

A28 Chart Road, Ashford Improvement Scheme

Q & A's

What are the aims of the project?

To provide additional capacity on the road network to improve traffic flows, improve pedestrian and cyclist routes, minimise environmental impacts on residents of Godinton and maximise opportunities to provide replacement planting.

What changes will be made to the road layout?

The carriageway between Tank roundabout and Matalan roundabout is being dualled with two lanes provided in both directions separated by a central island. The existing Tank and Matalan roundabouts are being enlarged to increase capacity. Loudon Way is being improved with more efficient signals, dedicated right and left turn lanes from Chart Road, and new pedestrian/cyclist controlled crossings of Loudon Way and Chart Road. Continuous footway/cycleway facilities are being provided on both sides of Chart Road.

What are traffic flows now and what is the predicted increase?

The existing traffic flow along Chart Road is in the region of 27,000 vehicles per day. It is difficult to accurately predict future traffic flows in a growth area like Ashford but traffic modelling suggests future flows in 2030 could be 32,000 vehicles per day.

Why traffic signals at Loudon Way?

Other options for the junction of Loudon Way were considered, including a roundabout and a left in/left out junction, but it is considered that traffic signals provide the best layout to achieve a balance between the following aims:

- Maximise traffic flow through the junction
- Allow the controlled flow of vehicles in and out of the Godinton estate
- Provide controlled crossings for pedestrians and cyclists of Chart Road and Loudon Way
- Minimise noise and air quality impacts on residents of Godinton estate
- Minimise impacts on existing bus routes
- Minimise land take
- Minimise impact on existing underground pipes and cables
- Provide opportunities to increase tree planting and landscaping enhancements

How will I access Cobbs Wood Industrial Estate & the Waste Recycling Centre?

Access to the industrial estate can be made from Carlton Road via Tank roundabout and turning left only from Chart Road into Hilton Road or Brunswick Road. Vehicles leaving the estate will only be able to access Chart Road from Carlton Road or by turning left from Brunswick Road. There will be no access from Hilton Road onto Chart Road.

Why can't right turns be allowed into or out of Brunswick Road or Hilton Road?

Right turns on dual carriageways are not desirable. They would need further traffic signals which would cause delays. It is better that vehicles u-turn at the Tank and Matalan roundabouts.

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Will the dual carriageway increase the distance people need to travel to access the Waste Recycling Centre?

Yes, this is unfortunately a consequence of the scheme, as those residents using Chart Road from the south will need to U-turn at Tank roundabout to access Brunswick Road, and those leaving the site wanting to go north on Chart Road will need to U-turn at Matalan roundabout after entering Chart Road from Brunswick Road or alternatively they could exit via Carlton Road onto Tank roundabout. Other forms of junction control were considered for Brunswick Road but there simply is not the space to provide a roundabout or another set of signals as the road is very constrained at this point.

How will pedestrians and cyclists be catered for in the new road layout?

A shared un-segregated pedestrian and cycleway will be provided along both sides of Chart Road and connected onto existing routes. This will mean that a new section of footway/cycleway is being provided on the east side of Chart Road between Brunswick Road and Brookfield Road, a section that is regularly used by pedestrians despite the lack of a footway. New controlled pedestrian/cycle crossing of Loudon Way and Chart Road will be provided at the Loudon Way traffic signals. These will generally be phased so users cross when signals are red to avoid introducing unnecessary delays for traffic. The existing controlled crossing to the south of Tank roundabout is being retained and a new crossing of Chart Road is being provided just north of Matalan roundabout.

Why will it be a shared unsegregated footway/cycleway?

The existing constraints on the route do not allow enough space for the provision of a segregated footway/cycleway. A pedestrian and cyclist count has been carried out and this showed that the usage was within the Sustrans guidelines for this type of route. A shared route was therefore considered the best use of the space available. Experience has shown that where segregated routes have been installed with insufficient space it can lead to the misuse of the marked pedestrian and cycle lanes.

Will the speed limit be changed?

The speed limit will remain as at present – 40mph and reducing to 30mph on the approach to Tank roundabout.

Will the road have street lighting?

Yes, the road will continue to have street lighting and all new lights will use LED lamps to reduce energy demand and maintenance requirements.

How much will the project cost?

The project is estimated to cost £33million.

How will the project be funded?

The project is being funded by a combination of £10million from Central Government's Local Growth Fund and the remainder from developer contributions.

When will the works take place?

Works are programmed to commence in early 2018 with completion in the autumn of 2019.

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Is planning permission required?

No, the road closely follows the existing road and the environmental impacts are not considered significant. The planning authority has indicated that the scheme can proceed as 'Permitted Development'.

Do you need to buy land and how will you do this?

Godinton estate was set-back when it was built because a future upgrade of Chart Road was anticipated. This has limited the amount of land required. It is hoped that land can be acquired by negotiation but a compulsory purchase order will be required to ensure all land can be obtained when we need it.

How will you protect residents from noise?

Although traffic will increase some of that traffic will be moved further away from houses. The scheme will also include a noise fence to mitigate any increases in noise and the design of this will be integrated with the landscape planting.

Will I be entitled to traffic noise insulation?

With the proposed noise protection it is unlikely that any properties would need to be offered secondary glazing.

Will residents be affected by increased air pollution?

Current assessments show that the scheme has a negligible impact on air quality, through a combination of achieving better traffic flow and the fact that in some places traffic is being moved further away from residential properties.

Will the value of my property be affected?

The value of your property should not be affected. An improved road and better traffic flow should be seen as a benefit by prospective purchasers. However, after the road is built, if some residents feel the value of their property has been affected by noise, lighting or fumes then they may be able to make a claim for compensation under the Land Compensation Act Part 1 1973.

Are trees being removed?

Yes, approximately 85 trees are being removed but we are proposing to plant in the region of 135 new trees, an increase of 50 trees. It is regrettable that some existing trees will be removed as part of the scheme but this is unavoidable due to the constraints of the route. However, we have the opportunity to improve the planting and landscaping and are currently working with Ashford Borough Council and a specialist landscape designer to provide additional and better quality trees and planting along the route.

Will protected species be affected by the scheme?

Extensive surveys have been undertaken to determine the effect on protected species, and to date only minor impacts on reptiles and great crested newts have been identified. Mitigation measures will be prepared to manage this. Removal of vegetation will take place outside of the bird nesting season.

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How will the works be carried out?

Sections of the scheme such as the new railway bridge and the road approaches can be built without affecting the existing carriageway. It is then probable that the additional width created can be used to maintain two-way traffic for much of the construction period. More detailed information on construction sequences will be provided in advance of starting on site once a Contractor has been appointed. The Contractor will be required to work with certain restrictions to ensure current traffic lanes are maintained as much as possible.

Will I still be able to access my house or place of work?

Yes, access will be maintained at all times, unless agreed otherwise with individual property owners.

Will there be night work?

Yes, certain critical activities such as the installation of the new bridge for which rail possessions will be required and final surfacing works will require night working.

Will there be road closures?

Yes, it is likely that road closures will be required for certain activities, such as the bridge installation which will require a crane to lift the new bridge beams into position but closures will be generally restricted to overnight or during weekend periods.

Will bus services be affected?

It is likely that services will be affected at some stage during the works but we will work closely with the Contractor and bus operators to ensure this is kept to a minimum.

How can I find out more information or make comments about the scheme?

A dedicated website has been set up for the project, this is www.kent.gov.uk/chartroad and will provide the latest information on the project. If you would like to make any comments, these can be made via the project email address, chartroadmajorproject@kent.gov.uk.

Newsletters will also be distributed to local residents and businesses to provide updates on the project at key stages as the design progresses and during construction on site. These will also be made available on the website.

What happens after the public engagement?

After the public engagement we will consider all of the comments and views expressed and this may lead to scheme amendments. By Spring 2016 we expect to be in a position where we can recommend to Ashford and County Council elected Members the final scheme to take forward.