

Maidstone Joint Transportation Board

**17
January
2018**



B2246 Hermitage Lane

Decision Making Authority	Kent County Council/Maidstone Borough Council
Lead Director	Roger Wilkin/William Cornall
Lead Head of Service	Tim Read/Rob Jarman
Lead Officer and Report Author	Brendan Wright/Russell Boorman/Mark Egerton
Wards and County Divisions affected	Wards: Heath, Fant, Allington County Divisions: Maidstone Central
Which Member(s) requested this report?	Committee

This report makes the following recommendations:

For Information. The Board are asked to note the contents of the Report, which responds to a petition received regarding Hermitage Lane and provides a progress update on the various improvement schemes planned in this part of Maidstone.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Maidstone Joint Transportation Board	17 January 2018

B2246 Hermitage Lane

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report responds to a petition regarding Hermitage Lane that was presented by Mr. Young to the Board in October 2017.
- 1.2 It also provides a progress update on the various junction improvement schemes that are being brought forward in this part of Maidstone through the Maidstone Integrated Transport Package.

2. HERMITAGE LANE PETITION

- 2.1 The petition initially sets the scene by describing the nature of the concerns regarding traffic conditions on Hermitage Lane:

The B2246, Hermitage Lane, is a vital artery for residents and is the sole access route to the Maidstone Hospital. The capacity of the road is already under severe pressure and the situation will deteriorate as further planned housing is completed.

Local residents, passing motorists and hospital users have had to put up with an unrelenting sequence of road works in Hermitage Lane causing unacceptable congestion and delays.

- 2.2 The petition then goes on to make four specific requests of Kent County Council, as Local Highway Authority, which are addressed in turn below:

1. To declare that the B2246 has now reached its absolute traffic capacity.

- 2.3 The B2246 extends over a distance of around 3km in connecting the A20 with the A26. The design capacity of the route varies along its length on account of the variable carriageway width, traffic volumes and number of side road accesses. These characteristics, coupled with other influencing factors such as the time of day, make it highly unlikely that the County Council could justify or defend a declaration that the entire route has reached capacity.

- 2.4 The County Council's approach to tackling congestion on this corridor has instead been focused on relieving the worst affected hotspots in order to improve overall journey time reliability.

2. To do everything within its powers to minimise the disruption caused by road works in B2246 and the surrounding area.

- 2.5 The County Council continues to do all it can to minimise the disruption to road users caused by road works. The recently completed junction improvement works were carefully managed to keep delays to a minimum and ensure the travelling public were kept sufficiently well-informed.

- 2.6 A similar pro-active approach will be implemented when the other improvement schemes are constructed.

3. To classify the B2246 as a high priority route and include it in the Kent Lane Rental Scheme with immediate effect.

- 2.6 A submission has been made to HAUC (Highway Authorities and Utilities Committee) to include the B2246 as part of the Kent Lane Rental Scheme. This is now out to consultation and the matter will be raised at the next meeting of HAUC on 9th January.

4. To carry out an urgent air quality investigation for both noxious fume and particulate levels along Hermitage Lane.

- 2.7 The monitoring of air quality falls within the remit of Maidstone Borough Council rather than Kent County Council, although both authorities work together closely to bring about improvements.
- 2.8 Recent modelling work doesn't indicate that air quality on Hermitage Lane exceeded the national air quality objective. However, air quality monitoring tubes have recently been deployed on Hermitage Lane in order that the situation may be monitored.
- 2.9 In addition to the above, Maidstone Borough Council has recently adopted Air Quality Planning Guidance that quantifies the scale of mitigation required from new developments. It will also be producing an Air Quality Development Plan Document in order to address this matter further through future planning policies.

3. JUNCTION IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES UPDATE

- 3.1 The Maidstone Integrated Transport Package includes several junction improvement schemes that will positively influence future traffic conditions on the Hermitage Lane corridor.
- 3.2 The Hermitage Lane widening scheme at the entrance to the retail park was completed at the end of November 2017, 1 week prior to the programmed completion date. The new signals have been commissioned accordingly and the benefits of the improvement are already being realised. This scheme was delivered with minimal disruption and had regular engagement with the local businesses to ensure a satisfactory completion.
- 3.3 The Coldharbour roundabout outline design has been completed and a Business Case is to be submitted to the SELEP in February 2018 for the release of funding in 2018/19 to allow the delivery to progress and construction to commence in early 2019. Initial discussions with the relevant land owner have been undertaken to minimise any delays.
- 3.4 Feasibility work has been completed in relation to the Hermitage Lane/St Andrews Road/Heath Road and Tonbridge Road/Fountain Lane/Farleigh Lane junctions and an outline design commission has been submitted to a consultant to be completed by June 2018. The construction of this scheme

is currently programmed for the year 2020/21; however, it may be possible to bring this forward.

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 **For Information.** The Board are asked to note the contents of the Report and the on-going assessment and design work that is being undertaken.
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5. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 5.1 None