

Agenda Item No. 4(b)

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**MEETING OF CABINET MEMBER – HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND
INFRASTRUCTURE**

22 December 2016

Report of the Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Communities

**PROPOSED TRAFFIC SIGNALS – RISE END CROSSROADS,
MIDDLETON BY WIRKSWORTH**

(1) **Purpose of Report** To consider the comments received following the publication of a proposal to install traffic signals at Rise End Crossroads, Middleton by Wirksworth.

(2) **Information and Analysis** The B5023 crosses the B5053 at Rise End, Middleton and is known locally as Rise End crossroads. There is a history of injury related collisions at this junction and various measures have been employed over the years to address this issue. This has included the realignment of Porter Lane, anti-skid surfacing, rumble strips and a vehicle activated sign, along with other signing and lining measures.

In the last 5 full calendar years (1 January 2011 to 31 December 2015), there have been 6 recorded injury collisions. A further injury collision has been recorded this year on 30 July 2016. The collision data, to which Derbyshire County Council has access, dates back to the start of 2003 and there have been 19 recorded injury related collisions during that time. These figures do not include damage-only collisions but the Parish Council has been forwarding photographs of such collisions that have occurred in recent times. It is clear that, despite various intervention measures being deployed, the collision trend continues. Bearing this in mind, a proposal to install traffic signals has been formulated to address this on-going collision problem. Funding for such a scheme has been secured within this year's capital funding allocation. The proposal is shown on the attached plan (Drawing number TA308/1/M019/4).

Consultation on the proposal has been carried out with various consultees, including the County Councillor Irene Ratcliffe, the Parish Council, Derbyshire Dales District Council, Derbyshire Constabulary, the County Council's Public Transport Unit, the County Council's Design and Conservation Officer, Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service and Derbyshire Ambulance Service amongst others.

A letter drop to properties in the immediate vicinity of the junction has also been carried out with approximately 54 letters posted. Thirty one responses to these letters have been received with 17 in opposition, 12 in favour and 2 not being specific either way. Six public notices were also erected in the vicinity of the junction and other representations have been received in addition to the posted letters.

One of the residents of Rise End contacted the Parish Council to suggest that wider discussion was required in the village and, as a result, provision was made at a Parish Council meeting on 10 October 2016 for the issue to be discussed. Various residents attended to put their point of view across and, due to the varied questions raised, a special public meeting was arranged to specifically discuss the proposal. The meeting was held on 20 October 2016 in the Holy Trinity Church and was attended by 55 villagers. Personal points of view were aired both for and against the proposal and all comments noted. A petition containing 55 signatures, all in favour of traffic signals, was handed over to Council Officers at the meeting. The receipt of this petition was acknowledged at the meeting of the Cabinet Member - Highways, Transport and Infrastructure on 15 November 2016 (Minute No.123/16 refers).

Taking into account all representations received, both in writing and verbally, a summary of the comments received is as follows:

- Traffic lights will lead to queuing which will block side roads/accesses.
- Traffic lights will not stop accidents from happening.
- More signs and lines should be considered first.
- A mini-roundabout would be more appropriate.
- It will affect on-street parking.
- It will increase noise and fumes.
- It is within a conservation area and will lead to urbanisation of the environment.
- The main issue is speed, not the junction itself.
- It's about time.
- Parking should be restricted as this already poses an additional hazard.
- Can shrouds be fitted to the lights to minimise light pollution?
- Could the bleepers for the pedestrian crossing not be too loud at night time?
- The traffic lights will reduce speeding.
- Long overdue.
- Pedestrian crossing lights are needed.
- Traffic lights would be disruptive to owl and bat habitats in the disused quarry.
- Better signage is all that is required.
- Install opposing flashing electric road signs on each approach on the B5035.

- Traffic will speed up on seeing a green light.
- Impact on the value of existing and new property prices.
- Invasion of privacy.
- Will not be able to park outside the house anymore.
- The existing vehicle activated sign is in the wrong place.
- Temporary lights have caused problems in the past.
- The traffic lights will affect pub/camp site business.
- A speed camera would slow drivers down on the approach to the junction.
- Change the priorities of the junction.
- Light pollution.
- Positive speed reinforcement – smiley face for under 30mph.
- Traffic lights will create congestion.
- Traffic lights are unjustifiable.
- Traffic lights increase journey times.
- How will it affect the location of the bus stops?
- A permanently lit up Stop sign on Porter Lane would be safer.
- Please think again and use a less invasive method to control traffic.
- A sleeping policeman put across the Porter Lane and Ashbourne sides would resolve the matter.
- More rumble strips.
- Traffic lights will also reduce speeding which is a common occurrence.
- Anti-skid surfacing is needed rather than lights.
- Village name signs are required on the approaches to the village.
- There is no bus service to take the Anthony Gell pupils to school anymore, therefore they walk now, morning and afternoon, crossing that road every week day.
- The near misses are getting more frequent.
- We believe that traffic lights are an absolute necessity.

The Parish Council held an extraordinary meeting following the public meeting on 31 October 2016 to discuss the feedback received and have confirmed that, following consideration of all points of view made, they support the installation of permanent traffic lights at Rise End crossroads. The Parish Council also recommended that:

- Improvement of the visual impact of signage to reinforce the speed limit on the approaches to the junction.
- High grip surface on both lanes of Porter Lane/Ashbourne Road near the cross roads.
- Mitigation for a resident's concerns regarding access to his property and business.
- The 30mph limit to be extended beyond the entrance to Middleton Top on the Ashbourne Road.

Councillor Irene Ratcliffe also supports the proposal, as does the Police. No objections have been received from any of the other consultees.

The Chair of the Governors of the village school has also written to request urgent measures at the crossroads following several incidents involving school users.

Officer Comment

As with all highway intervention measures, officers always consider every option available to them to address specific issues. The cost of the measures forms a large part of this consideration. Derbyshire County Council is measured on its performance in terms of casualty reduction and has to demonstrate a rate of return on its investment in terms of casualty reductions.

In this instance, as with all collision remedial schemes, the collision history has been studied and the causation factors of all these collisions taken into consideration. Having regard to this data, it is deemed that traffic signals would be the only feasible measure to address the continuing collision trends at this junction, particularly bearing in mind the measures that have already been implemented.

Any highway design work carried out always takes into consideration the environment which it is in and employs the principles set out in Derbyshire County Council's Environmental Codes of Practice. This has been the case with this particular proposal and the signal heads have been positioned bearing in mind the nearby properties. Also, due to the conservation status of the site, advice has been sought from both the Council's Conservation Officer and, due to the concerns raised about the effect on wildlife, the Council's Ecologist.

It is not considered that a mini-roundabout would be suitable for this location. Whilst mini-roundabouts are a valuable traffic engineering tool in the right circumstances, they are more suited to '3 arm' junctions where, nationally, they do compare favourably with other junction treatment methods in terms of collision statistics. However, their use at '4 arm' junctions is not as successful. A mini-roundabout is not just a matter of applying a simple road marking and associated traffic signs. Deflection is a key part of good mini-roundabout design which means that drivers do not "straight line" the roundabout. The central island alone will not provide this deflection. This requires setting the give way lines back into the side roads which would make the already poor visibility even worse. Also, the overrunning of domed central islands by large vehicles can create noise and ground vibrations similar to road humps.

A change in the priorities at the junction would not be feasible as visibility would still be poor at the side roads and this could also increase the speed of through traffic on the B5035, particularly on the downhill approach from

Ashbourne. Neither of these options would help to improve the situation for cyclists and pedestrians.

Whilst a number of comments make reference to excessive speed, from the collision data available, it does not appear that the approach speeds on the B5035 are a contributing factor in the collisions recorded. However, the traffic approaching round the bend from Wirksworth is a common trend in the collisions and the existing vehicle activated sign has been erected to warn of the fact that a vehicle is waiting at the junction and to help to regulate the approach speed of this traffic. This sign would be removed if traffic signals were to be installed.

The existing anti-skid surfacing would be renewed should traffic signals be installed with additional anti-skid surfacing on the approaches to the new stop lines on the B5023. Following comments received at the public meeting, extra anti-skid surfacing could also be considered on the uphill section of the B5035 past the Rising Sun Public House depending upon available budget.

Any roadside parking that takes place should be in accordance with the Highway Code, as is the case currently.

In terms of approach speeds being higher if drivers should see a green light, the traffic lights will be set up to rest in the all red condition to deter this. With regard to queues, the traffic signal equipment will use the latest technology available including vehicle sensors embedded in the road surface and microwave vehicle detectors on the signal heads. It is not anticipated that undue queues will be experienced on a regular basis. However, the signal controller will be configured to adapt to varying traffic flows and provide an appropriate green period to disperse any queue that may develop. It needs to be borne in mind that this proposal is primarily to improve road safety as there is no capacity issue here. In fact, it is anticipated that signal control will improve the overall efficiency of this junction and will be nothing like temporary traffic lights that are used for roadworks.

As stated previously, excessive speed is not a common contributory factor in the collision data, therefore it is not considered that traffic calming measures (e.g. road humps) would be an appropriate means of addressing the issue here. Measures involving vertical deflection do present noise and vibration issues for nearby residents. For instance, national guidance on the use of rumble strips, advises that they should not be installed within 200m of a residential property due to the noise that they generate. This is why the rumble strips that have been used already at Rise End are primarily a visual measure rather than an audible one.

The 30mph speed limit has already been extended on Porter Lane to reflect the extension of the built-up area and measures to enhance the presence of

the limit can be considered. It is not considered that the 30mph speed limit needs extending on the opposite approach from Ashbourne as its current location reflects the start of the built-up area and extending the speed limit would have little impact on the collisions occurring at the junction. "Keep Clear" markings can be installed at any nearby accesses to help to keep them clear.

Local Member Comment

Councillor Irene Ratcliffe has provided the following comment:

"I welcome the recommendations of the officers for the installation of traffic lights at Rise End Middleton as the best solution to a long standing problem of confusion by motorists leading to accidents and many near misses over many years at this cross road.

I have taken on board both the objections and the many residents who sent in their wishes for the scheme.

My thanks goes to the officers for taking part in the Parish Council's public meeting and giving time to answer residents questions so well. I would also like to thank the Council that at a time of cuts to its budget they have found funding that will make the junction safer for everyone that uses it."

(3) **Financial Considerations** This is an approved scheme in the Local Transport Plan 2016-17 (Scheme 02 06 02) with a budget of £160,000.

(4) **Equality and Diversity Considerations** A pedestrian crossing facility is proposed as part of the signal installation. This will include dropped kerbs to provide easy access for wheelchair users and people with walking difficulties, as well as push chairs. To ensure the safety of blind and partially sighted people it is proposed to provide tactile paving to the recommended layout. Audible beepers are normally used for the benefit of blind and partially sighted pedestrians which are also helpful to others. The volume of the audible unit can be adjusted so as not to present undue disruption to nearby residential properties.

Advanced cycle stop lines are also being proposed as part of the scheme. These offer cyclists improved safety at junctions by enabling them to move off ahead of other vehicles and clear the junction first.

(5) **Environmental Considerations** The Council's Conservation and Design Officer commented *"If there is a significant safety requirement for this intervention then I feel it is particularly important that you follow the guidance in the County Council's environmental code of practice for highways signs. To my mind all elements of the scheme need to be kept to a minimum, i.e, reduce the number of poles and traffic heads, keep all lining to an absolute minimum*

and if there are lights take advantage of this by significantly tightening-up radiuses on the junction creating more room for pedestrians.”

The Council's Ecologist has expressed no particular concern on the impact on the wildlife of the area, particularly owls and bats. There are glow worms in the highway verge on Porter Lane near to the Stone Centre, however, this is considered far enough away from the junction so as not be affected.

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: legal, prevention of crime and disorder, human resources, health, property, social value and transport considerations.

(6) **Key Decision** No.

(7) **Call-In** Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report? No.

(8) **Background Papers** Held on file within the Economy, Transport and Communities Department. Officer contact details – Steve Alcock, extension 38176

(9) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATIONS** That:

- 9.1 The proposed traffic signal scheme be installed at Rise End Crossroads, Middleton by Wirksworth, at an approximate cost of £150,000, with any additional modifications as detailed in the report included as the budget allows.
- 9.2 The lead petitioner and all those who have taken the time to provide feedback be informed accordingly.

Mike Ashworth
Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment

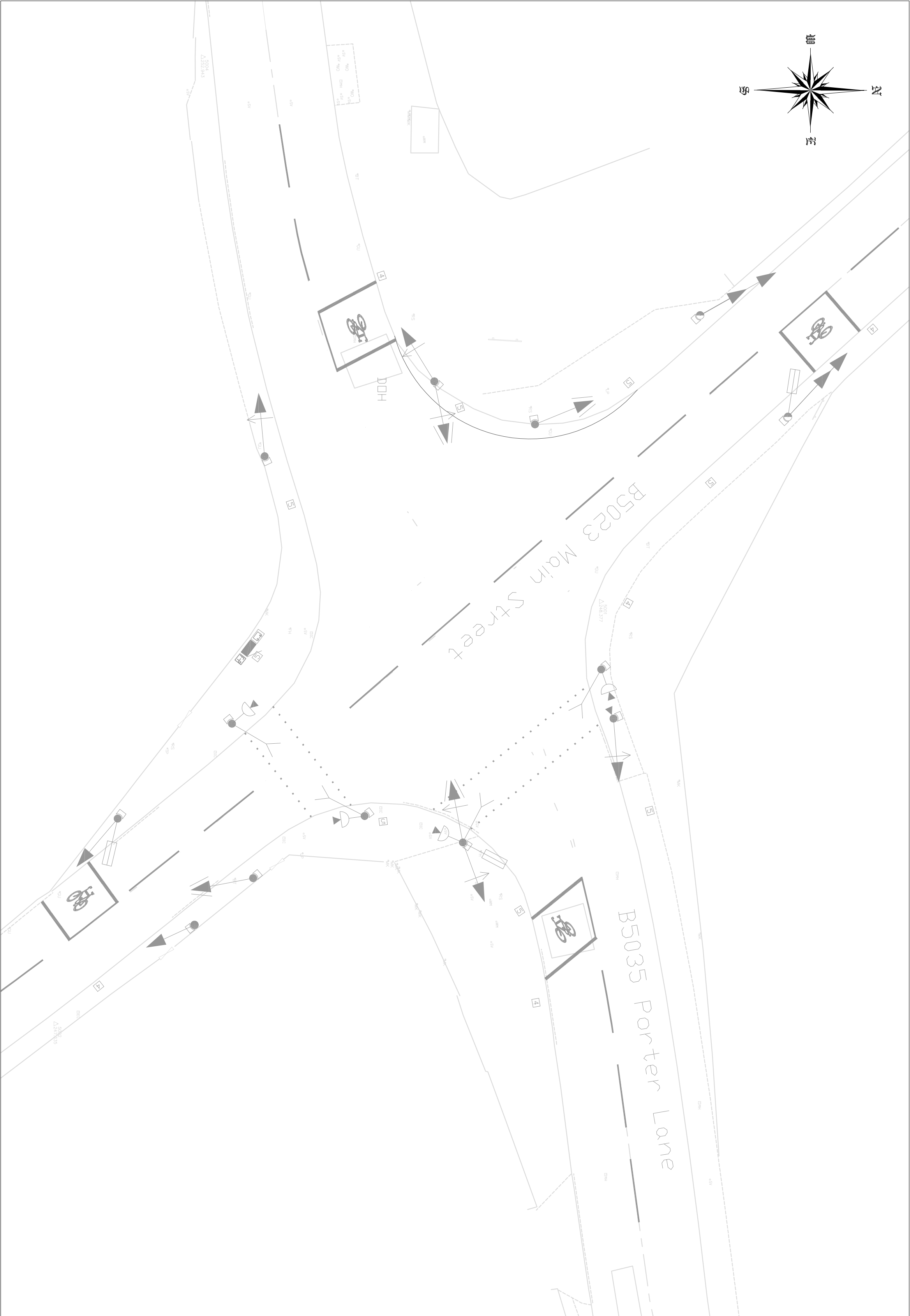
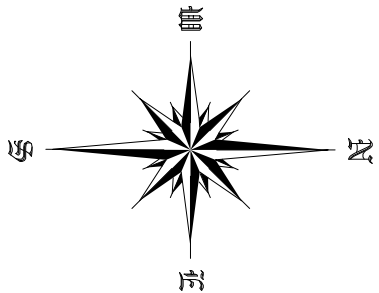
1

2

3

4

5



Key

- Primary Traffic Signal Head
- Secondary Traffic Signal Head
- Pedestrian push button unit red man / green man indicator

- Traffic Signal Controller Cabinet
- Electricity Termination Pillar

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National Highway Sector Schemes
Certificate Nos - FS 64122/FS 64124

AMENDMENT DETAILS				By	Date	As
Drawn by	MH	Checked by		Approved by		Scale
Date	29.11.16	Date		Date		NOT TO SCALE

DERBYSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL
Improving life for local people

MIKE ASHWORTH
Strategic Director
Economy, Transport and Communities

PROJECT TITLE
Proposed Traffic Signals
B5023 Main St, Porter Ln
Middleton

DRAWING TITLE

General Layout

DCE DRAWING No.	PRINT No	DWG STATUS
CLIENT DRAWING No.	TA308/1/M019/6	Issued