

# Maidstone Joint Transportation Board



**17  
October  
2018**

## Maidstone Bridges Gyratory – Road Safety Report

<b>Decision Making Authority</b>	Kent County Council/Maidstone Borough Council
<b>Lead Director</b>	Simon Jones
<b>Lead Head of Service</b>	Tim Read
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Russell Boorman/Jay Judge
<b>Wards and County Divisions affected</b>	Wards: Maidstone Central/High Street/Bridge/Fant
<b>Which Member(s) requested this report?</b>	Councillors Clark, Chittenden and Bird.

### **This report makes the following recommendations:**

That the Maidstone Bridges Gyratory – Road Safety Report be noted.

### **Timetable**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Maidstone Joint Transportation Board	17 October 2018

# Maidstone Bridges Gyratory – Road Safety Report

## **1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the Road Safety Audit undertaken following the completion of the Maidstone Bridges Gyratory scheme.
- 1.2 In 2015, the new north bound lanes were opened for traffic, with the scheme being officially opened in March 2016. Initial concerns were raised in relation to the inconsistent use of lane discipline and impact on the Non-Motorised Users (NMU) post scheme completion.

## **2. Road Safety Audit:**

- 2.1 A site visit was completed by the audit team during the hours of daylight on 06/02/2018 between 15:00 and 16:30 hours. The weather varied from overcast to snow and the road surface was damp.
- 2.2 Traffic conditions in the area varied from free flowing to queuing closer to the peak time. The site visit completed during the hours of darkness was undertaken on the 06/02/2018 between 18:00 and 18:30 where the weather conditions were overcast with damp road surface. The traffic conditions were free flowing.
- 2.3 Any comments or suggestions for road safety improvements are aimed to address matters that might have an adverse effect on road safety in the context of the chosen design.
- 2.4 Safety issues identified during the Stage 3 Audit and site inspection which are excluded from the Road Safety Audit report, but the Audit Team wishes to draw to the attention of the Project Sponsor (Kent County Council) are presented in a separate letter.
- 2.5 The scheme was subject to a Stage 1 Road Safety Audit carried out in October 2014 by Amey. Of the problems raised in that audit all appear to have been satisfactorily addressed with the exception of one which was revisited in the Stage 2 Road Safety Audit.
- 2.6 The Stage 2 Road Safety Audit was carried out in January 2016 by Amey. The report raised five potential road safety problems which appear to have been satisfactorily addressed with the exception of one which was believed to be partially resolved and was revisited in the Stage 3 Road Safety Audit.

## **3. Purpose of the scheme:**

- 3.1 The scheme is intended to relieve congestion around the Maidstone Gyratory, which is at the confluence of the A20, A26, A229 & A249 and includes two crossings of the River Medway.

- 3.2 The main proposal is to construct a northbound contraflow carriageway along the eastern side of the gyratory. This will allow M20-bound traffic from the SE to avoid detouring around the gyratory, thus relieving congestion. Changes will be made to the lane layouts on the eastern side of the gyratory, the western side remaining as it is at present. The merge of the two northbound flows onto the A229 Fairmeadow will be managed with traffic signals.
- 3.3 Existing pedestrian crossing facilities between the NW footways of Broadway and High Street will be removed in order to accommodate the contraflow carriageway.

#### **4. Problems Arising Road Safety Audit Stage 3:**

- 4.1 A problem was identified on Broadway in relation to NMU activity and was summarised as 'risk of pedestrian crossing at inappropriate locations'.
- 4.2 The Audit Team were aware of the strategic decision to retain the steps in order to maintain as much access to the river towpaths as possible however there was still the concern there is no information for pedestrians travelling on the towpath NE of River Medway regarding of the closed footpath towards town.
- 4.3 Although there is a safe route to continue along the river towpath under the bridge, as there is no information presented, pedestrians could choose to use the stairs as this is the shortest route. Only on top of the stairs pedestrians are presented with the sign referencing 'Access to river only'. At this point pedestrians, could choose to cross Broadway in order to continue towards their destination with an increased risk to being stuck from circulating traffic.
- 4.3 The recommendation was to install signage at the bottom of the stairs to inform pedestrians of the road layout ahead. This recommendation has been accepted and signage is due to be erected in the near future.
- 4.4 A second problem was identified on Bishops Way in relation to Traffic Signs, Carriageway Road Markings and lighting and was summarised as 'road markings inappropriately removed could be misleading and potentially lead to side swipe collisions.
- 4.5 The existing intermittent white line road markings on Bishops way have not been completely removed and are still visible. As the new road markings, have begun to show signs of fading it is not clear which of the line road markings should be followed.
- 4.6 Both vehicles from the nearside lane and offside lane could decide to access the middle lane in the same time leading to potential side swipe collisions.
- 4.7 The recommendation was to completely remove the existing road markings and refresh the new markings. Again, this recommendation has

been accepted and arrangements made for this to be carried out in the near future.

4.8 This concluded the Road Safety Audit Stage 3 problems with no other Safety Issues being presented.

## 5. **Crash Data:**

5.1 Table 1 shows the crash trend for the Maidstone Bridge Gyratory System:

<b>Recorded Year</b>	<b>Slight</b>	<b>Serious</b>
2012	1	1
2013	6	1
2014	7	1
2015	9	0
2016	8	2

*Table 1 Crash Trend.*

5.2 In 2017, the first full year following operation of the new north bound lanes, the recorded crash data is as follows:

- **3 slights**
- **0 serious**

5.3 This equates to a **48%** reduction in 'slight incidents' over the average in the previous 5 year period.

## 6.0 **Pedestrian Facilities:**

6.1 Due to the removal of the existing subways at the lower High Street and decommissioning of the 'at grade' crossing full NMU surveys were undertaken during the design stage. This data was utilised to inform the requirements for the revised 'at grade' crossing between the High Street and River.

6.2 The central 'Pen' increased to an overall area of 33m<sup>2</sup> which is significantly larger than the previous. This size is sufficient to accommodate the additional footfall.

## 7.0 **Cycling Provisions:**

7.1 The Gyratory System has never been the designated cycle route, however, during the design stage options were explored to alter the existing route which utilised the gyratory system.

7.2 Due to safety concerns, the decision was taken to maintain the existing cycle route through the remaining Medway Street sub-way with additional signage to direct cyclists accordingly.

7.3 Since opening, there have not been any recorded incidents involving cyclists on the gyratory system.

## **8.0 Conclusion:**

- 8.1 Following completion of the Maidstone Bridges Gyratory scheme there has been a reduction in recorded incidents for all highway users.
- 8.2 Minor problems were noted following the Road Safety Audit Stage 3, which are being addressed accordingly.
- 8.3 Safety will continue to be monitored and assessed with recorded incidents being collated annually.