
**The Crescent Signal Junction and Carriageway Improvements to
Remove Exit Movement from The Crescent into the Junction**

To: **Swale Joint Transportation Board**

By: **Lee Carl of JNP Group (on behalf of Keepmoat Homes)**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Ward: **Swale**

Date **8th February 2022**

Summary:

This report gives details of the proposed improvement works to the junction where Halfway Road, Minster Road, The Crescent and Queenborough Road meet. The Schemes, Planning and Delivery (SPD) Team are assisting with the writing and consultation of the traffic regulation order (TRO) for this scheme which is being funded and installed by Keepmoat Homes as part of the residential development on Belgrave Road.

This report seeks approval to proceed to make the Traffic Regulation Order following public consultation already completed.

For Decision

1.0 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 This report has been prepared in response to the Traffic Regulation Order objections that were raised against the proposed signal junction and carriageway improvements at the junction where Halfway Road, Minster Road, The Crescent and Queenborough Road meet.
- 1.2 The junction is located approximately 1.2km east of the proposed residential development site.
- 1.3 The improvements were proposed to improve the capacity of the junction as a result of the new residential development at Belgrave Road. The recent TRO application was in accordance with the works that were requested as part of the planning conditions for the Belgrave Road development.
- 1.4 A detailed transport assessment was undertaken by JNP Group in 2019 to understand the existing traffic movements, and this was followed up with a specific technical note (TN004) to assess the different opportunities to improve the junction capacity.
- 1.5 The transport assessment demonstrated all approaches to the junction were approaching capacity and that this will deteriorate further as a result of background traffic growth and committed development alone.

2.0 Existing Junction Configuration

- 1.6 There are single lane approaches into the junction from Halfway Road, The Crescent and Queenborough Road. Minster Road approach features a one lane plus flare arrangement accommodating vehicles intending on turning right into Halfway Road.
- 1.7 Through a combination of site observations, feedback received at a Meet the Developer event and use of Google Traffic Conditions, it was noted that queuing extends along Queenborough Road towards these signals, notably in the PM peak hour when commuters return from work.
- 1.8 Some users of Queenborough Road are utilising the residential roads of Holmside Avenue, Adelaide Gardens and Southdown Road/The Crescent to avoid queueing traffic for travel northward towards Sheerness. Other drivers travelling to Minster follow a similar route through the use of Highfield Road, Admirals Walk and Banner Way to avoid the signals entirely.
- 1.9 There are few traffic generating land uses to the south of The Crescent and the volumes of traffic particularly in the PM peak hour lend evidence to the fact that drivers of Queenborough Road are using this approach as a means to avoid queueing before heading north towards Sheerness.
- 1.10 As a result of steady demand for green time on The Crescent, its stage is called every cycle which in turns results in increased delays on other approaches such as that of Queenborough Road.

3.0 Opportunities to Improve Capacity

- 1.11 A review of physical measures to provide any meaningful increase in capacity is limited due to the constraints of land available within the existing highway boundary at this time.
- 1.12 This is especially true for Queenborough Road where the building extents of Half-Way House (Mems Mezze) provide no space to accommodate a left-turn lane/flare.
- 1.13 There may be scope to provide a dedicated left turn lane/flare from Halfway Road through relocating the stop line closer to the junction and utilising part of the current footway in this location. Traffic signal equipment is located within this area which would require relocating and such improvements would not be of benefit to Queenborough Road or Minster Road.
- 1.14 If traffic flows were significantly lower on The Crescent, it may justify the potential to run this stage every other cycle and in turn give greater lengths of green time for the other approaches. In order for this to be effective, current use of The Crescent and the residential roads to the south of Queenborough Road would need to be deterred. It is considered the best method of doing so would be through the use of traffic calming features such as road narrowing's with priority/give way operating arrangements or speed cushions/road humps.
- 1.15 The most effective method of improving capacity across the junction would be to remove entry from The Crescent entirely with this approach serving exit traffic only. This approach was requested for consideration by KCC within a telephone conversation held on 22/07/2019 and is discussed further below.

4.0 Introduction of One Way Entry into The Crescent

- 1.16 The performance of the junction was assessed without the ability to exit from The Crescent into the junction.
- 1.17 The results of the assessment show that the junction will operate significantly better than that under the existing arrangements. Queue lengths are reduced under all scenarios and for all approaches.
- 1.18 The proposed configuration has the potential to maintain the status quo mitigating against background traffic growth, committed development and the proposals at Belgrave Road.
- 1.19 For both the existing and proposed arrangements, queueing is still forecast to occur along Queenborough Road however the incentive provided by removal of priority controlled exit at The Crescent should deter drivers from using residential roads to the south and emerging back onto Queenborough at Southdown Road.

5.0 Consultation

- 1.20 The County Council advertised its intention to implement the new junction arrangements from the 17th December 2021 to the 10th January 2022 and the order was advertised as shown in **Appendix A**.
- 1.21 Public notices were placed on site outlining the proposals and an advert was placed in the Kent Messenger in the week ending 17th December 2021.
- 1.22 Various statutory consultees were contacted directly about the proposals including Kent Police, South East Coast Ambulance Service, Kent Fire and Rescue Service, The Road Haulage Association and The Freight Transport Association;
- 1.23 The local County Council members and Swale Borough Council ward members were also issued a copy of the consultation notice.
- 1.24 The closing date for the consultation responses was on the 10th January 2022, the County Council had received written support from Kent Police and one other comment which is anonymous. 18 responses of objections from members of the public have been received. A summary of the messages of support and objections are included in **Appendix B**.
- 1.25 Following a thorough review of the objectors' comments, this detailed report outlines the benefits and improvement of the scheme, which were agreed as part of the planning process, and looks to alleviate the public concerns.

6.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

- 1.26 The consultation has not identified any safety or operational issues.
- 1.27 The scheme has been independently assessed by KCC Highway Transportation and Development and Intelligent Traffic Systems Teams and consultants employed by Swale Borough Council, all have concluded that the scheme provides significant junction performance improvement.

1.28 This is a deliverable scheme that has the support of the Parish Council. The scheme proposals should assist in improving congestion and pedestrian safety, it is requested that the proposed one way system be agreed and the TRO made.

Appendix A – Deposit Document

Appendix B – Consultation Responses

Respondent	Support/Object	Comments
------------	----------------	----------

1	Kent Police	Support	<p>Kent Police have no specific observations to make regarding the proposed making part of The Crescent (16m in a north westerly direction) as one way, however in general terms we would expect the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The application meets the necessary criteria • The proposal complies in all respect with the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 • The safety of other road users is not compromised by the introduction of these measures <p>Our reference for your proposals is 354/21</p>
2	Participant	Support	<p>I support the efforts to simplify motor vehicle movements at this junction. I note that point 1 of the order includes an exemption for pedal cycles, which I welcome.</p> <p>The existing junction at the northern end of The Crescent is traffic light controlled. It is unclear how the ongoing safe movement of people on pedal cycles through the junction is to be accommodated. I trust that such movements will continue to be part of the traffic light sequence either through use of loop detection or a push button system.</p>
3	Participant	Objection	<p>The online pdf is not easy to read if you zoom into the read the detail. The order excludes pedal cycles from the one way restriction but gives no information as to what signage will be installed to allow this to happen. There also seems to be no signage warning other road users that cyclists could be coming towards them. It is important to ensure no restrictions are made to ban cycles from using the junction in any direction. Is it proposed to create shared space rather than on carriageway? There also seems to be no road markings where cyclists would wait for the traffic signals.</p>
4	Participant	Objection	<p>I don't believe it will help the traffic flow and will make exiting Southdown road impossible and dangerous.</p>
5	Participant	Objection	<p>As I use this road regularly for work and will not be able to if it's one way and will increase traffic on Queenborough Road</p>
6	Participant	Objection	<p>I regularly visit an elderly relative in Southdown and it is horrendous trying to exit or enter via that road with traffic constantly queued on the main road. If traffic no longer has the option to use the Crescent junction surely it will only get worse. Also, why oh why has a Housing Association agreed to fund???? Pretty obvious I would say YET MORE HOUSES BEING BUILT on our once green and pleasant Island. An Island being destroyed by the greed of so many and the ignorance of those chosen to protect and care for constituents. So so sad to see our Island being destroyed :(</p>
7	Participant	Objection	<p>I would like to know how this is going to benefit me as I live in the Crescent. Presently I am able to go straight across the traffic light to Halfway Road or right to Minster Road this will now mean I will need to go round the block to get on the Queenborough Road which is always a nightmare. Perhaps it would be better to make the road residents parking only to stop all the unnecessary parking from the garage people waiting to change their tyres or people parking to go and pick up a takeaway, especially when there is already a car park,</p>

			near all the takeaways. The road is dangerous because of the speed of the vehicles that use it and I'm surprised that there has not been an accident. Also because of all the parking there is often a bottle neck of cars trying to leave the Crescent therefore making it difficult for emergency vehicles able to use it. I think by doing what you are doing will mean people will block my driveway more than they already do forcing me to park elsewhere in the road. Therefore parking outside my house is a nightmare.
8	Participant	Objection	Will make it difficult to get out of southdown Road. Turning right will be too busy to pull out and turning left is too tight already due to large volume of traffic and parked cars causes clipping kerb
9	Participant	Objection	It's going to be extremely hard for people trying to get out of said road due to the busy main roads. My grandparents and my auntie all live in this road and I don't believe this should be happening.
10	Participant	Objection	This would be more dangerous than it already is, not safe for anyone. Unfair to residents on this road and Southdown.
11	Participant	Objection	It's going to block our road and make it difficult for us to get out.
12	Participant	Objection	If you make the Crescent one way, you will cause awful congestion at the bottom of Holmside, with people wanting to turn right into Queenborough Road. There is a need for double yellows at the junction now..and the ridiculous move of making the crescent one way would make matters worse. At present, most residents in Rosemary Avenue, Adelaide gardens, and it's cul de sacs, and Furzehill Crescent use this as their Main route out towards Minster and Sheerness. To make it one way is just going to cause more traffic disruption as people try to turn right out of Holmside. In short, a badly thought out idea.!
13	Participant	Objection	Restricting traffic to / from the crescent would impact residents of the road and surrounding roads. During rush hour traffic joining the main road is near impossible and without access to this junction directly you would be making residents lives harder
14	Participant	Objection	I live in Adelaide Gardens and would be seriously affected by this proposal. Whilst it might limit the 'rat run' at certain times of day it will only move the problem to Highfield Road and Banner Way, which already takes its share. For residents in Adelaide Gardens, Southdown Road, Holmside Ave and Rosemary Ave who depend on this route for an easy route to Sheerness it will make turning right onto Queenborough Road a more hazardous event, especially in busy times. I realise that there is no easy answer to this issue, and I don't think this is it. At the risk of annoying residents of Rosemary Avenue and Holmside Avenue, an alternative would be to make Holmside one way at the northern end between Queenborough Road and Rosemary Avenue, or make a right turn from Queenborough Road into Holmside illegal, enforced by a traffic camera.
15	Participant	Objection	The area suffers with unmanageable traffic due to the amount of housing that is unsustainable for the island and continues to be built. Temporary traffic lights along Queenborough Road caused huge tail backs and queues throughout the island last month. This does not solve an issue of people trying to get around the island the best they can when more infrastructure is needed, not less!
16	Participant	Objection	Any local resident will tell you that this proposal will only increase current traffic problems, which will already become more severe once the 153 properties at Belgrave Place become inhabited To the best of my knowledge there have been no traffic

			incidents at this location, so I don't understand the proposal at all
17	Participant	Objection	<p>This proposed action will make it very difficult for traffic seeking to cross the junction of Queenborough Rd/ Minster Rd/Halfway Rd towards Sheerness or to turn right into Minster Rd. Alternate methods of access by using Southdown Rd Lowfield Rd or Banner Way could become unnecessarily difficult or possibly dangerous as a result of the increased potential for accidents.</p> <p>It would seem to me that a modern installation of traffic controls utilising latest Traffic sensors both camera and wire loops in the road surface would make traffic flow at the Queenborough Rd/ Minster Rd/Halfway Rd junction more efficient.</p> <p>If the proposal is approved then I would ask that initially it is a temporary order subject to review after a period of to time to allow for consideration of the impact of the change</p>
18	Participant	Objection	<p>If you make the crescent one way, you will cause awful congestion at the bottom of Holmside and Southdown,with people trying to turn right into queenborough road, especially during the rush hours. .There is a need for double yellow lines at the corners of these junctions with Queenborough road now,and the ridiculous move of making the crescent one way would only make matters worse.. At present, residents of RosemaryAvenue, Adelaide gardens and it's cul de sacs, and Furzehill crescent use this as their main route out towards Minster and Sheerness.The lights give a regular easy access to the crossroads, and are only on green for about 30 seconds, letting half a dozen residents out each time. In fact, as they are camera controlled, if no car is seen waiting to exit the crescent, then that phase is missed out for that sequence of lights.. Making it one way will only cause more congestion. As it is almost impossible to turn into Holmside now because of bad parking, and if all residents have to access from there as well, tempers will fray, and accidents will happen. If no one let's cars out to turn right in the rush hour, the only option will be go halfway across the road, holding up the traffic coming down from the lights, and hope some kind soul coming up from Quenborough will let you in.If,not,cars coming down will have to stop as their route is blocked... and this could lead to a tailback up to the lights.. Unlikely, yes, but a possibility.</p> <p>The problem is obviously that the traffic on Queenborough road needs speeding up in the rush hours, and it does currently cause a few headaches. However, as its the rush hours that cause the traffic problem, why not alter the timing of the lights at Halfway? If you have them set to permanent red between 7.30and9.30am,and 4.30and7.00pm,with appropriate warning notices at the junction of Southdwn and the Crescent, this would mean rush hour traffic would get a slightly longer phase during the rush hours, and only a minor inconvenience would be caused to the residents of the surrounding areas. It would also cancel out a lot of people using the Holmside route as a ratrun during the rush hour.</p> <p>Costwise, this would also be a cheap option... the electronics and timers etc are already in situ, so it would mean a few adjustments by the traffic light engineers to reset them.</p> <p>Why not try this for a trial period of say a year, plus do traffic surveys on the corners of Holmlside, and Southdown.</p> <p>The situation needs to be looked at as a whole and a long term solution found.</p> <p>As for Keepmote homes, I am still at a loss as to why they are trying to fund this ridiculous proposal. You cannot get to their</p>

			<p>site from the Crescent, or is there a proposal that is yet to be discussed where they intend to build more houses and will require access from the top of Holmside and Southdown, the same way they opened up the top of Belgrave road?? Their money would be better spent getting Belgrave resurfaced. Many of the residents of the area are of a certain age, ie silver voters, and whilst we might forget what we went into the kitchen for, we don't forget crazy unnecessary schemes implemented by the council, or who was on the council when silly decisions are made. The silver vote is quite influential round here!</p>
19	Participant	Objection	<p>I object to the introduction of a one-way system on The Crescent as I do not think it will improve the traffic situation. I live in Southdown Road and use The Crescent to gain access to the main road into Sheerness and Minster, as do residents in Highfield, Adelaide, Furze Hill and the other surrounding roads in this area. The traffic lights at The Crescent only turn to green when there is a vehicle waiting, and are only on green for a very short period of time, compared to the other sets of lights on this junction. The residents of these roads would now only have the option to use the junction at the bottom of Southdown Road. This in itself is not great, it is a very narrow junction due to parked cars, both in Southdown Road and on the main Queenborough Road, and the entrance to Havill's Funeral Services, which requires access at all times. To turn left out of this junction towards Queenborough very often results in mounting the kerb as there is not enough room with the waiting cars at the traffic lights being in the middle of the road due to the parked cars on Queenborough Road. To turn right out of Southdown towards Sheerness and Minster will rely on cars waiting at the lights letting you out, and a gap in the traffic coming from Sheerness and Minster. This could in turn create a traffic problem in Southdown Road. All this for the sake of about 10 seconds of green light at The Crescent. This change to the road setup is only being brought about due to the development of yet more houses. The houses being built in Bellevue Road are a good half a mile from The Crescent so struggle to understand the logic in this. Surely it would be beneficial to see how the traffic changes once these houses are occupied. Has a traffic study been completed on this junction at various times of the day, and has the alternative route been looked at i.e the junction of Southdown Road. I feel many residents will be unaware of this proposal as I only found out about it via a Facebook post by our local councillor Cameron Beart. Some people do not have social media so will be unaware. No street notice has been posted either. Where is the opportunity for those who want to object? Surely consultation letters should be sent to every resident in this area to enable them to make their opinions.</p>
20	Participant	Objection	<p>By making the Crescent one way this will increase the traffic flow in Southdown Road. Traffic wishing to then turn right to access Sheerness or Minster will regardless of road markings block Queenborough Road. It will not stop traffic rat running as they will then use Highfield Road and then exit via Minster Road. All this for a housing estate being built half a mile away, I note that this project is being funded by Keepmoat Homes the builders of the estate. Why were the local residents not given written notice, as this will affect them rather than someone half a mile away?</p>

**Appendix C – Proposed One Way Exit from The Crescent
Plan**