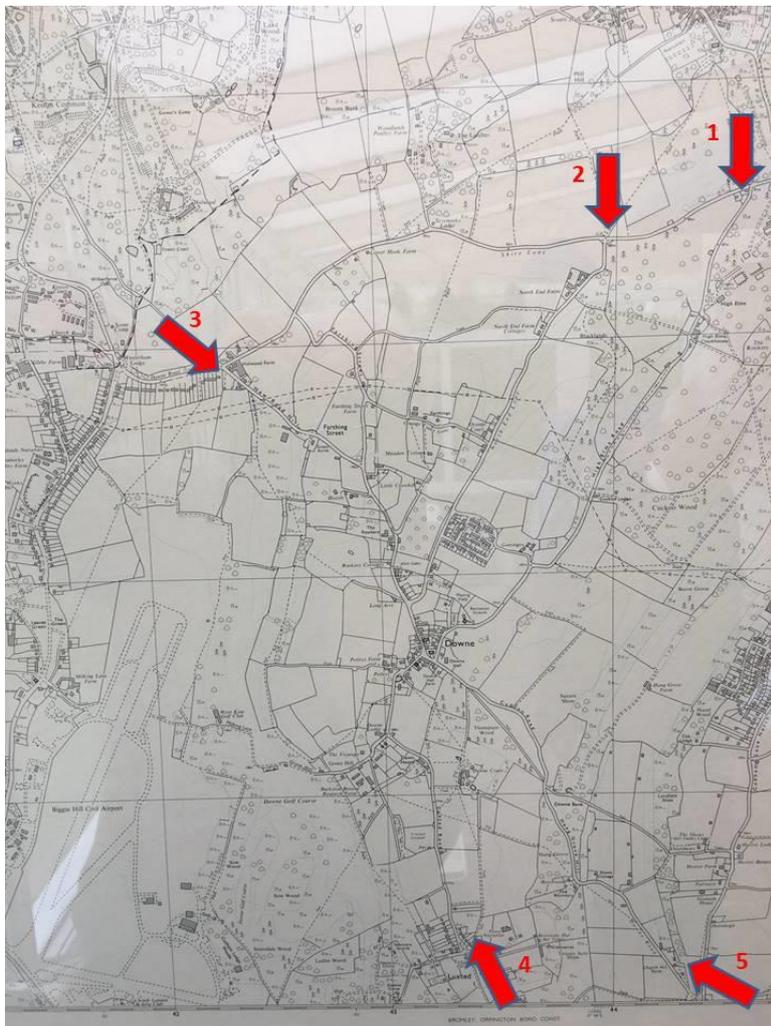


## Limiting Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) in Downe Village

**Introduction** - residents in Downe have been concerned for some time about the number of HGVs passing through the village. The narrow lanes are simply not suited to the size of these vehicles, yet they still transit through the village - presumably led by their Sat Navs. Damage to trees, bushes and pavements has been witnessed.

It is fully recognised that some large vehicles have legitimate business in Downe and it is not the intention of this report to recommend stopping these. Legitimate large vehicles include buses (146 and R8), farm vehicles, coaches (eg visiting Down House) and delivery vehicles conducting business in the village. This report recommends signage to help ward off HGV drivers who pass through Downe when completely unnecessary.

The solution was seen to be the protection of the five entry points to Downe, by erecting blue/white “Unsuitable for HGVs” signs at certain locations. A number of such signs already exist (these are covered in this report, and this report recommends installing more to complete the protection for the village. The five entry points are identified (and numbered) in the map below.



**Map – five points of entry to Downe village (1, 2, 3 are the actual points - 4 and 5 are the directions from the entry point)**

**Progress so far** - after some analysis of the problem, and a review of the current situation, a request was made to Cllr Richard Scoates and the Bromley Council Traffic Department, to install five additional “Unsuitable for HGVs” signs in the area. Cllr Scoates wrote *“I know that we have unsuitable for HGV signs essentially marking the Darwin Ward boundary, and if HGVs end up in Downe village they have essentially ignored a road sign, and therefore the ability to acknowledge any further signs is reduced. However, there has been an increase in reports of HGVs getting stuck in the village”*

After some consideration, two of the five signs were erected in late 2018. These were at location 1 (at the junction of Shire Lane and High Elms Road) and location 2 (at the junction of Shire Lane and North End Lane). This is helpful and a good start. The Council Traffic Department however, declined to address locations 3, 4 and 5 – replying:

- (3 September 2018) - *“As you are aware this area has been studied previously and as a result the Council has installed “unsuitable heavy goods vehicles” in all roads leading to this village .....However, the other locations are not suitable due to the insufficient spaces as a new post required to install this sign”*
- (22 October 2018) - *“There is currently no further plan to install further no HGV signs in this area however I will investigate to make sure existing “no HGN signs” (sic) are not covered by overgrown vegetation and if necessary will arrange cut them back”*

There are three problems with these replies. Firstly, and as this report makes out, “Unsuitable for HGVs” signs are not located in all roads leading to “this village” - as will be seen below, there is no, or insufficient/unclear warning to drivers in three locations. Secondly, this report contends that there is space for additional signage at key points. Thirdly, the point about overgrown vegetation is missing the point - this was not seen as a problem.

The following sections now deal with the three entry points (3, 4 and 5 on the map above), and make recommendations for additional “Unsuitable for HGVs” signs to be installed.

### **Map location 3 - at the junction of Downe Road, Shire Lane and New Road Hill (Holwood Farm)**

A sign is needed to dissuade HGVs from inadvertently entering Downe village from the A233 (Westerham Road). As can be seen in **Picture A** below, HGVs are currently warned about turning left into Downe Road, Keston from the A233. In addition, there is a further sign (**Picture B** below) on the traffic island as Downe Road is entered. This shows that Bromley Council have accepted the principle of warning HGV drivers heading towards Downe from the A233.



**Picture A** – “Unsuitable for HGVs” sign on A233 – pointing towards Downe



**Picture B** – “Unsuitable for HGVs” sign on A233/Downe Road – heading towards Downe

However, the next junction is the Downe Road, Shire Lane and New Road Hill (Holwood) junction. There is nothing here to dissuade drivers from bearing right at this junction (into New Road Hill) and thus entering Downe village. A further sign (in Downe Road) approaching the Downe Road, Shire Lane and New Road Hill (Holwood) junction should be installed to encourage HGV drivers to use Shire Lane (ie go straight ahead) rather than bearing right into New Road Hill (towards Downe village). See **Picture C** and **Picture D** for potential locations.



**Picture C** – existing signage in Downe Road (approaching junction) - the white/black direction sign lower edge is at least nine/ten feet above the pavement leaving plenty of space for a sign to be attached to the pole – or another pole installed. A sign here should state “Unsuitable for HGVs” with an arrow pointing to the **right** (encouraging drivers to travel along Shire Lane instead)



**Picture D** – alternative location for “Unsuitable for HGVs” sign at Holwood farm junction. If this location is chosen, a sign here should state “Unsuitable for HGVs” with an arrow pointing to the **right** (encouraging drivers to travel along Shire Lane – to the left - instead)

#### Map location 4 - at the junction of Cudham Lane North and Church Road, Cudham

There is nothing to warn HGV drivers travelling westwards away from Cudham church junction (ie turning off Cudham Lane North along Downe Road/Hangrove Hill or Church Road/Berry's Hill) that these roads are completely unsuitable for HGVs. The Council have established this principle for Downe Road/Hangrove Hill already, as there is an "unsuitable for HGVs" sign at the entrance to Downe Road in the centre of Downe village when heading eastwards (ie the other way – see **Picture E** below). The warning needs to be completed by a sign at the other (Cudham) end of the road. **Picture F** below shows the potential location of a “Unsuitable for HGVs” sign – this would protect both Downe Road/Hangrove Hill and Church Road/Berry's Hill, and encourage drivers to continue along Cudham Lane North.



**Picture E** - existing sign at entrance to Downe Road in Downe village centre



**Picture F** - potential location at Cudham Lane North for an “Unsuitable for HGVs” sign to protect Downe Road/Hangrove Hill and Church Road/Berry's Hill

## Map location 6 - At the junction of Jail Lane/Berry's Hill/Single Street

At the Downe village end of Luxted Road, an existing HGV warning sign (see **Picture G** below) shows that Bromley Council have accepted the principle of warning HGV drivers heading towards Luxted Road and Down House. HGVs travelling along Luxted Road – itself not suited to HGVs – will eventually encounter Single Street, Cudham, which is a single track road and even more unsuited to HGVs.



**Picture G** - existing sign in Downe village heading towards Luxted Road

At the other end - an HGV warning sign already exists at Berry's Green (see **Picture H** below). This shows an ambiguous HGV sign at the junction of Jail Lane/Berry's Hill/Single St (coming from the Jail Lane end). It indicates the Council have already accepted the unsuitability of HGV traffic heading eastwards at this point – however, part of the sign (maybe the wording ?) has worn away.



**Picture H** – existing sign at Berry's Green

It would seem feasible to upgrade this existing sign to say that HGV traffic is unsuited heading towards both Berry's Hill and Single St. If this location is chosen, a new sign here should state “Unsuitable for HGVs” with an arrow pointing **ahead** AND an arrow pointing to the **left** - telling drivers that both Berry’s Hill and Single Street are unsuitable for HGVs.

There are several alternative places to locate a sign to protect Berry’s Hill and Single Street – some of these are below



**Picture J** - potential alternative location for an “Unsuitable for HGVs” sign to protect Berry’s Hill and Single Street (in Jail Lane outside the Old Jail car park)



**Picture K** - potential alternative location for an “Unsuitable for HGVs” sign to protect Berry’s Hill and Single Street (in Jail Lane close to Charles Darwin school). This would have the effect of dissuading HGVs from travelling from the urban part of Jail Lane (which can take HGV traffic) through to the narrow countryside part of Jail Lane which eventually ends at Berry’s Hill/Single Street.

Steve Barnes

May 2019