

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

08 September 2008

Report of the Head of Countywide Improvements

Part 1- Public

Matters For Decision

1 HADLOW ROAD, TONBRIDGE - PUFFIN CROSSING

Summary

A report on representations received on proposals to install a puffin crossing on Hadlow Road, Tonbridge, and recommendations on how to address the points raised.

1.1 Context

- 1.1.1 This report advises members of the progress of the proposed puffin crossing facility on the A26, Hadlow Road, Tonbridge, and the options available for the provision of formal crossing facilities on this section of the A26. After an initial consultation undertaken by Kent Highway Services, a petition has been submitted raising concerns about the proposed location of the crossing.
- 1.1.2 Planning Permission was granted, on appeal, for 54 elderly residential units, at Castle Court adjacent to Hadlow Road. There is a condition within this planning permission, (and a Section 106 Agreement), to provide a 'pelican type pedestrian crossing' on Hadlow Road, (A26), in the vicinity of Castle Court to cater for the additional pedestrian movements as a direct result of this development. A financial contribution of £35,000 has been provided by the developer and is to be used to provide for the installation of a signalled controlled crossing by 10 January 2011.
- 1.1.3 There have been a number of historical requests for a formal crossing facility on this section of Hadlow Road, due to the number of pedestrians who cross in this location. This number has increased as a direct result of the construction of Castle Court residential development. Owing to the proximity to the existing traffic signals at the junction of Cannon Lane and the A26, Hadlow Road, (approx 80m away), there is a need to link any new crossing facility constructed near the Castle Court development with these signals. This will have additional cost implications to the proposed crossing facility as it will require certain components of the existing traffic signals at the junction to be upgraded, to allow the two systems to communicate with each other. Early financial estimates of this upgrade to the existing traffic signals are in the region of £10,000 - £15,000.

- 1.1.4 The Transportation team of Kent Highway Services has undertaken initial site surveys, and initially identified a location immediately west of the junction of the Hadlow Road and Garden Road as the most suitable location for a formal crossing in the area.
- 1.1.5 Following detailed site investigations, the proposed location for a puffin crossing facility was amended to immediately east of the junction with Garden Road as indicated on the plan in **Annex 1**.
- 1.1.6 This location immediately east of the junction with Garden Road is preferred to a location immediately west of the junction for the following reasons:
- The frontages of the properties immediately west of the junction are significantly closer to the carriageway.
 - A crossing east of the junction will allow any traffic turning left out of Garden Road to safely exit the junction when the crossing is being used, and traffic is being held by a red signal. A crossing west of the junction would be likely to result in traffic blocking the junction.
 - There are issues with vegetation at the location west of the junction that could obscure the traffic signals and would add an additional burden to the existing maintenance requirements.
 - It is closer to the existing traffic signals and therefore requires less ducting to be provided to link it into the existing traffic signals at the junction of Cannon Lane and the A26.
 - The existing bus stop is located where the original location of the crossing was proposed.
 - There is an additional desire line for pedestrians from the northern end of the Hadlow Road down Garden Road and to the local 'sports ground' facilities, which are currently signed for pedestrians down Garden Road.

1.2 Commentary

- 1.2.1 In response to the consultation sheet sent to local residents in July 2008, a total of 8 written responses were received by Kent Highway Services including a petition with 39 signatures. The petition was from the residents of Garden Road and objects to the proposed location on the grounds of the limited visibility at the junction with Hadlow Road and the related safety when exiting this junction. The Petition requests that the crossing facilities are incorporated into the existing traffic signals.
- 1.2.2 In addition to the petition, another 5 individuals are strongly opposed to the proposed crossing. The main objections are as follows:

- Road safety and the difficulty of residents exiting both Garden Road, and the private driveways near the proposed crossing and in relation to traffic speeds on Hadlow Road.
 - The proximity of the existing traffic signals, and the potential for further traffic congestion in the area.
 - The sound from the crossing will be a disturbance to nearby properties.
 - An increase in noise and air pollution from vehicles stopping and accelerating away from the crossing.
 - That the crossing should be incorporated at the existing traffic signals.
- 1.2.3 There was one letter in favour, from the resident's association of Castle Court, who have previously submitted a petition, (to the Borough Council's Chief Executive in July 2007), with 53 signatures, enquiring when the crossing on the Hadlow Road would be installed.
- 1.2.4 There was also a letter from the Hadlow Road Residents Group which supported the need for a crossing facility on this section of Hadlow Road, but questioned the precise location of the crossing in terms of the access / visibility out of Garden Road and the proximity of the junction with Cannon Lane and the potential for vehicles turning left out of Cannon Lane to drive into the rear of any waiting vehicles at the crossing.
- 1.2.5 In response to the consultation, the reasons for locating the proposed crossing to the east of the junction with Garden Road have been highlighted in section 1.1.6.
- 1.2.6 The issue of the proximity to the existing traffic signals has been briefly touched upon in relation to the length of ducting required to link to the proposed Puffin Crossing. The coordination of the sets of signals is clearly important and the proposed crossing would be linked into the junction signals to prevent traffic being held by a red light at both locations. If westbound traffic on the A26, (towards the town centre), was initially held by a red light at the existing traffic signals, (and was then allowed to proceed via a green light) and the button was then pressed on the new crossing, there would be sufficient time allowed for this traffic to proceed through the new crossing before the signals at the new crossing changed to red and allow pedestrians to cross. This configuration will prevent traffic at the front of the queue on the A26 from being held at the junction with Cannon Lane and then being held again by a red light at the crossing.
- 1.2.7 Any traffic signals installed at this location could have the sound turned down to a minimal volume.
- 1.2.8 Additional air pollution would be created by the installation of a pedestrian phase at the existing traffic signals, as this would require an all red phase at the junction

to allow pedestrians to safely cross. This is a location where continued vigilance needs to be exercised in relation to air quality.

- 1.2.9 As a result of the concerns raised over the safety of the proposed crossing, Kent Highway Services arranged for an independent Stage 2 Safety Audit to be undertaken on the proposed Puffin crossing. This audit has raised no safety issues relating to the specific location of the crossing, the access in / out of the junction with Garden Road or the locations of the private accesses along this section of Hadlow Road. In addition there were no concerns raised regarding the location of the crossing and the potential for vehicles turning left out of Cannon Lane to drive into the rear of any waiting vehicles at the crossing.
- 1.2.10 The Safety Audit makes reference to the proximity to the existing traffic signals at the junction with Cannon Lane in terms of traffic on the northbound approach of the A26, but not in relation to the operation or safety of a crossing at this location. It does however recommend that louvers are fitted to the signal head of the existing traffic signals to avoid the potential for any drivers being confused by the two sets of traffic signals.
- 1.2.11 Given the additional work required to link the proposed puffin crossing in with the existing traffic signals it is estimated that the cost of providing this new crossing will be in the region of £70,000. An allocation of £15,000 has already been identified from the ITS schemes in this financial year to supplement the £35,000 secured through the Section 106 agreement. As a result an additional £20,000 would be required from this years Integrated Transport Scheme funding in order to implement a crossing in this financial year.
- 1.2.12 The alternative to installing a separate Puffin Crossing facility on the Hadlow Road is to upgrade the existing traffic signals at the junction of the Cannon Lane and the A26. Initial investigations indicate that the cost of providing a full pedestrian phase at this junction would be in the region of £150,000. Whilst this would have the benefit of providing additional formal crossing facilities over Cannon Lane, it would result in additional queue lengths at the junction when the pedestrian phase is called.
- 1.2.13 Additionally, the option of installing a pedestrian phase at the Cannon Lane junction would require the scheme to be put forward for PIPKIN assessment in order to secure the additional funding required. There is no guarantee at this stage that this proposal would receive a sufficient high enough priority to proceed.

1.3 Legal Implications

1.3.1 Nil

1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.4.1 As discussed in the report, this scheme benefits from a development contribution and the call on public funds is consequently abated.

1.5 Risk Assessment

- 1.5.1 To delay the works would increase the risk to highway safety bearing in mind the identified need for improved crossing in the context of the planning permission for the development at Castle Court.

1.6 Recommendations

- 1.6.1 The Board is invited to endorse one of the following approaches;

- 1) A:- Proceed at the proposed location, as indicated on Drawing nos B0888300/1102 – Appendix A
- 2) B:- Provide a crossing west of the junction with Garden Road
- 3) C:- Promote the possibility of installing a pedestrian phase at the existing traffic signals at the junction of Cannon Lane and Hadlow Road.

Background papers:

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Nil

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