
A229 Loose Road Corridor Study - Maidstone

To: **Maidstone JTB**

Main Portfolio Area: Environment and Transport

By: Andrew Westwood

Classification: **For decision**

Ward:

Division:

Summary:

This report outlines the proposals identified following a review of the A229 corridor between the Upper Stone Street/Loose Road/Sheals Crescent and Loose Road/Cripple Street/Boughton Lane junctions. The review has sought to identify minor measures that can be implemented to assist traffic flow and improve journey time reliability along this key strategic route.

This report is seeking Members approval of the following measures identified as part of the review:

1. Loose Road/Upper Stone Street/Sheals Crescent

Proposed lane marking alterations.

2. Sheals Crescent to Armstrong Road

Proposed alterations to lane allocations and pedestrian crossing arrangements.

3. Wheatsheaf Junction

Proposed removal of the Cranborne Avenue egress and a partial conversion of Cranborne Avenue to one-way eastbound.

4. Bus Stops

Proposed relocation and removal of bus stops.

1.0 Introduction and Background

1. Introduction

1.1 The A229 in the south of Maidstone suffers from congestion and delays during both the morning and evening peak periods. The draft KCC Congestion Strategy identified the corridor as an area that suffers from poor journey time reliability and has prioritised the need for measures to be implemented that can reduce delays.

1.2 The review has identified a number of proposed improvements that are primarily intended to assist traffic flow on the A229. Each improvement is described below and illustrated in the attached drawings 1 and 2.

2.0 Body of the report

2.1 **Loose Road/Upper Stone Street/Sheals Crescent**

The lane markings are proposed to be altered to create two continuous traffic streams into Sheals Crescent and remove the give way arrangement for south bound traffic turning into Sheals Crescent from Upper Stone Street. The benefit of the change will be the reduction in delays when traffic blocks back onto Upper Stone Street and impacts upon southbound traffic flow. This has previously been trialled during utility roadworks and was found to work successfully.

2.2 **Sheals Crescent to Armstrong Road**

The carriageway will be re-allocated along this section of Loose Road to create three lanes for southbound traffic and one lane for northbound traffic. This will achieve a more efficient use of highway capacity by enabling a dedicated lane to be provided for southbound traffic turning right from Loose Road into Armstrong Road. It will also reduce queuing delays for southbound Loose Road traffic, as Armstrong Road bound traffic will be removed from the two approach lanes.

The modifications will incorporate improvements for pedestrians with new crossings being added to the southern arm of the junction. These will be walk with traffic to enhance the overall efficiency of the junction operation.

Modelling of the junction indicates that these alterations will improve overall capacity by 5% in the AM peak and 6% in the PM peak.

Furthermore these modifications will align this junction's configuration with that of the Wheatsheaf Junction. This will mean that both junctions will be capable of being coordinated together, thereby increasing the efficiency of movement along the corridor as a whole.

2.3 **Wheatsheaf Junction**

The traffic signalled A229/A274 'Wheatsheaf' junction currently operates over capacity during both peak periods. This causes congestion and delay for road users on the A229 and A274.

Removal of the Cranbourne Avenue egress at the junction would allow the green timings for the main roads to be increased. This modification would provide 17 seconds of increased green timing, equating to an extra 340 vehicles in an hour being able to pass through the junction.

To facilitate this change the Cranbourne Avenue junction arm would have to be made one way eastbound (i.e. entry only). This has implications on local residents and road users that currently use Cranbourne Avenue for egress, given that they would be required to use alternative routes such as Plains Avenue, Park Way or Northumberland Road.

Two options have been considered for Cranbourne Avenue. These are:

- Cranbourne Avenue to be one-way eastbound over its full length; and
- Cranbourne Avenue to be one-way eastbound over a short section east of the Wheatsheaf junction. This is the preferred option as it maintains much of the existing two-way operation and will require a build-out feature and signage to prevent vehicles from attempting to exit into the junction.

The traffic order required for the one-way operation will require a statutory consultation process. The outcomes of the consultation will be reported at a future meeting of this Board.

2.4 **Bus Stops**

The review identified that the current positioning of bus stops in close proximity to junctions on the A229 has an adverse impact on traffic flow when buses have stopped to pick-up and drop-off passengers.

It is proposed to relocate the southbound bus stop further to the north from its current location close to the Loose Road/Armstrong Road/Park Way junction.

The northbound bus stop to the south of the Loose Road/Armstrong Road/Park Way junction is proposed to be removed. This will result in longer walking distances for some passengers.

The bus operator has been consulted and has no objections to the proposed changes.

2.5 **General**

The details of the schemes can be seen on drawing 1 and 2

It should be noted that the Wheatsheaf junction is included within the Maidstone Integrated Transport Package and will therefore be the subject of further investigation to identify a more substantive highway capacity improvement. This work will need to take account of any minor modifications approved by this Board.

3.0 **Financial**

3.1 The works are estimated to cost £160,000 for all of the options.

4.0 **Legal implications**

4.1 A traffic order is required for the change at the Wheatsheaf junction to facilitate the one-way operation.

5.0 **Recommendations**

5.1 **Loose Road/Upper Stone Street/Sheals Crescent**

Members are recommended to approve the proposed lane marking alterations.

5.2 **Sheals Crescent to Armstrong Road**

Members are recommended to approve the proposed alterations to lane allocations and pedestrian crossing arrangements.

5.3 **Wheatsheaf Junction**

Members are recommended to approve formal consultation on the proposal for part of Cranbourne Avenue to be made one-way eastbound in order to prevent egress into the junction.

5.4 **Bus Stops**

Members are recommended to approve the proposed alterations to bus stops.

Future Meeting if applicable:	Date: N/A
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Annex List

