

Maidstone Joint Transportation Board



**16
January
2019**

Maidstone Integrated Transport Package (MITP)

Decision Making Authority	Kent County Council/Maidstone Borough Council
Lead Director	Simon Jones
Lead Head of Service	Tim Read
Lead Officer and Report Author	Russell Boorman/Lee Burchill
Wards and County Divisions affected	Wards: Shepway South/Parkwood County Divisions: Maidstone South East
Which Member(s) requested this report?	Committee

This report makes the following recommendations:

That the report be noted.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Maidstone Joint Transportation Board	16 January 2019

Maidstone Integrated Transport Package (MITP)

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report provides an update in respect of the proposed junction improvements contained within the Maidstone Integrated Transport Package (MITP).

2. A20 Coldharbour Roundabout:

- 2.1 An initial feasibility design has been completed which proposes to significantly enlarge the existing signalised Coldharbour roundabout (100m diameter). Due to the increased size of the proposed roundabout, sufficient capacity, modelled to 2032, will be generated increasing the free flow of traffic and therefore does not require this junction to be signalised.
- 2.2 This scheme requires the acquisition of third-party land to accommodate the roundabout enlargement. Early discussions have been undertaken with the land owner (RBLI) who are responsive to the purchase of the required land. However, the relatively small area of land required forms part of a much larger plot that is subject to a quite onerous overage held by the NHS; this poses a significant risk to the project and assistance has been sought from KCC Property to resolve. Further discussions have identified the Secretary of State would need to approve the overage removal or indeed request recompense for any lost revenue. A meeting has been arranged with all relevant parties to move forward.
- 2.3 A commission has been issued to develop the feasibility design through to detailed design and this will be completed in July 2019.
- 2.4 It was initially hoped to commence construction in 2019, this may still be achievable, however due to the large quantity of works on the network in the surrounding area, it is more realistic to plan for a 2020 commencement, this can still be delivered before the SELEP 2021 constraint.

3. B2246 Hermitage Lane:

- 3.1 A feasibility design has been completed which addresses congestion at this location. Due to the constrained urban environment, the proposal requires the use of a parcel of the adjacent heathland and the removal of mature trees.
- 3.2 A traffic regulation order, TRO, will also be required to remove 'on street' parking, enabling the free flow of traffic along Fountain Lane. Residential properties have existing 'off street' parking, however, due to multiple car households, opposition to the TRO poses a risk to the scheme.
- 3.3 The scheme proposes the linking of the traffic signals at the junction with A26 Tonbridge Road and B2246 Hermitage Lane by fibre connection allowing them to work together.

- 3.4 A commission has been raised to develop the concept design to outline design. Design work has commenced and is due to be completed in December 2018.
- 3.5 The above proposal does not deliver the required capacity benefits and does not demonstrate good value for money which is required for the approval of a submitted Business Case.
- 3.6 Alternative proposals have been identified which would deliver the required congestion relief. However, it is felt these proposals would not be received positively and meet opposition.
- 3.7 This junction has therefore been postponed from the MITP delivery until such times that a agreed mitigation measure can be found that will satisfy all criteria and stakeholders.

4. A229 Loose Road Maidstone (including the Wheatsheaf):

- 4.1 A commission has been raised for outline design on the A229 Loose Road corridor. This includes the proposal for the 'Wheatsheaf' junction. The commission was due to complete in December 2018. Due to the A26 sink hole, data was not able to be collected until November 2018. This has now been collected, validated and passed to the consultant to test the benefits of the proposed junction improvements.
- 4.2 A reduced size roundabout is being considered at the Wheatsheaf junction, this will limit the requirement for third-party land to deliver the scheme. This proposal will however still require the closure of Cranbourne Avenue at its junction with the A229 Loose Road. This is due to the traffic demand on the A229/A274 and would cause significant delays in Cranbourne Avenue itself and would negate and capacity benefit a roundabout at this location would deliver/
- 4.3 It must be noted that without support there is a significant risk that this proposal would not be delivered within the required SELEP timeframes and funding may be lost. It must be further noted that if the smaller roundabout option does not demonstrate the capacity benefits and good value for money, the larger option will be reverted too which also carries significant risks of limited support.
- 4.4 Due to the confined urban environment, the proposals for the rest of the A229 Loose Road corridor may also require the acquisition of third-party land. This has the potential to attract opposition and presents a high risk to the project.
- 4.5 Several surveys have been carried out to better inform the design which is progressing well and is anticipated completion of early 2019. Engagement will commence during the design phase with specific events for the residents and businesses being arranged.

5. A20 Ashford Road:

- 5.1 A feasibility design was completed to address congestion, which included a dedicated 'left turn lane' into Wellington Street. This required the use of existing highway land (verge area) to accommodate.
- 5.2 Local Member briefings were carried out and although the scheme itself was accepted, it was felt that it did not address the entire congestion issue and a re-design was requested. Local members were advised that this would require the acquisition of Mote Park land and repositioning of the flint wall, which is listed. There was a general acceptance that this approach would be beneficial and KCC were to proceed accordingly.
- 5.3 A commission has been raised for a feasibility design to be undertaken that satisfies the requirements of local members to address the congestion on all approaches. This commission was completed in October 2018.
- 5.4 The proposal requires the acquisition of the adjacent Mote Park land on the southern side of the A20 Ashford Road. The existing listed 'Rag-Stone' wall will also need to be relocated to accommodate the widening required. This element of the scheme requires a planning application to be submitted, which may be subject to objections.
- 5.5 The revised design currently exceeds the allocated budget from the MITP. An independent cost consultant is reviewing the initial estimate and we are hopeful this will demonstrate this can be delivered within the allocation. Other funding opportunities are also being investigated to ensure this essential scheme can be delivered.
- 5.6 The expected commencement of this project (subject to roadspace availability) will be late 2019 early 2020.

6. Business Case Submission

- 6.1 The board raised concerns at the previous meeting in relation to the loss of LGF funding as Business Cases had not been submitted for the remainder of the MITP programme (these include 3, 4 and 5 above).
- 6.2 SELEP set a deadline of the 16th November for all business cases to be submitted. Confidence was given at the previous board meeting that this deadline would be achieved, and three separate consultants were working on their delivery.
- 6.3 With the exception of the B2246 Hermitage Lane, for reasons stated above, all business cases were completed on time. However, at this stage they are awaiting submission for the following reasons;
- 6.4 A20 Ashford Road was not demonstrating good value for money and returned a low Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) figure, which would not have been

received well by the SELEP's independent technical evaluator and risked losing this element of the funding.

- 6.5 The decision was taken to combine all the remaining Business Cases into one 'Phase 3' business case that gives a more robust picture of the quantitative and qualitative benefits of the package of schemes. This also provides an overview of the combined benefits that the junction improvements deliver on a wider scale. This gives a much greater chance of this being accepted by SELEP.
- 6.6 A change of scope was submitted to the SELEP before the 16th November 2018 Accountability Board to request that a larger scheme is delivered at the A20 Ashford Road with an increased LGF ask as part of Phase 1. SELEP Secretariat are reviewing the decision process for this change and early discussions have identified that this should be reviewed in conjunction with the Business Case submissions for the remaining schemes that KCC intend to submit for approval as part of Phase 3 of the MITP.
- 6.7 KCC are therefore currently working on a combined submission which will cover both the Phase 1 change of scope and the new schemes (rather than submitted separately). SELEP have asked that this submission should come forward before February 2019 in line for a decision at the next SELEP Accountability Board meeting in March/April 2019.
- 6.8 Members must recognise the risks associated with the delivery of the existing programme. It is therefore necessary, and prudent of KCC to include an additional junction improvement in the Phase 3 submission to mitigate any potential underspend or loss of funding.
- 6.9 Therefore, this submission does include mitigation measures on the A20 London Road Aylesford at the junction with Hall Road. This scheme demonstrates good value for money and achieves capacity benefits.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 Kent County Council presents this report to Members for information. They must recognise the risks associated with the delivery of this package of works and understand the timing constraint of 2021 for construction.
- 7.2 KCC will keep Members and the board updated at key milestones throughout the next stages.
- 7.3 KCC also recognises the emotive nature of the acquisition of third-party land and will engage with the Local Members and affected parties accordingly. The improvements are aimed to address the current congestion and future growth and benefit all highway users.