

Background to V4 crossings – Planning context and previous work to analyse crossing options

Planning Approvals and other Agreements

Outline planning approvals were granted by the Milton Keynes Partnership Development Committee in 2007 – 05/00291/MKPCO and 06/00123/MKPCO.

<http://edrms.milton-keynes.gov.uk/NorthgatePublicDocs/00136929.pdf>

The planning approvals were based on the provision of a series of new signal controlled junctions between the WEA and V4. Subsequently, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was agreed between the Council and Gallaghers/Redlawn, the lead developer, to facilitate the creation of grid roads into the WEA from the V4. In the MoU it was agreed that the arrangements for connections to the V4 would “Initially be T junctions and the associated residential development will be built without formal pedestrian crossing facilities but as development progresses pedestrian crossing facilities will be required. The final form of these will be determined following consultation with local residents, and if appropriate delivered by MKC. The adopted solution may be built by MKC with a contribution to the costs made by the developer.”

A series of S278 agreements have been made between the Council and Gallaghers/Redlawn. Under these agreements Gallaghers have agreed to pay up to £60k for a pedestrian crossing at junction 25 for a period of up to 5 years after the formal adoption of the junctions by MKC. There is a requirement for the crossing to be within the area covered by the S278 agreements for each junction but there is no requirement regarding the types of crossing to be delivered. Outline planning approvals were granted by the Milton Keynes Partnership Development Committee in 2007 – 05/00291/MKPCO and 06/00123/MKPCO.

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CPRP Approval and Business Case

A Business Case (START doc) was approved by the council’s Capital Project Review Panel (CPRP) in July 2014. In the Business Case the purpose of the project is to create access for pedestrians and cyclists to and from the WEA development to the eastern section of Milton Keynes along the V4, including:

- identifying locations,
- designing concept,
- assessing the type of crossings & facilities
- constructing crossings

Two potential sites on the V4 Watling Street were identified where grade separated pedestrian/ cycle facilities could be provided that would fit with the anticipated development strategy for the WEA and provide benefits in terms of connectivity at the outset of the development.

Located to the north of the Crown Hill Roundabout and to the south of the Millers Way Junction. At these locations land within the control of MKC is available which is currently not identified for development. At both of these sites the preferred form of grade separated facility is a footbridge as opposed to an underpass. Whilst it may be possible to construct an underpass the associated costs and overall impact in terms of service diversions, land-take and environment are significantly high for an underpass compared to the footbridge option.

It is accepted by MKC and the Developer that additional facilities will be required at the other development access junctions along V4 as the WEA development progresses and the provision of further footbridge crossings of the V4 will be possible, however, there may be the need for additional land that is currently outside of the control of MKC.

Previous Options Analysis

Several reports designed to analyse the options for crossings of the V4 have been produced since 2008.

2008 – Mouchel produces its report on V4 Pedestrian crossing options. This report considered the various types of crossing possible and recommended the creation of “at grade” crossings.

A number of objections to the “Mouchel report” were raised by the Special Environment Policy Development Committee during 2008. The objections made by the Committee included; that the report did not take the existing MKC policy into account in regard to grade separation of grid road crossings, the unsuitability of at grade crossings for roads where the speed limit is 60mph and that the report had, wrongly, claimed the public has a fear of crime in underpasses.

August 2013 – URS produces a further V4 crossing options evaluation report. This report endorses the technical assessments included in the 2008 Mouchel crossings option report but suggests that the most appropriate solutions would be grade separated footbridges at two locations, Junction 4 and Junction 25. Basic outlines for the locations of footbridges were also provided by URS.

December 2013 – the then Head of Transportation Services produces a report for Cabinet that acknowledges the work of URS but recommends that instead of footbridges the most appropriate solution is to build two underpasses on the V4. This recommendation is adopted by Cabinet.

September 2015 – Jacobs produces its initial feasibility report on the provision of underpasses between junction 28 and 4 and between Crownhill Roundabout and junction 25. These reports identify underpass locations that are significant distances from the new V4 junctions 25 and 28/4. Following discussions with the MKC Urban Design team the likely desire lines across the V4 are calculated based on likely destinations and journeys to and from

the WEA. This leads to a further feasibility report on locations much closer to junctions 4 and 25.