

From: Simon Jones, Corporate Director, Growth, Environment & Transport

To: Neil Baker, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

Subject: Kent Street junction improvements and road widening of A228 Malling Road between Kent Street and Beech Road, Tonbridge and Malling.

Key decision: 25/00018

Divisions Affected: Malling Rural East

Summary: This paper provides an update on the Kent Street junction signalisation and road widening of A228 Malling Road between Kent Street and Beech Road, Tonbridge & Malling.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport is asked to:

- i. Approve the delivery of a traffic calming scheme to mitigate the impact of traffic arising from the Kings Hill Phase 3 development.
- ii. Approve that the cost of staff and consultant time to project manage, input into the delivery and supervision of the scheme, be recoverable against the S106 Developer Contributions and Kent Lane Rental funding.
- iii. Approve to progress all statutory approvals or consents required for the scheme.
- iv. Approve the implementation of permanent Traffic Regulation Orders, if required as such associated with any speed limit reductions, subject to completing the statutory consultation process associated with Traffic Regulation Orders.
- v. Approve any additional consultation/engagement as required for the scheme.
- vi. Approve to enter into construction contracts as necessary for the delivery of the scheme subject to a review of the procurement strategy by the Strategic Commissioning team; and
- vii. Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport to take relevant actions, including but not limited to finalising the terms of and entering into required contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary to implement the decision as shown at Appendix 1.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 S106 developer funding agreement was secured from Kings Hill Phase 2 development and carried through to the S106 developer funding agreement for the Phase 3 development.
- 1.2 The funds are for 'Local Traffic Management and Calming' for A scheme at Kent Street, Mereworth junction with the A228 designed to mitigate the impact of traffic arising from the Development and to enhance safety and conditions for local residents, pedestrians and cyclists.
- 1.3 Design options were undertaken aimed at improving visibility at the Kent Street junction with the A228 along with widening of A228 Malling Road between Kent Street and Beech Road.
- 1.4 A signalised junction incorporating a controlled pedestrian crossing on the A228 and widening the carriageway between Kent Street and Beech Road was consulted on and a recommendation to proceed to construction agreed by the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council Joint Transportation Board in September 2023. Noting that visibility improvements could not be achieved whilst exiting Kent Street without incorporating a signalised junction.

2.0 Update and governance

- 2.1 Over the last 12 months, detailed design work has progressed along with agreeing additional land requirements outside the existing highway boundary with the adjacent landowner.
- 2.2 The designs have altered following the consultation feedback with the removal of the cycleway between Kent Street and Beech Road. The footway provision on the north side of the A228 extent has been reduced to a length between Kent Street and a new bus stop north of Kent Street – **see Appendix A – General Arrangement Drawings** to provide budget savings. There is an existing footway on the south side.
- 2.3 The project has now got to a point where the detailed design is complete and a contractor ready to commence construction in April 2025 via the Highway Term Maintenance Contract. In the following few months the co ordination of the various elements of the scheme is required which includes, finalising and instructing utility companies to undertake the diversion of their underground and overground apparatus, gaining appropriate approvals for the removal of the hedgerow, removing the hedge and trees within the hedgerow prior to the bird nesting season, placement of a temporary or permanent fence line along the new highway boundary to secure the landowners land and provision for a compound area to accommodate temporary machinery, materials and welfare facilities.
- 2.4 The construction is likely to be phased, starting in April 2025, following the removal of the hedge and installation of the boundary fence. A programme of work will be developed along with the temporary traffic management phasing;

although some of the work can still accommodate two way running lanes of traffic, there will be the need for temporary traffic lights and road closures at various times to install ducts across A228, provide sufficient working space and resurface parts of the road.

- 2.5 Advance notification of the work will take place and temporary traffic signals manually operated, when necessary, will be needed to reduce the impact of the work; however, delays will occur as the A228 is a busy route. During road closures, there will be a signed diversion route which will be a significant detour although it is anticipated that local traffic will find their own routes. We will be working with the local Parish Councils and County Members to agree how best to reduce the impact on the minor roads.

3.0 Environmental, Ecological and Arboriculture Assessments

- 3.1 KCC has commissioned Waterman consultants to undertake all necessary Environmental, Ecological and Arboriculture assessments and to advise on any relevant approvals, mitigation and actions to be undertaken.

4.0 Other options considered but discarded

- 4.1 Other potential scheme options were considered as part of an option appraisal process and consulted on, however none of these were suitable alternatives as they did not improve the visibility for vehicles exiting Kent Street West and Kent Street East onto the A228 Malling Road. The option of not promoting upgrades to the local road network was also considered not to be feasible due to the road safety implications and proposed development growth within the district and neighbouring districts with additional large vehicle movements through a narrow section of the route between Mereworth and Kings Hill.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 The estimated cost of the scheme is £1.3m and is being funded partly by developer contributions already banked (£1.0m) and Kent County Council via the Kent Lane Rental Fund (£0.3m). The detailed costings have been scrutinised and the budget available from the two sources is adequate to deliver the scheme. The costings include an element to cover risk and contingency, and use of the already procured contracts reduces any cost uncertainty to ensure it is affordable within our funding envelope.

6.0 Programme

- 6.1 It is anticipated that the construction period will be from April 2025 to November 2025 but in a phased approach as stated in paragraph 2.4.

7.0 Legal

- 7.1 The proposals are permitted development and do not require planning permission.

- 7.2 Consultation with and necessary approvals from the Local Planning Authority in relation to the removal of hedgerows has been undertaken (as they have been identified as protected hedgerow under the Natural Environmental and Rural Communities Act 2006 - NERC Act, 2006).
- 7.3 The scheme requires additional land from the adjoining land owner – see **Appendix B- Land plan**. The land owner has supported this improvement with the agreement for land to be dedicated as Highway about to be signed and sealed on confirmation that this report is supported and approved for progression to construction. The consideration for the land to be dedicated as public highway has been agreed at £7,876.25.

8.0 Equalities

- 8.1 The Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) is included in **Appendix C** and shows that there will be positive impacts for all users as the proposed improvements will separate users from vehicular traffic wherever possible therefore creating a safer environment for all users, encouraging walking and wheeling bringing overall health benefits.
- 8.2 In the temporary arrangement during construction, there will be a need for a number of alterations to the existing pedestrians' facilities.
- 8.3 Access to properties will be always maintained. KCC site staff will be agreeing appropriate access with those immediately affected by the work.

9.0 Governance

- 9.1 The Corporate Director of Growth, Environment & Transport will inherit the main delegations as set out in the proposed decision.

10.0 Recommendation(s)

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- ii. Approve that the cost of staff and consultant time to project manage, input into the delivery and supervision of the scheme, be recoverable against the S106 Developer Contributions and Kent Lane Rental funding.
- iii. Approve to progress all statutory approvals or consents required for the scheme.
- iv. Approve the implementation of permanent Traffic Regulation Orders, if required as such associated with any speed limit reductions, subject to completing the statutory consultation process associated with Traffic Regulation Orders.

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| v. | Approve any additional consultation/engagement as required for the scheme. |
| vi. | Approve to enter into construction contracts as necessary for the delivery of the scheme subject to a review of the procurement strategy by the Strategic Commissioning team; and |
| vii | Delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport to take relevant actions, including but not limited to finalising the terms of and entering into required contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary to implement the decision as shown at Appendix 1. |

11.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Proposed Record of Decision
Appendix A - General Arrangement Drawings
Appendix B – Land Plan
Appendix C – EqlA

12.0 Contact Details

Report Authors: Jamie Watson/Nikola Floodgate
Senior Programme Manager (Active Travel) and Road Safety & Active Travel Group Manager

- Phone number: 03000 416239
- E-mail: nikola.floodgate@kent.gov.uk

Relevant Director: Lead Director: Haroona Chughtai

- Director of Highways, Transportation & Waste, GET
- Phone number: 03000 412479
- E-mail: haroona.chughtai@kent.gov.uk

Corporate Director: Simon Jones

- Corporate Director of Highways, Transportation & Waste, GET
- Phone number: 03000 411683
- E-mail: Simon.Jones@kent.gov.uk