



Gladman Developments Ltd (RN: 367)

Examination of the Ashford Local Plan 2030

Issue 11 – Are the strategic transport schemes referred to in Policy TRA1 justified and will they be delivered in timely fashion so as to facilitate growth and environmental benefits?

(iii) Is it realistic to expect that the Junction 10a scheme will be completed and open to traffic in August 2019? Would these improvements provide adequate capacity for the development anticipated during the plan period and beyond? Is it reasonable to require financial contributions to be made as part of a number of the site allocations policies if the work is already funded? Are suitable safeguards in place to ensure adequate capacity is in place before occupation of new development occurs?

1. No. Whilst substantial progress has been made with regard the approval of the Development Order by the Secretary of State it is understood that work on site did not commence until February 2018. Currently Highways England anticipate the end date for the project as May 2020¹. The website does not give a detailed breakdown as to what the work programme is and whilst there is potential that the road could be open to traffic prior to the end date of works, it would seem somewhat optimistic to have a road open to traffic by August 2019.
2. There must also be question marks as to whether even when complete the development of the new junction 10a will solve all the current traffic capacity issues in the urban area of Ashford. For example, significant improvements are likely to be required along the A28 Canterbury Road in order to enable development on this side of Ashford.
3. A Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA), dated March 2016, was undertaken on behalf of KCC to provide an initial indication of the impact of the housing and employment allocations. The TIA formed part of the evidence base for the draft version of the Local Plan.

¹ <http://roads.highways.gov.uk/projects/m20-junction-10a/> (Retrieved 07/03/18)

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4. The TIA looked at the key junctions in proximity to each site with the focus on four junctions (3 signals, 1 roundabout) on the A28 corridor. Each junction was assessed in isolation (i.e. not linked in a corridor model) at a forecast year of 2031.
5. The TIA forecasts all three of the traffic signal-controlled junctions to operate well-over capacity with the emerging allocations. The level of operation is as much as 37% over capacity leading to queue lengths of almost 200 vehicles, equivalent to circa 1,150m. These queue lengths highlight the need for the corridor study as problems at one junction can have a knock-on effect on others. The reported level of performance will require significant improvements at each junction. Queues and delays are already evident along the corridor.
6. The three junctions are listed below in order of greatest site impact (i.e. closest to the site and KE):
 - I. A28/A2042 Faversham Road;
 - II. A28/Bybrook Road; and
 - III. A28/Simone Weil Avenue.
7. The consented Junction 10A will be located to the east of the existing Junction 10. It was born out of Ashford being identified as a major growth area for the South East in the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan, with the provision of 31,000 additional homes and 28,000 new jobs by 2031. The existing Junction 10 was forecast to suffer from congestion and delays with this level of growth. The associated TA for M20 Junction 10A states the following (underlined emphasis added):

'The M20 Junction 10A scheme is therefore a key transport requirement that is essential to the future development of South Ashford'
8. It is important to note that the improvement is to serve south Ashford. The associated TA does not consider the effects of the junction improvement on the A28.
9. Aside from serving south Ashford, the junction may reduce some town centre traffic but it is very unlikely that it will reassign traffic from the A28 given the direct south-west to north-east, Ashford to Canterbury, connection that the A28 offers. The M20 offers a south-east to north-west, Folkestone to M25, connection serving different areas. The new junction does not offer a viable alternative route for A28 traffic.

Proposed Park and Change Site

10. One potential means of mitigating highways development impact in this area, alongside localised improvements to the A28, would be through the provision of the Park and Change at the proposed extension to allocation S2 being proposed by Gladman, and to which an application is currently before the Council (18/00236/AS). It is noted that due to the frontage of the current S2 allocation onto

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Canterbury Road the provision of a park and change scheme on the allocation would not be achievable. The provision of a 300 unit park and change off Canterbury Road has the support of Stagecoach who would be keen to operate the proposal, the use of a park and change would have significant transport benefits for the A28 corridor into the centre of Ashford. Gladman note that the proposed benefits of introducing such a scheme do not seem to have been assessed or considered by the Council in considering the required highway mitigation measures.

11. Stagecoach suggested that the site would be an ideal location for a 'mini park and ride' site, more formally known as a Park and Change (P+C), essentially a Park and Ride site but not exclusively for bus passengers; it can be used to switch to other modes of travel such as lift sharing and cycling.
12. After considering some preliminary traffic figures, Stagecoach affirmed their initial thoughts and stated that 300 spaces would appear to be suitable for this location with the figure being large enough to encourage its use.
13. The concept of Park and Ride or P+C is not a new one, and there has been a desire from Ashford Borough Council and KCC to provide a large scale site on the edge of the town centre which has yet to materialise. It is important to note that the proposed P+C is to serve the A28 corridor, it should not be seen as 'the' P+C site for Ashford.
14. Park and Ride is mentioned in the Local Plan with land safeguarded for a facility at Chilmington Green through its Area Action Plan, and in the context of the town centre's new office sector it states that:

'this will result in Park and Ride becoming a more desirable and cost effective option of securing parking space to support new development. In turn this will drive demand and patronage that would financially underpin the operation of a Park & Ride service.'

15. P+C facilities have considerable advantages to encouraging travel by sustainable modes. Not only should the site in this location encourage a proportion of A28 traffic to use the facility but the enhanced bus services should be attractive to new residents of the development as well as Kennington East and existing residents in the Kennington area, offering a realistic option to the private car. Stagecoach have presented several examples of where P+C facilities are accompanying mid-large scale residential developments, with perhaps the best example being a recently constructed Pitt Park and Ride site off Romsey Road, Winchester which has 200 spaces. It has proven to be very successful.
16. The proposed Park and Change on the development site and associated bus service improvements will encourage of modal shift from private car use. They will offer a viable alternative to the private car and encourage travel by sustainable modes of travel. These proposals will not only be of benefit to future residents of the site, but future residents of Kennington East and the local area.