

# **Motion at Council**

## **Traffic on Cricklade Road**

**Cabinet**

**Date: 10<sup>th</sup> September 2014**

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Author:	Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transport Board Director, Service Delivery
Wards:	Gorse Hill and Pinehurst, Penhill and Upper Stratton
Locality Affected:	North East, North Central
Parishes Affected:	Stratton St Margaret

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### **1. Purpose and Reasons**

- 1.1 This report is in response to the motion at the meeting of the Full Council on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2014 moved by Councillor Joe Tray and seconded by Councillor Mark Dempsey:

“The Council requests the Lead Member for Highways to bring a report to Cabinet detailing how the Council could complete a road traffic survey on Cricklade Road at the Moonrakers Junction, and following the survey, undertake and complete a preliminary design of a new Moonrakers Junction that would ease the traffic on this main route into and out of the town centre. Council believes this plan should be fully consulted upon and be ready to implement as soon as funding becomes available”.

The Motion was put to the vote and unanimously carried.

### **2. Recommendations**

That Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the summary of the history and key issues around the Moonrakers Junction and Cricklade Road corridor.
- 2.2 Note the work currently under way to update the Swindon Strategic Transport Model (Saturn) and the significant number of major transport infrastructure projects entering the design and feasibility stage in the planning process in the coming months.
- 2.3 Authorise the Head of Highways and Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Sustainability, and Transport to agree an appropriate position for Moonrakers Junction in a prioritised, three-year programme of design and feasibility work for major transport schemes.
- 2.4 Circulate the programme to Members once agreed.

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- 2.5 Advise the Council of the contents of this report in response to the Motion at the Council meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2014.

#### **3. Detail**

- 3.1 The Cricklade Road corridor is congested during peak travel periods, particularly at the Moonrakers junction (a double mini roundabout) and is a busy route throughout the day. This congestion may, at times, increase the traffic diverting onto alternative routes including adjacent residential areas.
- 3.2 Cricklade Road corridor accommodates a variety of journey types competing for the same limited road space. It provides the most direct vehicle access to the area north-east of Swindon Town Centre from the A419 north. It also provides access to the central area from Abbey Meads as well as access to residential and commercial locations in the vicinity. There are a number of busy bus services along the route as well as pedestrian and cycle movements.
- 3.3 At Moonrakers junction there is also east to west movement across the junction between Beechcroft Road and Whitworth Road as well as significant pedestrian crossing movements. All this is within a built up area with residential properties and local community facilities fronting directly on to the traffic corridor. It is therefore important to balance the conflicting needs of these different users and to understand the impact of any change that may improve journeys for one group of users while disadvantaging others and the impact on adjacent residents and businesses.
- 3.4 Over a number of years, various options have been examined for improving this route and the Moonrakers junction in particular. This has included dualling of Cricklade Road (such that the corridor is dualled from Thamesdown Drive to Cirencester Way), and associated works at Moonrakers junction (either a flyover linking Cricklade Road north and south, or signalisation). Other traffic management options for Moonrakers junction including creation of a single roundabout, signalisation and local widening of the carriageway at the junction have been examined.
- 3.5 Feasibility work carried out between 2005 and 2008 using the Saturn traffic model indicated that dualling of the corridor would increase capacity but also draw in significant additional traffic from other routes. The environmental impact of the additional traffic on local communities is likely to be significant. In addition a scheme for dualling and a flyover would require land take/demolition of properties along Cricklade Road and incur substantial costs. Proposals for dualling and a flyover have therefore not been taken forward in view of the costs in relation to the likely benefits and the unacceptable environmental impact.

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- 3.6 A scheme to replace the Moonrakers double mini roundabout junction with a large traffic signal controlled junction was also assessed and would require land from adjacent properties and in front of the shops. This scheme would largely manage existing traffic flows rather than creating additional capacity. It proved difficult to conceive an arrangement that offered significant reductions in peak hour delays compared to the existing layout which actually operates very efficiently.

### Future proposals

- 3.7 Since the work carried out between 2005 and 2008 traffic conditions have changed and further plans for growth have been proposed. Agreement has been reached to update the Swindon Strategic Traffic Model (Saturn) which is used to assess the impact of future growth plans and test potential highway mitigation schemes. Survey work connected to this update is being carried out during September 2014 and this includes extensive survey work in the vicinity of Moonrakers junction.
- 3.8 Once the model update is complete we will be in a better position to predict future traffic flows at Moonrakers and to test potential schemes and their impact on the wider highway network both currently and at future year scenarios.
- 3.9 However, there are a number of other significant highways and transport schemes currently in the planning process and these are likely to take priority over Moonrakers because of the availability of funding. Local Growth Funding has been secured through the Local Enterprise Partnership for schemes relating to the Eastern Villages development (including White Hart and A420), M4 Junction 15, M4 Junction 16, and rapid transit corridors. Work is also underway on designs for Transfer Bridges north and south junctions funded through Section 106 Planning Agreement obligations.
- 3.10 These, together with other schemes (including Moonrakers) will need to be prioritised in to an achievable delivery programme that matches available resources. This work is underway currently and will be agreed in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Members. It is likely that priority will be given to schemes where potential funding has already been identified and where work is required in order to secure final funding approval and also to schemes that unlock regeneration and growth in line with Council priorities.

## **4. Alternative Options**

- 4.1 Moonrakers could be prioritised over other schemes for investigation and scheme design. However, this would be at the expense of other schemes where funding is potentially secured. In addition, previous work has shown that there is

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no easy solution to Moonrakers that delivers significant peak hour benefits relative to financial and environmental costs.

- 4.2 The review could be carried out prior to completion of the Saturn Model update. However this would mean it was carried out without an up to date estimate of future traffic flows at this location.

### **5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management**

#### Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. There would be a cost in undertaking preliminary design of any improvement scheme. This would need to be prioritised using available budgets.

#### Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 Legal and Human Rights considerations have been fully taken into account in compiling this report. It is considered that the recommendations of this report are compatible with Convention rights.

#### All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.3 No other relevant implications have been identified in the preparation of this report.

#### Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.4 A Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) has not been completed for this report. No direct action or change of policy is proposed in this report. Any proposals for action in respect of the issues covered by this report will be subject to further decision making processes.

#### Risk Management

- 5.5 No significant risks have been identified.

### **6. Consultees**

- 6.1 The Board Director, Resources (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

### **7. Background Papers**

- 7.1 None

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**8. Appendices**

8.1 None

**9. Key Decision/Decision in Forward Plan**

9.1 This is a Key Decision and is included in the Cabinet Work Programme/Forward Plan for September 2014.