

Sturry Crossing & Link Road - Position Statement

Kent County Council

Canterbury City Council

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A proposal is included in the Publication Draft Canterbury District Local Plan June 2014 for a new link road, to bypass the constrained railway crossing at Sturry and facilitate wider development objectives – Policies SP3 Site 2 and T14. These policies set out the importance of this link and the way in which contributions would be sought for its delivery.

The A28 at Sturry level crossing is over capacity, based on calculations using the theoretical link capacity of highways, as set out in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB). Using DMRB calculations the theoretical maximum 2 way capacity of the road is 1250 vehicles/ hour although this is calculated without the interruptions of the level crossing.

DMRB minimum road width	6.1m	Actual road width	5.8m
DMRB theoretical maximum capacity	1250 veh/hr	Actual AM peak hour flow	1350 veh/hr

This constraint was stated by Kent County Council (KCC) Highways officers at the last local plan Inquiry in 2004 and the situation has not changed: in fact with background growth it has been exacerbated. At that time, KCC stated that no additional strategic sites should be located to the north of the level crossing because the level crossing was such a significant constraint (the inspector also recommended a reserve allocation at Broad Oak with c. 300 houses and a local transport improvement package).

The proposals for development at Sturry (SP3 Site 2) and to the north of the crossing have been progressed, aware of this constraint and as a means of delivering a solution to this barrier to development. Construction of the Sturry link road will mitigate the development impact on the Sturry level crossing.

It is understood that some enabling development would need to take place to allow this improvement to be delivered. The developers of the Sturry site have indicated that they would require to construct around 650 houses to be able to fund the construction of the bridge and the link road. This equates to 114 additional traffic movements across the Sturry railway crossing, which is in excess of a 5% increase that in our view could be tolerated whilst the link road is being constructed.

However, given the importance of the link road in the context of the emerging Local Plan and its key role in unlocking developments to north of Sturry Crossing, this further increase could be acceptable providing certainty of delivery of the link road and appropriate phasing of the payment of contributions to the highway authority, as the delivering body, have been secured. The link road has an estimated 18 months construction period.

It must be stressed that this level of development will only be acceptable as a package, to run in parallel with the construction of the link road between Sturry Hill and the A28 and with all mechanisms in place to

ensure certainty of its delivery. This quantum of development therefore represents the maximum number of houses that could be built before construction of the Sturry link road is completed.

This would also mean that other developments dependant on the link road would not be permitted to build out until the link road is completed. If the Sturry link road does not proceed then other dependant sites - Herne Bay and Hersden - cannot be commenced due to the issues of capacity addressed at the start of this note.

Since the original framing of the policy and following further discussions with the promoter of the site which includes the link road, a new proposal is being advanced to deliver the road and bridges. It is now proposed that the road and bridges will be delivered as part of this site (SP3 – Site 2) and without the involvement of the other sites mentioned in SP3.

New funding has been approved by the Local Enterprise Partnership towards funding this road (£5.9 million) since it has been recognised as a significant piece of infrastructure, delivering wider priorities around housing and growth.

This change in the proposed funding mechanism also follows further consideration of the potential for realistically pooling development contributions; these limit contributions to 5 development agreements. Having discussed this with the planning and highway authorities, it is the view of the promoter that greater certainty of delivery would be achieved by considering this solely as part of the Sturry site.