

**Report to - Cabinet Member (Urban Regeneration and Regional Planning) – 03 March 2005**

**Report of - Director City Development**

**Title - Traffic Schemes Associated with the Closure of Canley Level Crossing**

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### **1 Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 The report is intended to update the Cabinet Member on the progress being made to the proposed junction improvements at Earlsdon Avenue/Kenilworth Road and A45/Charter Avenue, and to seek a decision from the Cabinet Member on what option, as set out in paragraphs 4.1 and 4.2, should be taken to progress the schemes listed.
- 1.2 This report concerns land within the wards of Earlsdon, Wainbody and Westwood. The A45/Charter Avenue scheme sits on the boundary of all three wards.

### **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Cabinet Member is recommended to pursue the MOVA (microprocessor optimised vehicle actuation) traffic management arrangements for Earlsdon Avenue/Kenilworth Road.
- 2.2 The Cabinet Member is recommend to agree that work on the A45/Charter Avenue junction ceases until other proposed works associated with PrimeLines on the Sir Henry Parkes traffic island are completed. Further detailed design work will continue based on an evaluation of the traffic situation.

### **3 Information/Background**

- 3.1 Work carried out by consultants identified that traffic flows at the junction of Earlsdon Avenue / Kenilworth Road and the Sir Henry Parkes / A45 roundabout were likely to increase following the closure of Canley level crossing to road traffic. This work was carried out as part of the West Coast Main Line public inquiry in 2001. Coventry City Council argued that Network Rail (Railtrack at the time) should contribute a financial sum towards the cost of traffic improvements required as a direct result of the crossing closure. Canley level crossing was formally closed 6<sup>th</sup> June 2004.
- 3.2 Two Section 106 agreements were made. These state that Network Rail must make a contribution of £232,000 (as increased to reflect index-linking) towards the cost of a junction improvement on the A45/Charter Avenue and £27,000 (as increased to reflect index-linking) towards highway improvement schemes within a 2km radius of Canley level crossing.

- 3.3 **A45/Charter Avenue** – The purpose of this scheme is to reduce the level of traffic using the Sir Henry Parkes Road / A45 traffic island by providing an alternative route on to the A45 from Charter Avenue. New signals will be installed on the A45 to allow a right turn directly from Charter Avenue, which is currently operating well under capacity. Provision will be made for improved pedestrian and cycle facilities across the A45. This section of the A45 becomes congested during peak periods with tailbacks frequently stretching back approximately 1km from the Kenilworth Road. It is likely that this will impact on the operation of the proposed junction. It is not clear whether the closure of the crossing has had a major effect on queue lengths, however informal surveys indicate that there is no significant change.
- 3.4 Preliminary design for this scheme is complete and the estimated cost is £525,000. Further highway improvements are also due to be carried out in January 2006 on the A45 Sir Henry Parkes roundabout as part of PrimeLines. This may have an effect on traffic flows in the area.
- 3.5 **Environment** - The impact of the A45 scheme on the environment would be minimal as the majority of the work will take place within the existing highway boundary. Two options have been considered with one requiring the removal of a mature oak tree. This option will not be pursued.
- 3.6 **Kenilworth Road / Earlsdon Avenue** – The need for a traffic improvement scheme following the closure of Canley Level Crossing was identified in 2001 by consultants on behalf of the City Council. Traffic flows were predicted to increase by an average of 12% on the Kenilworth Road and by 12% on Earlsdon Avenue. To monitor the actual effect of the crossing closure more accurately, detailed traffic counts were commissioned to compare the before / after scenario. The counts looked specifically at all traffic travelling through the junction during the morning peak (07:30–11:30) and the evening peak (16:30–18:30). The results show that changes to flows vary significantly between the north and southbound carriageway on Earlsdon Avenue. It is unclear why traffic has decreased on the southbound carriageway and whether this is associated with the closure of the crossing. Traffic flows have increased by an average of 7% on Kenilworth Road.

Road	Direction	% Difference in traffic flows after the closure of Canley level crossing	
		Morning	Evening
Earlsdon Avenue	Southbound (towards Kenilworth Road)	-12%	- 25%
	Northbound (towards Earlsdon)	+21%	+ 15%
Kenilworth Road	North/South	+8%	+6%

- 3.7 Preliminary design on a new junction layout has been completed. The indicative cost would be in the region of £640,000 which is significantly higher than anticipated. A substantial proportion of the costs would be required for statutory undertakers to relocate existing services.
- 3.8 **Environment** - The proposed scheme would have a detrimental impact on the surrounding environment. The site is located within a conservation area and is adjacent to a Local Nature Reserve so any proposals must respect these designations in accordance with the relevant planning policies as set out in the Coventry Development Plan 2001. A detailed tree survey has been carried out which shows that the scheme would require the removal of up to 16 trees several of which are large mature trees which are considered of significant importance.

## 4 Proposal and Other Option(s) to be Considered

### 4.1 A45 / Charter Avenue

Options to consider are:

- a) continue with feasibility work and detail design to ensure that the junction will work in practice,
- b) wait until other junction improvements associated with PrimeLines are implemented at Sir Henry Parkes Road island and then proceed based on an evaluation of any changes,
- c) stop all work on the proposal.

It has been concluded that option b) is now recommended.

### 4.2 Earlsdon Avenue / Kenilworth Road

Due to the high costs, compared to the relative benefit of the scheme, and the impact on the environment, an alternative scheme should be considered. Officers recommend that the feasibility of the MOVA traffic signal system should be progressed. This system uses sophisticated traffic management software to increase the efficiency of traffic flows without the requirement to change the kerb line. The likely cost would be in the region of £20,000 to £30,000.

The options are:

- a) continue with detailed design of the current proposal;
- b) look into implementing the "MOVA" system,
- c) stop all work on the proposal.

It has been concluded that option b) is now recommended.

## 5 Other specific implications

### 5.1

	<b>Implications (See below)</b>	<b>No Implications</b>
Area Co-ordination		
Best Value		
Children and Young People		
Comparable Benchmark Data		
Corporate Parenting		
Coventry Community Plan		
Crime and Disorder		
Equal Opportunities		
Finance		
Health and Safety		
Human Resources		
Human Rights Act		
Impact on Partner Organisations		

	<b>Implications (See below)</b>	<b>No Implications</b>
Information and Communications Technology		
Legal Implications		
Property Implications		
Race Equality Scheme		
Risk Management		
Sustainable Development		
Trade Union Consultation		
Voluntary Sector – The Coventry Compact		

## 5.2 **Finance**

Both schemes will be funded from a combination of Section 106 funds referred to in para 3.2, and resources to be earmarked from the 2006/07 Local Transport Plan capital allocation.

## 5.3 **Sustainable Development**

The A45/Charter Avenue junction improvement will include facilities for pedestrians and cyclists to encourage more sustainable forms of transport. The main purpose of the scheme is to reduce congestion, which will help to improve air quality.

## 6 **Monitoring**

6.1 Monitoring of traffic flows has already taken place, as described above. Should any of the above schemes proceed, ongoing monitoring of the traffic situation will take place.

## 7 **Timescale and expected outcomes**

7.1 Depending on the options mentioned above, further feasibility work and detailed design will take place during late 2004/05 for the MOVA system at Earlsdon Avenue / Kenilworth Road; construction will take place during 2005/06.

7.2 If pursued, detailed design and construction for the A45/Charter Avenue scheme would take place during 2006/07.

List of background papers

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Papers open to Public Inspection

**Description of paper**

None