

Note for Inspectors

The delivery of the Inner Circuit and the use of interim highways measures

On Day 13 of the Hearings, under Matter 13, the Inspector asked the Council (with Kent County Council) to prepare a note to identify alternative highways measures that might be employed at the limited number of “pinch-points” along the route identified under Policy SP47.

This note supplements the previously submitted transport evidence relating to this matter, notably:

- CD6.11 Amey Technical Note – Strategic Site Allocations Impact 2018
- CD9.4 Highways Infrastructure – Statement of Common Ground
- CD9.9 Inner Circuit Delivery Strategy note

KCC has extensive experience of negotiating with landowners to deliver highways schemes that require third-party land negotiation. KCC has successfully negotiated a number of schemes over the last few years without the need to resort to the use of CPO powers.

It is the expectation of both Councils that the Inner Circuit is capable of being fully delivered as set out the draft Local Plan and joint Transport Strategy during the Local Plan period. As discussed at the Hearing, there are very few constraints on the route, following the principle of identifying as much of the Circuit as possible within the boundaries of strategic allocations. A substantial part of the route also lies on land within the ownership of parties already fully engaged in the Plan and development process, and signatories to the Transport Statement of Common Ground submitted to the Examination.

In order to ensure that the delivery of housing in the early years of the Plan is not compromised by any unexpected delay in the provision of the relevant strategic highways infrastructure, the Councils are confident that interim measures can be utilised to enable development of housing sites to commence. However, these measures are not considered to provide long term solutions, or to be alternatives to the measures set out in the Local Plan and Transport Strategy.

The Councils regard any such measures as interim measures to allow development identified in the Local Plan to proceed without being constrained by limitations in the highway network in the early part of the Plan period. This may result in an acceptance of additional traffic pressure within certain localities on an interim basis. It remains a key transport objective of both Councils to deliver the full Inner Circuit proposal, to provide long-term resilience in the local road network, and to support the delivery of homes and economic growth in the District over the Plan period.

The areas affected are very limited and involve small sections of Manston Court Road and Shottendane Road.

Initial enquiries have commenced in relation to both improvement schemes in relation to required land parcels, to inform external funding bids and to facilitate scheme development.

In part, this work is being carried out to inform development of the ongoing Major Road Network Fund Bid in relation to Shottendane (it should be noted that in relation to the Manston-Haine Road Link, the DCO application makes provision for a safeguarded route utilising land within the Northern Grass).

Potential measures to manage interim traffic impacts that could be employed in these areas include:

- Localised widening within existing verge areas
- Localised narrowing and priority working systems to manage traffic flow
- Alternative routes (eg: Manston Road; Vincent Road; links through the SP16 site)
- Localised weight restrictions for HGVs, linked to positive signing strategies for routing larger vehicles

Potential “pinch-point”	Nature of “pinch-point”	Interim highway measures that could be applied until full scheme is delivered
Manston Court Road, north of Manston Airport, Manston	Third-party land - landowners to be approached once the DCO decision is known	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Alternative routes (eg: Manston Road; Vincent Road; links through the SP16 site) 2. Localised widening within existing verge areas 3. Localised narrowing and priority working systems to manage traffic flow 4. Positive signing strategy to route larger vehicles
Land along Shottendane Road between Garlinge High Street and California Farm	Third-party land - land owners to be approached in the next 3 months in relation to Major Road Network scheme submitted to Government	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Localised weight restrictions for HGVs 2. Positive signing strategy to route larger vehicles

These are the sorts of measures that KCC have successfully employed elsewhere in the County.

This approach can be demonstrated by the Councils’ approach to the planning application for Westwood Village (Policy SP18), where a flexible approach to mitigation was agreed in this case, a proportionate contribution towards longer term highway solutions.

However, these are only examples. It is too early to determine which would be the most appropriate measures. This is for two reasons:

1. Detailed design for the improvements to Shottendane Road is to be undertaken for the MRN bid process - the Outline Business Case has to be submitted to Government by the end of 2019, followed by a more detailed Business Case next year; and
2. The DCO decision has not yet been made - the view of KCC and the District Council is that whatever development takes place at the Airport should make provision for the delivery of the Inner Circuit in that location. Depending on the future use of the site, there may be different route alignments available, and different options to consider.

The Council proposes an amendment to the supporting text to Policy SP47, as follows:

In the event that there is any delay in site acquisition or assembly in relation to any of the schemes identified in Policy SP47, the Council will, in conjunction with the County Council, make interim highway arrangements to enable allocated development schemes to proceed, pending full implementation and provision of planned strategic highways infrastructure through the regime of planning conditions and planning obligations.