



OPERATION BROCK ENGAGEMENT 2022

ABSTRACT

Results of the Engagement Activities on Operation Brock.

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Introduction

Operation Brock is a set of measures implemented by Highways England to keep the M20 open in both directions between junctions 8 and 9 in the event of disruption to services across the English Channel, by using different holding areas. It separates traffic into different lanes across both carriageways and keeps the M20 and other local roads open and moving.

Junctions 6, 7 and 8 of the M20 fall within the Maidstone Borough boundary.

An engagement exercise was carried out between 4 August and 2 October 2022, to help understand the impacts of Operation Brock on the daily lives of residents of Maidstone Borough.

The engagement exercise was made up of several elements:

- Quick poll – a single question poll on the impact of Operation Brock.
- Impact mapping – mapping of hotspot locations of issues caused by Operation Brock.
- Experiences of Operation Brock – peoples experiences and stories about the impact of Operation Brock on their lives.
- Ideas – a place for people to submit ideas to reduce the impact of or resolve Operation Brock.

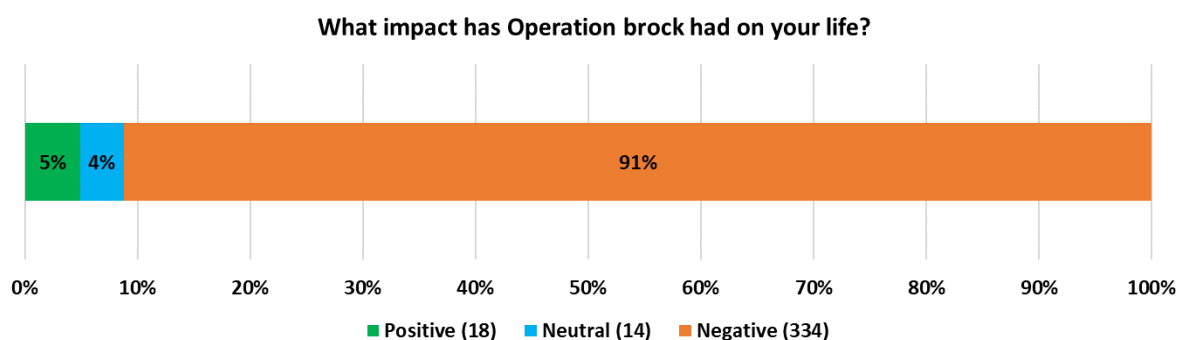
Overall, the project page received 2.2k visits. The table below shows a breakdown of the number of people who visited each activity page, the number of people that contributed when they visited the page and the total number of contributions.

Element	No. Visitors	Contributors	Contributions
Quick Poll Respondents	-	366	366
Mapped Impact Pins	138	35	46 Pins
Stories	485	266	276 with 248 Stories
Ideas	131	53	45 Ideas

Quick Poll

A total of 366 people took part in the quick poll, which asked: ‘What impact has Operation Brock had on your life’.

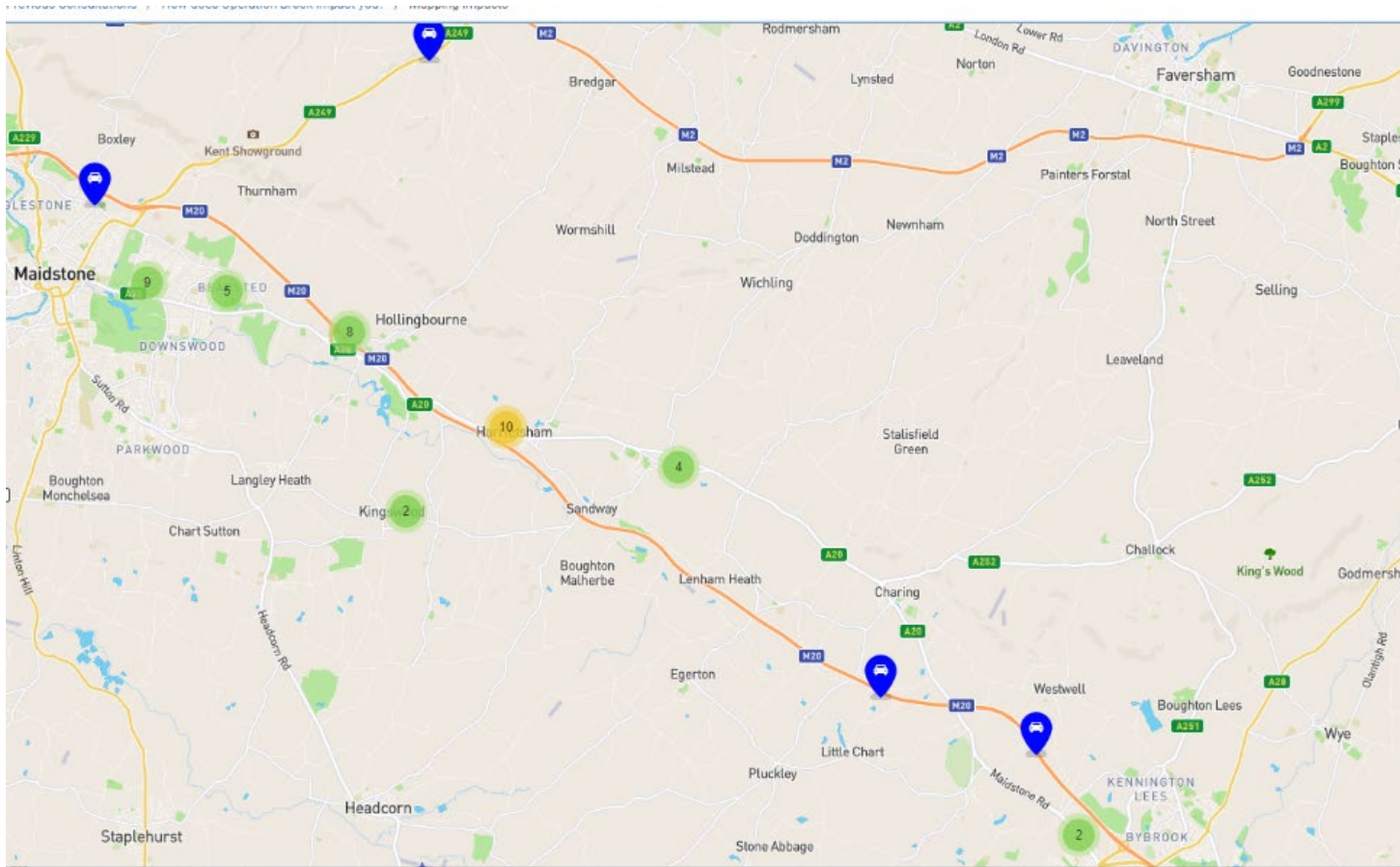
More than nine in ten respondents said that Operation Brock had negatively impacted their lives.



Mapping

A total of 46 pins were mapped. Below is an overview showing the spread of pins.

The greatest concentration of pins was in Maidstone Town Centre, Bearsted, Hollingbourne and Harrietsham. These areas are explored in more detail on the pages that follow.



Town Centre

A total of 9 pins were placed in Maidstone Town Centre.

Two pins were placed at Vinters Park.

The first mentioned always having to queue from Square Hill Road onwards as well as lorries blocking the roundabout at Grovewood Drive South.

The second pin was placed to highlight planning and development (housing building) that has made the junction of New Cut Road and Ashford Rd busier.

Two pins placed at Newham Court highlighted issues around the roundabout by Newham Court:

Congestion here wasn't solely due to Operation Brock, planning and development in the area also contributed to the issues.

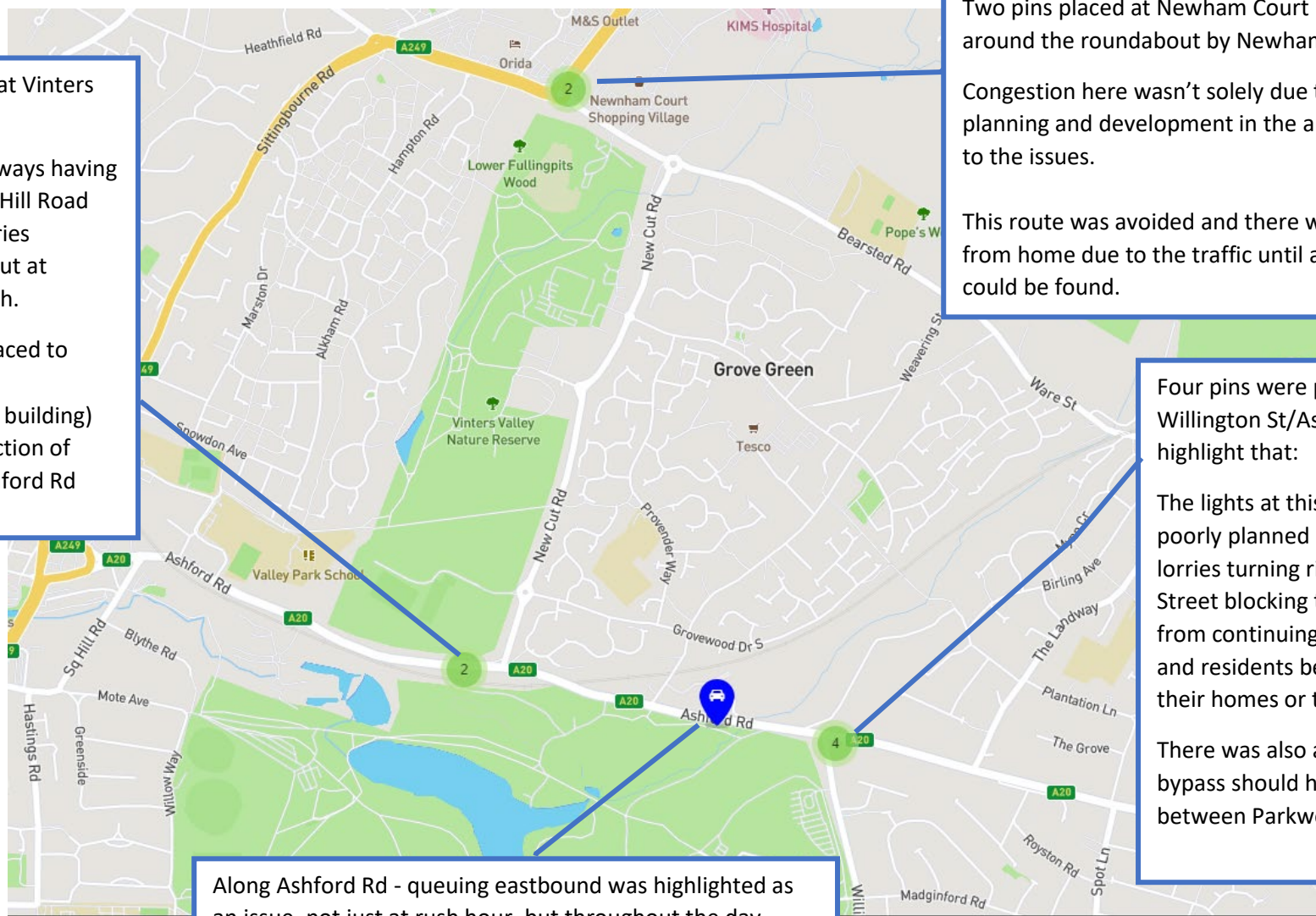
This route was avoided and there was a need to work from home due to the traffic until an alternative route could be found.

Four pins were placed at the Willington St/Ashford Rd Junction to highlight that:

The lights at this junction were poorly planned (1) Access issues with lorries turning right onto Willington Street blocking the flow of traffic from continuing on Ashford Road and residents being unable to access their homes or the A20 (2)

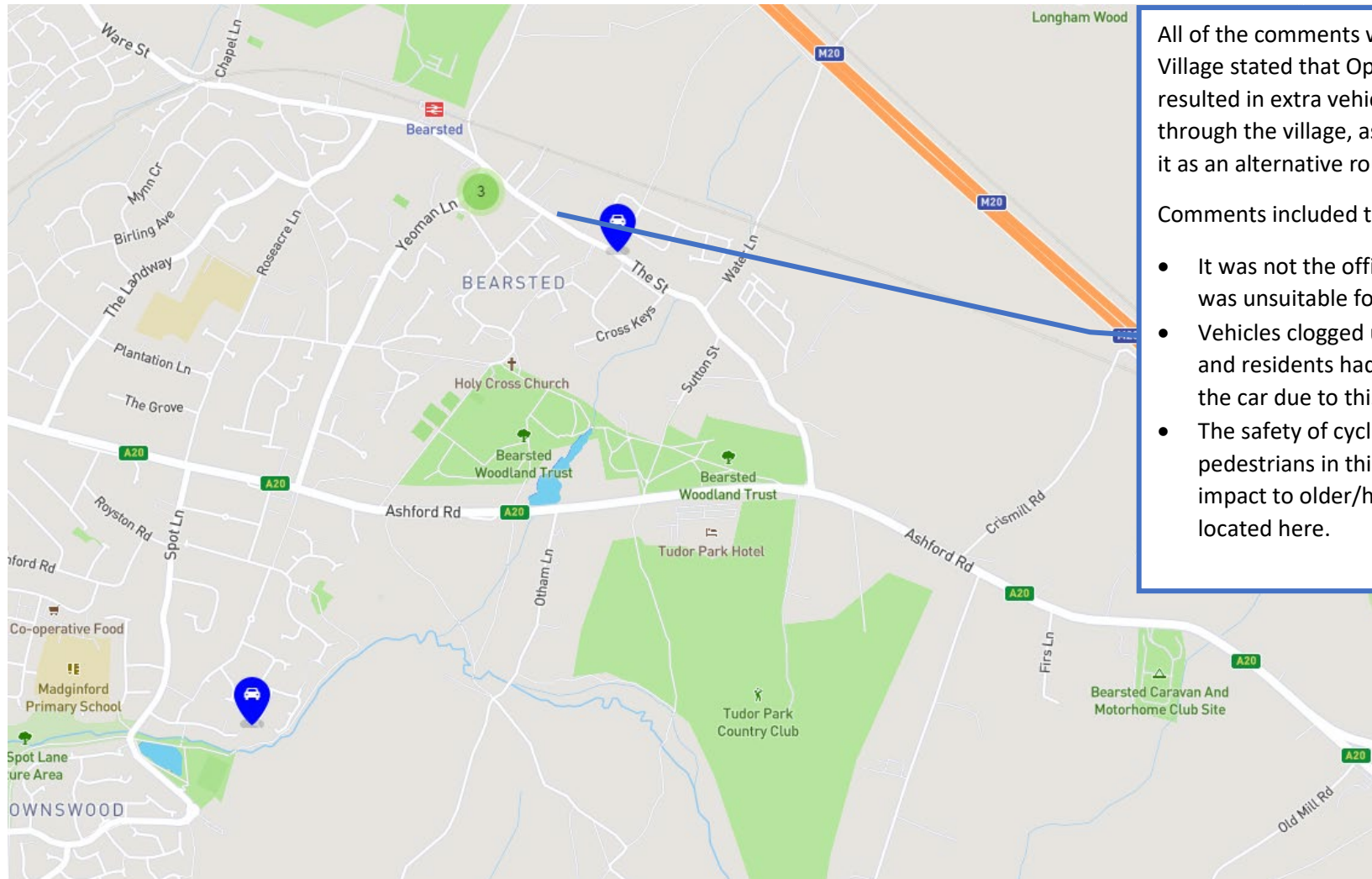
There was also a suggestion that a bypass should have been built between Parkwood and the M20.

Along Ashford Rd - queuing eastbound was highlighted as an issue, not just at rush hour, but throughout the day.



Bearsted

A total of 5 pins were placed in Bearsted, only the four placed in Bearsted Village (along The St) included a comment.



All of the comments within Bearsted Village stated that Operation Brock resulted in extra vehicles travelling through the village, as they were using it as an alternative route.

Comments included that:

- It was not the official diversion and was unsuitable for heavy vehicles.
- Vehicles clogged up the local roads and residents had to avoid using the car due to this.
- The safety of cyclists and pedestrians in this area as well as impact to older/heritage properties located here.

Hollingbourne

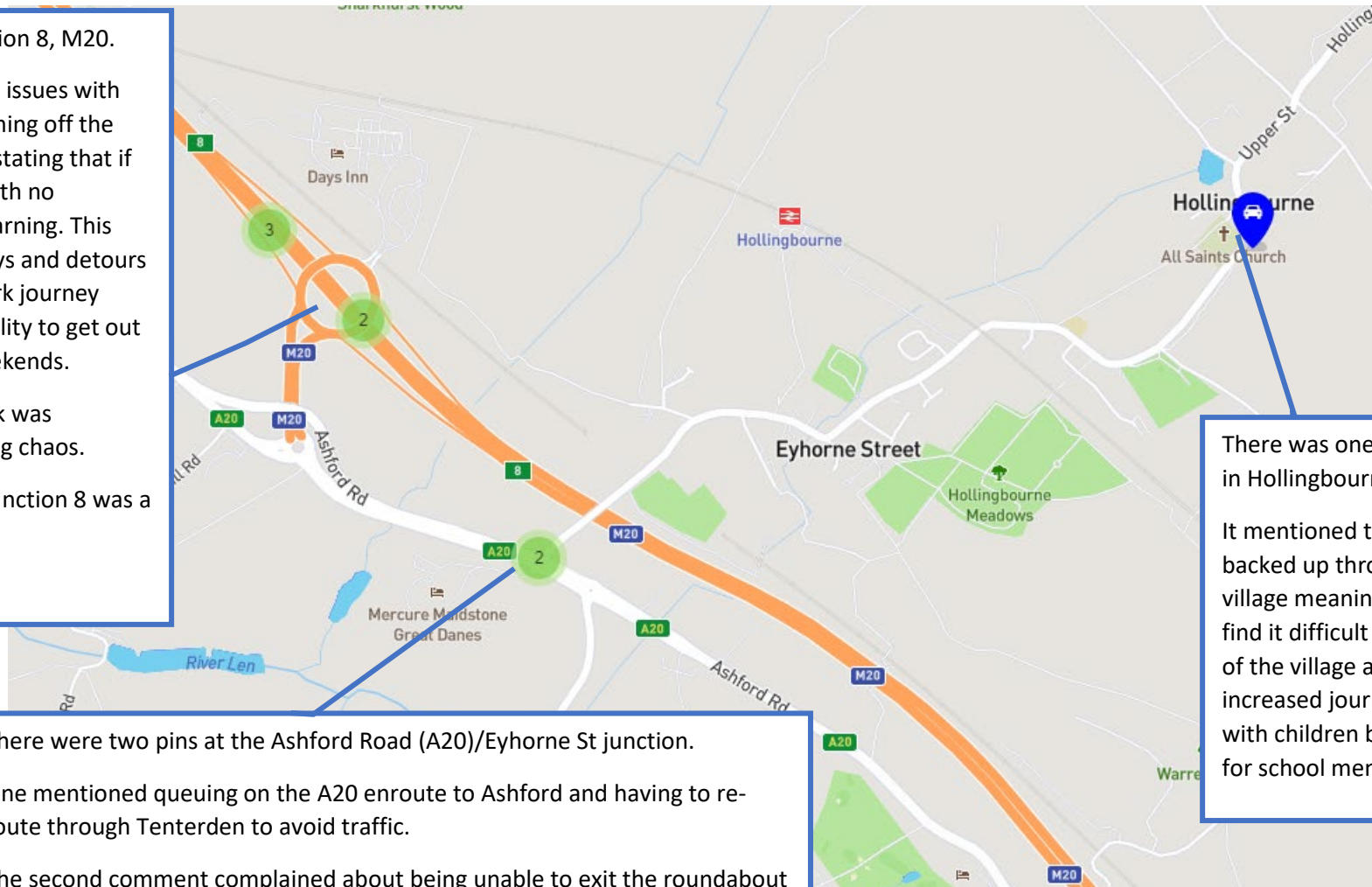
A total of 8 pins were placed in and around Hollingbourne, with five around Junction 8 (Hollingbourne interchange).

Five pins at Junction 8, M20.

Three mentioned issues with getting off or coming off the motorway here, stating that it is often closed with no notification or warning. This caused long delays and detours impacting on work journey times and the ability to get out and about at weekends.

The road network was described as being chaos.

The final pin at Junction 8 was a duplicate.



There was one pin placed in Hollingbourne Village.

It mentioned traffic being backed up through the village meaning residents find it difficult to get out of the village and increased journey times – with children being late for school mentioned.

There were two pins at the Ashford Road (A20)/Eythorne St junction.

One mentioned queuing on the A20 enroute to Ashford and having to re-route through Tenterden to avoid traffic.

The second comment complained about being unable to exit the roundabout without fighting, speeding, oncoming traffic.

Harrietsham

A total of 10 pins were placed in and around Harrietsham.

There was one pin before Junction 8, M20.
This comment mentioned speed limit restrictions but did not say what their view was.

There was one pin at A20 West Street/M20 highlighting this as an area of impact, but no comment was provided.

There was one pin at A20/bottom of Church Lane, highlighting this as an area of impact and stating the Operation Brock effectively closes the M20 and A20.

There was one pin on A20. The comment attached complained about access to their home being disrupted by the constant flow of traffic caused by Operation Brock.

There were two pins at Chegworth Rd, (1 comment).

The comment stated that there were difficulties in getting out of Chegworth and Broomfield roads, when traffic was diverted onto the A20.

In addition, it was mentioned that lorry drivers were using country roads to avoid congestion but ended up causing more issues in the villages.

There was one pin at the Taste of Bengal/A20/Church Rd.

The comment stated that the traffic volume, in particular HGVs, impacts on their enjoyment of village life.

There were three pins positioned on Ashford Road (Mayfield).

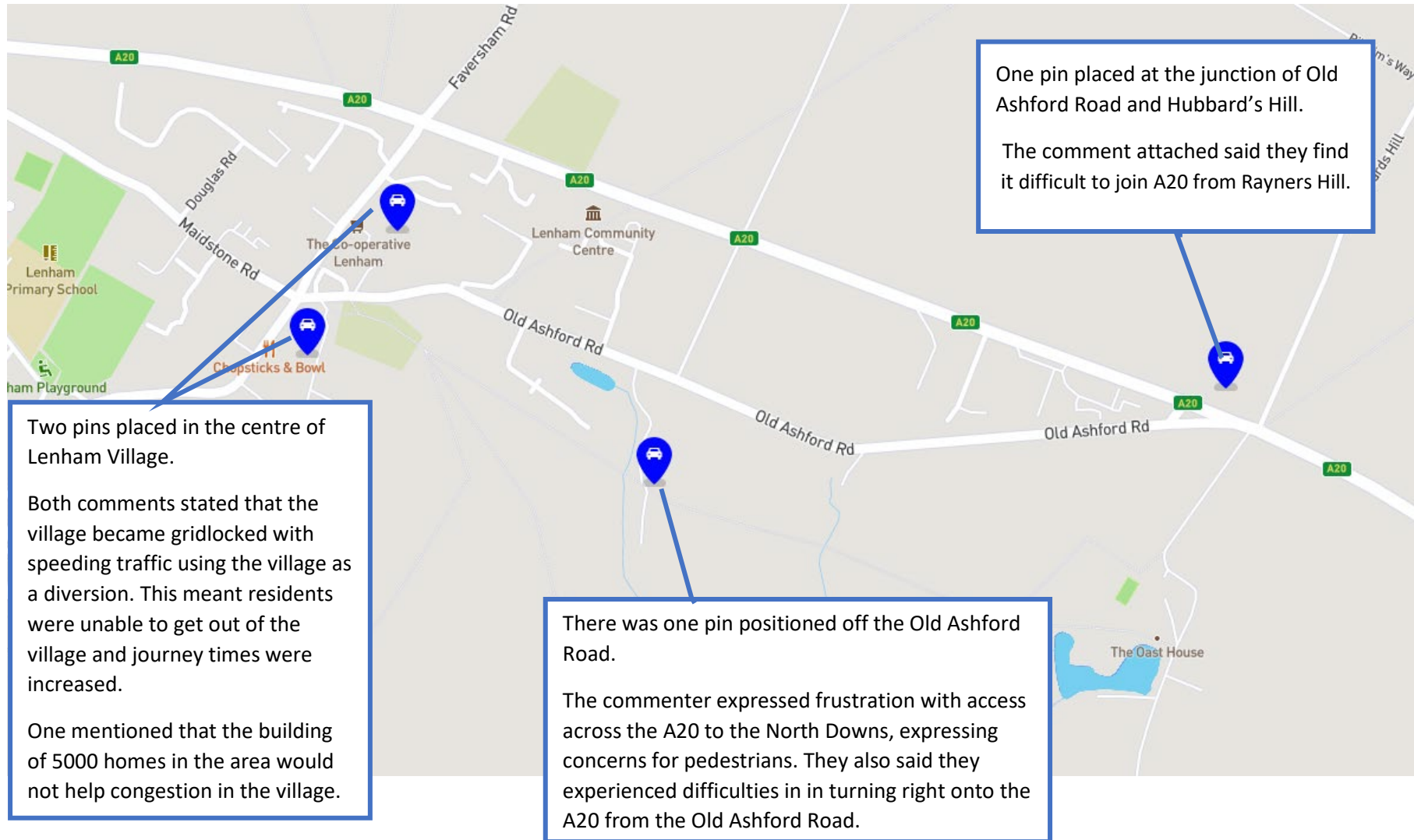
Two highlighted this as an area of impact but did not provide a comment.

Traffic volume and speed along the Ashford Road were mentioned as having a negative impact.



Lenham

A total of 4 pins were placed in and around Lenham Village.



Experiences

Residents were asked to share their experiences of Operation Brock. This allowed people to share, in detail, how Operation Brock has impacted them personally.

A total of 279 stories were received.

All stories were reviewed and categorised into themes. Summaries of the nature of the comments received for each theme and examples of comments are outlined below.

An overview of comments in each theme are highlighted below, within the context they were made.

Theme	No.
Junctions 7 & 8	92
Road Safety	89
Travelling East	85
Lorry Parks	70
Visiting Maidstone	68
Lost drivers	68
Business	64
Health & Wellbeing	56
Family life	49

Junctions 7 & 8

There were 92 comments categorised as relating to Junctions 7 & 8.

- An increase in congestion in local villages when junctions 7 & 8 are closed.
- Need to double back on themselves to get where they need to.
- No entry at junction 8, adding to journeys times.
- Poor signing in around both junctions.
- Bringing back the slip road on the south of junction 8 would improve the situation.

Living not far from J8 of the M20 having to double back to J7 to gain access to travel east is very wasteful of my time and fuel.

It's become a real problem because we can't get on at junction 8.

Road Safety

There were 89 comments categorised as relating to road safety.

- Increase in accidents.
- Incidents of violence due to road rage.
- A lot of speeding.

...causes safety issues and noise disturbance throughout the night as traffic routes through the narrow village streets. Some properties are right on the road without even a pavement between them and the road and properties are 'shaken' when traffic roars by.

- Dangerous in villages - large lorries are squeezing through narrow lanes and speeding.

Some vehicles are quite aggressive and come right up behind as they want to go by. London bound is worse as the foreign lorries want to travel at 60mph+ and can't go in overtaking lane so hassle hassle. They have no repercussions of speeding.

Travelling East

There were 85 comments categorised as relating to 'travelling east'.

- Avoiding travelling to Ashford, Folkestone and other coastal areas.
- 21 comments mentioned isolation or feeling trapped in homes.
- Local pressure group, Lower Thames Crossing Action Group, commented that if the proposed crossing goes ahead additional congestion would be created around Blue Bell Hill and the M20 eastbound.

we have an elderly relative we have to visit regularly in Folkestone. Operation Brock and the chaos it causes to surrounding routes has meant at times we are unable to get to our elderly relative. This causes lots of upset and frustration

I live in Maidstone and regularly would visit Folkestone / Hythe and surroundings because of the 40 min journey times. It takes far longer to get to the Thanet coast. I have visited far less frequently since Brock was in effect.

I also befriend for a charity and the person lives in Ashford and looks forward to my visits. With Brock I have had to cancel as it is impossible to get there...

Lorry Park

There were 70 comments categorised as relating to lorry parks.

- Lorry drivers need proper facilities.
- Manston Airport could be used as a lorry park.
- Lorry parks need to be developed closer to the ports.
- The Inland border facility in Ashford was always empty.

Simple solution is a car park for 3000 lorries with toilet & refreshment facilities. Problem solved!!

Manston airport sits virtually empty and has enormous capacity with facilities. Whilst elsewhere but much closer to the M20, lies Detling airdrome site, once again, enormous, and easily serviced.

Visiting Maidstone

There were 68 comments categorised as relating to visiting Maidstone.

- Being put off travelling to Maidstone.
- Choosing to shop elsewhere.
- Impacts on local business.

On 24/7 I intended to visit my daughter-in-law for her birthday and to take presents and cards. The town centre was gridlocked; the A20 Ashford Road was at a standstill, so I turned round and came back home.

We no longer go into Maidstone to shop, as the journey is horrendous, and what little public transport we have in rural areas is being cancelled to save the Council money!

We literally get cut off from doing daily routines because we can't easily get in or out of the village. It's worrying because if there was a medical emergency, I have no idea how we could work round that the traffic is so bad.

Lost Drivers

There were 68 comments categorised as relating to lost drivers.

- Lost drivers using country lanes that are unsuitable.
- Lost drivers causing congestion in villages.
- Lost drivers using unsuitable roads causes damage to infrastructure as well as parked cars and buildings (19 comments).

Many of the lorry drivers do not understand how to get back onto the M20 after coming off an Junction 8, I see at least one potential accident each time.

we once spent 2 hours there while a lorry got stuck and no one would reverse. I see damage to properties as people drive onto their gardens to get past each other, I've seen physical fights where people lose their tempers.

Businesses

There were 64 comments categorised as relating to business.

- Not travelling to shops and other leisurely activities.
- Being late or even missing work.
- Businesses closures.
- Leaving jobs due to time keeping issues.

My husband started a new job working from home, 3 weeks ago, as Operation Brock was taking a toll on him, driving back daily from Surrey. It would routinely take 4 hours on the return journey but only 1.5 hrs in the morning.

Adding extensive time onto my commute from Maidstone to Ashford since Spring this year. In addition to this it also affects Kent based businesses such as the Aspinall foundation in peak periods.

- Access to clients and vulnerable residents impacted.

The M2 queues and reduced speed is a factor in evaluating the logistics of a new business.

Health & Wellbeing

There were 56 comments categorised as relating to health and wellbeing.

- Disruption to hospital appointments- and fines for missing hospital appointments.
- Feeling like a 'prisoners in their own homes'.
- Cases of sleep disturbances due to noise levels.
- Concern for access in an emergency - ambulances cannot get through traffic.

As a community nurse I have been unable to get to my early patient, usually diabetics who need insulin. This puts their lives at risk.

Needed to get to Ashford Hospital but M20 was closed. Left early, but not early enough, so turned back at Harrietsham.

SERV (Blood Bikes) currently have a dearth of volunteers and I'm sure traffic volumes and delays in Kent contribute to that.

Ideas

An ideas board was used as part of public engagement on Operation Brock. Respondents were asked to submit their ideas about how the situation with Operation Brock could be improved or resolved. In addition to submitting ideas, people were able to vote and comment on the ideas submitted by others.

Some submissions contained more than one suggestion and some ideas were submitted several times. The 'mentions' in the column to the right refer to the number of times each type of idea was referenced, and the votes refer to the total number of votes for the ideas containing each suggestion.

Idea	Mentions	Votes
Lorry Park	13	12
Motorway Upgrades/Improvements	8	5
Brexit/EU Union	7	5
Port Upgrades and Management	6	1
Communications & Traffic Management	5	2
Diversions	4	4

Lorry Park

Respondents observed that there did not seem to be enough parking facilities at Dover compared to other ports. It was also noted in several comments that the lorry park at J10 was usually empty. Specifically, it was suggested that:

- There should be more lorry parks on route.
- The airfield near Dover could be used as a lorry park.

- A specific lorry park or parks be built including facilities for drivers (one suggested these should be at regular intervals from J2 onwards).

Motorway upgrade/improvements

There was a range of ideas relating to motorway improvement or upgrades, including:

- An offshoot road that would run parallel with the M20, with services, that could be used to park lorries.
- Changing the speed limit from 50 to 60mph on the dual carriageway at Dover.
- A bypass for Dover.
- A bypass to access southern Maidstone.
- Improving access onto the M2 and M20 e.g., adding more lanes
- Using the M26 to park lorries.

Port Upgrades /Management

Several ideas related to the port and how it was managed. It was suggested that:

- Improvement should be made at the port to create proper holding areas.
- Ferry capacity should be limited to a level that fits with road capacity.
- When disruption was announced, lorries should be held at the port.

Communications & Traffic Management

Some respondents felt that the situation with Operation Brock could be improved with some changes to communications and traffic management. It was suggested that:

- The traffic management system wasn't suitable for Kent and the algorithm needed to be reviewed.
- GPS data could be used to help reduce queuing.
- More signage was required deterring people from using the A20.
- A messaging system for Operation Brock updates would help people plan their journeys.

Diversions

There were four comments relating to diversions from the M20 to the A20. These mentioned:

- Bearsted village being used when it was not the official diversion.
 - Roadworks on the A20 – causing more issues
 - The need for comms messages to discourage people using the A20 and going through local villages
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