

Keep Maidstone Moving

Public Consultation

Have your say!

We are consulting on six highway improvement schemes, which aim to reduce congestion, travel times and pollution across Maidstone. Find out about our proposals and tell us your views.

Consultation open from
Wednesday 29 January to Wednesday 11 March 2020
kent.gov.uk/keepmaidstonemoving



Contents

Introduction	1
Background	3
A20 Coldharbour Roundabout	5
A229 Loose Road Corridor	9
A20 Ashford Road junction with Willington Street	23
A274 Sutton Road junction with Willington Street	27
Timescales	32
Frequently Asked Questions	33
Have Your Say	34

Introduction

The Maidstone Integrated Transport Package is a package of schemes intended to reduce traffic congestion in the Maidstone area. The schemes listed below are those which have reached a stage where they could potentially be delivered within the next few years. We are taking this opportunity to tell you about our proposals and to hear your views before the designs are finalised.

We will be consulting on these schemes from Wednesday 29 January to Wednesday 11 March 2020. We hope you will complete the consultation questionnaire on any (or all) of the schemes so that we can take your views onboard. This will help us make improvements where possible to ensure the schemes are the best they can be.

For more information on how you can have your say please see page 33.

- a. **A20 Coldharbour Roundabout**
- b. **A229 Loose Corridor:**
 - i. **Armstrong Road junction with Park Way (including Sheal's Crescent)**
 - ii. **The Wheatsheaf**
 - iii. **Cripple Street junction with Boughton Lane**
- c. **A20 Ashford Road junction with Willington Street**
- d. **A274 Sutton Road junction with Willington Street**



Background

Kent County Council (KCC), as a Highway Authority, has a responsibility for transport planning to ensure the appropriate road networks are in place to support growing communities. Giving them the opportunity to thrive in high quality environments, which provide a wide range of sustainable transport alternatives to the car.

KCC's [Local Transport Plan 4: Delivering Growth without Gridlock \(2016-2031\)](#) sets out how we will work towards our transport vision over the coming years. One of the plan's key aspirations is:

'To deliver safe and effective transport, ensuring that all Kent's communities and businesses benefit, the environment is enhanced, and economic growth is supported.'

The schemes presented in this consultation aim to deliver new and upgraded transport infrastructure, which is required to support planned growth in Maidstone up to 2031 and beyond.

In December 2016, KCC completed the Bridges Gyratory Improvement scheme, which saw the construction of two additional northbound lanes on the eastern side of the River Medway, with new junctions controlled by traffic signals and improved pedestrian facilities. This has helped reduce journey distances and travel times for northbound traffic on the A229 and supported the regeneration of the western riverside.

However, as traffic continues to grow on other parts of the road network and delays are expected to increase for road users, KCC is promoting further improvements.

Maidstone is the point where several main roads (A20, A26, A229 and A249) meet and provide onward links to four nearby



Aerial view of the completed Maidstone Bridges Gyratory Scheme

junctions with the M20. Pressure is most evident on the congested A229 and A274 corridors in south and east Maidstone and on the A20 corridor in north west Maidstone. The constrained nature of the town centre also contributes to congestion during peak periods.

Maidstone's wider urban area is designated as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). KCC is required, in partnership with Maidstone Borough Council, to act and introduce measures to improve the air quality within the management area.

The proposed schemes intend to improve the road network, helping to reduce congestion, provide additional capacity, improve air quality and deliver wider benefits to local businesses and communities.

As the planning authorities both [Maidstone](#) and [Tonbridge and Malling](#) have identified these schemes as part of their Local Plans, which provide frameworks for development until 2031. They plan for homes, jobs, shopping, leisure and the environment, and the infrastructure required to support these.

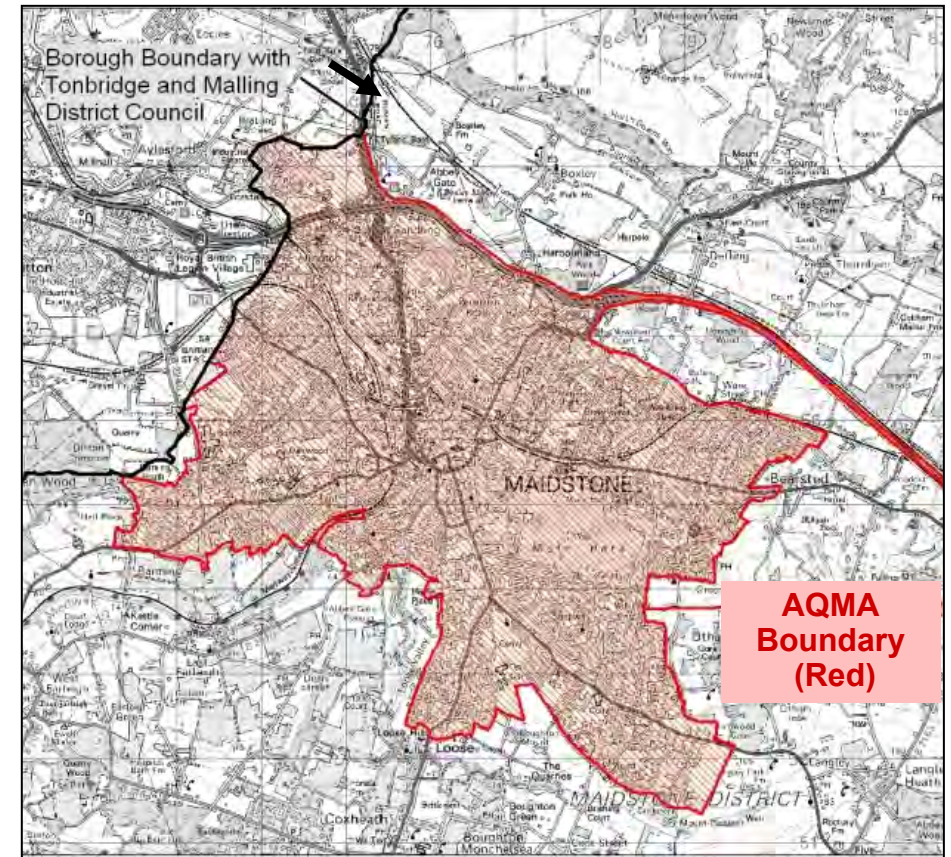
How will these schemes be funded?

The Maidstone Integrated Transport Package (MITP) provides the funding for all the proposed schemes except the A274 Sutton Road junction with Willington Street scheme.

The MITP is expected to cost £13.9 million. £8.9 million of funding has been secured from the government through the Local Growth Fund. The remainder will be funded through private sector Section 106 contributions from nearby housing developments to help mitigate their impact on the highway.

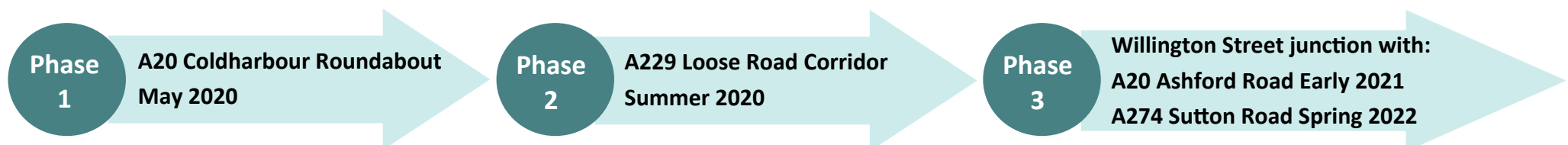
The A274 Sutton Road scheme (which will be funded separately), is expected to cost £2.5 million. Section 106 contributions of £1.8 million have been secured from surrounding developments. However, it is anticipated that there will be a funding shortfall due to the extensive work required to divert utilities including water, gas and electricity mains and fibre broadband cables.

KCC will be working closely with Maidstone Borough Council to identify suitable funding sources to address the gap. Therefore, we will deliver this scheme in the final phase of the works programme.



**Maidstone Town Centre Air Quality Management Area
(Maidstone Borough Council, 2018)**

In order to minimise any disruption likely to be caused by the construction of these schemes, a phased delivery approach will be undertaken. The phasing will be as follows:



A20 Coldharbour Roundabout



Looking south towards the junction

Introduction

Coldharbour Roundabout is the meeting point of the A20 and a link road to the M20 junction 5. Considerable growth is planned for this area, including the recently approved 'Whitepost fields' planning application to the south. This will increase the congestion already experienced by road users travelling between Maidstone and Malling (Ditton) and the M20, particularly during the morning and evening peaks.

Improvements are also needed to support the Smart Motorway works being carried out by Highways England between junctions 3 and 6 on the M20.

The key objectives for this scheme are to:

- Improve the efficiency of the roundabout thereby relieving congestion.
- Improve journey times and the reliability of journey times for those travelling through the roundabout.

In addition, the scheme may:

- Help to improve air quality in the local area.
- Improve access to the 20-20 Business Park and South Aylesford Retail Park.
- Increase capacity on the road network to accommodate further development.

What options did we consider before deciding on the preferred scheme?

Due to the proximity to the M20 and the high proportion of users heading to/from the motorway the options are limited. An earlier scheme that had a dedicated lane to the M20 running west to north was rejected because the improvements would only be short term.

We also considered alternative solutions to improve the operation of the Coldharbour Roundabout, such as, converting the roundabout to a signalised T-junction or implementing an enlarged signalised roundabout.

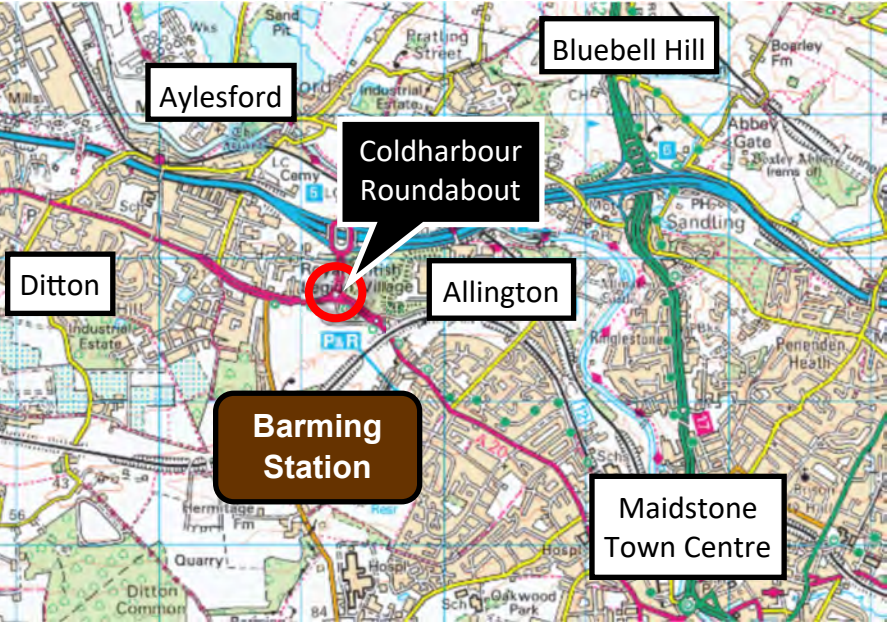
These options were rejected as they provided less capacity than our preferred scheme and there was a preference to remove/avoid signals if possible as this gives the best capacity benefits.

However, due to concerns that removing traffic signals could impact on queuing traffic, the design, whilst not incorporating traffic signals does allow for them to be fitted if required.

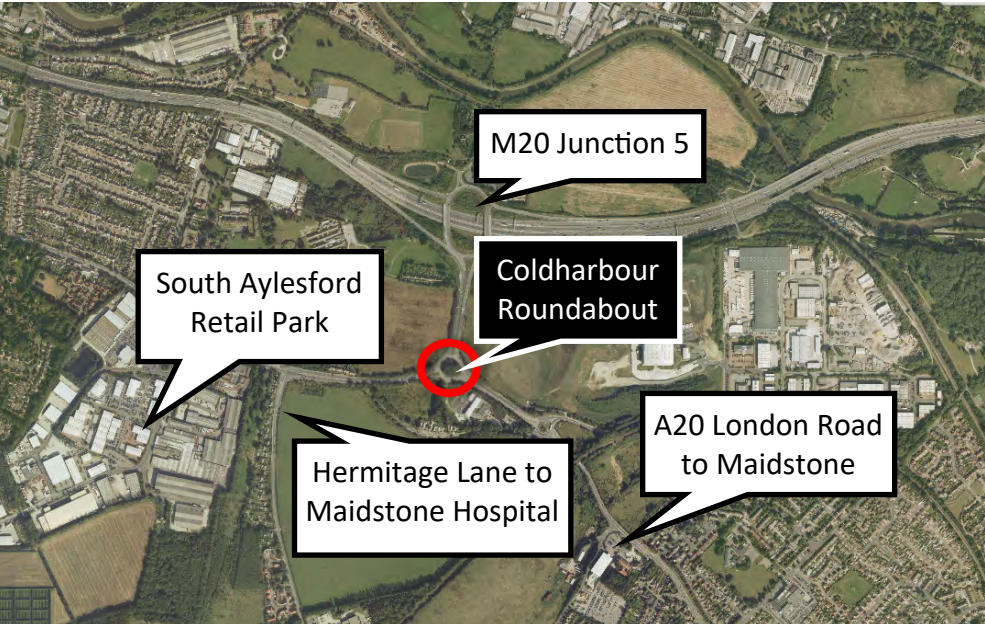
This preferred scheme is expected to improve capacity of the Coldharbour Roundabout by 60% in the morning peak period and 40% in the evening peak period.



Current congestion at Coldharbour Roundabout



Map of Coldharbour Roundabout



Aerial view of Coldharbour Roundabout

The Proposals - A20 Coldharbour Roundabout

The Road

- Travelling east towards the roundabout on the A20 London Road from Aylesford, the inside lane would remain for turning left for the M20. The outside lane would divide with the now middle lane also marked for M20. The new outside lane would be marked for A20 Maidstone.
- Travelling south from Coldharbour Lane, the current two lanes would be widened to three from the roundabout at junction 5 of the M20. The inside two lanes would be marked for A20 Maidstone. The outside lane would divide with both marked for A20 Aylesford.
- Travelling west towards the roundabout from A20 London Road, the inside lane would remain for continuing on the A20 Aylesford. The outside lane would divide with the now middle lane marked as either M20 or A20. The new outside lane would be marked for M20.

New Road Access

- A new access is being provided from the northbound carriageway of Coldharbour Lane as part of the agreed land transfers required for the delivery of the scheme.

A20 London Road

To Aylesford

New Road Access

To M20 Junction 5

Coldharbour Lane

The Footway

- Would remain unchanged with the exception of the break for the crossing of the new access for land to the west of Coldharbour Lane.
- The existing pedestrian crossing at Coldharbour Lane would not be signalled but would be reviewed if there is further development in the area.

Buses

- The bus stops currently located on the A20 would remain unchanged by the scheme.

Cycling

- The cycleway which currently runs on the south side of the A20 through the scheme would remain unchanged. An assessment was undertaken and was determined to be sufficient for the current and future usage.



Key



Road



Verge



Footway

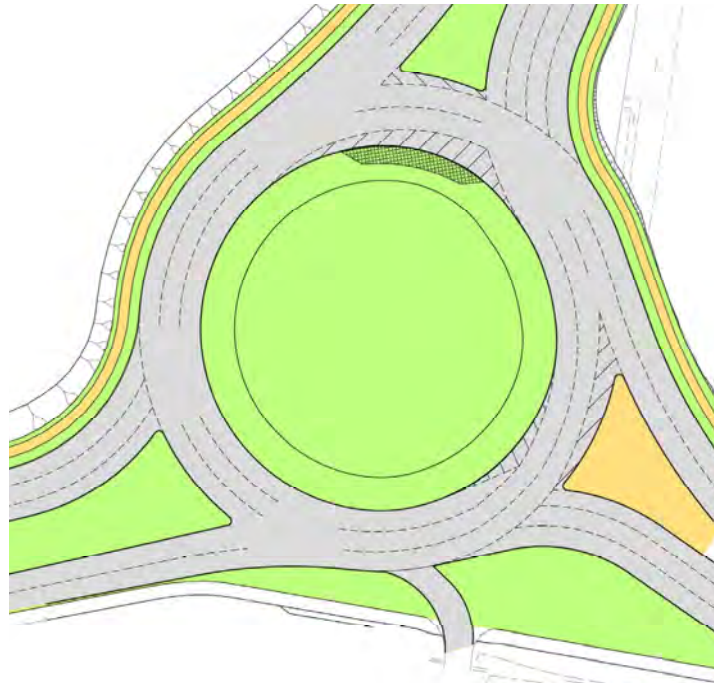


The Roundabout

- Would be enlarged to allow three lanes to go round the roundabout.
- Hatched lane markings would be used to reduce this to two lanes where appropriate for vehicle movements.
- The traffic signals are to be completely removed with give way lines to indicate entry to the roundabout and the required sightlines maintained.

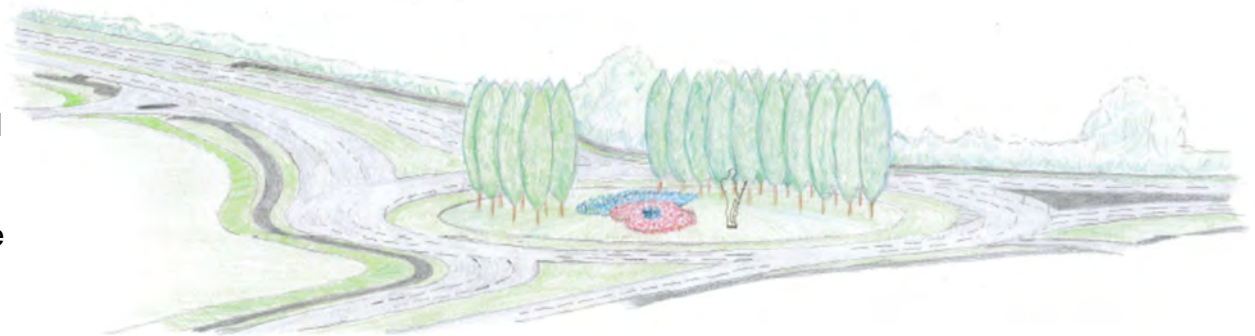
Traffic Signals

- A well designed roundabout with good visibility and reasonably balanced flows, would have more capacity for traffic than a signalised junction using the same amount of highway space. Therefore a normal give way roundabout would have greater capacity than if it were signalised.
- By enlarging the roundabout it would provide bigger gaps on each of the entries as natural gaps occur on a roundabout as vehicles accelerate at different speeds.

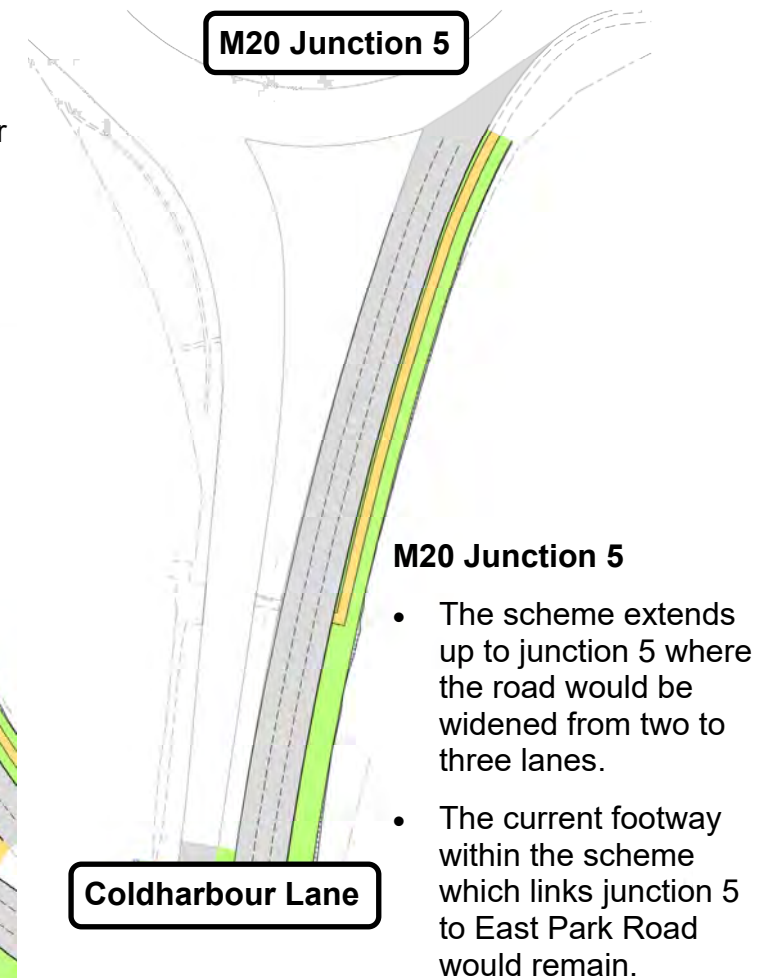


Environment

- A recent survey showed that the trees on the roundabout are not in good condition therefore they will be removed . We are working with local Councillors on landscaping proposals, which would have a memorial feature for World War One. The colours of the Royal British Legion are to be reflected in the planting, which would complement the sculpture of a 'Tommie' at the centre.



Sketch of the landscaping on the new roundabout



M20 Junction 5

- The scheme extends up to junction 5 where the road would be widened from two to three lanes.
- The current footway within the scheme which links junction 5 to East Park Road would remain.

A229 Loose Road Corridor



Looking south on the A229 at the
Park Way junction

Introduction

The A229 Loose Road Corridor scheme proposes improvements to three key junctions:

- i. Armstrong Road junction with Park Way (including Sheal's Crescent)
- ii. The Wheatsheaf
- iii. Cripple Street junction with Boughton Lane

These junctions are located to the south of Maidstone town centre. It is at the Wheatsheaf junction that the A229 converges with another major route, the A274, to head north into the town centre.

The A229/A274 corridor has been identified as a transport priority for Maidstone in KCC's Local Transport Plan 4. Maidstone's Local Plan also identified the need for improvements to the Wheatsheaf junction, Boughton Lane and its junction and the Loose Road.

The traffic problems were recognised in the examination of the Local Plan, with the Inspector recommending further investigation of potential transport improvements.

Largely as a result of the traffic congestion issues in the town, the entire urban area of Maidstone is covered by an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). The AQMA was declared in 2008 following a review of air quality in the town, which identified that

the Loose Road and Sutton Road (Wheatsheaf) junction specifically had high levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) and particulates.

The key objectives for this scheme are to:

- Reduce travel time along A229 corridor.
- Improve the reliability of journey times.
- Stop the deterioration in air quality.

In addition, the scheme is anticipated to deliver the following benefits:

- Enable planned housing and employment growth.
- Reduced use of unsuitable routes as rat-runs (cut throughs).
- Improve air quality.

What options did we consider before deciding on the preferred scheme?

Several alternatives have been considered for the Wheatsheaf junction, including a roundabout and a signalised junction with an additional lane for vehicles travelling north bound on the A229 Loose Road. Both would have required KCC to purchase private land.

The existing junction layouts and proposed improvements for all three junctions have been assessed using standard junction modelling software. The difference in junction delay between the 'do nothing' and 'do something' has been used to determine the potential benefits, as travel time saving, for each junction improvement. This equates to a 40% improvement in the morning peak period and a 43% improvement in the evening peak period.



Aerial view of the Loose Road Corridor

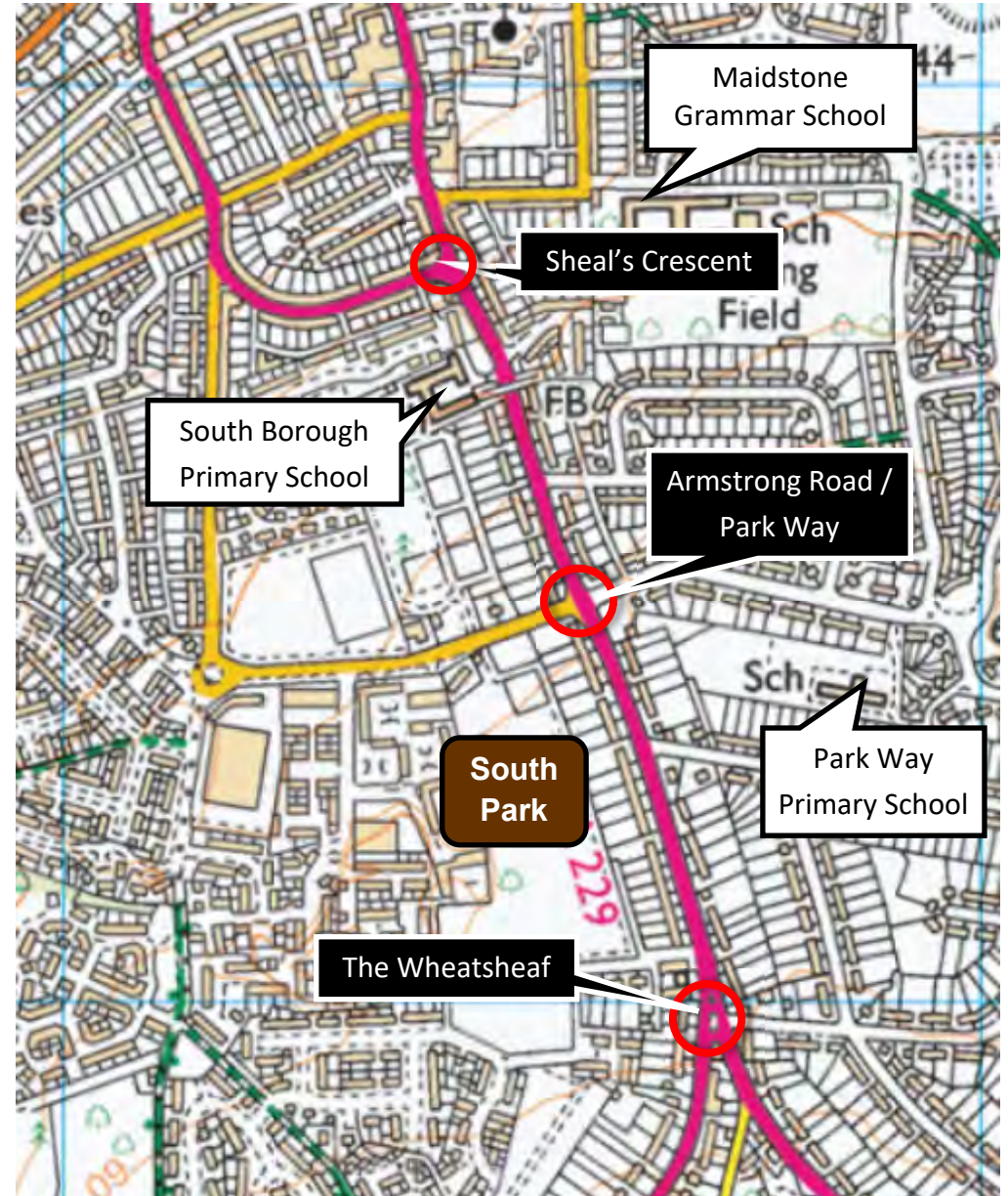
Armstrong Road junction with Park Way (including Sheal's Crescent)



Photo looking south on Loose Road at Sheal's Crescent



Photo looking north on Loose Road at Park Way



Map of Loose Road at Armstrong Road and Park Way

The Proposals - Sheal's Crescent

The Road

- Travelling south on the A229, the inside lane would remain dedicated for traffic continuing up towards the Armstrong Road / Park Way junction. The outside lane would also remain for traffic continuing towards the Armstrong Road / Park Way junction with a filter lane splitting off to enter Sheal's Crescent. This filter lane would no longer have give way lines. Instead traffic would flow freely to become the outside lane of Sheal's Crescent.

The Footway and Cycleway

- There are no intended changes to the footway.
- We will need to explore whether there is sufficient space to widen the footway to create a shared provision with cyclists or to create a separate cycleway.

- Travelling north on the A229, from the junction with Armstrong Road / Park Way the lane would no longer widen into two, instead remaining as one lane with hatching all the way round to become the inside lane of Sheal's Crescent.

Buses

- There would be no changes to the bus stops between Sheal's Crescent and the Armstrong Road junction with Park Way.

A229 Loose Road

A229 Sheal's Crescent

To Maidstone
Town Centre

To Shepway
and Loose

Beech Hurst Close

Key



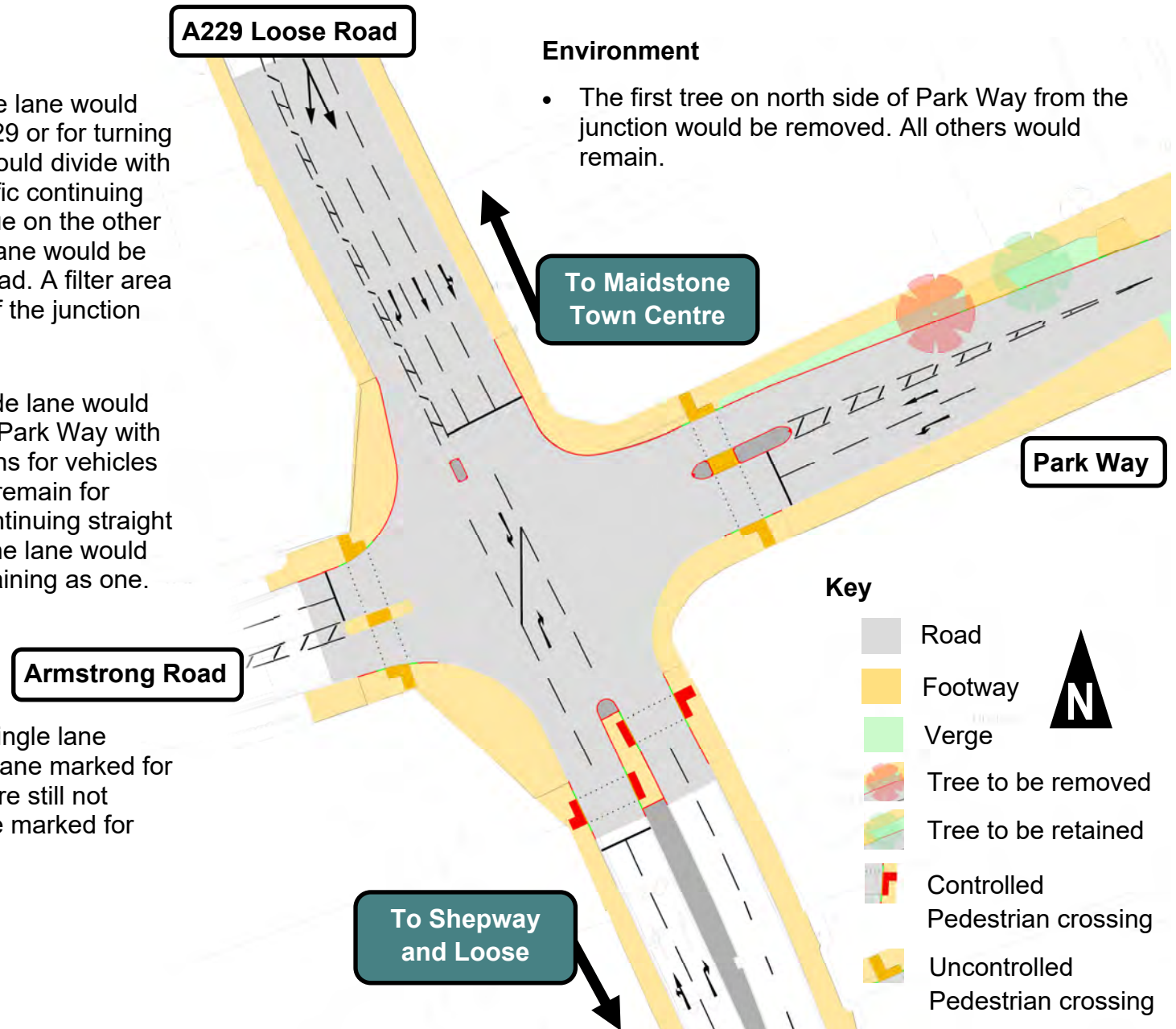
The Proposals - Armstrong Road junction with Park Way

The Road

- Travelling south on the A229 the inside lane would remain for traffic continuing on the A229 or for turning left into Park Way. The outside lane would divide with the now middle lane remaining for traffic continuing on the A229. Both lanes would continue on the other side of the junction. The new outside lane would be just for turning right into Armstrong Road. A filter area would remain available in the centre of the junction for cars waiting to turn.
- Travelling north on the A229 the outside lane would remain dedicated for turning right into Park Way with a filter area in the centre of the junctions for vehicles waiting to turn. The inside lane would remain for turning left into Armstrong Road or continuing straight into town. Once through the junction the lane would no longer widen into two, instead remaining as one.
- Travelling from Armstrong Road there would be no change.
- Traveling from Park Way the current single lane would divide into two with the outside lane marked for straight on and the right turn manoeuvre still not allowed. The new inside lane would be marked for turning left on to the A229.

Environment

- The first tree on north side of Park Way from the junction would be removed. All others would remain.

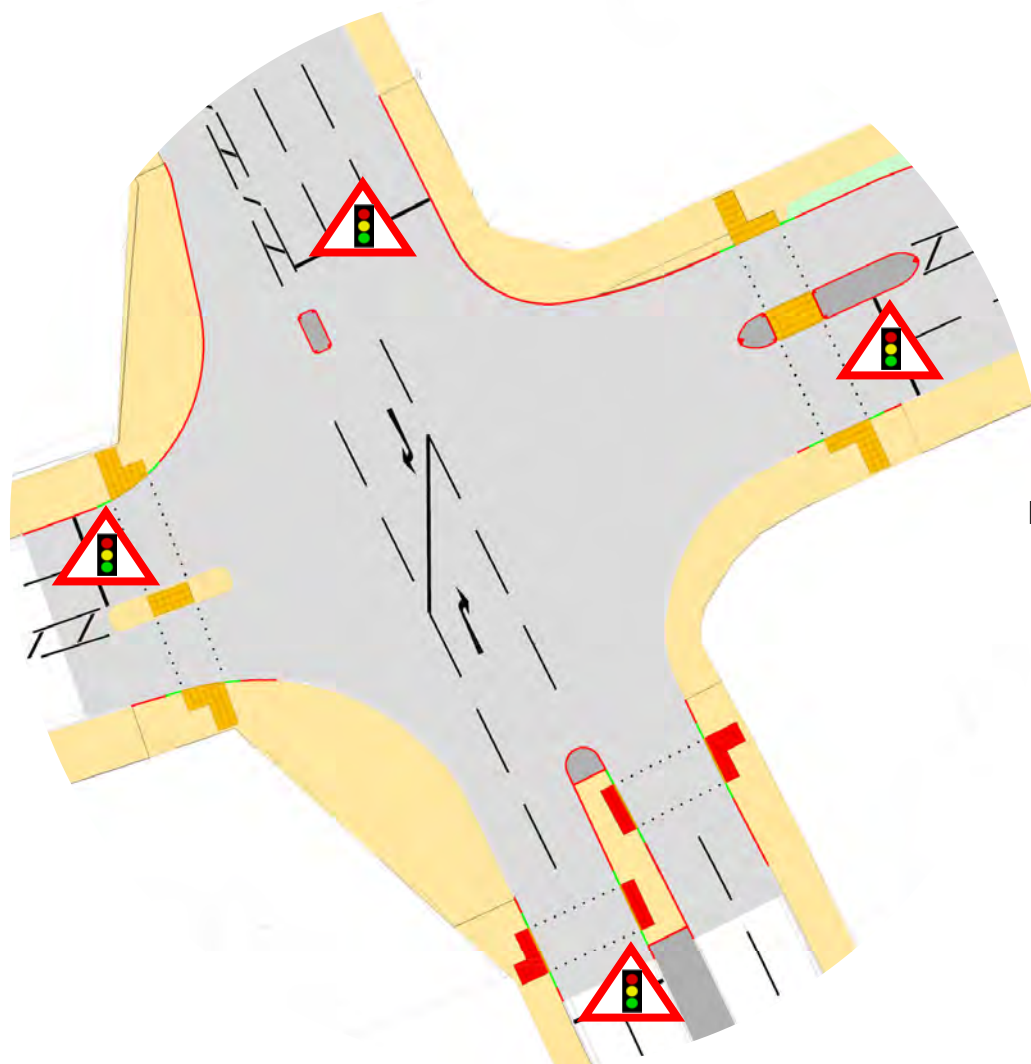


The Footway

- There would be widening in places in line with proposed new kerb lines. However, there is insufficient room to widen the footways throughout the scheme.

Cycling

- There are no plans to add any specific cycling provisions.



Traffic Signals

- The traffic signals would remain much as at present with the exception that the request pedestrian crossing on the north side of the junction would be removed and the traffic signals to the south of the scheme would be upgraded to provide this facility instead.
- Pedestrians would be routed south rather than north of the junction with pedestrian guardrails added to both northern corners to discourage people from still crossing the road at this location.
- Pedestrians would still be able to cross at the other three points with the Armstrong Road and Park Way crossings remaining the same type as at present - uncontrolled pedestrian crossings with a pedestrian island in the middle.
- The pedestrian crossing on the south side of the A229 Loose Road would be upgraded to a signalised request crossing. The pedestrian island is only one metre wide as there is no capacity to widen. However, there would be the potential to remove the guardrails and use flat islands with raised kerbs to gain space.

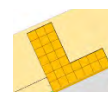
Key



Traffic Signal
Stop Line



Controlled
Pedestrian crossing



Uncontrolled
Pedestrian crossing



Pedestrian Guardrail



Pedestrian Crossings

Uncontrolled have features such as dropped kerbs and tactile paving and may even be adjacent to traffic signals but rely on pedestrians to determine when it is safe to cross.

Controlled, such as a Pelican crossing, are where pedestrians can push a button and wait for the green signal (usually a figure) to illuminate indicating that vehicles are being shown a red light.

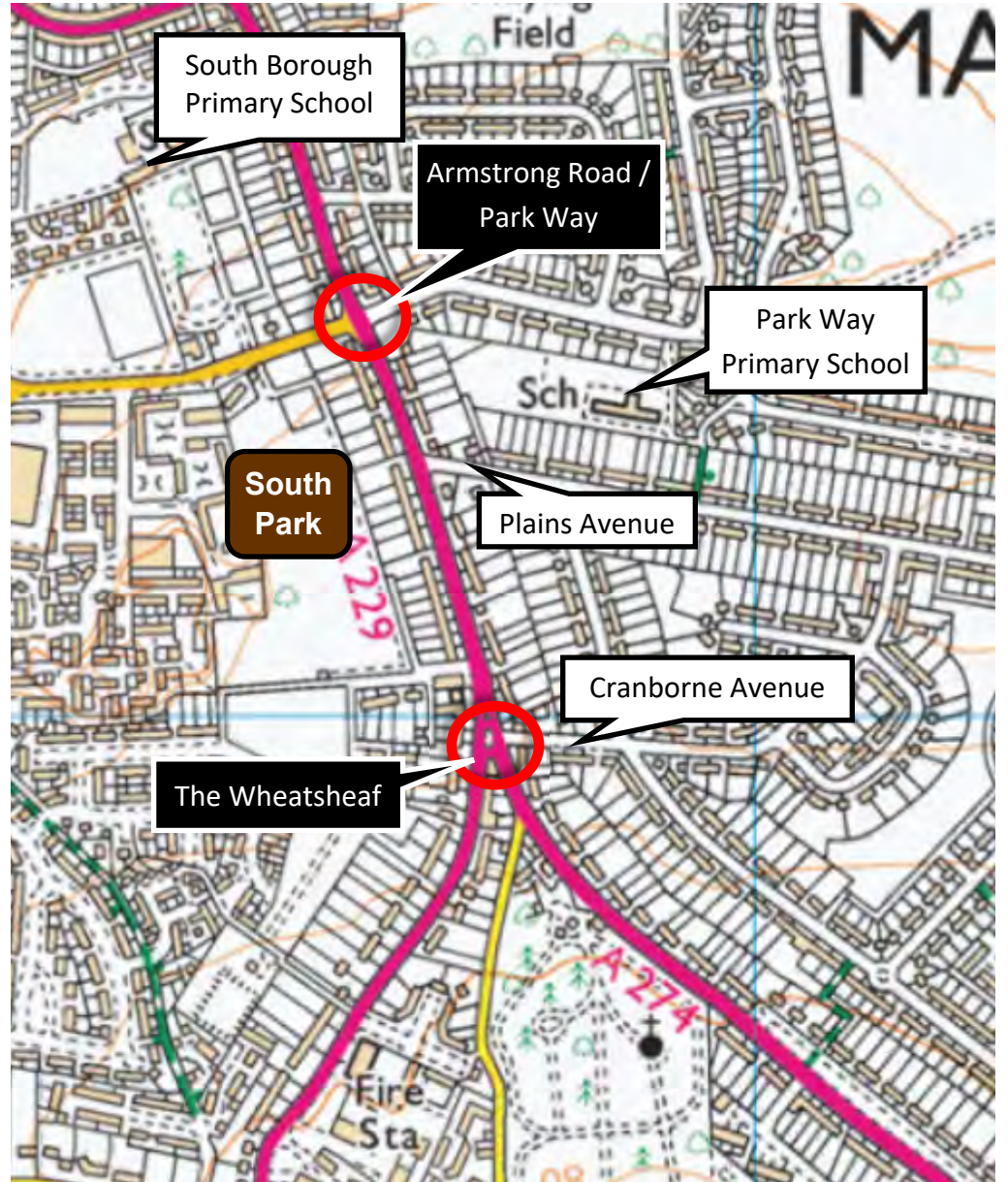
The Wheatsheaf Junction



Photo looking south on the A229 towards the Wheatsheaf Pub



Photo looking south towards the A274 Sutton Road



Map of The Wheatsheaf Junction

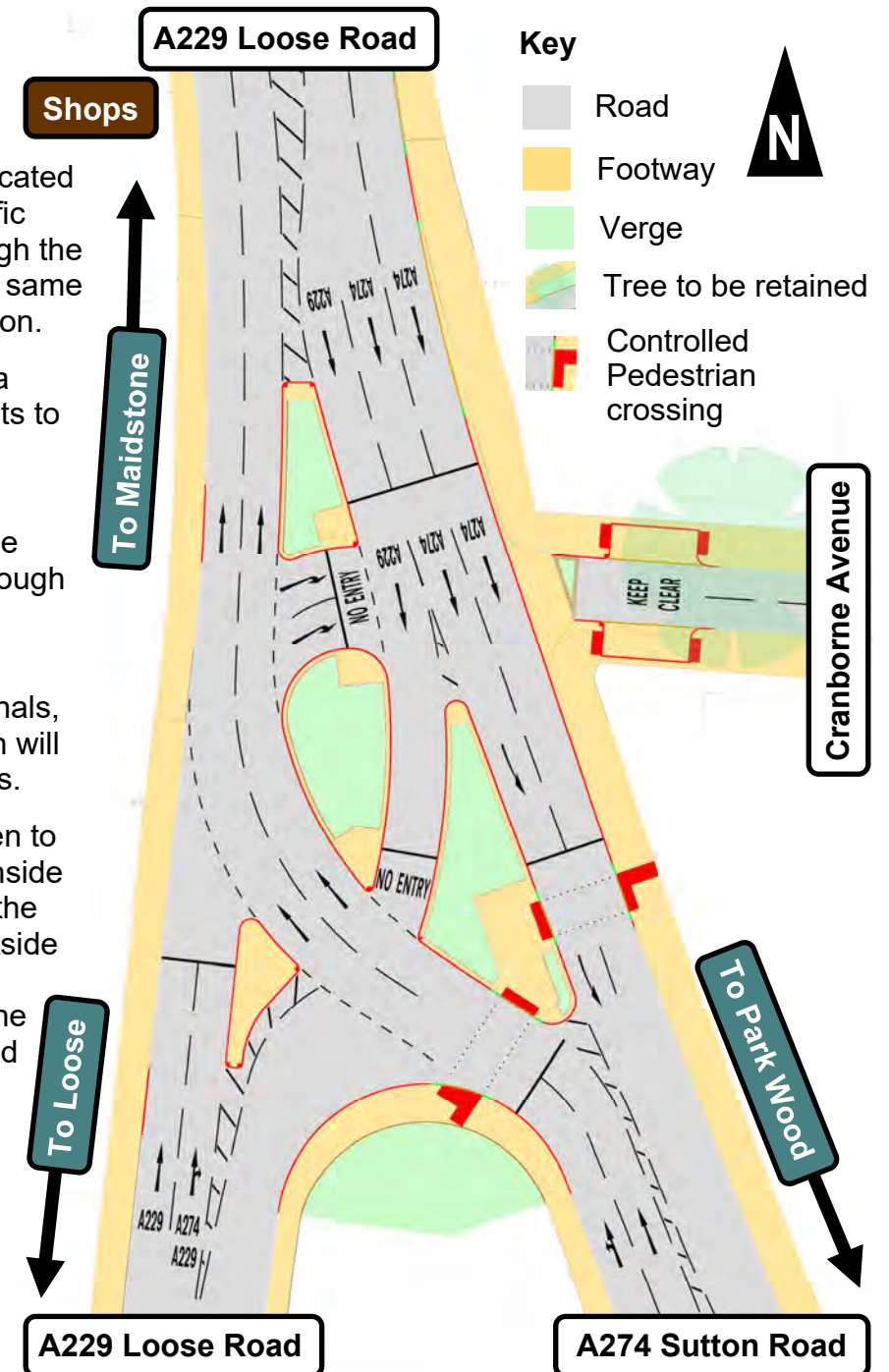
The Proposals - The Wheatsheaf Junction

The Road

- Travelling south to the A274 Sutton Road, the inside lane would remain a dedicated lane and marked for the A274. The outside lane would split just before the traffic lights with the now middle lane marked for straight on to the A274. Once through the traffic lights there would be a pedestrian request crossing in approximately the same location as currently. The two lanes would reduce to one just passed the junction.
- Travelling south to the A229 Loose Road, the now outside lane would remain a dedicated lane marked for the A229. The lane joins the junction with traffic lights to cross the traffic travelling northbound from the A274.
- Travelling north from the A274 Sutton Road, the inside lane would remain for straight on to the A229 north or for turning left onto the A229 south. The outside lane would remain a dedicated lane for straight on to the A229 north. Once through the traffic lights there would be a new request pedestrian crossing north of the junction.
- Plains Avenue is being assessed for traffic signals that will be linked to the signals, at the Wheatsheaf junction and Armstrong Road junction with Park Way, which will mean they can work more efficiently. This would make it safer for all road users.
- Travelling north from the A229 Loose Road, the current single lane would widen to two lanes but would stop at traffic lights further back than they currently. The inside lane would remain a dedicated lane for straight on to the A229. Once through the traffic lights it would join the A229 before the new pedestrian crossing. The outside lane would be marked for either continuing with the inside lane on the A229 or joining the junction. It would divide into two lanes before traffic lights to cross the traffic travelling southbound on the A229. Once through the traffic lights it would join the A274 just before the pedestrian crossing.

Buses

- The bus stop on the A274 Sutton Road just south of Cranborne Avenue would need to be re-sited further south and we would aim to keep this in the area before it narrows back to one lane. Liaison with the bus company would be undertaken as part of the detailed design process.



Traffic Signals and the Footway

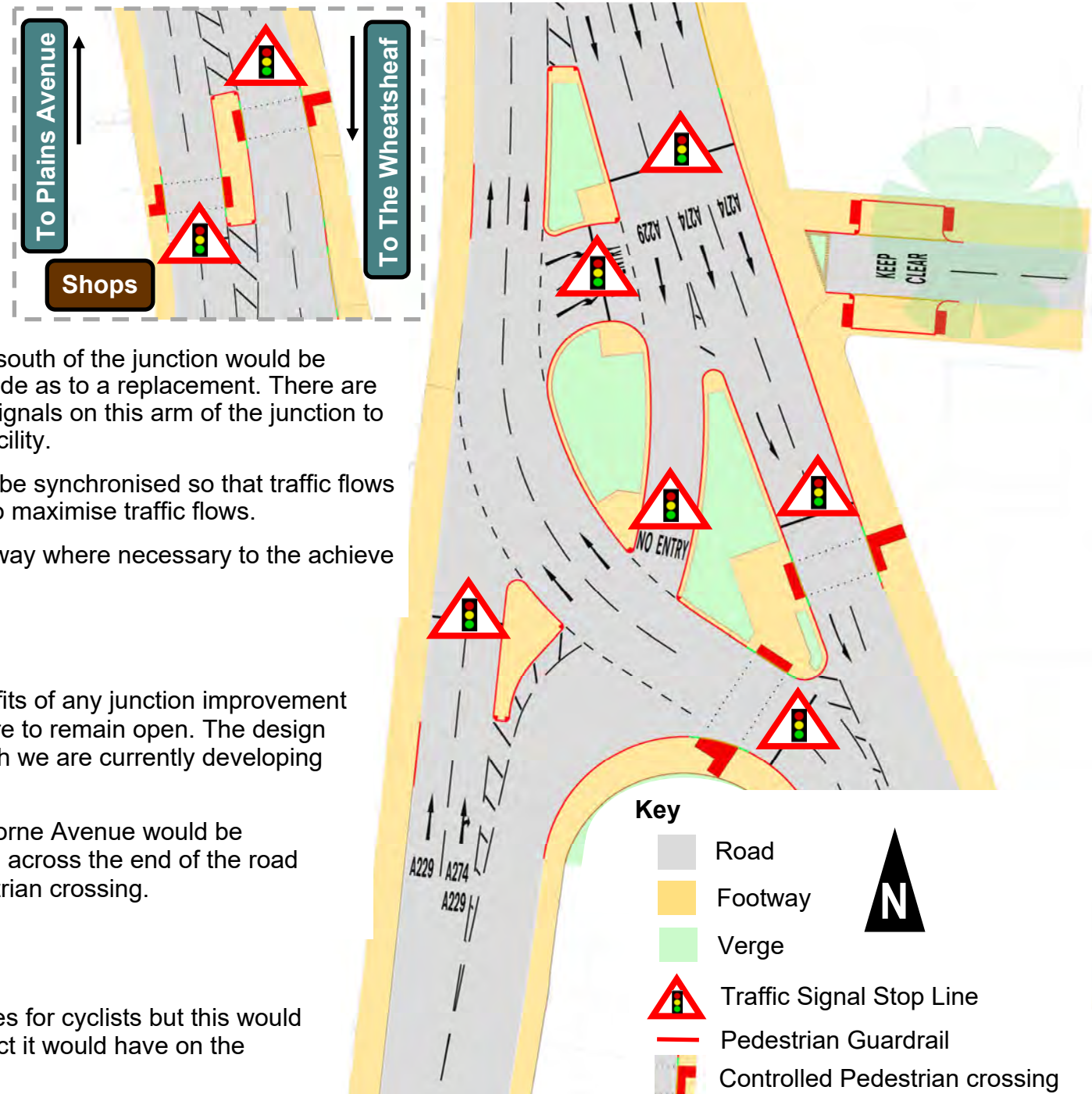
- The current traffic signals on the A229 north of the junction would have the pedestrian crossing facility removed with a new signalised pedestrian crossing created on the A229 further north outside the parade of shops.
- The current signalised pedestrian crossing on the A274 Sutton Road would be slightly repositioned.
- The pedestrian refuge island on the A229 south of the junction would be removed and no decision has yet been made as to a replacement. There are no plans however to upgrade the current signals on this arm of the junction to include a controlled pedestrian crossing facility.
- The new signals within the junction would be synchronised so that traffic flows freely and all the signals would be timed to maximise traffic flows.
- There would be some widening to the footway where necessary to achieve the desired alignments.

Closure of Cranborne Avenue

- Traffic modelling has shown that the benefits of any junction improvement at this location are greatly reduced if it were to remain open. The design creates a child friendly cul-de-sac for which we are currently developing additional landscaping plans.
- The current pedestrian crossing on Cranborne Avenue would be removed, with the footway being extended across the end of the road removing the need for a formalised pedestrian crossing.

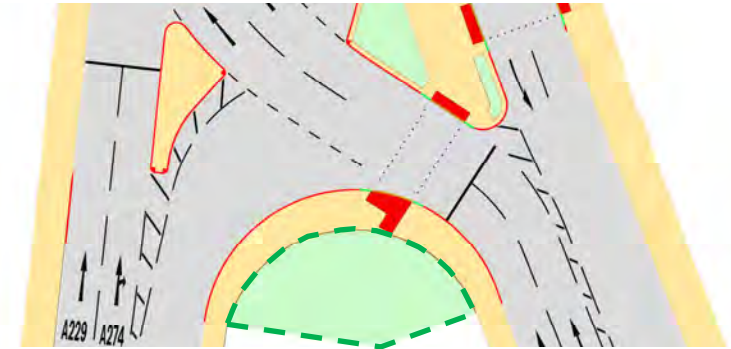
Cycling

- There is the possibility of advance stop lines for cyclists but this would require further investigation as to the impact it would have on the proposed junction.



Environment

- The Wheatsheaf Public House would be demolished to create the space required for the improvements. This would leave an area of land to the south, not required for the road, which would be landscaped and include a sculpture of a 'Sheaf of Wheat' in reference to the pub which stood there, with the expectation that the junction would continue to be known as The Wheatsheaf.
- The planting strategy aims to create a colourful palette with year-round interest of grasses and natural planting to aid in the reduction of air quality in the area.
- We have a couple of landscaping options for the area illustrated below:



Potential landscaping area to the south



Option 1

- Indicative public art inspired by Wheatsheaf Public House forms the centre of the square.
- Planting design focuses on strong vibrant colours as a foreground to the public art element.
- Multi-stem trees create an enclosure as a buffer from surrounding traffic.
- 2 metre wide pedestrian path.



Option 2

- Indicative public art inspired by Wheatsheaf Public House sits at the top of the site.
- Planting design focuses on strong vibrant colours as a foreground to the public art element.
- Clear stem trees create clear views across planting to the wider area.
- 2 metre wide pedestrian path.

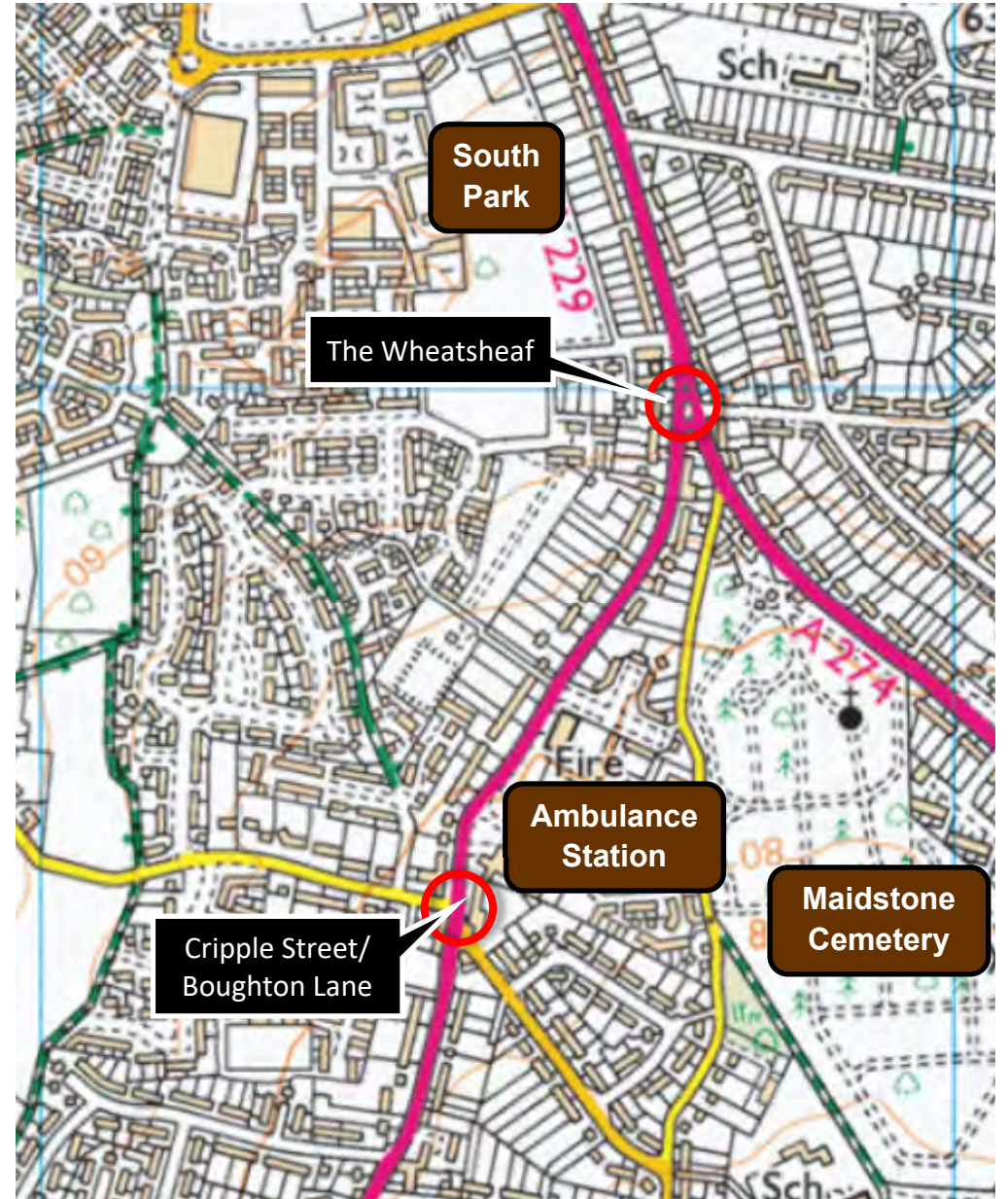
Cripple Street junction with Boughton Lane



Looking south east from Cripple Street towards Boughton Lane



Aerial view of Cripple Street / Boughton Lane



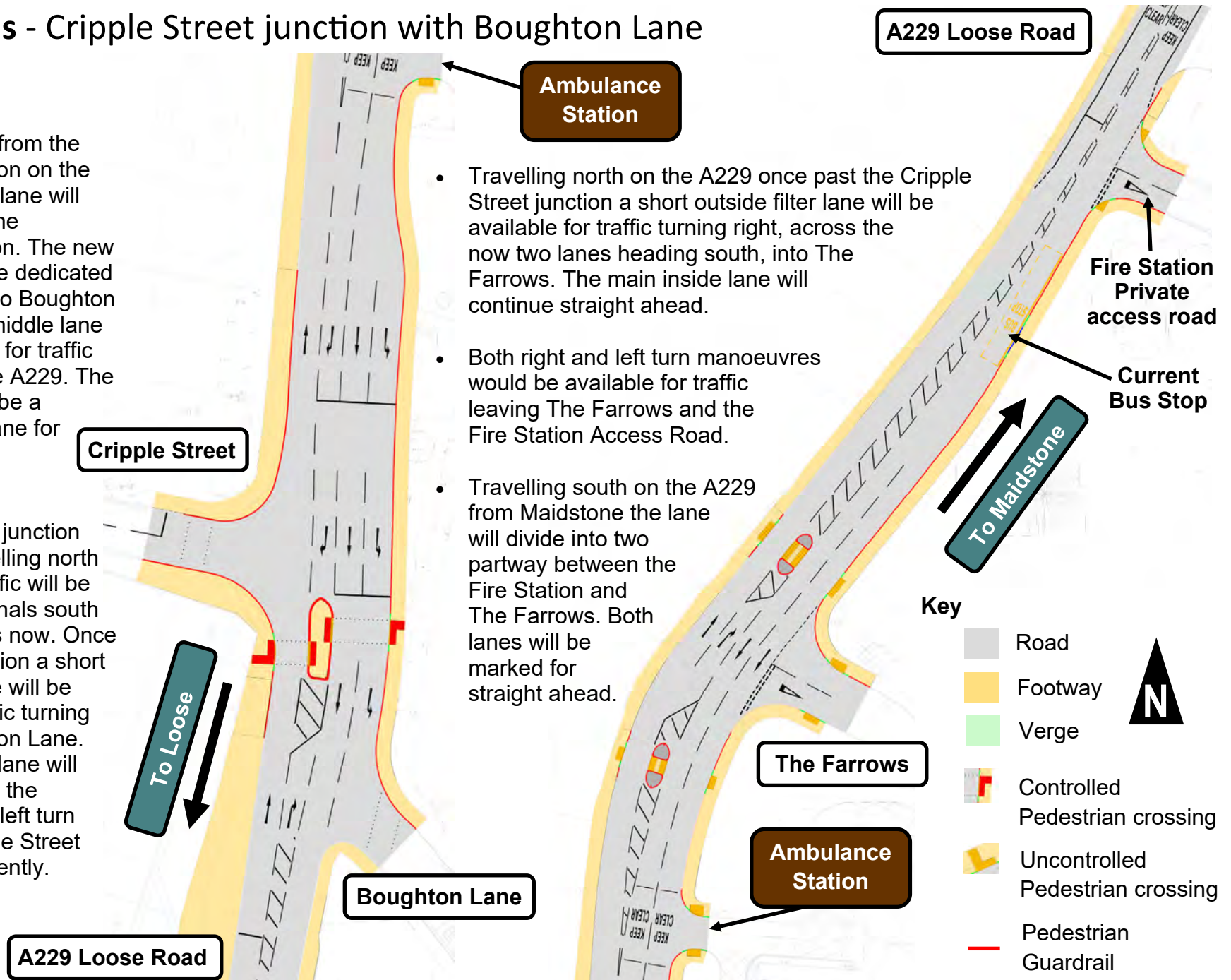
Map of Loose Road at Cripple Street and Boughton Lane

The Proposals - Cripple Street junction with Boughton Lane

The Road

- Travelling south from the Ambulance Station on the A229, the inside lane will divide just past the ambulance station. The new inside lane will be dedicated for turning left into Boughton Lane. The now middle lane will be dedicated for traffic continuing on the A229. The outside lane will be a dedicated filter lane for turning right into Cripple Street.
- Approaching the junction from Loose travelling north on the A229, traffic will be held at traffic signals south of the junction as now. Once through the junction a short outside filter lane will be available for traffic turning right into Boughton Lane. The main inside lane will continue through the junction with the left turn option into Cripple Street available as currently.

- Travelling north on the A229 once past the Cripple Street junction a short outside filter lane will be available for traffic turning right, across the now two lanes heading south, into The Farrows. The main inside lane will continue straight ahead.
- Both right and left turn manoeuvres would be available for traffic leaving The Farrows and the Fire Station Access Road.
- Travelling south on the A229 from Maidstone the lane will divide into two partway between the Fire Station and The Farrows. Both lanes will be marked for straight ahead.

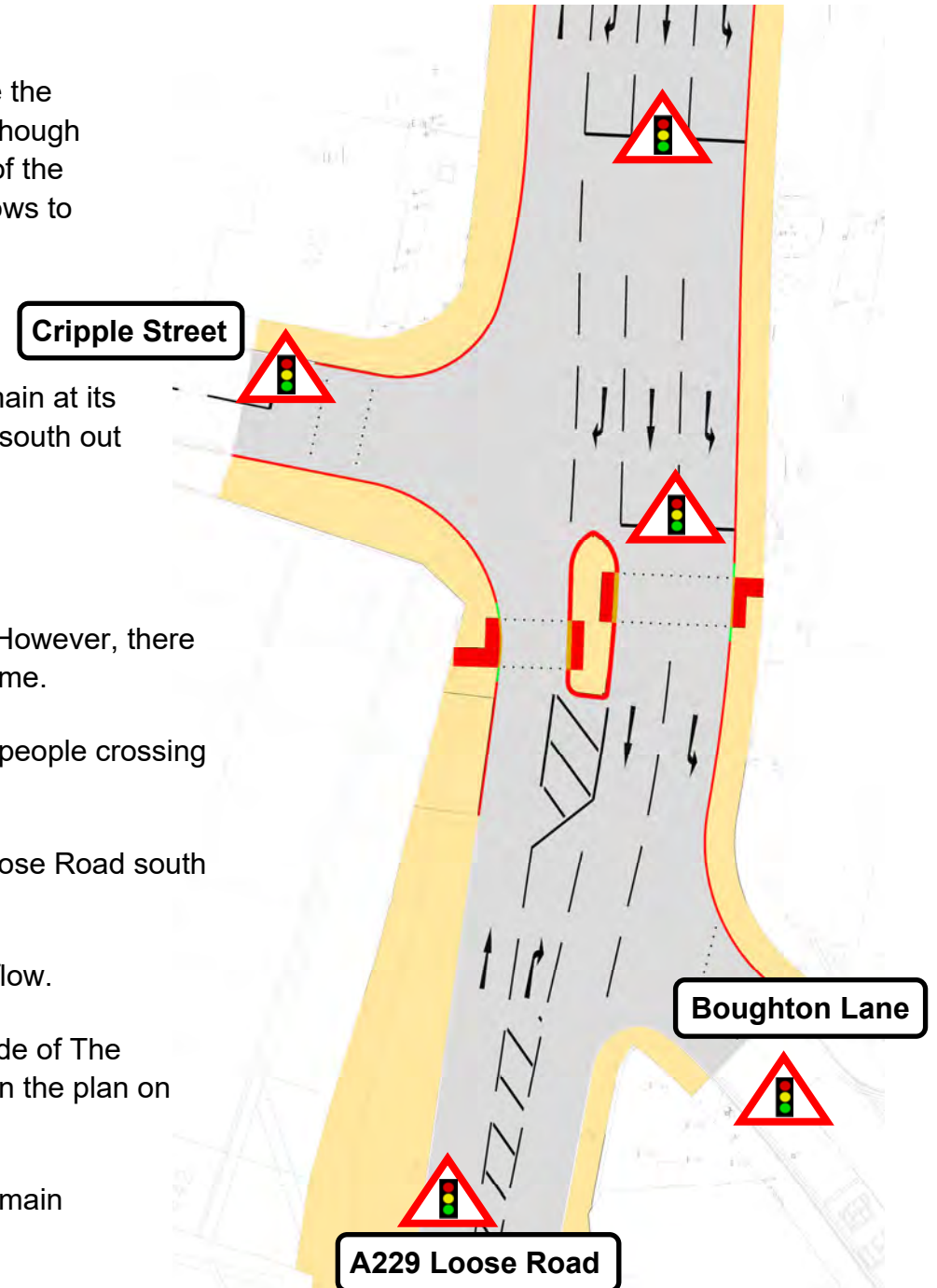


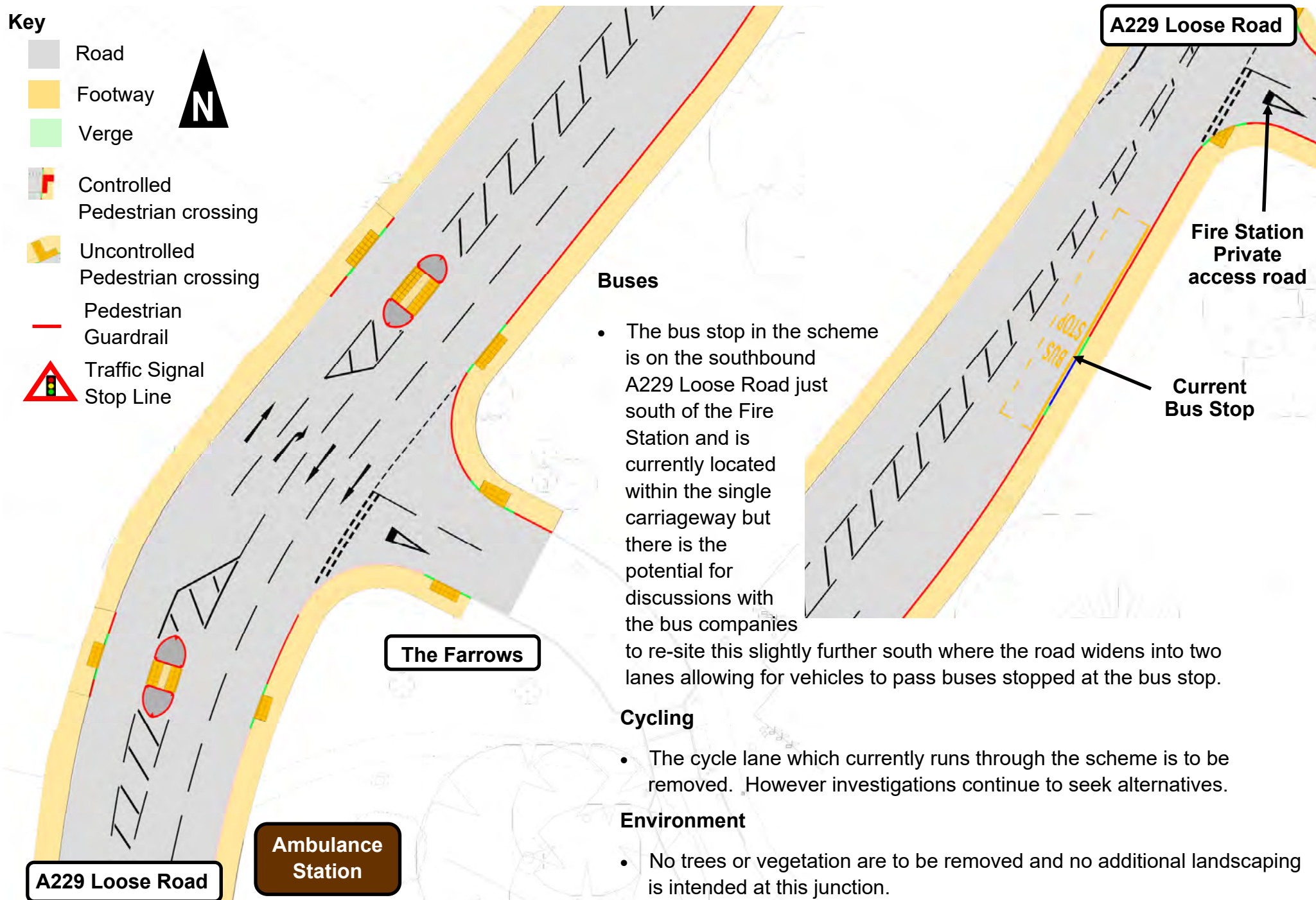
Traffic Signals

- The current traffic signals on the A229 north of Cripple Street will have the pedestrian crossing facility removed. The traffic signals will remain, although slightly north of their current location as well as the signals just south of the Cripple Street junction. This would allow for greater control of traffic flows to keep traffic moving.
- The current traffic signals on the A229 south of the Boughton Lane junction will have their pedestrian crossing facility removed. The stop line for traffic travelling north through the junction on the A229 will remain at its current location to allow for the turning circle of larger vehicles turning south out of Boughton Lane.

The Footway

- There will be widening in places in line with proposed new kerb lines. However, there is insufficient room to widen the footways the whole length of the scheme.
- Pedestrian guardrails will be added around the junction to discourage people crossing the road other than at the designated crossing routes.
- A new request pedestrian crossing will be created across the A229 Loose Road south of Cripple Street and north of Boughton Lane.
- Traffic signals will be co-ordinated to maximise pedestrian and traffic flow.
- The pedestrian crossings north of the Cripple Street junction, either side of The Farrows on the A229 Loose Road, will remain unchanged as shown on the plan on the opposite page.
- The pedestrian crossings on Cripple Street and Boughton Lane will remain unchanged.





A20 Ashford Road junction with Willington Street



Looking west along A20 towards junction

Introduction

Willington Street experiences significant congestion particularly during the morning and evening peak periods. Increased congestion may encourage drivers to use unsuitable minor roads in the area. The reliability of bus services may also be reduced, affecting important bus routes, such as the Arriva Greenway (Maidstone - Ditton) and one of the routes from Maidstone Hospital to the town centre.

The A20 Ashford Road is a defined route on KCC's Resilient Network because of how busy it is and the lack of alternative routes. This strengthens the need to manage congestion, particularly in the event of an incident on the M20.

Between 2012 and 2017 there have been six road traffic incidents in the area. The proposed scheme would improve road safety by reducing failure to stop at traffic signals and smoothing traffic flow.

The key objectives for this scheme are to:

- Improve the efficiency of the junction thereby reducing congestion.
- Improve journey times and the reliability of journey times.
- Improve Road Safety.

Achieving these will unlock other benefits including:

- Increasing capacity on the network to better accommodate further development.
- Improve air quality.

What options did we consider before deciding on the preferred scheme?

The following options were considered:

Option 1: keep existing signals with an unsignalised priority left turn filter lane from Willington Street to the A20 Ashford Road (west). In addition, two ahead lanes would be provided on the Ashford Road (west) approach and exit.

Option 2: a signalised left turn with extended right turn lane and dedicated left turn lane on A20 (east).

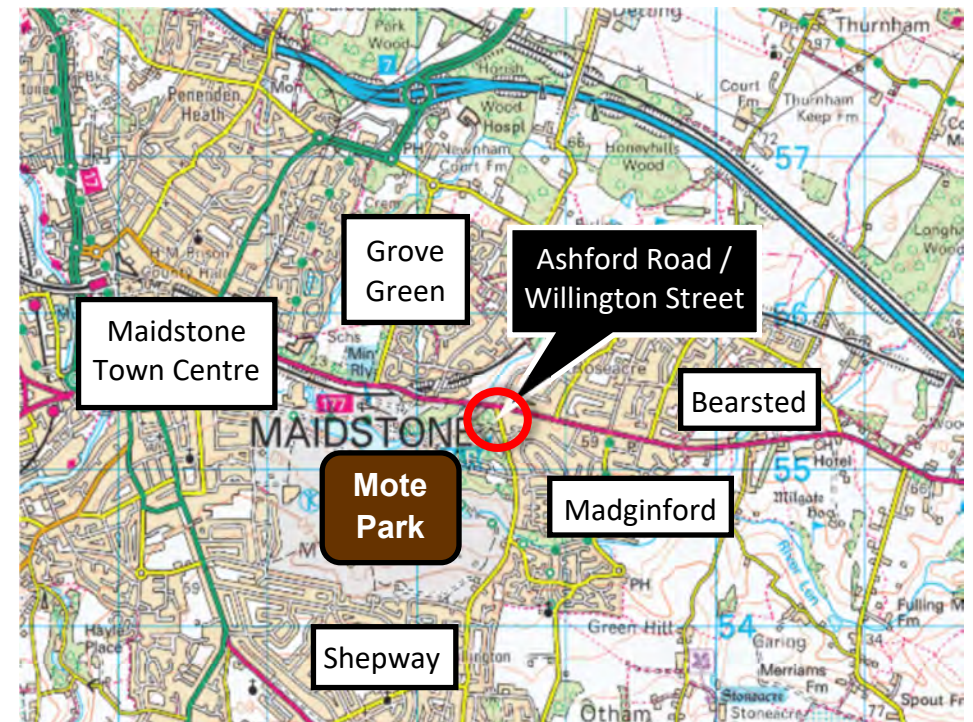
Option 3: removal of existing signals and replace with a three-arm roundabout.

Options 1 and 3 have been discounted because they are more costly and will not deliver the much needed improvements to congestion on Willington Street. Option 2 is our preferred option. It builds upon the design concept presented to the Maidstone Borough Council and KCC's Joint Transport Board (JTB) in 2015.

The JTB expressed some support but asked for a greater degree of improvement. The design revisions now included in Option 2 present the most significant improvements to congestion, in the region of 36% in the morning peak period and 39% in the evening peak period and have been endorsed by the JTB.



Aerial view of Ashford Road / Willington Street



Map of Ashford Road / Willington Street

The Proposals - A20 Ashford Road junction with Willington Street

The Road

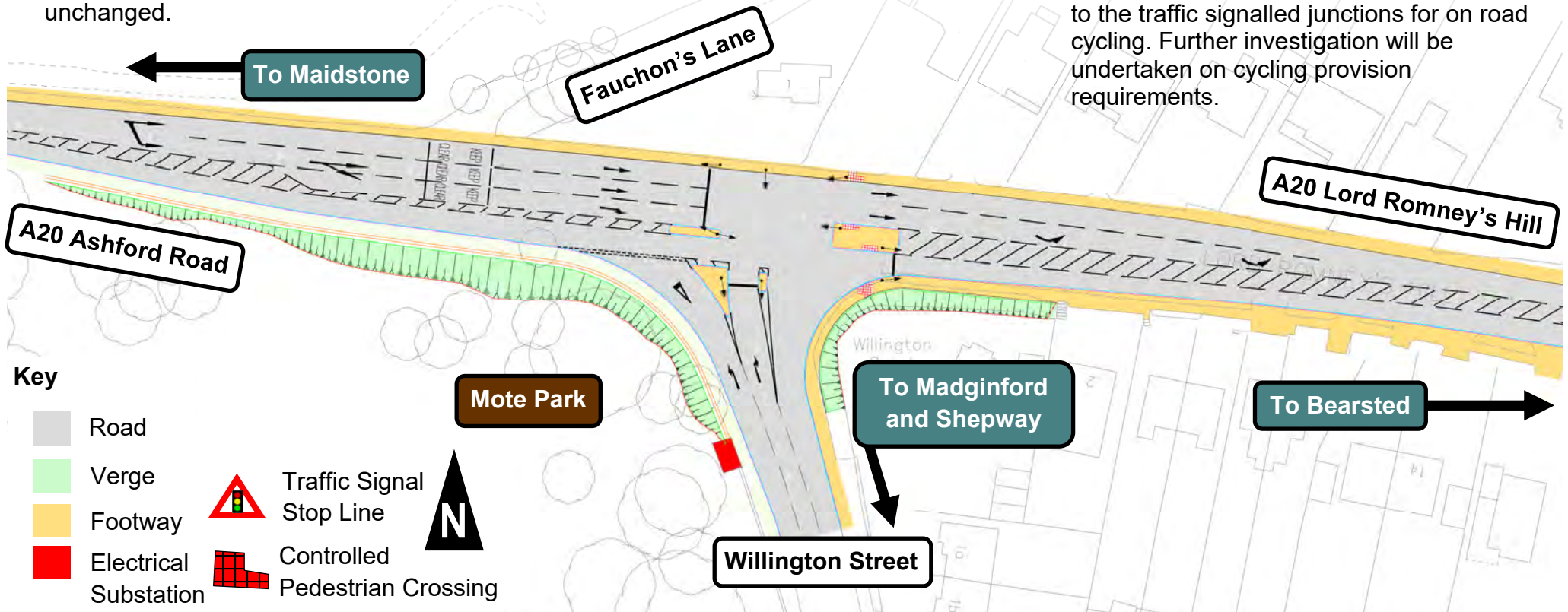
- Travelling east on the Ashford Road the lane would divide into two further back (west) from the junction than currently, with the inside lane for continuing east on the A20. The outside lane would divide in two with the now middle lane also for continuing east on the A20. Once through the crossing the two lanes on the A20 would filter down to one. The new outside lane would remain a dedicated lane for Willington Street.
- Travelling west on the Ashford Road there would be no change other than the upgrading of the traffic signals to incorporate a signalised pedestrian crossing.
- Travelling from Willington Street the inside lane would no longer be controlled by traffic signals but have give way lines instead. The outside lane would remain unchanged.

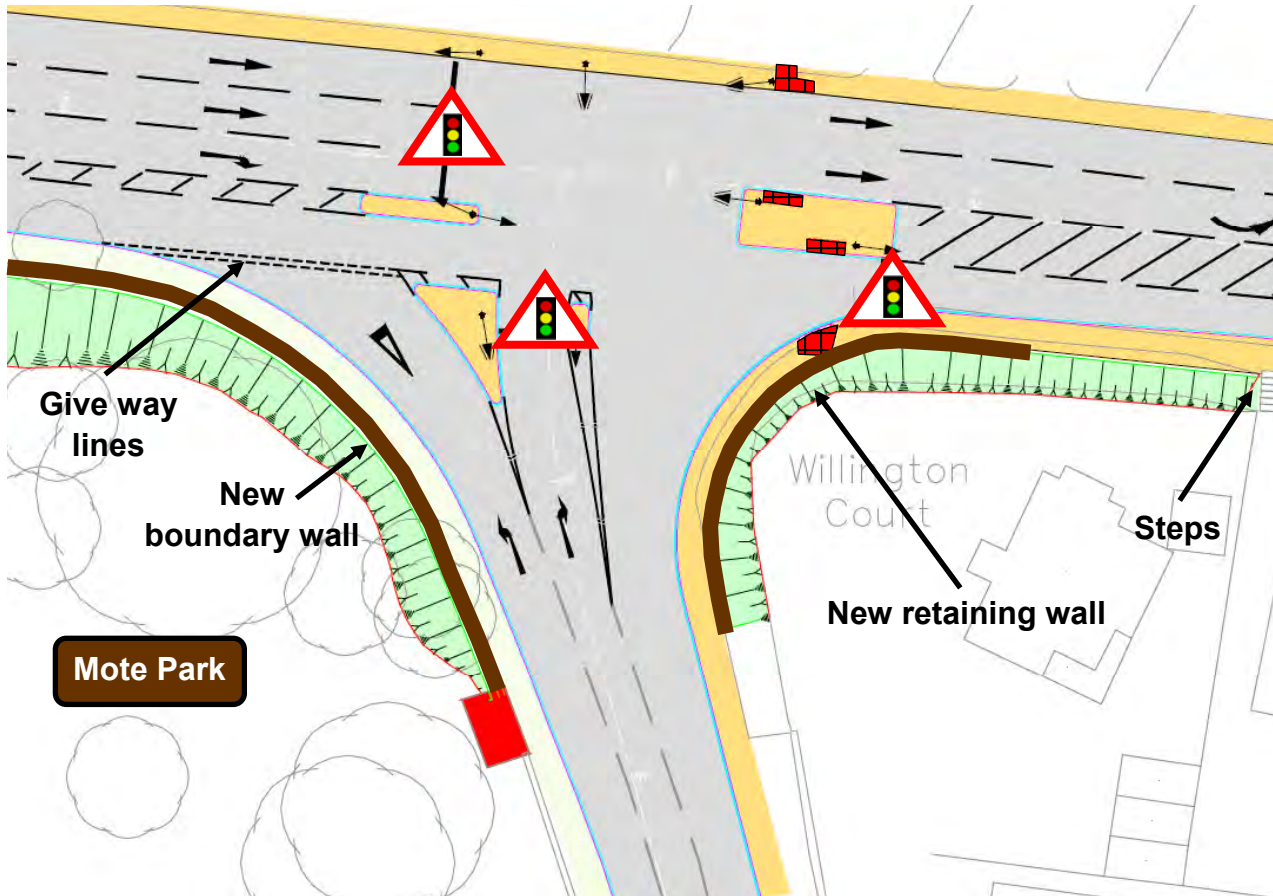
The Footway

- The existing footway widths would remain the same.
- A new signalised pedestrian crossing facility would be installed to allow safe passage between the south and the north side of the A20 with the island in the middle being widened.

Cycling

- Advanced stop lines would be provided prior to the traffic signalled junctions for on road cycling. Further investigation will be undertaken on cycling provision requirements.





Environment

- The current ragstone boundary wall of Mote Park would be removed and rebuilt slightly further towards the park by approximately 4m. Where possible, the existing stones would be re-used. Approval would need to be given by Historic England on construction methods.
- A new retaining wall would be built on the opposite side of Willington Street. Details of the materials that will be used are still to be decided but it is the intention to at least face the wall in ragstone.
- The steps just east of Willington Court on the south side of the A20 would remain.
- We have yet to draw up landscaping proposals in detail. However, our emerging proposal is to remove some small trees, which would be replaced nearby. The current verge on the south side to the east of the junction would probably be removed and paved owing to the difficulty of maintaining it.

Traffic Signals

- The traffic signals turning left from Willington Street to the A20 would be removed and replaced with give way lines.
- The traffic signals east of the junction would be upgraded to become a request pedestrian crossing.
- The other two junctions; turning right out of Willington Street and the Ashford Road east would keep their current traffic signals.



Image of current retaining wall

A274 Sutton Road junction with Willington Street



Looking north west towards the junction

Introduction

The A274 Sutton Road scheme proposes a junction improvement between Willington Street and Wallis Avenue. This junction currently suffers existing congestion and will worsen due to current and forthcoming housing growth.

The key objectives for this scheme are to:

- Reduce congestion.
- Improve reliability of journey times during peak periods.

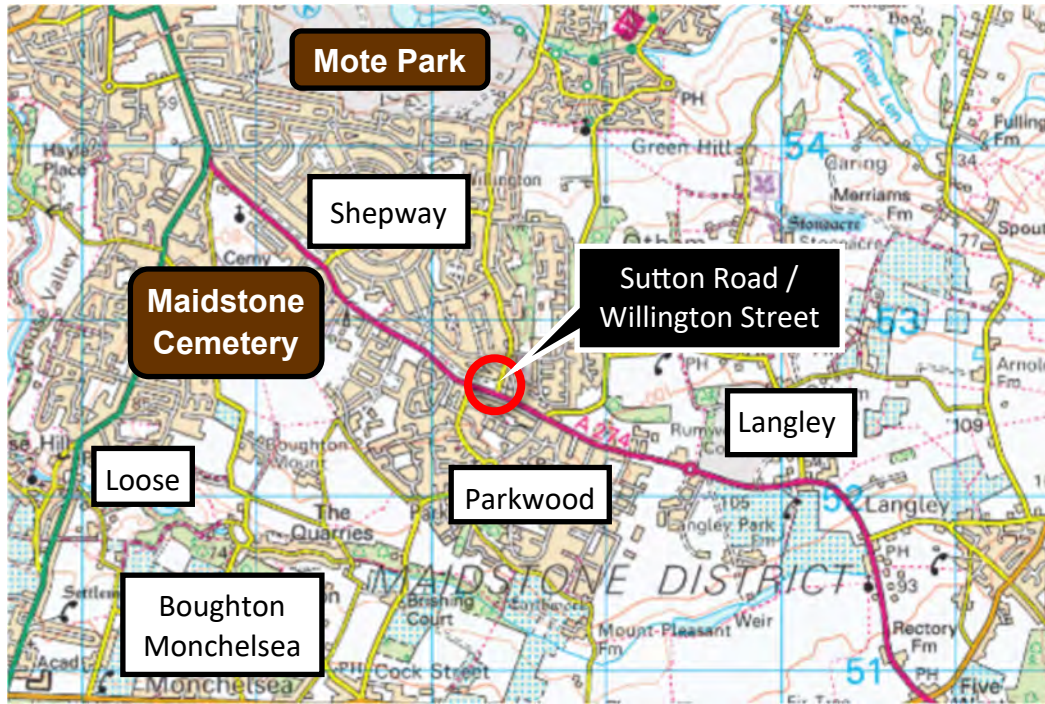
Other benefits include:

- An improved opportunity to provide new planting to replace existing trees and hedgerows, which would still need to be removed to deliver this scheme.
- Traffic modelling results have shown that the proposed junction layout provides a modest improvement to junction capacity. However, a year after construction the junction would be at capacity in the evening peak period.

What options did we consider before deciding on the preferred scheme?

A scheme was presented to the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board (JTB) in January 2018, which provided details of the increased capacity up to 2031, including all the development in the area identified in the Local Plan. It also took into consideration the natural background growth. This option was rejected due to concerns relating to the removal of the cherry trees fronting Bell Meadow and the proposed landscaping to replace the loss of trees.

This reduced scheme has been developed which, whilst it does not provide the same long-term benefits, will improve capacity for the current volume of traffic using the route. This proposal will also require the removal of some of the cherry trees on the Bell Meadow side of the Sutton Road and hedgerow on the north of the A274 Sutton Road.



Map of Sutton Road / Willington Street



Looking east along Sutton Road at its junction with Wallis Avenue (east)

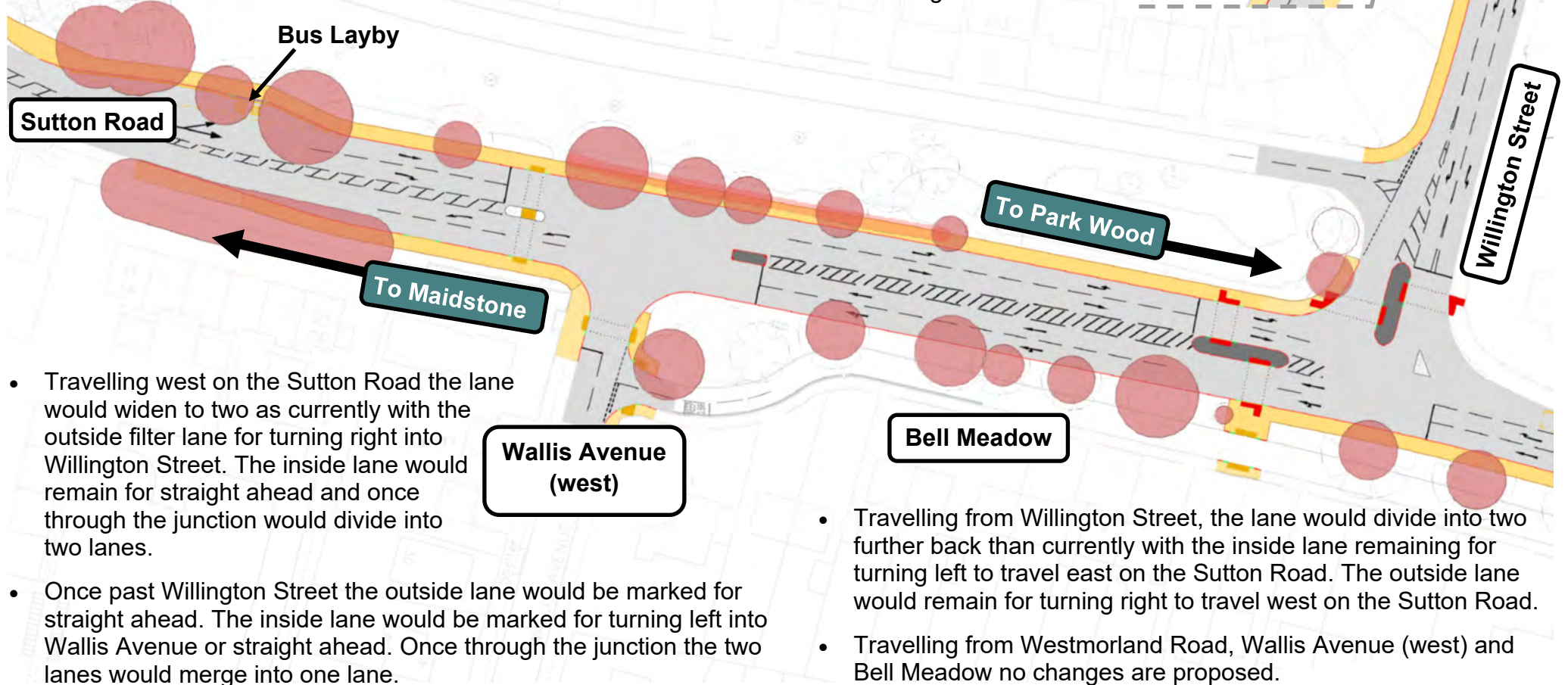


Aerial View of Sutton Road / Willington Street

The Proposals - A274 Sutton Road junction with Willington Street

The Road

- Travelling east on the Sutton Road, a bus layby would be created shortly before the Wallis Avenue (west) junction. The lane would widen from this point onwards, dividing into two lanes with the inside lane for straight ahead and the outside lane for turning into Wallis Avenue.
- Once past Wallis Avenue the inside lane would remain for turning left into Willington Street with the outside lane continuing straight ahead as a single lane through the junction.



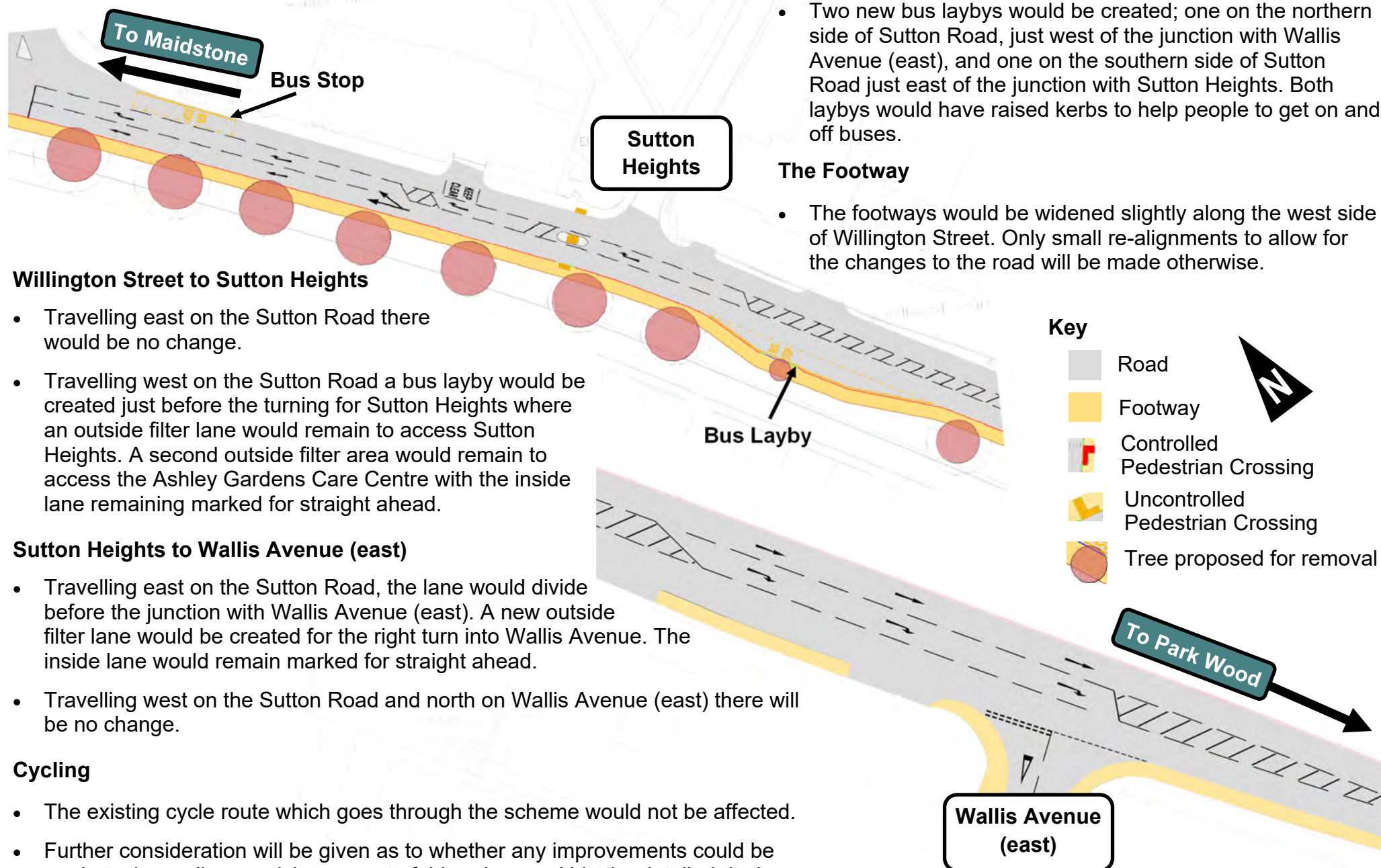
Traffic Signals

- All the existing traffic signals would remain in their current locations.
- The request pedestrian crossing would remain although there would be some slight changes to their alignment.

- Travelling west on the Sutton Road the lane would widen to two as currently with the outside filter lane for turning right into Willington Street. The inside lane would remain for straight ahead and once through the junction would divide into two lanes.
- Once past Willington Street the outside lane would be marked for straight ahead. The inside lane would be marked for turning left into Wallis Avenue or straight ahead. Once through the junction the two lanes would merge into one lane.

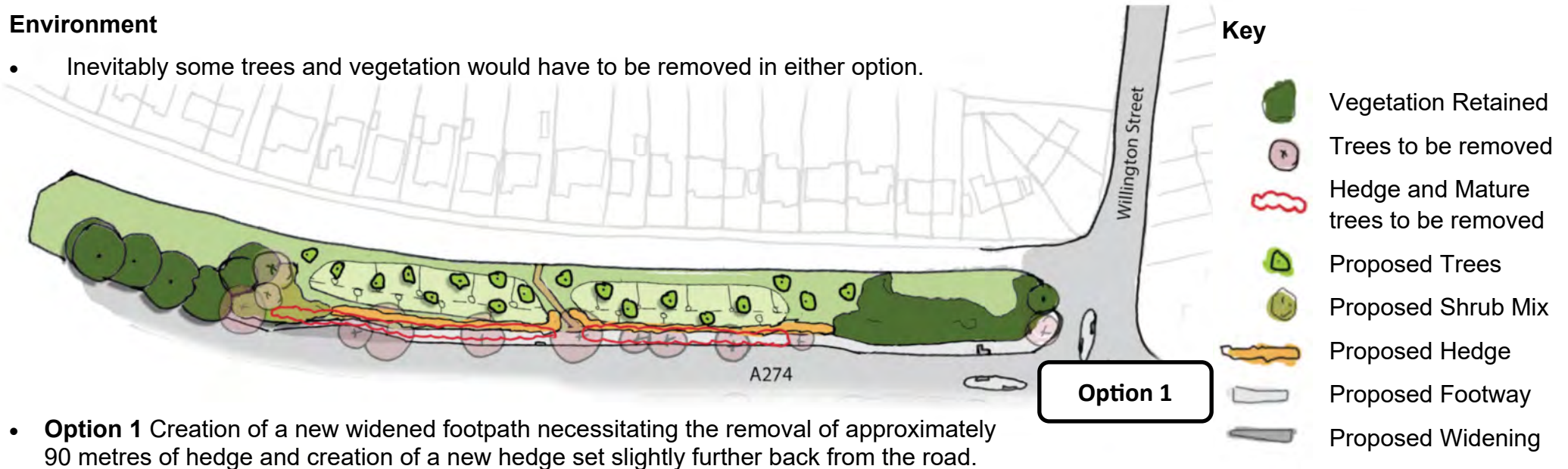
- Travelling from Willington Street, the lane would divide into two further back than currently with the inside lane remaining for turning left to travel east on the Sutton Road. The outside lane would remain for turning right to travel west on the Sutton Road.
- Travelling from Westmorland Road, Wallis Avenue (west) and Bell Meadow no changes are proposed.

Sutton Heights and Wallis Avenue (east)

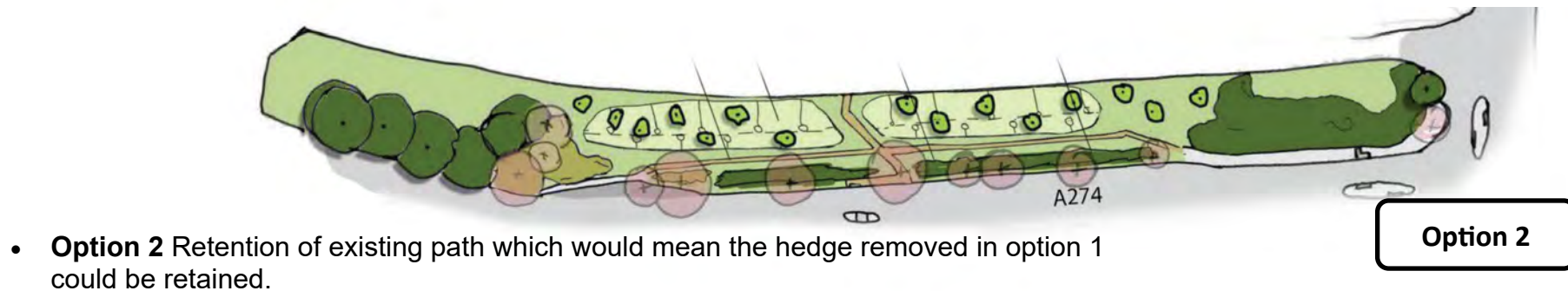


Environment

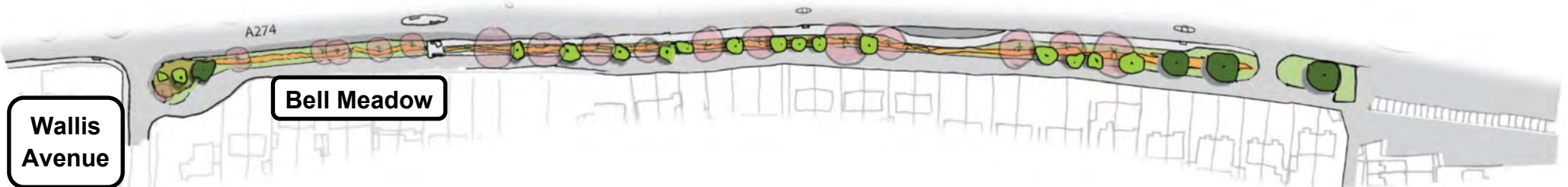
- Inevitably some trees and vegetation would have to be removed in either option.



- Option 1** Creation of a new widened footpath necessitating the removal of approximately 90 metres of hedge and creation of a new hedge set slightly further back from the road.



- Option 2** Retention of existing path which would mean the hedge removed in option 1 could be retained.



- Both options are the same for the area of land fronting Bell Meadow proposing a hedge with intermittent tree planting.

Timescales

What happens after this consultation?

A consultation report will be produced, which will summarise the feedback received and KCC's response. This will be published on the consultation website and presented to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation in April 2020.

We will use the your feedback to further develop the scheme designs. An update will be presented at the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board and Tonbridge & Malling Joint Transportation Board at the next convenient meeting after April 2020. This report will be publicly available with the final designs also being uploaded to the kent.gov.uk website.

We will keep residents, road users and other stakeholders updated on the progress of our schemes through our website, newsletters and engagement events.

Equality Impact Assessments

To help ensure that we are meeting our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 we have undertaken Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs) on each of the schemes to assess the impact our proposals could have on people due to their protected characteristics (age, sex, gender identity, disability, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, marriage and civil partnership and Carer's responsibilities).

The EqIAs will be updated after the consultation to take into account any relevant information received and will be reviewed throughout the project. They can be viewed on our website and are available in hard copy on request.

The below table provides an indication of when construction will start for each of the schemes:

Scheme Name	Proposed Start Date
A20 Coldharbour Roundabout	Spring 2020
A229 Loose Road Corridor <i>(including Armstrong Road / Park Way, The Wheatsheaf and Cripple Street / Boughton Lane)</i>	Summer 2020
A20 Ashford Road junction with Willington Street	Early 2021
A274 Sutton Road junction with Willington Street	Spring 2022

Have your say

Your feedback is essential to help us shape our proposals going forward so that they best suit the needs of your local community, businesses and road users.

Whether you support or have concerns about the schemes being proposed, we want to hear your views.

You can do this by completing the consultation questionnaire, which is available from our website kent.gov.uk/keepmaidstonemoving

Alternatively, you can request a paper copy by emailing kmmconsultation@kent.gov.uk or pick one up from one of our consultation events or local libraries within Maidstone.

We are holding three consultation events where you can drop in and talk to our team. These are at:

**The Tudor Park Marriott Hotel,
Ashford Road, Bearsted ME14 4NQ**

**Saturday 8 February 2020
Drop in from 10am to 1pm
(formal presentation at 11am)**

**The Village Hotel, Castle View,
Forstal Road, Maidstone ME14 3AQ**

**Wednesday 12 February 2020
Drop in from 5:30pm to 8:30pm
(formal presentation at 7pm)**

**Sessions House, County Hall,
County Road, Maidstone ME14 1XQ**

**Monday 17 February 2020
Drop in from 1pm to 7pm
(formal presentation at 2 and 6pm)**

If you have any questions for the team but are unable to make the events or require any of the consultation material in hard copy please feel free to email us at:

kmmconsultation@kent.gov.uk.

If you require any of the consultation material in an alternative format or language please email alternativeformats@kent.gov.uk or call 03000 42 15 53 (text relay service number: 18001 03000 421553). This number goes to an answering machine, which is monitored during office hours.

Please provide your comments by Wednesday 11 March 2020.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Local Plan?

Local Plans must be consistent with national policy but can also take on board local planning issues that are important to Maidstone. The Maidstone Borough Local Plan provides a framework for development until 2031. It plans for homes, jobs, shopping, leisure and the environment, and provides infrastructure to support these. The policies within the Plan would be used to make decisions on planning applications. The countryside is an important part of Maidstone, and the best way to protect it is to allocate specific sites for development.

Any queries about decisions regarding planning and housing in the area are the remit of Maidstone Borough Council. For more information visit their website www.maidstone.gov.uk

What is the Local Transport Plan?

The Local Transport Plan tells you how Kent County Council will work towards our transport vision over the coming years. Local Transport Plan 4: Delivering Growth without Gridlock (2016-2031) brings together KCC's transport policies, looking at local schemes and issues as well as those at a countywide level and of national significance. The full document can be viewed online at www.kent.gov.uk/localtransportplan. Queries about the Local Transport Plan should be put to your local County Councillor. Find details of your local member on KCC's website www.kent.gov.uk.

Can the funding for this scheme be spent on something else?

Funding for schemes often comes from a variety of sources. Most funding is bid for on a competitive basis and awarded to a specific scheme. Any funding awarded in such a way could not be diverted elsewhere and would have to be returned if not spent on the specifically identified scheme.

What will happen to traffic during the construction period?

By looking at these schemes as a package of works we aim to integrate the delivery to ensure the minimum impact on the travelling public. These schemes are subject to the same rules as all other works and we will liaise with the local Streetworks Co-ordinator with regards to any other potential or emergency works in the area, which might impact on the delivery of our schemes. Specific details will be widely advertised when a contractor has been appointed.

For any alternative formats, please email alternativeformats@kent.gov.uk
or call **03000 421553** (text relay service number **18001 03000 421553**).
This number goes to an answering machine, which is monitored during office hours.



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