

## **BOROUGH OF POOLE**

### **TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY GROUP – 5 JUNE 2008**

#### **REPORT OF HEAD OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES ON**

#### **OAKLEY HILL/ OAKLEY LANE JUNCTION IMPROVEMENT**

##### **1. Purpose of the Report and Policy Context**

- 1.1 The Capital programme implements schemes which support the Transportation strategy and delivers the targets set out in the Local Transport Plan and Best Value Performance Plan.
- 1.2 This report brings forward proposals for changes at the Oakley Hill/ Oakley Lane junction designed to reduce congestion at the nearby junction of Oakley Hill with the link road to the A31.

##### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 It is recommended that,
  - (a) the Portfolio Holder approves the proposals as detailed in Section 4 of the Report, and
  - (b) following implementation, the Head of Transportation Services be asked to monitor roads between Queen Anne Drive and Oakley Lane to assess whether there is an increase in rat-running.

##### **3. Background**

- 3.1 The Government has developed and agreed with the Local Government Association four shared priorities for the delivery of transport strategy around which the Local Transport Plan (LTP) was structured. The four shared priorities are Congestion, Accessibility, Road Safety and Air Quality. Government funding is provided over the course of the LTP to implement schemes which deliver these objectives. It is a requirement to demonstrate ongoing progress in these areas if this continued Government funding is to be assured.
- 3.2 The Strategy for delivery under the heading of congestion includes a number of strands, with one of the main features being the improvement of traffic movement along several Prime Transport Corridors (PTCs) across the conurbation.
- 3.3 The A349 route between the Port, Town Centre and via Gravel Hill to the A31 is one of the identified PTCs. Several junctions and points of congestion are being considered along this route, with the aim of minimising congestion and providing more consistent journey times. This strategy will also have a positive influence on the Council's strategic aim to support the economic vitality of the Town.

3.4 Approval was recently given to a road widening scheme on Gravel Hill which create right turning lanes into Steepleton Road and Poole Grammar School, minimising the impact of vehicles waiting to turn right on through traffic. It is planned to undertake these works over the school summer holiday period.

4. **Proposals**

4.1 This report brings forward proposals to change the Oakley Hill/ Oakley Lane junction which will have a positive effect on reducing congestion at the nearby roundabout at the junction of Oakley Hill (B3073) with the A31 link road.



4.2 Currently, vehicles needing to turn right from Oakley Lane into Oakley Hill

are required to turn left and then carry out a U-turn at the link road roundabout. The right turn ban was introduced in the early 1990's as visibility for this manoeuvre was poor. Also, Oakley Lane was being used as a rat run for through traffic. However the result of this U-turning traffic is to not only increase the flow



around the roundabout but also delays traffic approaching from the A31 as drivers are unsure of the traffic movements.

4.3 Traffic counts were carried out at the roundabout junction earlier this year and results were as follows,

Traffic entering the roundabout from the roads shown

	<b>AM peak</b>	U-turners	<b>PM peak</b>	U-turners
A31 link road	476	0	797	0
A349	984	0	1119	2
B3073 Oakley Hill	519	<b>108</b>	684	<b>99</b>

4.4 It is noted that over 20% of traffic from Oakley Hill (B3073) carries out a U-turn in the am peak, and nearly 15% in the pm peak. The majority of these turns will cause a delay to other vehicles entering the roundabout.

4.4 The need for traffic to turn left out of Oakley Lane also increases journey times for those going north, including buses. The ability to turn right at this junction will greatly assist Wilts & Dorset's Service 3, Poole – Broadstone – Merley – Wimborne (the Wimborne Flyer). This service runs half hourly in the daytime via Merley and hourly on Sundays and in the evenings. It is estimated that approximately 3 minutes will be saved on peak hour journeys into Wimborne, with 1.5 minutes saved during the off peak. Since introduction of the Flyer in June 2006 the Poole - Wimborne corridor has seen significant passenger growth. Patronage has increased by a reported 90% due to investment in air conditioned, low floor fully accessible vehicles running on the faster more direct route.

4.5 A scheme has now been developed which would permit the right turn from Oakley Lane into Oakley Hill by means of a signalised junction, shown on Drawing No. JC0750/07 as Appendix A.

4.6 This scheme has the following advantages:

- The need for U-turns removed from A31 link road roundabout with consequent reduced congestion and vehicular conflict.
- Improved pedestrian/ cycle crossing facilities at the junction.
- Signal control would allow a bus to be given priority to clear this junction if it is running late.
- Priority can be given to Oakley Hill traffic
- No visibility issues for traffic emerging from Oakley Lane

- 4.7 A possible disadvantage could be the chance of reintroduced rat running along roads between Queen Anne Drive and Oakley Lane. This has been raised as an issue before, such that in 1999 residents of Canford Magna Village joined with Canford School and Canford Magna Parish to pay for traffic calming works in Canford Magna Village. By means of adjusting signal timings here it can be ensured that the Oakley Hill route is no more favourable than the Queen Anne Drive/ Gravel Hill/ Oakley Hill route. A further option available is additional traffic calming on Oakley Hill. Monitoring of this situation will take place once the new scheme is up and running.
- 4.8 The Oakley Hill/ Oakley Lane junction is only a short distance from Canford Bridge, where significant refurbishment and construction work is currently underway. At the current time a complete closure of Oakley Hill is programmed for 23 June, which could last up to 4 months. During the period of the road closure would be an ideal time to undertake these junction improvement works.
- 4.9 The estimated cost is £150,000, which can be allocated from within the 2008/09 Capital Programme.
- 4.10 This scheme was considered by the Broadstone, Merley and Bearwood Area Committee on 21<sup>st</sup> may 2008. The Committee supported the proposals, albeit with the following issues / concerns raised:
- (a) That the school bus picking up in front of the Willet Arms would cause congestion and disrupt the operation of the signals
  - (b) Bus priority at the signals would lead to drivers rushing to follow the buses through
  - (c) Request for a cycle crossing facility north of the bridge at willet road

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**Appendix A - Drawing No. JC0750/07**

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