

**Devon Local Transport Plan - Scheme for Formal Approval  
Okehampton Traffic Capacity Improvements**

Report of the Area Engineer (North)

***Please note that the following recommendation is subject to consideration and determination by the Committee before taking effect.***

**Recommendation: It is recommended that the scheme shown on drawing number EATS(N)448-02-00 be approved at an estimated cost of £86,000.**

**1. Summary**

The report seeks approval for a scheme to upgrade traffic signals in the centre of Okehampton. The two junctions are located at East Street\Mill Road and at Market Street\Fore Street. The aim of this scheme is to reduce congestion times by introducing more effective management of the signal timings to improve traffic capacity through the junctions.

**2. Background**

Traffic movements and capacity on the B3260 through the centre of Okehampton are heavily influenced by the existing signalised junctions and pedestrian crossing points. Over recent years there has been an increase in congestion and travel delays particularly at the main Market Street\Fore Street signalised junction. This situation is most significant at peak times when it becomes difficult for increased traffic volumes particularly in the Market Street area to exit and join the B3260. Increased traffic demands in the Market Street area can be linked in part with the development of new supermarket sites in this part of town and peak volumes are also influenced by school travel patterns. Through the planning process developer funding was secured to provide highway improvements in the town including a scheme to reduce congestion in the town centre by improving the Market Street\Fore Street signals. A range of options were considered as part of a feasibility design including options to remove traffic turning movements to maximise capacity through the junction. However it was not felt that traffic volumes should be allowed to increase in other parts of the town road network and a longer term aspiration for a new highway route to serve the Market Street area is being considered as part of the emerging Local Development Framework. A major improvement scheme of this nature would allow greater potential for capacity improvements in the town centre. However in the short to medium term this scheme proposal maintains the current junction layout and traffic movements and concentrates instead on making the best use of improved signal technology to reduce delays.

**3. Proposal**

The proposal as shown on drawing number EATS(N)448-02-00 will introduce four improvements to the current junction arrangements in the town centre:

- The existing signalised Puffin controlled pedestrian crossing in Fore Street will be linked to the Market Street\Fore Street signals to coordinate signal times and reduce conflicting delays to traffic using Fore Street.

- The existing Zebra controlled crossing in Market Street will be upgraded to a Puffin controlled pedestrian crossing and also linked to the Market Street\Fore Street Signals to reduce conflicting delays to traffic and help vehicles to exit Market Street at peak times. And to improve the crossing facilities for pedestrians.
- The signal controlled junction at Fore Street\Market Street will be upgraded with MOVA signal control (Microprocessor Optimised Vehicle Activation). The MOVA signal control system is a more efficient form of signal junction control that is able to deliver reduced delays particularly at peak times.
- The existing above ground vehicle detectors at the East Street\Mill Road junction will be replaced with in ground loop detection on the East Street inbound approach to reduce the problems caused by vehicles turning right into Northfield Road.

MOVA is more flexible and the signal timings can vary widely as the traffic conditions change. The MOVA system will generate its own signal timings cycle-by-cycle, varying continuously with traffic conditions, both in the short term (hour to hour, day to day) and in the long term following annual trends and longer term traffic growth. As an additional benefit, the system also provides information on traffic flows at the junction.

#### **4. Financial Considerations**

The cost of the scheme is estimated at £86,000. It is proposed that the full cost of this scheme be met through available developer contributions. A total sum of £106,000 has been received by Devon County Council. This total sum has been negotiated through two S106 Agreements related to residential developments on land to the west of Giblands, Broadpark, Okehampton.

#### **5. Alternatives Considered**

A number of options for traffic layouts and movements were considered in terms of costs, benefits and affect on local traffic movement before reaching the recommended design. It is felt that this proposed scheme will maximise traffic capacity of the existing junction layout without having a detrimental impact on traffic patterns in other parts of the town. However, it should be recognised that there will continue to be situations when these junctions reach saturation and some delay due to congestion must still be anticipated.

#### **6. Sustainability Considerations**

By reducing congestion at this key location, the scheme will help to promote sustainable public transport by reducing delay on the main road and will help improve opportunities for walking to local services and schools by the provision of upgraded pedestrian facilities. This scheme will have a positive impact on sustainable travel patterns within the community.

#### **7. Equality Considerations**

There are no equality implications to be considered.

#### **8. Scheme Audits**

The scheme has been subjected to Safety and Environmental audits.

#### **9. Legal Considerations**

There are no legal considerations to be considered at this time.

## 10. Reasons for Reaching the Recommendation

The scheme contributes towards the objectives of the Devon Local Transport Plan, by reducing congestion and by delivering Accessibility.

Joe Deasy

**County Electoral Division: Okehampton Rural**  
**District Council Ward: Okehampton**

Local Government Act 1972

List of Background Papers

Contact for enquiries: Joe Deasy

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Background Paper

Date

File Ref.

None

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sc/okehampton traffic  
2 hq 260309