

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

12 September 2005

Joint Report of the Director of Planning & Transportation
and the Divisional Manager

Part 1- Public

Matters For Decision

1 STARVECROW CORNER, SHIPBOURNE – PROPOSED MINOR JUNCTION IMPROVEMENTS

Summary

This report informs Members of the work to be undertaken to carry out minor kerb realignment work from currently allocated budgets that should assist in the reduction of the number of crashes that occur at this junction. The report also suggests a proposal, jointly funded by the Borough and County Councils, that would extend the scope of this work, including the installation of a speed actuated warning sign.

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 Members may be familiar with the crash history of Starvecrow Corner junction. This has led to safety concerns about the junction and resulted in media interest and approaches to local Members and the Highway Authority over the past years
- 1.1.2 Much work has been carried out at the junction, including the cutting back of hedges, replacement line markings and road studs, enlarged chevrons, etc. However, crashes continue to occur at the junction.
- 1.1.3 The sum of £15,000 is allocated in the current budgets for the resurfacing of the road with a high skid resistance material in the vicinity of the junction. However, we question whether this is the most effective use of the budget given the current situation and timing and whether the budget would be better spent on a more comprehensive scheme.
- 1.1.4 A more comprehensive scheme with the County and Borough Councils working in partnership might present a more appropriate way to deal with problems at this junction.

1.2 An Amended Scheme

- 1.2.1 The County Council's crash database reveals that there have been six injury-related crashes at the junction in the most recent three-year period for which records exist. Additionally there are anecdotal reports of frequent damage-only incidents, which are not recorded as part of the crash statistics. Over the years, there have been small improvement schemes carried out to try and address the problems at this location. However, the continued incidence of crashes indicates that further work is necessary. We take the view that resurfacing the road, on its own will not satisfactorily deal with the crash problem,
- 1.2.2 Jacobs Babbie, on the instructions of the Divisional Manager, has produced a scheme for the minor realignment of part of the kerb around the junction [**Annex 1**]. The scheme involves some kerb realignment together with the revised siting of an enlarged chevron that would be more easily seen by motorists approaching the junction from the Shipbourne direction and this removes the see-through illusion towards Higham Lane that we believe is a contributory factor to the crashes. The cost of the consultant's scheme has been estimated at £14,000 approximately. Such a scheme would be expected to reduce, significantly, the crash record.
- 1.2.3 The Highway Manager, with the Divisional Manager's approval, has taken the decision to substitute the consultant's proposal for the resurfacing proposal with the possibility of including the resurfacing of the road in next year's programme of works. However, the Borough Council has made a suggestion that could result in the resurfacing being carried out in conjunction with the kerb realignment this year resulting in a project that would address most aspects of the difficult conditions found at this junction. In addition, the Council has suggested that the installation of a vehicle-actuated bend warning sign would also enhance these measures.

1.3 A Possible Jointly Funded Scheme

- 1.3.1 The Borough Council might be prepared to share the cost of a jointly funded comprehensive scheme, if a speed actuated warning sign were to be included in the scheme. Such a sign would display a message warning motorists of the bend if they approached too fast.
- 1.3.2 A comprehensive scheme would include the kerb realignment, the resurfacing of the junction with a high skid resistance material and the installation of a speed actuated sign. However, it should be borne in mind that due to the physical constraints and the rigorous vegetation at this location, northbound vehicles and any overgrowing vegetation could adversely affect the sign. It will be necessary to closely monitor and respond to overgrowth and damage to signs.

1.4 The Financial Implications

- 1.4.1 The sum of £15,000 is currently shown in the budgets for the resurfacing of the junction using a high skid resistance material. The Highway Manager has already

taken the decision that this budget would be better expended on the minor kerb realignment proposal.

- 1.4.2 It will not be possible to carry out the kerb realignment and resurface the road from the current maintenance budgets. Therefore, the sum of £15,000 would need to be allocated in next year's highway maintenance budgets for the resurfacing of the junction next year.
- 1.4.3 The estimated cost of carrying out a comprehensive scheme including the kerb realignment and resurfacing works, together with the installation of a speed actuated sign, is £40,000. The Borough Council has already committed £6,000 for a speed actuated bend sign at this location but, bearing in mind its significance and the long held community concern about the safety at this location, it is felt that the Borough Council might wish to increase this to 50% of the estimated costs to secure implementation of the complete scheme. Such an approach would be dependent on the formal approval of the Borough Council and would mean that the KCC would need to find a further £5000 in addition to the £15,000 already allocated in the budgets to complete the funding package. The Highway Manager would be prepared to find that sum from the current maintenance budgets given the recurring repair costs to damaged street furniture.

1.5 Conclusions

- 1.5.1 The approach set out above would result in a complete "suite" of works being carried out as a single scheme. Members should understand that whilst it should be possible to carry out the engineering works during the current financial year the installation of the speed actuated sign might slip into the next financial year, depending on the availability of a suitable electricity supply.
- 1.5.2 We consider that the measures referred to above should significantly reduce the number of crashes at this junction.

1.6 Recommendations

That

- 1.6.1 The project **BE PROGRESSED** on the basis of a partnership funded comprehensive package as described in the report subject to funding approvals by the two Councils and
- 1.6.2 Officers **BE REQUESTED** to prepare a scheme that will include realigning the kerb, the resurfacing of the junction and the installation of a speed actuated warning sign for implementation during the current financial year.

Background papers:

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