
Progress Report – Tonbridge Interchange Improvements

To: **Tonbridge & Malling Members Forum 25th February 2019**

By: Tim Middleton – Principal Transport Planner, KCC

Classification: **For Information**

Summary:

An update on progress for the Tonbridge Station project and outlining the additional measures to improve the traffic system.

1.0 Station Scheme

The planned works have completed on the West Kent Local Growth Fund (LGF) scheme to improve the Transport Interchange at Tonbridge Station.

2.0 Improvements to the Traffic System

As with all new signal schemes, some time is required for drivers and pedestrians to get used to the new arrangement. KCC usually give new signal arrangements a few weeks before making any tweaks to the timings as drivers and pedestrians will need time to get used to the new configuration.

Since completing the scheme, some improvements to the traffic system have been identified to help manage the traffic and pedestrian flows more efficiently.

3.0 Yellow Box Markings

The Traffic signals themselves are designed to adjust their timings depending on traffic flows and pedestrians flows. However, part of the issue we are finding is the junction itself becomes blocked by vehicles who are entering when their exit is not yet clear. The lights then change and drivers become 'stranded' in the junction. This causes a change to the timings as the sensors pick up on the vehicles and then give extra time for the junction to clear before allowing pedestrians to cross. This means that at some points it will appear that no vehicle or pedestrian is allowed to proceed and the lights remain on red longer than they would have done.

To counteract this we will be installing yellow box markings in the junction to deter drivers from entering the junction without a clear exit. We will adjust some of the signal heads themselves to help with this too.

At the time of writing an installation date is yet to be confirmed but it is expected to take place in early March. If a date is arranged by the time of the meeting a verbal update will be given.

4.0 Pedestrian Display units

It is clear that most pedestrians are expecting to see the displays up high and naturally look to the far side of the road, as they would on a Pelican Crossing.

Puffin crossings, as the Tonbridge signals are, are becoming the new standard across the country as they can react to real world situations to alter the timings.

On Puffin crossings the display units must be located on the near side. This is so that when the 'green man' is shown the waiting pedestrians cross the road and anyone behind them who arrives late would be discouraged from crossing. The sensors mounted on the poles will monitor the pedestrians who are crossing and give them more or less time to cross depending on how much time the pedestrian needs.

For example, older people who may walk more slowly will be given longer to cross. Subsequently if someone pushes the button and then crosses before the 'green man' or walks away entirely, the puffin crossing is able to cancel itself and keep traffic flowing. This cannot happen on a Pelican Crossing.

However, if an additional person joins the crossing late the system will delay the traffic as long as it can within designated parameters to keep that person safe. To prevent this from happening the 'green man' disappears relatively quickly compared to a Pelican Crossing which is set on a timer.

To help pedestrians we will install additional pedestrian display heads higher up the poles but on the near sides. Additionally we will install a new pole on the corner of Waterloo Road near to the Newsagents as it is clear that pedestrians heading towards the station are naturally stepping beyond the display unit and are then unable to see if their 'green man' has been shown.

At the time of writing an installation date is yet to be confirmed but it is expected to take place in early March. If a date is arranged by the time of the meeting a verbal update will be given.

5.0 Next Steps

Beyond the improvements outlined above, we will continue to monitor the junction and optimise the timings where we can. It may be that KCC needs to run some awareness campaigns regarding the new crossings and how to safely use them. This is something we shall consider if pedestrians remain unclear as to how best to use the crossings.

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