

TO: SWALE JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

DATE: 8 September 14

SUBJECT: Lower Road junction with Barton Hill Drive

BY: KCC Head of Transportation and Development

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: A discussion of the traffic management options that are suitable for this junction.

Decision Required: For information

Introduction

1. KCC Highways receives a considerable number of complaints about the performance of this junction, and at the last meeting of this Board in June a report was presented on a proposal to improve capacity at the junction by banning the right turn from Lower Road into Barton Hill Drive. The recommendation from the Board was to design a mini roundabout or full sized roundabout to replace the traffic signals at the junction.

Discussion

2. Mini roundabouts are designed for tight urban environments where traffic speeds are likely to be low and the requirements for deflection can be reduced as the roundabout acts as a mechanism for motorists giving way in turn.
3. At Lower Road the speed limit drops from national limit to 40mph just to the west of the junction with Barton Hill Drive. Both of the Lower Road approaches to the junction are straight, and at lightly trafficked times of the day, would be fast. This environment is not suitable for a mini roundabout:
4. Design guidance from the Department for Transport is that mini roundabouts should not be provided where the speed limit is higher than 30mph. Although there have been locations where a 30mp speed limit has been extended to cover the location of a mini roundabout, this is frequently not successful in lowering speeds sufficiently. At this location it would require the speed limit to be extended in Barton Hill Drive. Thistle Hill and the length of Lower Road between and either side of these two junctions along a length of road that does not meet the criteria for a 30mph limit.
5. In order to provide sufficient deflection to operate safely, a mini roundabout would require the acquisition of third party land so that the roundabout can be offset to remove the straight through movement. Without this any design would be most unlikely to pass a safety audit.
6. It would therefore be more suitable to design a "small roundabout" with a solid central island to match the one at the junction of Lower Road and Thistle Hill Way, 400m to the east which deals with a similar volume of traffic. The roundabout can be offset to the south to provide suitable deflection and would require land acquisition. A feasibility design for this has been prepared with an estimated cost of around £200,000 plus the cost of the necessary third party land.
7. It is possible that future development allocations at Thistle Hill could be required to fund a solid island roundabout at this location as part of their mitigation. However this may be a medium or long term solution, and therefore, in the interim a bid has been

put forward for funding from the block capital allocation for Local Transport Plan (LTP) schemes to try to bring forward a roundabout solution at this junction. However, in the current financial climate and reduction in budgets, the LTP funding is mainly targeted to Safety Critical schemes and as this location has a good safety record it would be unlikely to be a high priority for funding.

Financial Implications

8. At present there is no funding for a roundabout construction scheme. The outcome of the bid for funding from the LTP schemes block capital allocation should be known In September, and if successful it would allow the design and delivery of the scheme to be brought forward.,
9. If the LTP bid is not successful the roundabout could potentially be funded by a suitable scale of enabling development from the two strategic housing land allocations in the Local Plan.

Decision Required

10. This report is for Members' information.

Contact Officer: Ruth Goudie, Strategic Transportation Planner, KCC Highways.