

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

24 September 2012

Report of the Director of Kent Highways and Transportation

Part 1- Public

Matters For Decision

1 B245 LONDON ROAD/ DRY HILL PARK ROAD – THREE WAY TRAFFIC SIGNALS PROPOSAL

Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide members with information on the consultation that has recently been carried out for the B245 London Road/Dry Hill Park Road three way traffic signal proposals and request the JTB endorse proceeding with the proposals notwithstanding the objections made.

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Following concerns raised by the local community, especially Tonbridge School, about the safety of children crossing at the B245 London Road/Dry Hill Park Road to get to Tonbridge School Kent County Council Highways & Transportation under took an investigation in to providing a safe crossing. Tonbridge School kindly assisted with funding an investigation with the primary aim of providing a safe crossing.
- 1.1.2 The B245 London Road is a fairly major route between Tonbridge and Sevenoaks with a junction onto the A21 to the north. The road is subject to a 30mph speed limit. Currently traffic islands are provided at intervals down the road with dropped crossings installed for use as a pedestrian crossing aid. Dry Hill Park Road is largely a residential road but there are a number of schools within this area. The road forms a direct route to A227 Shipbourne Road and A26 Hadlow Road. There are parking restrictions in place on both London Road and Dry Hill Park Road.
- 1.1.3 Early discussions concluded that due to the geometry of the junction and close proximity of the access to the sports facility the only way to install a standalone pedestrian crossing would be to convert one of the existing pedestrian islands to the east or west of the junction. This was discounted as experience shows that unless the crossing is in close proximity to the desire line it is unlikely to be used. Therefore, the only other practical and safe way of providing a crossing on the desire line was to signalised the whole junction.

- 1.1.4 In November 2010, Jacobs were commissioned by Kent County Council to undertake an outline/feasibility design for traffic signals at the B245 London Road junction with Dry Hill Park Road, Tonbridge. The report states that the fundamental requirement of the brief was to provide controlled crossing facilities for school children crossing the B245 London Road to and from the sports facility which had been newly constructed. The layout being considered was simple and contained within the existing carriageway. Pedestrians cross the road in a single move, which requires an “all red” to traffic stage. The report concludes that there are no practical alternative options for consideration.
- 1.1.5 The report acknowledges that “the introduction of traffic signals into an area that currently enjoys a free flow will adversely affect the traffic flow. As the installation is principally intended to help pedestrians, it is this class of road user that will benefit.”
- 1.1.6 A Stage 1 Road Safety Audit and Equality Impact Assessment were carried out in April 2012. A number of recommendations were made and considered prior to consultation on the proposals being carried out.

1.2 Proposals

- 1.2.1 The existing proposal is for three way traffic signals at the B245 London Road junction with Dry Hill Park Road. The works will include the provision of puffin crossing facilities in Dry Hill Park Road, and east and west of the junction on London Road. The existing bus shelter opposite the junction on London Road will be relocated to a position further west, as shown on the attached plan.
- 1.2.2 Consultation on these proposals was started on 30th July and included a letter drop to local residents. The consultation letter requested comments and objections be made to Kent County Council by 24th August for consideration. Details of these proposals can be seen in the drawing attached in **Appendix 1** of this report.

1.3 Results of the Consultation

- 1.3.1 A summary of the consultation responses received is shown in the table below:

Summary of Results

	Support	Object
Member of Public	3	6
Schools	6 (2)*	
Councillors		3
Kent Police	1	
Tonbridge Civic Society		1
Total	10 (6)	10

* A total of 6 letters of support were received; however these letters represented the views of only 2 schools.

- 1.3.2 Kent County Council received a total of 20 responses to the consultation that was carried out. As shown in the table above, the consultation results show that there were 10 letters of support and 10 letters of objection. The main reason given for objecting to the proposal was that the traffic signals would prevent the free flow of traffic and this would result in significant congestion. The main reasons for supporting the proposals was that it would aid pedestrian movements across London Road and that it would improve safety.
- 1.3.3 Kent Police stated that in principle they had no objections to the proposals.
- 1.3.4 Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council have sought clarity on the potential impact of full signalisation of the junction, as opposed to the provision of an on-demand formal crossing on one arm of the junction to aid pedestrian movements across London Road. In particular whether greater volumes of traffic would be encouraged to use Dry Hill Park Road and Yardley Park Road for access between the B245, A227 and A26. Whilst some change in traffic behaviour might occur this is felt to be marginal and it would be necessary to ensure that the traffic signals are designed to give priority to vehicles travelling along B245 London Road rather than increasing opportunities for vehicles to use Dry Hill Park Road. On balance the pedestrian safety issues should take precedence.
- 1.3.5 The County Council confirm that the phasing of the junction will be designed to encourage keeping traffic on the B245 London Road.

1.4 Conclusion

- 1.4.1 The provision of a standalone pedestrian crossing facility on the B245 London Road / Dry Hill Park Road junction, to aid pedestrian movements across London Road, has been discounted as the only suitable locations are deemed too far from the desire line. Kent County Council does not believe that this option offers good value for money as experience shows that a pedestrian crossing off of the desire line is unlikely to be used on a regular basis.
- 1.4.2 Based on this, the only other option that allows pedestrians to safely cross at this junction on the pedestrian desire line would be to provide pedestrian crossing facilities as part of a signalised junction. These traffic signals would be designed so that the timing and phasing of the traffic signals ensures that priority remains with the traffic travelling along the B245 London Road

1.5 Legal Implications

- 1.5.1 None.

1.6 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.6.1 Funding will be provided by Kent Highways and Transportation.

1.7 Risk Assessment

1.7.1 As described in the report.

1.8 Equality Impact Assessment

1.8.1 See 'Screening for equality impacts' table at end of report

1.9 Recommendations

1.9.1 Kent County Council requests that the Joint Transportation Board endorses the proposal to proceed with the full signalisation of the B245 London Road/ Dry Hill Park junction.

Background papers:

Nil

contact: Caroline Wellard
Tel: 08458 247800

John Burr
Director of Kent Highways and Transportation

Screening for equality impacts:		
Question	Answer	Explanation of impacts
a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community?	No	
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality?	Yes	The provision of signal controlled crossing points will provide safer means for all pedestrians to cross the highway.
c. What steps are you taking to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?		

In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above.