

Fort Hill De-dualling, Margate

A report by the Capital Programme Manager to the Highways Advisory Board meeting on 8 January 2008.

Introduction

1. In support of Turner Contemporary and the adjacent Rendezvous site the intention is to de-dual Fort Hill. See Fig. 1 attached.
2. The purpose of this Report is to explain the background, programme and funding and to present the scheme proposal for recommendation to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways and Waste for formal approval.

Background

3. Fort Hill is a short section of local dualling constructed many years ago that sits out of context with the rest of the B2051 coastal route between Margate and Cliftonville.
4. The coastal side of Fort Hill is the site of Turner Contemporary and to the east beyond the RNLI Lifeboat Station, the Rendezvous development site.
5. From the very inception of Turner Contemporary, the idea has been to return Fort Hill to a single carriageway. This will reduce the perception of severance and integrate Turner Contemporary and the Rendezvous development with the Town and particularly the old town. It will also free up surplus land that will contribute to the two developments either directly or in the context of improving the setting. It is as much about perception as reality but the single carriageway and associated improved street scene should help strike a better balance between the needs of pedestrians and drivers.

The Scheme

6. The scheme will utilise the southern westbound carriageway which was the original alignment of Fort Hill. The junction with Turner Contemporary will remain signal controlled. The signals are mainly to cater for pedestrian movements and in particular to close the junction down in the event of the launch or recovery of the lifeboat that has to manoeuvre within the junction to access the slipway. Towards the top of Fort Hill, a right turn lane protected by island refuges will maintain good access to the Police Station. This area of the scheme may be subject to change post construction depending on the future access arrangements to the Rendezvous site. This is unfortunate but the difficulty is that the Rendezvous proposals are not yet defined and there is an obligation to commence the Fort Hill de-dualling in April 2008 to complement the Turner Contemporary programme.
7. While the carriageway will be conventional asphalt, higher quality materials will be used for the kerbing and footway paving to raise the standard of the public realm.
8. Outside of the basic scheme there is the opportunity to carry out complementary improvements to improve general pedestrian access and ambience. The pedestrian area between the Promenade running into the Turner Contemporary entrance and towards the Pier could benefit from improvement. King Street is also a key pedestrian route between the town and Turner but is dominated by two traffic lanes at the expense of narrow footways. Thanet District Council has proposals to revert to just one lane of traffic and widen the footways.

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Procedure & Programme

9. The scheme is a lessening of highway and within the highway boundary and does not require planning consent.
10. The nature of the scheme is such that specific public consultation has not been appropriate although the proposals have been implicit within the various submissions, exhibitions and recent public meeting related to Turner Contemporary. The intention would be to inform the residents and business that front the works and in the area prior to construction and to erect a Notice Board on the site with a plan of the scheme.
11. The joint Local Members for Margate & Cliftonville have been consulted about this report and any views will be reported at the Board meeting.
12. Kent Highway Services has given a commitment to commence the scheme construction in April 2008. The works will be carried out by our term contractor Ringway and are expected to take 6 months and be completed by October.

Financial Implications

13. The estimated cost of the de-dualling scheme is £0.750m. The available funding is £0.750m composed of £0.550m underspend on the capital programme and £0.200m Cabinet Member allocation for footway improvements.
14. A bid for Objective 2 funding has been successful with £0.850m awarded for 'Opening of the Eastern Seafront' and some of this funding should be available for top-up funding of the enhanced public realm.
15. While the priority is the de-dualling, the objective is to carry out the more wider regeneration improvements to the adjacent King Street and the Promenade entrance to Turner Contemporary subject to funding availability.

Recommendation

16. Subject to the view of this Board it is proposed to recommend to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Highways & Waste that the scheme for the de-dualling of Fort Hill and associated works on The Promenade and King Street shown on Drawing No. B0647400/20 is approved for development control and land charge disclosures.

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Background Documents: None

On Display: Drawing No. B0647400/20