

**Thanet Local Plan Examination
Inner Circuit Route Improvement Strategy - Delivery Clarification Note**

This note has been produced to provide the Inspectors with some further clarification in relation to the proposed methodology for implementation of the Inner Circuit Route Improvement Strategy and how it relates to delivery on each of the Strategic Housing Allocation sites. It should be read in conjunction with Technical Note - Strategic Site Allocations Impact (Core Document 6.11) and other Transport evidence base that has been produced in relation to the Local Plan examination.

The delivery of the Inner Circuit is intended to provide a cohesive package of highway-based mitigation to support traffic growth pertaining to the draft Thanet Local Plan. At this early stage it is anticipated that no single allocation site is reliant on the delivery of the entire strategy in order to progress, as such strategic sites will continue to contribute towards the ongoing housing supply throughout the lifetime of the proposed Local Plan.

As the plan progresses traffic impacts relating to individual strategic allocation sites will be identified in more detail. There will naturally be key components of the Inner Circuit that will be more pertinent to individual allocations and a programme for funding and delivery will evolve across the plan period to reflect background traffic conditions and the financial situation at the time of inception.

The Inner Circuit consists of the following elements as outlined in **Table 1** below.

Table 1 - On site infrastructure to be delivered in line with new strategic housing allocations.

On Site Infrastructure	Relevant Delivery Site
New road link Between A28 Brooksend Hill and Minnis Road	Birchington (SP14)
New road link between A28 Brooksend Hill and Acol Hill/B2050.	Birchington (SP14)
New road link between Shottendane Road and Manston Road.	Land north and south of Shottendane Road, Margate (HO2)
New road link between Hartsdown Road and Shottendane Road.	Land north and south of Shottendane Road, Margate (HO2)
Widen Nash Road along its existing alignment (or new alignment in line with future masterplan for the site)	Westwood (SP16) (Note this includes the delivery of widening of Nash Road between the edge of the allocation site and the existing Star Lane Roundabout)
New road link between A256 Haine Road and B2050 Manston Road (on site section)	Land at Manston Court Road, Haine Road (SP18)

*Please note that all new links will be designed, where constraints allow, to local distributor standard

It is expected that the above infrastructure will be realised in line with the delivery of each relevant strategic site and secured through an appropriate form of Highway Agreement (Section 38/278 of the Highways Act 1980). The cost implication of delivering these elements is not expected to exceed the typical build costs for

delivery of primary access to development sites of the magnitude proposed. It is anticipated that on site infrastructure will provide a dual purpose in accommodating redistributed trips within the surrounding highway network, so will potentially provide a level of highway mitigation ahead of off-site sections of the Inner Circuit being delivered.

In addition to on-site infrastructure, there are areas of existing/new highway infrastructure that fall outside of the curtilage of the allocation sites, these are outlined in **Table 2** below.

Table 2 - Off Site Highway Improvements/New Infrastructure

On Site Infrastructure	Contributors (Impact Based)*	Contributors (efficient delivery model)*
Extension of Columbus Avenue to Manston Road, Birchington (to local distributor standard)	Birchington (SP14), Westgate (SP15), Land north and south of Shottendane Road, Margate (HO2)	Birchington (SP14), Westgate (SP15),
Widen existing Manston Road between Acol Hill and Shottendane Road (to local distributor standard)	Birchington (SP14), Westgate (SP15), Land north and south of Shottendane Road, Margate (HO2), Westwood (SP16), Land at Manston Court Road, Haine Road (SP18)	Birchington (SP14),
Widen/provide improvements to Shottendane Road (to local distributor standard) as far as the vicinity of Housing Allocation site H02, Margate and improve junctions with Park Road, Minster Road and High Street Garlinge.	Birchington (SP14), Westgate (SP15), Land north and south of Shottendane Road, Margate (HO2), Westwood (SP16)	Land north and south of Shottendane Road, Margate (HO2), Westgate (SP15),
New Road Link between A256 Haine Road and B2050 Manston Road (on site section) (to local distributor standard)	Birchington (SP14), Westgate (SP15), Land north and south of Shottendane Road, Margate (HO2), Westwood (SP16), Land at Manston Court Road, Haine Road (SP18)	Land at Manston Court Road, Haine Road (SP18) Westwood (SP16)

*An indication of a potential apportioned and efficient delivery model is outlined in Technical Note - Strategic Site Allocations Impact (Core Document 6.11).

With the potential adoption of a pure 'traffic impact-based' apportionment approach to infrastructure funding, it is possible that a delay in delivery of a single strategic site (with a less significant traffic impact in a given locality) could subsequently instigate an undue delay to delivery of highway key mitigation. In order to secure more rapid delivery of infrastructure in line with sites that have a higher impact within the locality, it is proposed that an 'efficient infrastructure delivery model' could be employed to enable individual sites to contribute similar levels of overall funding towards Inner Circuit infrastructure, but instead apply their overall funding liability to sections of the Inner Circuit that are most geographically relevant to the given site. This is a matter that will be monitored from the outset.

Page 12 of the Strategic Site Allocations Impact (Core Document 6.11) outlines a potential methodology to deviate from a pure impact apportionment of costs and potentially speed up infrastructure delivery, so that the Inner Circuit could be delivered in phases as housing sites are realised effectively reducing liability for any one phase to a maximum of 2 sites.

Whilst this part of the document will be subject to ongoing review, it is considered a sound way of rationalising infrastructure delivery in the locality and will enable a more flexible approach to triggers to be employed in the future.

It would be reasonable to review this position throughout the plan period in line with delivery rates on each site and to reflect any potential changes in circumstances, for example realisation of development on the Manston Airport site, or the securing of external funding for highway infrastructure projects directly related to the Inner Circuit.

Delivery Routes

There are several potential delivery/funding routes for offsite infrastructure outlined in Table 2. At this stage it is considered that a flexible approach to delivery is maintained, in order to react to any potential changes in circumstances across the plan period.

1. Delivery of physical infrastructure by developers under Section 278 of the Highways Act 1980, in agreement with KCC as the Local Highway Authority.
2. Delivery of Infrastructure by KCC as the Local Highway Authority, using Section 106 contributions from strategic allocation sites.
3. Delivery of infrastructure by KCC as the Local Highway Authority, as a major capital project using external funding sources (such as Local Growth Fund, National Productivity Investment Fund or National Roads Fund pertaining to the Major Road Network)
4. A combination of the above.

Delivery of individual elements of the Inner Circuit will ultimately be dictated by the speed of housing delivery. Any Section 278 highway agreement solution could be secured through necessary planning conditions or legal mechanisms relating to the development planning process. Under a direct delivery route (by developers) there would be a requirement for them to include relevant Inner Circuit infrastructure as part of their development planning consent. Alternatively, it is possible for planning

consent for Inner Circuit infrastructure to be progressed ahead of delivery or consent for related strategic sites.

KCC based delivery routes will require the Highway Authority to work closely with the Planning Authority (TDC) and developers to forecast the appropriate juncture at which to progress associated scheme design and any necessary planning consents. It is anticipated that relevant design work and scheme development will be progressed as contributions are collected, in line with ongoing trajectory forecasts (which are subject to regular review). The phasing of the Inner Circuit delivery will be largely dictated by the rate of delivery on individual housing sites and/or any external infrastructure funding that may be realised across the plan period.

Should external funding be obtained, then it is possible that the relevant infrastructure will be subject of a separate planning consent process ahead of development sites being progressed. This process would be led by the County Council as the Local Highway Authority, however there may be some requirement for financial input from the strategic site promoters in order to assist in early stage cash flow and scheme development. Ongoing dialogue will be maintained throughout and wording to this effect is included within the agreed Statement of Common Ground in relation to highway infrastructure.

The delivery of the offsite Inner Circuit infrastructure will require the consolidation of relevant land parcels outside of the existing defined highway boundary. An initial review of relevant land titles suggests that a large majority of land is already within the ownership or control of strategic housing land promoters. This means that the number of individual third-party land owners without a direct interest in the Local Plan will be limited. The Council would first seek to acquire the necessary land parcels through negotiation (via direct approach through appointed land agents), with the use of compulsory purchase (CPO) powers being considered should traditional negotiations prove to be unsuccessful.

Given experience of similar schemes across the county, the likelihood of a compulsory purchase process being required is adjudged to be very low, (however it cannot be ruled out at this stage). As is common practice, it would be necessary for relevant strategic allocation sites to indemnify the Council in relation to any outturn costs relating to the CPO process. It is anticipated that this can be secured through relevant legal agreement as the scheme progresses. Open dialogue in relation to this issue is an agreed component of the agreed Statement of Common Ground in relation to highway infrastructure. It is possible to progress any CPO process ahead of the required housing trajectory to ensure that Housing Land Supply is maintained in line with current forecasts. It is anticipated that a CPO would be most likely to be made under the Highways Act 1990 given the strategic transport objective it is intended to facilitate for the benefit of the whole district (i.e. the provision of the Inner Circuit as a whole). Thus, for the purposes of the assessment of compensation, the assumption would be under these circumstances, that the Inner Circuit scheme is cancelled and that no highway will be constructed to meet the same or substantially the same need.

Birchington (SP14) and Westgate (SP16)

These two sites represent the two largest allocation sites within the plan (1,600 and 2,000 dwellings respectively), they are also in close geographical proximity to one another. A common land stakeholder (Millwood Homes) has interests in both sites, therefore this provides an opportunity for these stakeholders to collaborate and produce a joint transport impact evidence base to inform any forthcoming planning applications in relation to these sites.

The on-site infrastructure within the Birchington allocation (outlined in Table 1) provides scope for an early release of highway capacity on the A28 corridor, as the link roads will assist in redistributing trips away from the most congested parts of the local road network (Birchington Square). At this early stage it is anticipated that this will enable the delivery of a significant amount of housing in line with the housing trajectory (to be confirmed through more detailed modelling studies to be developed at the planning application stage).

It is considered that the delivery of the A28 to Acol Hill Link will be a key component in managing initial traffic impacts, from both the Westgate and Birchington sites, on the A28 and Acol Village. It is anticipated that appropriate financial contributions towards Columbus Avenue and Shottendane Road improvements (or direct delivery if agreed) can be secured at an appropriate juncture within the delivery of the site and will not impede the ability of these sites to contribute towards ongoing housing land supply as envisaged.

Land North and South of Shottendane Road, Margate (HO2),

In relative terms this site is significantly smaller than the other strategic sites proposed within the draft plan, as such the main traffic impact from this development site is likely to be realised within the direct locality of Coffin House Corner junction (Shottendane Road, Hartsdown Road, Nash Road, Tivoli Road & College Road) and the Shottendane Road corridor. It is anticipated that the early delivery of the link road infrastructure between Shottendane Road/Hartsdown Road/Manston Road will be a key component in managing the impact from this development as it will provide a bypass route which will assist in distributing traffic away from Coffin House Corner.

There is initial confidence that the delivery of these internal links will be adequate to enable the site to be realised in full, in conjunction with a proportionate financial contribution towards Shottendane Road (Inner Circuit) being made at an appropriate juncture in relation to the delivery of the site.

Nash Road (SP16)

Nash Road site is located within a geometrically constrained part of the local road network; however, this site provides the opportunity to deliver important infrastructure which will assist in managing the impacts on the existing A254 corridor. The build out of the non-strategic housing site, Land off Nash/Manston Road, Margate (HO4) will provide an important piece of internal road infrastructure and this will assist in the delivery of the Nash Road (Sp16) site in the medium to longer term.

Coffin House corner junction will remain a network capacity constraint until such time that the housing sites HO4 and HO2 are delivered and provide a level of relief through the provision of onsite infrastructure, however the proposed housing trajectory outlined within the plan provides a reasonable prospect that the necessary infrastructure will be delivered in tandem with the Nash Road site (SP16).

In terms of the ability of this site to provide necessary off-site improvements to the southern end of Nash Road, further investigations have now clarified that the promotor of this site has access to the necessary land parcels to deliver these improvements without the need for third party land.

Land at Manston Court Road (SP18)

As outlined within the Strategic Site Allocations Impact (Core Document 6.11) this site largely relates to the requirement for the new road link between A256 Haine Road and B2050 Manston Road (which in turn forms part of the Inner Circuit). This site will also provide a significant amount of on-site delivery in relation to the same piece of infrastructure. Resolution to grant planning consent has already been achieved for the first 900 dwellings within this site, with a pro-rata financial contribution towards this link being negotiated.

This demonstrates a commitment from the Council to apply a flexible approach to infrastructure delivery and that a significant amount of development on this site can be realised prior to the delivery of the link road. For further phases of the development which do not form part of the current grant resolution, it is important for future impacts on the Manston Court Road corridor to be managed, therefore it is likely that later phases will be required to align with the physical delivery/implementation of the Manston to Haine Link. This position will be reviewed when the second phase of development is progressed.

Other Matters

KCC and TDC continue to prepare schemes in readiness for any external funding opportunities that might arise throughout the life of the plan. It is important to note that the cost of off-site infrastructure is fluid at this stage and subject to regular review throughout the life of the plan. Initial feasibility design work has been produced for Inner Circuit infrastructure and these have informed the cost estimates that are contained within the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).

KCC as the Local Highway Authority are currently engaged in a process of developing a bid for the forthcoming Major Road Network funding stream that was recently announced through the Department for Transport (as part of the National Road Fund). If successful, this will involve the delivery of large sections of the Inner Circuit to form a Birchington and Westgate bypass route to provide relief in relation to the A28 corridor. Both KCC and TDC remain committed to working with the private sector to negotiate efficient delivery of the Inner Circuit and readiness for any external funding opportunities that might arise in the future.