

---

## **A228/M20 Junction 4 - Eastern Overbridge Widening**

**To: Tonbridge & Malling Joint Transportation Board - 26  
September 2016**

**Main Portfolio Area: Growth, Environment & Transport**

**By: Roger Wilkin, Director of- Highways & Transportation**

**Classification: For Information**

**Ward: West Malling & Leybourne, and Downs & Mereworth  
Division: Malling North**

---

**Summary: M20 Junction 4 overbridge widening scheme - permanently  
closing right turn out of Castle Way**

---

### **1.0 Introduction**

1.1 The Board are aware that as a result of the decision to temporarily ban the right turn out of Castle Way to facilitate the traffic management for the bridge widening works the opportunity arose to consider whether this should be made permanent.

1.2 This Report gives a commentary on the traffic surveys carried out, crash data and initial response to public engagement and is offered for information at this stage with the intent of bringing a further report to the next Board meeting on 28 November.

### **2.0 Background**

1.1 The junction was created in 2006 as part of the A228 Leybourne & West Malling Bypass. It is unusual in layout and this was dictated by the layout constraints of the Bypass and J4. It attracted considerable comment at the time and while this has subsided over the intervening years there remains a residual local concern.

1.2 Unrelated to this, the right turn out of Castle Way has been temporarily banned during the bridge widening scheme to assist traffic management. The view was that by banning the right turn out, traffic exiting J4 going onto the A228 would not be held at the signals allowing traffic to clear J4 more easily. In promoting this, some suggested that it might be a good idea to make this a permanent arrangement.

1.3 Traffic surveys were carried out in March before the J4 works started and the right turn out was banned, and further surveys were carried out during July to assess the changes.

### **3.0 Commentary**

## **Crash Record**

3.1 For the 5 year period between January 2011 and December 2015 (the latest date for which confirmed data is available) there have been 11 slight injury recorded crashes. The circumstances of 3 crashes seem unrelated to layout. It is hard to be absolutely clear (because the layout of the junction does not lead to clear descriptions) but officer judgement is that a majority of the remaining 9 crashes are related in some way to the right turn movement. Further investigation has shown that a greater proportion of crashes have occurred in the last three years and that has triggered its designation as a cluster site for consideration. Many crashes also seem to be related to red light violations.

## **Traffic Flows**

3.2 Traffic flows on Castle Way are relatively low. Traffic flows on the section approaching the A228 junction were 26,000 vehicles per week in March and that reduced to 17,000 vehicles per week in July following the right turn ban - a reduction of just over 30%. Flows on the middle section of Castle Way are slightly less and showed a slightly lower reduction of about 25%.

3.3 As would be expected there was not a significant change in flows on Castle Way coming away from the junction or indeed along Park Road.

3.4 It is an assumption but on the basis that Leybourne and Oxley Shaw residents have a greater likelihood because of their proximity of using the junction to access J4, the reduction is probably traffic from the wider area such as A20 who have elected to use the designated routes as the rat running advantage has been lost or diluted by needing to turn left and U turn at Park Road roundabout.

## **Diversion Length**

3.4 The total diversion length for traffic making the 'U' turn at Park Road roundabout is 1km. U turning traffic has to merge and move across to the right turn lane at the approach to Park Road roundabout. There is 200m available to achieve this weaving which is less than desirable however traffic is only released from Castle Way in platoons of about six vehicles and gaps are often available because traffic from J4 is also released in phases and observation has shown that this movement takes places with relatively little difficulty.

## **Park Road Roundabout**

3.5 There is no comparison data with March but in June/July queuing was surveyed on both the A228 approaches to the roundabout signals. There are brief periods of short queuing at the roundabout signals during the morning and evening peak periods as would be expected but there is no queuing for what would be the 'U' turn movement for banned right turn traffic heading back towards J4.

3.6 For most of the time the A228 approach and release from the circulating area are both green at the same time and hence queuing on the circulating area is not an issue. However, it does occur at times but this could probably be overcome by adjusting the signal phases so that both the A228 approach and circulating area were always fully synchronised.

## **Other Aspects**

3.6 Banning the right turn would allow the traffic signals on the A228 approach in advance of J4 at the Castle Way junction to be removed.

### **4.0 Public Engagement**

4.1 A consultation Newsletter was distributed to most homes covering an area generally bounded by M20 to the north, Birling Road to the west, A20 to the south, and to the rear of Lunsford Lane, Unfortunately we did not achieve full coverage and a further drop to the missed areas was undertaken.

4.2 The consultation Newsletter has also been sent to

- Leybourne Parish Council and the adjacent parish and town councils - namely Birling, Snodland, Kings Hill, East Malling & Larkfield and West Malling.
- Borough Council Ward and County Council Division Members covering the Parish and Town Council areas above and the local Member of Parliament.
- Emergency services, bus operators and other organisations like the Premier Inn/Brewers fayre, school and church.

4.3 Leybourne Parish Council held a public meeting on Friday 2 September attended by Mrs Sarah Hohler - division member, Tom Tugendhat MP and John Farmer - KCC officer, to allow residents to express their views.

### **5.0 Initial Public Engagement Response**

5.1 The local community have been given an extended deadline of 19 September to say whether they agree or disagree with the temporary right turn ban being made permanent. Over a 1000 newsletters have been distributed and 140 replies have been received so far and resident's views are fairly even with a slight preference in favour of reinstating the right turn.

5.2 Nu- Venture, who operate the main bus service through the junction that would be affected by a permanent ban - Service 149 that runs from the Medway Towns to Kingshill on school days - are concerned about the additional journey time for the northbound service.

5.3 The Fire Brigade welcome the added flexibility provided by Castle Way but have suggested that they would not feel able to sustain a significant objection if the right turn was banned.

5.4 The Ambulance Service has no objection and that is in part related to the possibility of them having a satellite base at the end of Park Road where they would have a direct link onto Park Road roundabout for emergency calls.

5.5 No other replies have been received so far particularly from parish councils and other organisations but that is not surprising because of the holiday period but I am aware that Leybourne, and Birling Parish Councils have met but their formal response is not available at the time of drafting this report.

## **6.0 Initial Public Engagement Commentary**

6.1 Views expressed by residents so far are fairly evenly split. Those in favour of permanently banning the right turn generally welcome the improved safety and the secondary benefit of reduced traffic on Castle Way and this together offsets any concern about the longer travel distance. Those opposed are concerned about the longer distance to travel and traffic and safety issues related to weaving with A228 traffic, the 'U turn' manoeuvre at Park Road roundabout and inadequate storage on the circulating area when held at the signals.

## **7.0 Financial Implications**

7.1 The cost of any works whatever the eventual outcome and as long as they are minor and proportionate and can be seen as contributing to the overall improvement and safety of J4 can be covered from the bridge widening funding.

## **8.0 Legal implications**

6.1 There are no legal implications for the Board.

## **9.0 Conclusions**

7.1 This is like to be finely balanced decision.

7.2 More time is required to give residents, parish councils and other consultees and organisations the opportunity to give their response.

7.3 If the preference is for the ban to become permanent then some time is required to consider the concerns about limited storage on the circulating area of Park Road roundabout and if that can be addressed by amending the synchronisation and phasing of the traffic signals and any changes to road markings and lane destinations.

7.4 If the preference is to restore the right turn then some time is also required to see how safety might be improved and to address what seems to be a preponderance of red light violations. There have also been suggestions about making the right turn a single lane only to avoid an alleged number of 'side swipe' incidents and that also needs to be considered although the initial view is concern about how that would impact on junction capacity.

7.5 It is the objective to try and progress these considerations so that a more informed Report and discussion can be held at the 28 November meeting of this Board.

## **8.0 Recommendations**

For Information.

Future Meeting if applicable:	Date: 28 November 2016
-------------------------------	------------------------

Contact Officer:	John Farmer - Project Manager (major Projects) e mail: john.farmer@kent.gov.uk tel: 07740 185252 - OR Richard Shelton - Project Manager (Major Projects) e mail:richard.shelton@kent.gov.uk tel: 07540 677604
Reporting to:	Tim Read - Head of Transportation Service

## Appendices
