

Update on LGF Funded Improvements to reduce congestion at the Yew Tree Road/London Road Junction & Speldhurst Road/St Johns Road junction in Southborough

A report by the County Council's Traffic Schemes and Members Highway Fund Manager to the Tunbridge Wells Joint Transportation Board on 20 April 2015

Background

This report provides an update to the Board for further information on the progress of a Local Growth Funded (LGF) scheme to increase capacity on the A26 in Southborough through the Yew Tree Road and Speldhurst Road junctions.

A copy of the junction modelling summary report and initial outline design drawing is attached for information in appendices A & B.

Progress

Kent County Council commissioned Amey to undertake traffic surveys and model two options for the Yew Tree Road junction with London Road and Speldhurst Road junction with St Johns Road, in Southborough. The options modelled were (1) Removal of the existing traffic signal controlled junctions and replacement with two mini roundabouts with off line zebra crossings to cater for pedestrian movements through the junctions, (2) Improvements to the existing traffic signal controlled junctions to include formal pedestrian crossing facilities allowing removal of the existing standalone Puffin crossing on London Road and removal of the Bus priority signals on St Johns Road. Both options have been modelled using traffic count data recorded in December 2014 and using a forecasted growth in traffic volumes over a ten year period, with a view to reducing the current peak time traffic congestion and increasing capacity through the junctions.

The junction modelling has concluded the following scenarios:

1. **Do nothing** – Operational capacity will decrease in proportion to the natural growth in traffic resulting in a continued increase in peak time delays.
2. **Do something (mini roundabouts)** – Modelling identified that this option would create increased congestion at peak times from the existing layout in all scenarios that have been modelled.
3. **Do something (Improvements to the existing traffic signals)** – The option modelled showed that with predicted growth the junction would operate with some spare capacity in 2026.

A pedestrian staggered crossing has been considered on the Speldhurst Road junction with St Johns Road as part of the modelling report. This option would offer a small additional increase in capacity in the future. However, the option would require the procurement of a significant portion of land from an adjacent business premises. It is considered the additional costs to procure land and the detrimental effect this may have on the business considered against the small benefit in capacity precludes any benefit of carrying out this aspect of the proposed scheme.

The option detailed in scenario 3 from the list above is considered to offer improved capacity at both junctions and a reduction in peak time congestion modelled over a 10 year period based on predicted growth.

The LGF funding for this project will need to be spent within the 2015/16 financial year and the projected construction period is programmed to commence in January 2016. The delivery of this scheme has been programmed to avoid conflict with existing works on Longfield Road and the predicted increase in traffic during the run up to Christmas.

Recommendation

1. That members note the report; and
2. Support the proposed improvements detailed in scenario 3 being taken forward to detail design and implementation stage.

APPENDICES

Appendix A - Junction Modelling Summary Report

Appendix B – Yew Tree Road Signals

Sources of Information:

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