Further letters of support from parents have been sent to the local authority.

35. The select committee report states that “Because of the high child pedestrian casualty rates, and the effect of speed on children s mobility and quality of life, a number of witnesses including the Traffic and Children Coalition, called for “well-enforced 20 mph speed limits around all schools and parks” as “an important part in redressing the balance in favour of children on our streets”. It would

not only reduce the danger to children but also make it easier for them to cycle to school as many wish. **We recommend that guidance to local authorities indicate that a 20 mph limit should be the norm in the vicinity of schools in urban and rural areas during the day on weekdays, though they should have the ability to vary the limits at other times.** (para 85). We agree and we ask for 20 mph limits outside Picklenash school.

The Squirrel, west of Newent

36. A series of z-bends along which there are several houses which are very difficult for utilities and emergency services to access because there is no where to pull off the road which narrows at this point.

Kilcot Hill/Kilcot Cross

37. The Gorsley & Kilcot Parish Appraisal reported that “within the questionnaire a massive 80 per cent of respondents felt that there were major danger-spots on the roads in the parish and when asked for details a third pinpointed Kilcot Hill/Kilcot crossroads.”

38. “The issue about which residents expressed the greatest concern was the amount and speed of traffic on the B4221 and B4222 and the consequent dangers to pedestrians and other road users. Major “danger-spots” on roads in the parish were identified by 147 residents, the highest response to any conceptual question. Speeding on minor roads and the poor state of repair of road surfaces and verges also produced high levels (101) of dissatisfaction. Urgent action on all these problems was called for in 80% of written comments as well as in replies to specific questions.” (page 20).

39. In the summary of responses to the questionnaire the followine were the main concerns:

- * Kilcot Hill/Kilcot Crossroads 33% (range of comments related to speed and junctions)
- * Speeding vehicles on main road and rural lanes - 21%
- * Aston Ingham road - 8.5% (traffic too fast/danger from concealed entrances)

Other comments that were made included:

- * Visibility - bends/junctions make it difficult to see approaching traffic when exiting from property or road junctions on to main road (in particular)
- * Whole of main road through parish regarded as being dangerous - additional problems identified as being Sterrys crossroad and outside Post Office in Gorsley
- * Narrow verges/unsafe walking

40. Speeds in this area are excessive, up to 17.5% of vehicles observed on sample occasions by group members were exceeding 50 mph (see para 20 of this submission for details).

41. Once again, the Area Traffic Manager has referred the issue of a speed camera in this area to the AIP team, and public support from local residents in the form of a filled in questionnaire has been forwarded to the Traffic manager and the AIP team. We await the result of their deliberations. We are aware there is a difference, in terminology at least, between speed and safety cameras; we are not worried about which is deployed, we take the view that either will have a similar effect in calming traffic.

Junction of Sterrys Lane and B4221

42. The problem is danger arising from poor visibility. I quote from an appeal decision “Highway Safety - The County Council has advised that the visibility available to the left for vehicles exiting from Sterrys Lane onto the B4221, is approximately 38m, although it is acknowledged that there is scope to improve the visibility in that direction to some 65m by resiting an existing telegraph pole. Nevertheless, at best, the maximum visibility available would be about half of that recommended in the Government publication “Places, Streets and Movement” (PSM) for the speed limit of 40 mph which applies on this stretch of the B4221. (para 14 of Appeal reference APP/P1615/A/01/1080444).

The 50 mph Speed Limit near Gloster Building Supplies, Kilcot

43. There have been a number of instances in which lorries have left the road at this point and crashed through hedges onto private property. There were three such cases in about 6 weeks last autumn and each caused major disruption on the road although there were no injuries. However, there are a number of houses as well as a workplaces in this immediate area and the risks are obvious.

Brassfields Farm to Kilcot

44. See Mr Martin Davy’s letter: “As you are possibly by now aware, there was an accident on the stretch of road between Brassfields Farm and Kilcot (on 12 May) at about 7.15 pm. I had occasion to go past the scene a short while later and it was apparently one of the “usual” causes for accidents on this stretch. Almost certainly a car travelling towards Kilcot started to overtake before the double white lines had ended, thinking he/she could see into the hidden dip, and collided head on with a car coming from Kilcot.”

Christchurch, Gorsley

45. Traffic speeds past this location and down the hill to the crossroads, which are difficult to negotiate, are excessive (see para 20 of this submission for details).

46. Martin Davy says in his letter, enclosed that “Driving from Kilcot to Gorsley gives me the cold shudders if there is a car or especially a lorry coming the other way at this point, because if the worst happens, there is little avoiding action which one can take.”

Gorsley Post Office to Gorsley Goffs School

47. Speeds in this area are excessive, up to a quarter of vehicles observed on sample occasions by group members were exceeding 50 mph (see para 20 of this submission for details). Our report (reference a. para 1) quotes the post master Gordon Martin for whom the main issues are speed and safety. He describes the B4221 as a very dangerous road and the speed of traffic as ‘horrendous’. The worst times for speeding are between 7 and 9 am and 5 to 7 pm when cars reach 80 to 90 mph. One of his advertising boards, which is about the weight of a small child, is run over frequently - you can see the tyre marks - and is blown over several times a day by the slipstream of heavy goods vehicles. He points to the effectiveness of the speed camera at Highnam and he firmly believes that speed cameras would reduce the speed of traffic and thereby increase safety.

48. The only parking available is in a shallow lay-by on the opposite side of the road. He has seen a number of close shaves involving people crossing the road between the lay-by and his premises and speeding vehicles. He has personal experience of this because he carries goods to customer's cars. Mr Martin has tried to buy or lease land adjacent to his property to provide off-road car parking but without success.

49. The Ove Arup report on Gorsley Goffs school (reference c. para 1) states that "The B4221 is the main concern among parents and school staff, and presents a very hostile environment for cycling or walking. The school considers speed reduction on the B4221 to be an essential safety measure.....". The B4221 provides a direct route from the M50 to Gloucester, avoiding the A40(T) and the A449(T).... There is a footway on the north verge only and this is narrow (1.0m to 1.5m) and is located directly adjacent to the carriageway. For much of the length between Pound Farm Lane and Gorsley Post Office, the footway is of inadequate width to enable parents and children to walk abreast, or for parents with pushchairs to pass one another. Passing traffic is intimidating and the safety of primary-age children is a valid concern. At the existing combination of vehicle flows, any cycling facility would need to be fully segregated from motor traffic. In view of the age of children attending Gorsley Goffs School, and the percentage of HGVs on the B4221, speed reduction alone would not be sufficient to provide for cycling to school on the B4221 carriageway." (4.4.1)

"It is recommended that a 30 mph speed limit is introduced on the B4221 through Gorsley village, from a western limit between Pound Farm Lane and Burrups Lane to an eastern limit east of the junction with Sterrys Road. The reduced speed limit is considered necessary in view of the substandard footway width, and the difficulties involved in providing an adequate footway width. The Government's new Road Safety Strategy (Tomorrow's Roads - Safer for Everyone. DETR, March 2000) proposes a new hierarchy of roads, defined by their function and quality, one feature of which will be 'a normal speed limit of 30mph in villages'. (5.2.1)

"It is suggested also that Herefordshire Council investigates if the Police would support and enforce a weight restriction on the B4221. (5.2.1)"

50. We entirely endorse these observations and recommendations and we hope they will be supported by the current study. We also hope that a 20 mph limit will be considered outside Gorsley Goffs school (see paras 25 and 26).

Junction 3 M50 (North)

51. Martin Davy refers to the known hazardous spot at the junction of the B4221 and the M50 slip road, on the north side of the motorway. The problem is the sharp bend in the B4221 at this point. He reported an accident there on Tuesday, 7 May, at about 8.15 pm. "The cause was not obvious, but this is a known hazardous spot. The police were in attendance. I expect either a car exited from the motorway and failed to observe passing traffic on the B4221, or more probably, a car coming from Upton Bishop took the bend too fast and hit a car coming in the other direction. You may be aware that the bend is deceptively sharp. The direction sign was hit a number of weeks ago, and has still not been replaced. Re-aligning the junction (not the motorway junction) would be relatively cheap and help considerably."