

Meeting: Cabinet
Date: 14 March 2024
Classification: Part 1
Key Decision: No
Title of Report: Notice of Motion: Cuckoo Corner

Executive Director: Alan Richards – Executive Director for Environment & Place
Report Authors: Neil Hoskins – Head of Highways & Coastal
Executive Councillor: Cllr Kevin Buck, Cabinet Member for Transport, Highways and Parking

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. This report makes recommendations for Cabinet to consider in relation to a Notice of Motion presented to the Council on 14 December 2023.
- 1.2. The Notice of Motion related to concerns about traffic flow at Cuckoo Corner roundabout on the A127. The Notice of Motion text is set out in **Appendix 1** of this report.
- 1.3. Currently the data does not support major intervention in the design of this junction.
- 1.4. Other factors, especially those relating to right turn vehicle movements from the westbound Priory Crescent could be contributing to congestion experienced at Cuckoo Corner.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- 2.1. Cabinet notes the Notice of Motion relating to Cuckoo Corner at **Appendix 1** and agrees that junction monitoring is continued to gather data to inform a trial scheme.
- 2.2. That subject to the analysis of that data, a trial scheme is brought forward to restrict westbound right turns from Priory Crescent into Aldi and the Saxon King Pub and that the effects of this trial scheme are monitored post implementation to inform any potential future changes.

3. Background: Cuckoo Corner

- 3.1. The Notice of Motion relating to Cuckoo Corner is attached at **Appendix 1**.
- 3.2. The current Cuckoo Corner layout was completed in March 2011 as part of a £5m regional funding allocation from central government.
- 3.3. The junction is controlled by Microprocessor Optimised Vehicle Actuation (MOVA), which assesses the traffic flows on each arm of the junction and then calculates the allocation of 'green time' to each arm. The MOVA automatically adjusts the signal timings at any given moment to maximise the number of vehicles able to use the junction.
- 3.4. The current layout was adopted following a series of protests against the original layout (see below) after the discovery of a royal early medieval (late 6th century) burial – The Saxon Prince, and due to the effect the changes would have had on mature trees.



4. Air Quality

- 4.1. The council passively monitors Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) at the Cuckoo Corner junction. The results show that no exceedances of the annual mean or 1-hour Air Quality Objective have been measured over the 3 years, 2020, 2021 and 2022.
- 4.2. The data for 2023 will be available in the form of an Annual Status Report. The status report is submitted to DEFRA and provides data and information for the full preceding calendar year.
- 4.3. As part of the commitment to improving the air quality in Southend, all the diffusion tubes across the city have been reviewed. The outcome of this

assessment is due very soon and any recommendations will be considered with a view to implementation.

4.4. There is also an indicative ambient air quality monitor located at the cuckoo corner junction (see below) which measures harmful gases including NO₂ and particle matter.

4.5.



4.6. The monitors provide detailed air quality measurements in real-time to help identify pollution hotspots at a localised level such as busy road junctions. Data obtained from this monitor since November 2022 has been analysed and there has been no exceedance of the hourly mean for NO₂.

5. Traffic Flow

5.1. Traffic flow data is collected periodically at Cuckoo Corner and primarily used to update the multi-modal model. The latest figures were collected on 29 November 2022. This indicates that a total of 36,020 vehicles used the junction between 07:00 and 19:00 with a morning peak of 3887 vehicles per hour and an afternoon peak of 3935 vehicles per hour.

6. Pedestrian Crossing

6.1. The existing pedestrian crossing adjacent to the Aldi store is well used. A total of 464 pedestrians (Tuesday 29 Nov 2022) crossed with the highest figure being between 15:00 and 16:00 (66 pedestrians). The Puffin crossing is configured on Vehicle Actuation so when the push button is pressed it starts the count down to the pedestrian phase. This is set at 40 seconds between 07.30 to 09.15 and 16.00 to 18.15. At all other times it is set at 35 seconds. Recent work has been carried out to upgrade and improve the vehicle and pedestrian detection system and this has resulted in better traffic flow.

7. Aldi Junction

7.1. The Priory Crescent/Aldi/Saxon King junction slows the traffic flow at Cuckoo Corner. This junction has 2617 per hour vehicles at the afternoon peak

(Tuesday 29 Nov 2022). This junction would need to be factored when considering alternative Cuckoo Corner layouts.

8. Proposed Alternative Layout

- 8.1. A scheme (including associated traffic regulation orders) to prevent westbound right turn movements into Aldi and the Saxon King Pub could be brought forward. The effects of this scheme could then be monitored post implementation. If the trial scheme is successful, further detailed design and modelling work will be required to inform a wider area redesign. If the trial supports this further work then a budget allocation for a mixture of in-house (where available) and external consultant resource would be needed to evaluate against the existing situation and deliver the scheme.
- 8.2. In preparing the scheme, discussions will be held with the businesses to understand and mitigate, where possible, any adverse effects.

9. Reasons for Decisions

- 9.1. The data does not currently support major intervention at this junction. However, subject to the collection of further data, a small-scale intervention on Priory Crescent, to restrict westbound right turns into Aldi and the Saxon King Pub may be brought forward to ascertain whether this relieves the congestion currently experienced at the junction.

10. Other Options

- 10.1. None.

11. Financial Implications

- 11.1. Approximately £100k from LTP for the initial data collection, Priory Crescent intervention and post implementation monitoring.

12. Legal Implications

- 12.1. A traffic regulation order will be required to restrict westbound right turning from Priory Crescent.

13. Policy Context

- 13.1 LTP3 Policy 16 – Road Safety Engineering

14. Carbon Impact

- 14.1. The intention of the trial scheme is to improve traffic flows and therefore reduce pollution and carbon emissions linked to idling. If the data supports the trial scheme and the trial scheme leads to these outcomes, there may be a small improvement in emissions as a result.

15. Equalities

15.1. There are no perceived equalities issues in relation to the recommendations.

16. Consultation

16.1. The implementation of any trial orders would be subject to the usual consultation requirements.

17. Appendices

17.1. Appendix 1 – [Cuckoo Corner Notice of Motion](#)

18. Report Authorisation

This report has been approved for publication by:		
	Name:	Date:
S151 Officer	Joe Chesterton	4/3/2024
Monitoring Officer	Susan Zeiss	4.3.2024
Executive Director(s)	Alan Richards	1/3/2024
Cabinet Member(s)	Cllr Kevin Buck	4/3/2024

Appendix 1 – Notice of Motion

Improving Cuckoo Corner

Traffic congestion is a major issue in our city, exacerbated by many bottlenecks and areas of high traffic pressure. The Cuckoo Corner roundabout is one such area with regular traffic jams tailing back in multiple directions having a knock-on effect to traffic congestion across the city.

This junction is a vital gateway to the East of the city for buses and motorists. When clogged, tailbacks can reach the city centre, Kent Elms corner, Sutton Road roundabout, and beyond Warner's Bridge into Rochford.

Natural traffic flow is impeded by concerns about the an unsuitable layout that includes partial traffic signalling at the roundabout, traffic-controlled pedestrian crossings too close to the junction, and merges in-turn that are too short. Planned large-scale developments in the city will add significant volumes of traffic including large vehicles for delivery, causing further congestion.

This junction falls between the two Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) of Southend, and the air quality here is not currently sufficiently monitored.

On recent walkabouts with ward councillors, members of the senior leadership team found it difficult to breathe after a few short minutes at the junction.

Therefore, this Council resolves to:

1) Publish existing data around current traffic congestion and any monitoring undertaken at this junction. Where this data does not exist, Council will monitor the following for a period of at least 3 months:

- a) Volume of traffic, given on an hourly basis to identify peak periods of pressure;*
- b) Distribution of these vehicle movements at each entry/ exit;*
- c) Use of pedestrian crossings, to be cross-referenced with peak traffic periods.*

2) Model alternative layouts and arrangements for Cuckoo Corner junction, including:

- a) Box junctions;*
- b) Relocation of the pedestrian crossings;*
- c) Relining options;*
- d) Improved provisions for cyclists;*
- e) Improved provision for buses;*
- f) Phasing of traffic lights;*
- g) Full traffic signalling on all exits/ entrances, or;*
- h) Removal of traffic signals to aid traffic flow.*

3) Conduct a focused assessment of air quality at the Cuckoo Corner junction, to include:

- a) Live monitoring of air quality over a minimum 6-month period;*
- b) Particulate monitoring (PM2.5 and PM5).*

4) Liaise with local bus companies to understand the pressures caused by congestion at this junction on achieving a punctual service.'