

# Individual Executive Member Decision

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<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Hambridge Road/Boundary Road, Newbury - Proposed Junction Improvements</b>
<b>Report to be considered by:</b>	Individual Executive Member Decision
<b>Date on which Decision is to be taken:</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> March 2012
<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	ID2412

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**Purpose of Report:**

To summarise the response to the consultation of the proposal to introduce traffic signals and pedestrian crossings at the junction of Hambridge Road and Boundary Road, Newbury.

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**Recommended Action:**

- (a) that this project is put “on hold” until the current planning application for the “Sterling Cables” site has been determined and the long term future of the Boundary Road rail bridge has been resolved.
- (b) that further investigation work is carried out at the appropriate time and a further Individual Decision taken in due course.
- (c) that initial discussions take place with the owner/landlord of the Old London Apprentice public house to establish whether the provision of a stand-alone pedestrian crossing adjacent to their property is feasible.

**Reason for decision to be taken:**

To consider the responses to the consultation of the above scheme and make a decision as to how to proceed

**Other options considered:**

As detailed in the report

**Key background documentation:**

Traffic Modelling Technical Note

Portfolio Member Details	
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Contact Officer Details	
<b>Name:</b>	Neil Stacey
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## Implications

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<b>Policy:</b>	None
<b>Financial:</b>	If implemented, the scheme will be funded as part of the approved Capital Programme.
<b>Personnel:</b>	None
<b>Legal/Procurement:</b>	If the scheme is implemented, Legal Services will be required to process the necessary traffic regulation order.
<b>Environmental:</b>	None
<b>Property:</b>	None
<b>Risk Management:</b>	If the scheme is implemented in its current form, there is a risk that the junction will fail to meet the needs of future traffic patterns
<b>Equalities Impact Assessment:</b>	<p>If the project proceeds, specific facilities for pedestrians with impaired vision or mobility will be included, namely dropped kerbs, tactile paving and rotating cones. These will assist them in crossing Hambridge Road and Boundary Road.</p> <p>If the scheme does not proceed, no such facilities will be provided, but conditions for disabled pedestrians will be no worse than in the current circumstances.</p>

## Consultation Responses

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### Members:

<b>Leader of Council:</b>	Councillor Graham Jones made no comments.
<b>Overview &amp; Scrutiny Management Commission Chairman:</b>	Councillor Brian Bedwell: I am happy to agree to ID provided the local Ward Member is also in agreement
<b>Ward Members:</b>	<p>Councillor Roger Hunneman: Given the uncertainty of outcome of the current Sterling Industrial Estate planning application and its potential impact on the nature of this junction together with possible changes with the railway bridge, it would be prudent to delay the decision to implement the full proposed scheme.</p> <p>I remain very concerned about the lack of facilities for pedestrians to safely cross Hambridge Road and Boundary Road North and I would really like see improvements made and that appeared to be the the view of the majority of respondents to the consultation. Please press ahead with talking with the landlord of the London Apprentice pub to see what changes to his car park entrance might be acceptable to him to accomodate a pedestrian crossing.</p> <p>Councillor David Allen: I've looked at your recommendations and I agree with them. There is too much uncertainty over the Sterling application and the railway bridge to warrant</p>

expense at this time.

Can you, however, start discussions with the London Apprentice pub to see if they would be willing to modify their car park layout to provide a pedestrian crossing.

**Opposition  
Spokesperson:**

Councillor Keith Woodhams: I support the scheme as proposed by Cllr Roger Hunneman.

**Local Stakeholders:**

Consulted in January/February 2012 via a leaflet drop and local publicity. See Appendix B for a summary of the responses.

**Officers Consulted:**

Jon Winstanley, Mark Edwards, Andrew Garratt, Valerie Witton

**Trade Union:**

Not applicable

Is this item subject to call-in?	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No: <input type="checkbox"/>
If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:		
The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval		<input type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council		<input type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position		<input type="checkbox"/>
Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months		<input type="checkbox"/>
Item is Urgent Key Decision		<input type="checkbox"/>
Report is to note only		<input type="checkbox"/>

## Supporting Information

### 1. Background

1.1 A project to introduce traffic signals, incorporating pedestrian crossings, at the Hambridge Road/Boundary Road/Kings Road junction was included in the Highways Capital Programme for construction in 2012/13. The scheme is to be funded from Section 106 funds received as a result of developments in the Newbury area.

1.2 This report summarises the responses to the consultation of the scheme and comments on the wider issues associated with its delivery.

### 2. Project details

2.1 The existing and proposed layouts are shown in Appendix C.

2.2 Hambridge Road (the B3421) meets Kings Road and Boundary Road at an uncontrolled crossroads close to Newbury town centre. Hambridge Road is a two way road, running east-west and Kings Road becomes one way (westbound only) approximately 30 metres west of the junction. Boundary Road runs north-south; the northern part of which is one way (southbound only) and the southern part is two way. Hambridge Road/Kings Road has priority over Boundary Road. There are no footways on the west side of Boundary Road (south) or the south side of Kings Road.

- 2.3 To the south of the junction is a bridge, which carries Boundary Road over the Newbury to Reading railway line. The bridge has a footway on one side but is not wide enough for two way traffic. Northbound traffic must therefore give way to southbound traffic. The rail bridge is structurally weak and is subject to a 3 tonne weight limit.
- 2.4 The proposed junction improvements involve the introduction of traffic signals to control traffic at the junction. These would incorporate pedestrian crossings over the northern part of Boundary Road and Hambridge Road. The one way restriction on Kings Road would be amended so that the one way restriction came into effect at the junction itself, rather than 30 metres to the west.
- 2.5 The improvement project was originally developed on the basis that the adjacent “Sterling Cables” site would be redeveloped and a new link road provided by the developer to connect the roundabout at Sainsbury’s supermarket to Hambridge Road, bypassing Kings Road and Mill Lane. The planning application submitted in 2010 was unsuccessful, and a further application submitted in early 2012 is yet to be determined.
- 2.6 There is a long standing aspiration to provide pedestrian crossing facilities on Hambridge Road close to the junction with Boundary Road. In order to deliver such crossing facilities, it was decided to proceed with the junction improvements, despite the uncertainty surrounding the “Sterling Cables” site, up to the consultation stage, and design the scheme so that should the link road be provided in future, two way traffic on Kings Road could be accommodated.
- 2.7 The original design included significant carriageway widening at the junction but due to the high cost of relocating underground telecommunications equipment, this has been omitted from the proposals, which retain existing kerb lines.

### **3. Consultation responses and officer comments**

- 3.1 Leaflets explaining the proposals were sent to residential and business properties in the area and to other local stakeholders. Local publicity also led to other road users requesting details of the project. A total of 35 responses to the consultation were received of which 17 express support of the proposals, 15 express opposition or objection and a further 3 are neutral. Appendix B contains a summary of all the responses received. The most commonly raised concerns are summarised below.

#### Traffic signals will increase congestion

- 3.2 Prior to the consultation period, consultants were engaged to model the operation of the junction using the “Linsig” software, which is a recognised tool for analysing junction capacity and traffic congestion at traffic signals. The modelling work undertaken used traffic survey data from 2009 and indicated that although the junction would work well under traffic signal control for most of the time, the junction would be operating at full capacity in the morning rush hour. This would result in delays, especially to westbound traffic on Hambridge Road. It should be noted, however, that westbound traffic on Hambridge Road is already subject to delays caused by the junctions downstream at Sainsbury’s and at the A339. In practice, it is likely that although delayed at the Boundary Road junction, vehicles would subsequently re-join the same queue on Kings Road at Sainsbury’s or the A339

junction, with little overall effect on their journey time. It would require a more complex model to make an informed conclusion, however.

- 3.3 In light of the reservations expressed during the consultation period, further surveys were commissioned so that up to date data could be used. Our consultants have made the same conclusions and reservations were expressed regarding the junction's ability to cope with traffic levels in the morning peak period. It was pointed out, however that this should be weighed up against the benefit to pedestrians of having a crossing facility.

#### Traffic issues on the Boundary Road rail bridge

- 3.4 The current single lane operation of the bridge is a local traffic bottle-neck and road users frequently raise concerns over safety due to the conflict between opposing vehicles and also the conflict between vehicles and pedestrians. Several consultees have expressed concern that this would be exacerbated by introducing traffic signals at the junction, as a northbound queue on Boundary Road could block the bridge for southbound traffic and in turn block the junction. The traffic model shows that this is a valid point at busy times.
- 3.5 Due to the forthcoming electrification of the railway line, the bridge is likely to need work to enable the overhead cables to be installed beneath it. Although officers are in discussion with Network Rail regarding similar issues in the eastern part of the district, no firm plans have yet been submitted for this bridge. It is possible that this initiative will bring about an opportunity to improve the bridge for the benefit of road users and officers will discuss this with Network Rail in due course.

#### Pedestrian crossing not justified due to low pedestrian numbers

- 3.6 The recent surveys show that during the hours of 0700 and 1900, a total of 167 people crossed Hambridge Road and 182 crossed Boundary Road at or near the junction. The justification for a pedestrian crossing is based on a formula known as "PV squared", where P represents the number of pedestrians crossing in the busiest 4 hour period and V represents the number of vehicles. Although the survey results show that the numerical threshold is not met, other factors should be taken into consideration, such as the difficulty in crossing the road and any latent or suppressed "demand".
- 3.7 It is difficult for pedestrians to cross Hambridge Road at this location because traffic approaches from four different directions. The future pedestrian "demand" is also likely to increase as a result of the new racecourse development. It is therefore considered that a pedestrian crossing facility would be worthwhile and well used.
- 3.8 Because it is a one way street, Boundary Road (north) is not as difficult to cross as Hambridge Road as vehicles only approach from one direction. Also, the number of vehicles using Boundary Road is much lower than Hambridge Road. However, the junction mouth is wide, pedestrians have a long distance to cross and visibility can be restricted by parked cars.

#### Suggestion for a stand-alone pedestrian crossing(s) instead of traffic signals

- 3.9 The layout of Hambridge Road is not ideal for a pedestrian crossing due to the frequent commercial accesses located close to the junction with Boundary Road.

Furthermore, a crossing must not be located too close to a junction because drivers may be distracted by the crossing when negotiating the junction and vice versa.

- 3.10 There is a potential location for a crossing outside the “Old London Apprentice” public house, approximately 20 metres from the junction, but this would require a modification to the pub’s access and agreement from the owner/landlord.

Suggestion that the Council has other priorities for funding

- 3.11 Should this project proceed, it will be funded from “Section 106” contributions received from developments in the area which must be spent on improvements to the local highway network and as such could not be diverted to other Council services or highway maintenance.

**4. Options for consideration**

- 4.1 The following paragraphs summarise 3 options, their advantages and disadvantages:

Option 1 – Proceed with the proposals unaltered

- 4.2 Advantage:

Pedestrian crossings are provided on Hambridge Road and Boundary Road.

- 4.3 Disadvantages:

- i) The junction operates at full capacity, leading to traffic congestion at peak times.
- ii) If and when the new link road is built, a traffic signal controlled junction may not be appropriate to the new traffic patterns.

Option 2 – Retain the current junction but introduce a separate Zebra Crossing

- 4.4 Advantages:

- i) A pedestrian crossing is provided on Hambridge Road.
- ii) This option is less costly than Option 1, therefore funds could be diverted to other initiatives in the area.

- 4.5 Disadvantages:

- i) Implementation of this option is conditional on the agreement of the owner/landlord of the Old London Apprentice.
- ii) No pedestrian crossing is provided on Boundary Road.
- iii) Although options are kept open for the Hambridge Road/Boundary Road junction, there is a risk that a future change to the junction would impact on the crossing such that it had to be removed.
- iv) Zebra crossings do not incorporate the same level of provision for disabled pedestrians as crossings with traffic signals.

### Option 3 – Do nothing until the Sterling Cables and Boundary Road bridge issues are resolved

#### 4.6 Advantage:

- i) No abortive work is carried out.
- ii) The project will proceed in light of new information and will not attempt to “second guess” the outcome of these issues.

#### 4.7 Disadvantages:

- i) No pedestrian facilities are provided in the short term.

### **5. Equalities Impact Assessment Outcomes**

5.1 West Berkshire Disability Alliance was consulted on the proposals and sought clarification of the facilities that would be available for disabled pedestrians.

5.2 If the project proceeds, specific facilities for pedestrians with impaired vision or mobility will be included, namely dropped kerbs, tactile paving and rotating cones on the traffic signals. These will assist them in crossing Hambridge Road and Boundary Road.

5.3 If the scheme does not proceed, no such facilities will be provided, but conditions for disabled pedestrians will be no worse than in the current circumstances.

### **6. Conclusion**

6.1 The consultation process resulted in a marginal preference for, rather than against the proposed junction improvements. However, the valid concerns expressed by those opposed, coupled with the unresolved issues surrounding the “Sterling Cables” site and the Boundary Road rail bridge, mean that there is a risk that implementing the project now will result in the junction failing to meet the needs of future traffic patterns.

### **7. Recommendation**

7.1 In view of the above it is recommended that:

- (a) This project is put “on hold” until the current planning application for the “Sterling Cables” site has been determined and the long term future of the Boundary Road rail bridge has been resolved.
- (b) Further investigation work is carried out at the appropriate time and a further Individual Decision taken in due course.
- (c) Initial discussions take place with the owner/landlord of the Old London Apprentice public house to establish whether the provision of a stand-alone pedestrian crossing adjacent to their property is feasible.

## **Appendices**

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Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment – Stage 1

Appendix B – Summary of responses to consultation and Officer comments

Appendix C – Existing and proposed road layouts



## APPENDIX A

### Equality Impact Assessment – Stage One

<b>Name of item being assessed:</b>	Hambridge Road/Boundary Road, Newbury – Proposed Junction Improvements
<b>Version and release date of item (if applicable):</b>	ID 2412, 30 <sup>th</sup> March 2012
<b>Owner of item being assessed:</b>	Neil Stacey
<b>Name of assessor:</b>	Neil Stacey
<b>Date of assessment:</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> March 2012

<b>1. What are the main aims of the item?</b>
Changes to operation of a road junction and provision of pedestrian crossings.

<b>2. Note which groups may be affected by the item, consider how they may be affected and what sources of information have been used to determine this.</b> (Please demonstrate consideration of all strands – age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation)
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<b>Group Affected</b>	<b>What might be the effect?</b>	<b>Information to support this.</b>
Disabled people (people with impaired vision or mobility)	<p>West Berkshire Disability Alliance was consulted on the proposals and sought clarification of the facilities that would be available for disabled pedestrians.</p> <p>If the project proceeds, specific facilities for pedestrians with impaired vision or mobility will be included. This will assist them in crossing Hambridge Road and Boundary Road.</p> <p>If the scheme does not proceed, no such facilities will be provided, but conditions for disabled pedestrians will be no worse than in the current circumstances.</p>	Dropped kerbs, tactile paving and rotating cones will guide disabled pedestrians to the appropriate crossing point and indicate where and when it is safe to cross.
All other groups	No effect.	N/A

<b>Further comments relating to the item:</b>
None.

<b>3. Result</b> (please tick by double-clicking on relevant box and click on 'checked')	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>High Relevance</b> - This needs to undergo a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Medium Relevance</b> - This needs to undergo a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Low Relevance</b> - This needs to undergo a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>No Relevance</b> - This <b>does not</b> need to undergo a Stage 2 Equality Impact Assessment

**For items requiring a Stage 2 equality impact assessment, begin the planning of this now, referring to the equality impact assessment guidance and Stage 2 template.**

<b>4. Identify next steps as appropriate:</b>	
Stage Two required	
Owner of Stage Two assessment:	
Timescale for Stage Two assessment:	
Stage Two not required:	

**Name:** Neil Stacey

**Date:** 9<sup>th</sup> March 2012