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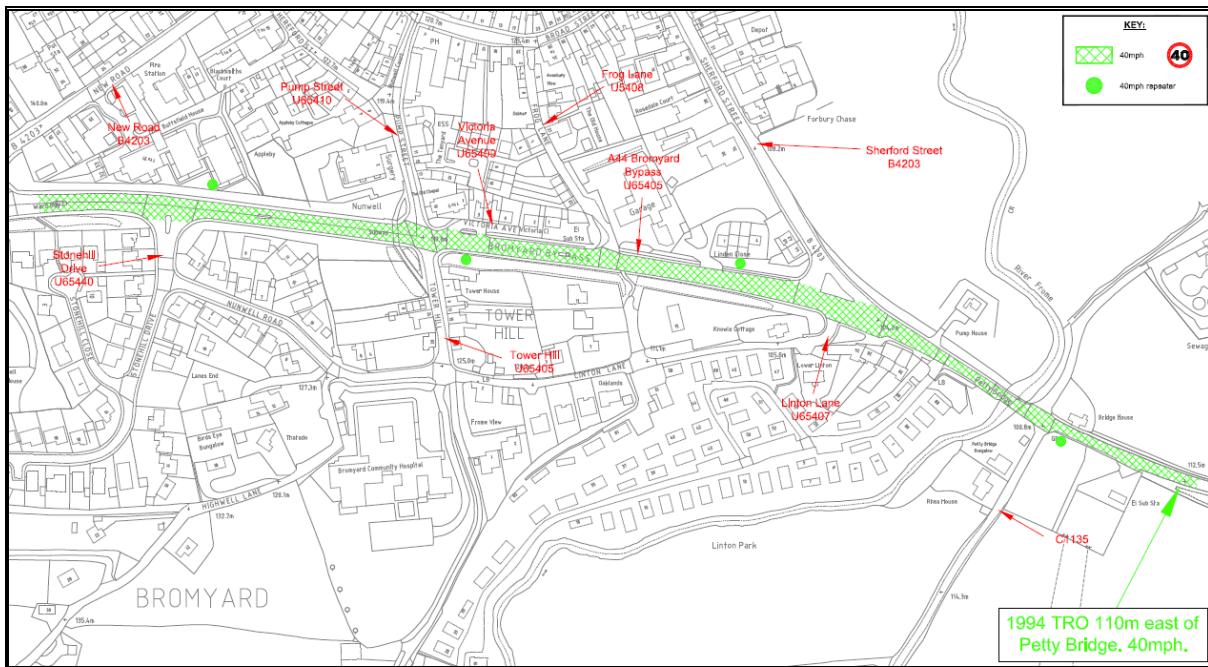
### **BRIEFING NOTE**

#### **A44 BROMYARD BYPASS**

**(ADL REF: 3409/14/NOVEMBER 2107)**

#### **Background:**

The section of the A44 (locally referred to as the Bromyard Bypass) currently benefits from a 30mph and 40mph speed limit. The figure below shows the extent of the road under review (40mph section).



The Local Member has requested that the existing 40mph section be reduced to 30mph.

ADL Traffic & Highways Engineering Ltd have been instructed to review the suitability of reducing the speed limit from a 40mph to 30mph.

## **Relevant Factors and Considerations:**

Department for Transport Circular 01/2013 Setting Local Speed Limits (DfT Circular 01/2013) advocates for single carriageway in urban areas.

Section 6 states: "*The national speed limit on street lit road is 30mph*". However a speed limit order made in 1994 imposes a 40mph speed limit on this particular street lit section of the A44.

At point 75: "*Urban roads by their nature are complex as they need to provide for safe travel on foot, bicycle and by motorised traffic. Lower speeds benefit all urban road users, and setting appropriate speed limits is therefore an important factor in improving urban safety.*"

At point 77: "*The standard speed limit in urban areas is 30mph, which represents a balance between mobility and safety factors.*"

The same applies for the villages as per point 131: "*Fear of traffic can affect people's quality of life in villages and it is self-evident that villages should have comparable speed limits to similar roads in urban areas. It is therefore government policy that a 30mph speed limit should be the norm through villages.*"

## **Engineering and Environment:**

The 750m section of the A44 Bromyard Bypass under review is in a market town of Bromyard and has a speed limit of 40mph from a point 90m east of where the centre line of the C1135 intersects the centreline of the A44 for a distance of 750m in the westerly direction.

This section of the road benefits from approximately 2m wide footways on both sides of the carriageway as well as from a system of street lighting.

The Bromyard Bypass runs in a broadly east-west direction and is characterised a downhill slope in easterly direction from its junction with the B4203 New Road up to the junction with Pump Street and Tower Hill, followed by a flat profile up to the junction with Sherford Street and then an uphill gradient and a S-bend thereafter.

The carriageway is approximately 10m wide, although the carriageway narrows to 6m at Petty Bridge where the A44 traverses River Frome on the eastern end of this section.

There are four priority T-junctions, one crossroads and one staggered junction with other adopted roads within the extent under consideration.

These junctions are provided with right turn lane facilities except for the easternmost junction with the C1135 as the carriageway is narrow at this location.

The Bromyard Bypass provides direct frontage access to a limited number of residential properties, an access to Linton Park (country park), a pump house, a petrol filling station and vehicle sales centre and a layby on the southside of the carriageway to the east of the junction with Sherford Street.

Bromyard Bypass is a bus route for the following bus services; 420, 469, 476, 482, 672 and 674. The bus stops are located on Bromyard Bypass adjacent to the junction with the U65407 Linton Lane and the crossroads with the U65410 Pump Street and the U65405 Tower Hill.

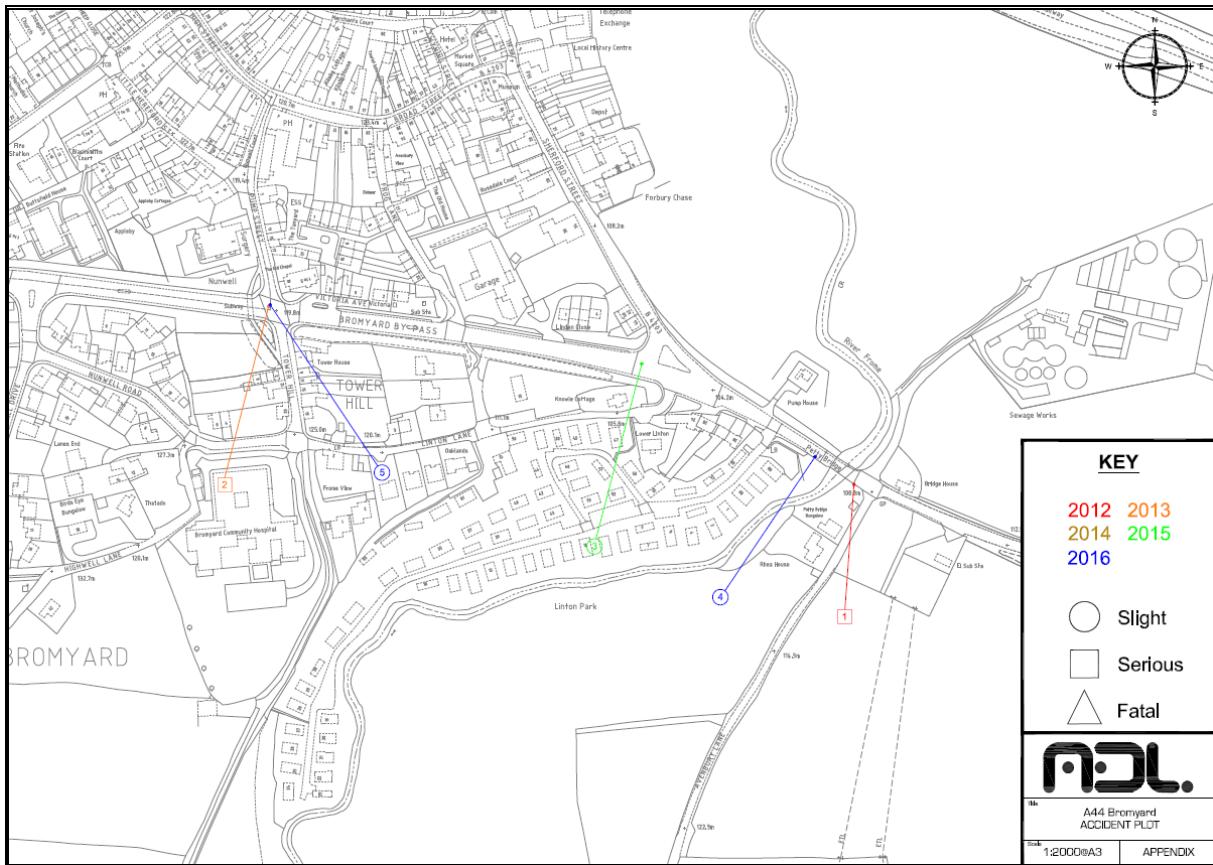
Bromyard Bypass provides connections to public footpath (Bromyard Footpath 2) which provides pedestrian links to Little Hereford Street and Linton Lane.

#### **Personal Injury Collision Information:**

The table below depicts personal injury collisions that have occurred in the five years between 1<sup>st</sup> May 2012 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 inclusive - this being the latest validated data as at October 2017.

A total of five collisions occurred within the 750m section of a 40mph speed limit on The Bromyard Bypass. Three of the collisions were classed as slight and the remaining two were classed as serious.

<b>Plan Location</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>
1	15/10/2012	Driver of a vehicle struck the central reservation and collided with the metal railing on the site of the A44. Driver's illness/disability and the loss of control over the vehicle were recorded as the likely contributory factors. [Serious accident]
2	14/02/2013	Driver of a vehicle failed to give way at the junction with Pump Street and Tower Hill and collided with a goods vehicle traveling on the A44 [Serious accident]
3	16/10/2015	Driver of vehicle failed to give way at the junction with Sherford Street and collided with a vehicle traveling on the A44. [Slight accident]
4	25/01/2016	Driver braked suddenly and lost control causing the vehicle to hit the verge. [Slight accident]
5	10/06/2016	Driver waiting to turn right onto Pump Street failed to judge the oncoming vehicle's speed causing collision. [Slight accident]



### Existing Speed Survey Data:

Most road engineering and speed limit design refers to the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed. This is the speed that 85 per cent of vehicles do not exceed when measured in free-flowing conditions at any single point on the highway.

One aim of a speed limit is to encourage more drivers to travel at about the same speed which has shown to reduce the likelihood of collisions. However, to be successful speed limits must be evidence led and not set unrealistically low as this can quickly lead to an erosion of respect for speed limits.

Speed limits on their own are very unlikely to reduce vehicle speeds if they are set significantly lower than a prudent driver would choose to travel if there were no limit and such a course of action can lead to a worsening safety record.

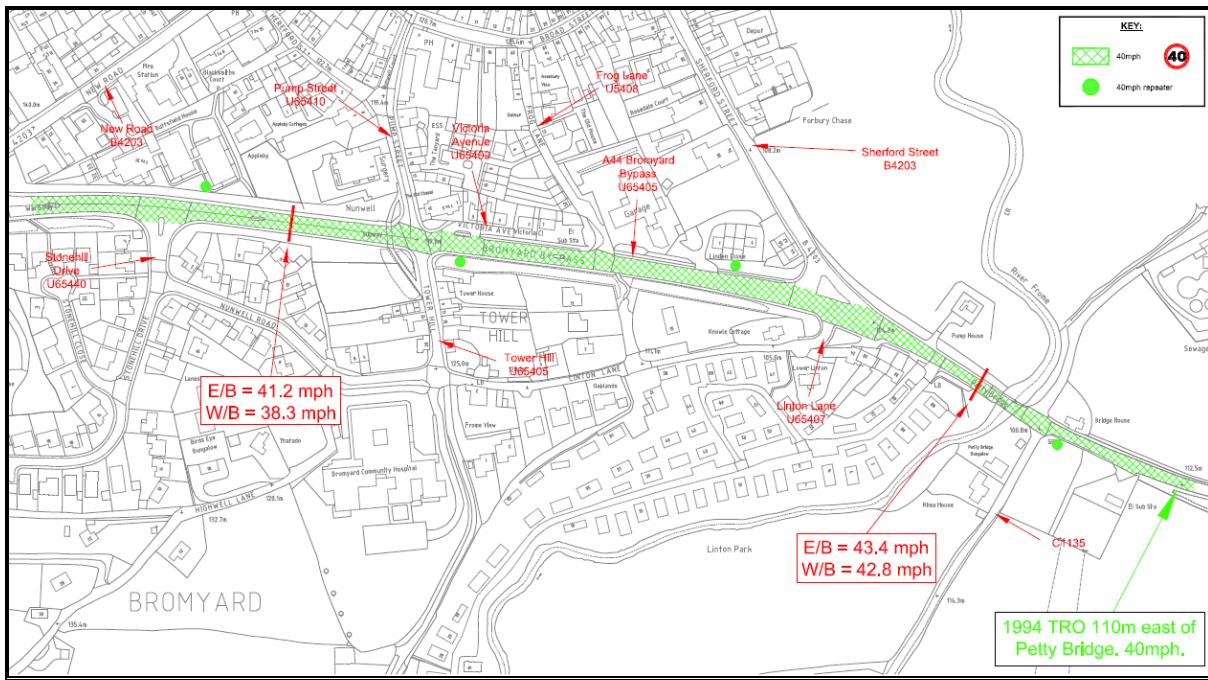
Research has shown that the safest and most responsible group of drivers travel at or below the 85th to 90th percentile speed and this leads to recommendations that speed limits should normally be set at or around the 85th percentile speed recorded under good conditions.

It's important to remember that a speed limit does not imply that it is a safe speed to travel at under all conditions. On all journeys on all types of road it is necessary to trust drivers to adopt lower speeds than the posted speed limit as conditions dictate and setting speed limits cannot be expected to replace this decision-making process.

Whilst the 85th percentile speed is an important and influential factor in deciding an appropriate speed limit other factors are also considered alongside the 85th percentile speed and may influence the recommendation. These are discussed in the review section below.

The speed surveys were undertaken at two locations on The Bromyard Bypass. The figure below shows the speed survey locations and the 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speed survey results.

<b>Speed Survey Location</b>	<b>Eastbound</b>	<b>Westbound</b>
East	43.4mph	42.8mph
West	41.2mph	38.3mph



With reference to information contained in the sections above:

The 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds; (1) indicate a good level of compliance with the existing 40mph speed limit and suggest that from a responsible motorists point of view the speed limit is currently set at a reasonable level and; (2) are below ACPO guidelines for the speed enforcement intervention level of 46mph i.e. speed limit +10% + 2 mph.

Given the wide carriageway width and the limited frontage compared to the adjacent 30mph section, a reduction in speed limit from a 40mph to a 30mph without a significant change in the environment or the introduction of self-enforcing traffic engineering measures would see a low level of compliance.

This section of the A44 serves a function of a through route and hence it is not considered appropriate or reasonably practicable to introduce effective speed reducing features on the carriageway to support a reduction in speed limit. Vertical features such as road humps and horizontal features such as chicanes or narrowing's on this type of route may not be appropriate.

The latest five-year personal injury collision history does not reveal a pattern of collisions or contributing factors or frequency that leads one to critically question the appropriateness of the existing 40mph limit.

Given the existing 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds and the existing road side environment (i.e. wide carriageway width and limited frontage), many responsible drivers would see reduced speed limit as an unreasonably low speed limit. The imposition of such a limit could result in an increase in overtaking, tailgating, inattention etc. all of which would increase the risk of collisions occurring.

Initial discussions have taken place with the Police and at this point in time they are in broad agreement with the comments in this report.

**Response from Statutory Committees:**

Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police

***"I do not feel I could support a reduction of the current 40mph limit to 30mph. The aspect and road layout in the 40mph area is drastically different to that in the 30mph; given the width of the road and relative lack of frontage development 40mph is an appropriate speed limit for this section of road. In my opinion, if the 40 limit is reduced it will not be widely complied with. I would have additional concerns that a reduction to the 40 limit may lead to an increase in vehicle speeds in the current, and appropriate, 30mph limit, particularly for eastbound traffic. As drivers approach what would be an unrealistically low speed limit they may not adhere to it and could maintain a higher speed through the whole area. If it is possible to redirect any funds set aside for a TRO, I would suggest there is benefit in improving on the current 30mph gateway signage at the eastern side to make it more conspicuous as this may have a positive effect on driver behaviour in the 30mph section."***

Bromyard and Wimslow Parish Council

***"The issue was discussed at Council on Monday and the Council is fully supportive of the proposed reduction to 30 mph, as were the two Herefordshire Councillors present and those members of the public who attended. There is a serious issue with speed of traffic, particularly HGVs, and noise created in the Council's opinion by the poor road surface etc. There was some debate about road design, engineering, enforcement etc - all for another day no doubt."***

Bromyard and Bringsty Ward Councillor

***"My preference would be for a uniform 30mph limit, so that the 40mph zone would become 30mph."***

**Recommendation:**

Having considered all the above factors the recommendation is that the existing 40mph speed limit on the A44 Bromyard Bypass is appropriate particularly given the existing 85<sup>th</sup> percentile speeds and the immediate roadside environment.

A reduction from a 40mph speed limit to a lower speed limit is likely to lead to disappointment as to its effect on reducing the existing speeds, will in all likelihood not receive support, and hence enforcement from the Police or Safer Roads Partnership and could lead to a worsening safety record.