

**From:** Roger Wilkin, Director – Highways, Transportation & Waste  
**To:** Joint Transportation Board  
**Date:** 19<sup>th</sup> May 2016  
**Subject:** Star Lane / Gordon Road, Westwood - Transport Improvements  
**Classification:** For Decision

**Summary:**

This report provides information in relation to proposed transport improvements comprising of a new Toucan Crossing in Star Lane (with associated cycle infrastructure). In addition traffic calming measures are proposed in Gordon Road. The scheme is in accordance with and funded by historically secured Section 106 developer contributions.

**1.0 Introduction**

Westwood has been subject to considerable development growth within the last decade, with the success of Westwood Cross and its associated retail and leisure developments being a major contributor to increased peak hour traffic loading on the local highway network. In addition to this, a considerable amount of further committed development is due to be commenced / completed over the coming years. Further growth is being planned for by Thanet District Council, through their emerging Local Plan, which will set out the vision for managed growth within the district to 2031.

The emerging Thanet Transport Strategy (currently in draft, awaiting further development of the Local Plan) is being developed in order to underpin the emerging Local Plan. It identifies a number of key highway interventions and infrastructure, both within Westwood and the District as a whole, to accommodate highway and transportation challenges associated with anticipated growth requirements. These improvements seek to manage traffic congestion, provide a more resilient highway network, and enhance network access and coverage of sustainable travel options, such as walking, cycling and public transport. The key measures outlined within the strategy have previously been reported to members, and these were endorsed at the JTB meeting in June 2015.

The Westwood Relief Strategy is a key element of the draft Transport Strategy and encompasses the delivery of a new integrated outer ring road at Westwood, which in turn reduces the convergence of traffic onto the main Westwood roundabout. This will subsequently provide the opportunity to explore the provision of a more appropriate environment for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport facilities.

The Poorhole Lane and Star Lane sections of the ring road have recently been delivered, through a combination of developer contributions, local pinch point and capital funding. These improvements have been further complimented by brand new road infrastructure of New Star Lane and New Cross Road.

An appropriate road link between Margate Road and Westwood Road has yet to be realised and represents the final quadrant of the ring road. A possible option for delivery of this section crosses land belonging to Tesco. When the final link is delivered, this will enable the full benefits of recent road investment to be realised, through the provision of a more resilient road network.

Whilst delivery of new road infrastructure to date, has had a positive impact on traffic congestion and journey times in the Westwood area, this has expectedly led to an increase in traffic on Star Lane. Subsequently concerns have been raised by local members and residents, particularly in relation to the absence of controlled pedestrian crossing facilities on this part of the highway network. This issue in turn then acts as a barrier to walking and cycling.

In addition to the above, once committed development and background growth is introduced to the local road network, vehicle queuing will undoubtedly increase. When this occurs, it is likely that Gordon Road will become a more attractive route for traffic, as drivers seek to avoid localised queuing at key junctions.

The issue of traffic reassignment within Gordon Road was considered when highway mitigation was negotiated in relation to the nearby Gleeson's housing development site (which has already secured planning consent). An appropriate monetary contribution was secured through this development to address this issue if and when necessary.

## **2.0 The Scheme**

The proposed scheme consists of the following elements:-

- A new Toucan Crossing on Star Lane, located adjacent to the existing junction with Gordon Road.
- A buildout on either side of the junction of Gordon Road / Star Lane, which in turn will improve visibility at this junction and provide an appropriate footway width to facilitate the proposed Toucan Crossing.
- Conversion of the footway on the northern side of Star Lane to incorporate a footway / cycleway between the proposed Toucan Crossing and Nash Road.
- Provision of new footway to link existing pedestrian facilities at Wherry Close to existing and proposed footway / cycleway in Nash Road

- Installation of Precast concrete speed cushions at regular intervals within Gordon Road to manage speed and discourage localised traffic reassignment. Locations are approximate and are subject to change following detailed surveys and an consultation process with stakeholders.

Drawing number **KCC/S106/SLGR/001** shows the proposed scheme in outline form.

Since no cycle crossing facilities exist on the Star Lane arm of the Poorhole Lane roundabout (and there is no scope to introduce them), the proposed Toucan Crossing directs cyclist to utilise the existing shared facility between the retails units, which in turn connects to existing cycle facilities on the A254 Margate Road.

Necessary ducting and power supply has already been provided for the provision of the Toucan Crossing, as part of recent carriageway refurbishment works in Star Lane. This will minimise the amount of disturbance to the recently reconstructed road surface.

The proposed shared footway / cycleway on Star Lane will be 3.0 metres wide, with the exception of a section (between properties 42 & 18), where it narrows to a nominal 2.5 metres. Cycle design guidance generally recommends a preferred minimum of 3.0 metres for shared routes of this nature. In this instance, given the relatively short distance proposed, on balance, it is considered that the nominal 2.5 metre width will provide an adequate environment for cycling and is unlikely to generate any overbearing safety issues.

The proposed speed cushions within Gordon Road are typical of that introduced elsewhere in the district and will act as a feature to discourage excessive vehicle speeds in and rat running between Star Lane and A254 Ramsgate Road. The location and form of traffic calming feature is indicative at this stage, and an informal consultation process will take place with residents prior to the commencement of detailed design work, and will subsequently inform design considerations.

### **3.0 Finance**

All associated costs are covered by section 106 developer contributions.

### **4.0 Consultation**

Consultation with local residents directly affected by the scheme is planned to inform the detailed design process. Further stakeholder consultation as part of necessary statutory notices will be undertaken, once detailed designs have been produced.

## **5.0 Recommendation**

That the scheme is progressed as outlined in the report.

## **Background Documents**

Plans attached – **KCC/S106/SLGR/001**

## **Contact details**

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