

East Kent Access – Phase 1C

A Report by the Head of Transport Management to the Highways Advisory Board on 7 January, 2003.

Introduction

1. At the Transport Operations Board meeting on 6 July 1999, an outline scheme for Phase 1C was approved for the improvement of the A256 between Sandwich Bypass and Richborough power station site. See Figure 1.
2. At a subsequent Board meeting on 22 March 2000, a scheme for traffic signals was approved for the Ebbsfleet Lane junction with the A256 to form an interim overall termination point for Phase 1C. See Figure 1.
3. The design of the scheme has been developed and this report recommends minor scheme amendments, and seeks authority to submit a planning application and statutory orders.
4. A separate report to this meeting, giving a general update on the capital programme, explains that construction of Phase 1A & 1B is ready to start and a contract award is only waiting for the Government Office for the South East to release the funding.

Scheme amendments**Alignment**

5. An amended alignment is proposed between Stonar Cut and the Ramsgate Road roundabout (see Drg. No. 100017/1C/8). The approved outline design kept close to the existing alignment of the A256 that is on a curve over this section. In developing the detailed design, it is considered necessary to take a slightly flatter radius that will encroach into the frontage of Universal Salvage. The revised alignment is required to satisfy design and safety standards and form a better connection into the enlarged Ramsgate Road roundabout to be constructed as part of Phase 1B. The new alignment also reduces the extent of utility diversions and has the benefit of avoiding the landscaped banking fronting the Pfizer water treatment works.

Footway/cycleway

6. The Phase 1C scheme retains, albeit reconstructed over much of its length, the footway/cycleway along the east side of the A256. In developing the design it is considered desirable to provide a similar facility along the west side to serve the potential development sites and because the improvement of the A256 to dual carriageway standard will limit available safe crossing points.

Ebbsfleet Lane junction

7. The scheme for traffic signals was proposed to provide a natural termination point for Phase 1C and to assist safe turning movements at the junction. Signals were proposed at a time when feasibility work for Phase 2 had only just commenced. A preferred route for Phase 2 has now been identified and it commences to the south of the Ebbsfleet Lane junction, at a roundabout on the A256 at the Pfizer Social Club entrance. The full scheme for East Kent Access would therefore effectively bypass the Ebbsfleet lane junction.

East Kent Access

8. The approved scheme would require some land acquisition. This is no longer regarded as appropriate in a location where a Nature Reserve and designated Special Protection Area abuts the A256, and where the junction will not form part of East Kent Access. The proposal has therefore been modified to keep the layout within the existing highway boundaries (see Drg. No. 100017/22A). Implementing traffic signals at this junction will depend very much on the success in securing Local Transport Plan funding for Phase 2 and the likely timescale for implementation after Phase 1. It is hoped that traffic signals will not need to be installed because they are not an ideal solution in this semi rural location and safety benefits need to be balanced against operational disadvantages. However, until programming and funding issues become clearer, it is considered desirable to retain the concept of traffic signals as an approved scheme.

Approved Drawing Correction

9. Over a short section of A256 the recently approved plans for Phase 2 are not fully compatible with the plans for Phase 1C. The A256 between the Phase 1C Richborough power station site roundabout and the Phase 2 Pfizer social club roundabout is intended to be to dual carriageway standard consistent with the whole route. The approved proposals for Phase 2 showed the intent but were not taken far enough to show the connection to the Phase 1C Richborough power station roundabout. The proposals are within the highway boundary and a revised drawing is put forward for approval (see Drg. No. 100017/56A).

Stonar Cut sluice gates

10. The sluice gates are the responsibility of the Environment Agency (EA) and will need to be replaced as they lie on the line of the new Sandwich bound carriageway. The EA are in the process of completing a feasibility study into the form and location of the replacement sluice gates. Once a scheme has been identified, the EA will seek the necessary approvals.

Consultation

11. Phase 1C is an on-line improvement in a rural location fronted in the main by existing businesses or potential brownfield development sites. No other options were feasible and conventional public consultation was not appropriate.
12. Following substantive development of the scheme our consultants Babtie met with all the principal frontagers during summer 2002,. There will always be site specific detailed issues of concern but they report no adverse reaction on the concept of the revised alignment and land take implications or the footway/cycleway and its additional land take implications.
13. The revised traffic signal scheme at Ebbsfleet Lane junction is lesser in scale and therefore should not be a concern to the residents who live in the area. Their primary interest relates to Phase 2 and following consultation the alignment has been moved further away from their rear boundaries, which also gives scope for screening.

Statutory Procedures

14. Subject to the scheme amendments being approved, the next stage is the submission of a planning application and associated Environmental Statement for Phase 1C. The application would only include the scheme as far as the roundabout at the Richborough power station site because the Ebbsfleet Lane traffic signal scheme would have deemed planning consent as with any other minor highway improvement within the highway boundary.

East Kent Access

Local Member Views

15. Phase 1C is mainly within the Division of Mr Leyland Ridings. Ebbsfleet Lane junction falls within the Divisions of Mr Fox and Mr Kirby. They have been consulted but at the time of finalising this Report, no views have been received. Any views will be reported at the meeting.

Finance

16. The estimated cost of the scheme has increased as a result of the general development of the design of the scheme. In addition to the increased cost of the alignment changes, the scheme will also be burdened with the full cost of replacing the sluice gates at Stonar Cut. Earlier discussions with the Environment Agency had suggested the replacement might attract a high level of betterment contribution. A revised bid was made in the Local Transport Plan Annual Progress Report submitted in July 2002.
17. The 2003/2004 Settlement Letter received in December 2002 made no reference as this will inevitably be linked to the decision on releasing the funding for Phase 1A and 1B.
18. Tenders for the construction of Phases 1A and 1B have also included Phase 1C even though no commitment can be given at this time. This is consistent with evolving procurement initiatives and where early contractor involvement can help develop and optimise the detailed design, and provide more robust cost estimates. The tendered price submitted by the preferred contractor is consistent with the Local Transport Plan revised bid.

Recommendation

19. Subject to the views of this Board, it is proposed to recommend to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration that:
 - (i) Drg. No. 100017/1C/8 is approved for development control and land charge disclosures.
 - (ii) Drg. No. 100017/22A is approved for development control and land charge disclosures.
 - (iii) For proposals shown on Drg. Nos. 100017/1C/ 8 and 100017/22A, I may seek all necessary consents; to arrange for the making and submission for confirmation of orders for the compulsory acquisition of land and rights necessary for construction; to make and submit for confirmation all other necessary orders and schemes under the Highways Act to enable the scheme to be constructed.
 - (iv) Drg. No. 100017/16 is abandoned and is no longer an approved drawing.
 - (v) Drg. No. 100017/22 is abandoned and is no longer an approved drawing.
 - (vi) Drg No 100017/56A supersedes drawing number 100017/56 and is approved for development control and land charge disclosures.

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Background Documents:

Appendix 1 – Explanation of Drawings

Figure 1 attached

Drg. No's 100017/1C/8; 100017/22A and 100017/56A

Appendix 1

East Kent Access – Explanation of the Drawing to be approved and abandoned.

To be approved

Drg. No. 100017/1C/8 – 1/2500 scale plan showing the revised Phase 1C scheme between Ramsgate Road roundabout and the Richborough power station site roundabout for approval.

Drg. No. 100017/22A – 1/2500 scale plan showing the revised traffic signal scheme at Ebbsfleet Lane junction for approval.

Drg No 100017/56A - 1/2500 scale plan showing the southern end of Phase 2 and includes the short missing section of improvement of A256 at Richborough power and is to supersede drawing number 100017/56.

To be abandoned

Drg. No. 100017/16 is the original 1.2500 scale plan showing Phase 1C scheme between Ramsgate Road roundabout and the Richborough power station site roundabout to be abandoned.

Drg. No. 100017/22 is the original 1/2500 scale plan showing the traffic signal scheme at Ebbsfleet Lane junction to be abandoned.