

# KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

**DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:**

David Brazier, Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport

**DECISION NO:**

22/00025

**For publication** *[Do not include information which is exempt from publication under schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972]*

**Key decision: YES**

**Subject Matter / Title of Decision**

Bearsted Road Improvement Scheme, Maidstone

**Decision:**

As Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation, I give approval for the County Council to:

- i. adopt the Bearsted Road dualling scheme shown on Drg. No. 70040984-SK-0086 for development control, land charge disclosures and implementation;
- ii. retain the current scheme for widening Bearsted Road to three lanes scheme shown on Drg. No. 70040984-SK-0087;
- iii. delegate the decision to decide which of the two scheme options (Drg. No. 70040984-SK-0086 or Drg. No.70040984-SK-0087) is delivered to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment & Transport under the Officer Scheme of Delegations following the views of this Committee and after prior consultation with the Cabinet Member;
- iv. give authority to enter into the appropriate land, development and funding agreements and the award of the construction contract, and all other acts and consents and any subsidiary contracts required to allow the scheme to be implemented;
- v. delegate to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment & Transport, under the Officer Scheme of Delegations following prior consultation with the Cabinet Member, any further or other decisions as may be appropriate to deliver the Bearsted Road scheme;
- vi. confirm that other decisions in Record of Decision 18/00026 remain extant.

**Reason(s) for decision:**

Report to the Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee 17/3/2022 refers.

The A249 Bearsted Road scheme is an important infrastructure improvement which aims to address congestion in Maidstone. It has been successful in unlocking external funding from the Department for Transport under the National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF).

This decision will enable the construction contract to be awarded, necessary funding and land agreements to be signed and subsequently for construction to commence in Spring 2022.

There are many improvement schemes planned for Maidstone in the coming years, including the Keep Maidstone Moving programme funded through the Local Growth Fund; and delays to the Bearsted Road construction would influence the delivery of these schemes.

**Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:**

There was extensive public consultation in 2019.

**Any alternatives considered and rejected:**

Do Nothing – discarded as congestion needs to be addressed to cater for future growth in this location. Doing nothing would result in £2.27m of abortive costs and reputational risk given the planning consents have been achieved, and the capacity and active travel benefits of the preferred scheme would not be realised.

Do Something - To signalise the A249 Bearsted Road (Next roundabout) and enlarge and signalise the Bearsted Road/New Cut Road roundabouts and widen Bearsted Road to provide 3 lanes between the roundabouts. The estimated cost to deliver this option is £13.4m.

Do Maximum - This would deliver all of the improvements from Option 3, plus signalisation and capacity enhancements at the A249 junction with the M20 Junction 7. Improvements to M20 J7 have been a longstanding ambition and although can be funded through developer contributions, these will not be received in time to enable delivery alongside the Bearsted Road scheme. Although the developers have entered into S106 agreements, their payments are linked to key trigger dates, therefore several external funding bids have previously been submitted to Central Government. KCC will continue to develop the proposals alongside MBC and future grant and loan opportunities will be explored, but this Do Maximum option is not currently viable.

**Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:**

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signed

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date