

From: **Matthew Balfour - Cabinet Member for Environment & Transport**

**Barbara Cooper – Corporate Director Growth, Environment & Transport**

To: **Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee**

Decision No: 16/00029

Subject: **A226 London Road/A206 St Clements Way, Greenhithe – Junction Improvement and Construction of New Bus Lanes**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

**Past Pathway of Paper:** None

**Future Pathway of Paper:** None

**Electoral Division:** Swanscombe and Greenhithe & Dartford East

**Summary:** This report is seeking approval to take the highway improvement for the A226 London Road/A206 St Clements Way through the next stages of development and delivery including authority to progress statutory approvals and to enter into funding and construction contracts.

**Recommendation(s):**

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Environment & Transport on the proposed decision as follows and as indicated on the proposed decision sheet attached at Appendix A.

i) give approval to the feasibility design for A226 London Road/A206 St Clements Way, Greenhithe Improvement Scheme for development control and land charge disclosures shown in principle on Drawing No. 4300384/000/05 Rev B.

ii) give approval to progress to a detail design stage, the A226 London Road/A206 St Clements Way Improvement Scheme shown as a feasibility design on Drawing No. 4300384/000/05 Rev B, including such work as drainage and environmental mitigation.

iii) give approval to progress all statutory approvals and consents required for the scheme shown in principle on Drawing No. 4300384/000/05 Rev B.

iv) give approval to carry out public engagement for the scheme shown in principle on Drawing No. 4300384/000/05 Rev B.

- v) give approval to enter into Single Local Growth Fund funding agreement subject to the approval of the Corporate Director of Finance & Procurement.
- vi) give approval to enter into construction contracts as necessary for the delivery of the scheme subject to the approval of the Commissioning Board to the recommended procurement strategy.
- vii) give approval for any further decisions required to allow the scheme to proceed through to delivery to be taken by the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment & Transport under the Officer Scheme of Delegations following prior consultation with the Cabinet Member.

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The A226 London Road and A206 St Clements Way roundabout junction is located on a key strategic route between Dartford and Gravesend and also provides access to the Bluewater and Crossways retail/commercial developments and links to the Dartford Crossing. St Clements Way also forms a key part of the Fastrack bus service and provides direct access to Greenhithe Station. See Appendix B (Feasibility design – Drawing No. 4300384/000/05 Rev B.)
- 1.2 The purpose of the scheme is to reduce traffic congestion, particularly during peak hours and to improve overall journey time reliability. This will be achieved by increasing the capacity of the St Clements Way/London Road roundabout. The provision of new bus lanes in each direction on St Clements Way will also improve existing bus journey times and assist the planned expansion of the Fastrack bus service. The area can also become congested when there is an incident at the Dartford crossing or during busy shopping periods at Bluewater but it is unrealistic to try to provide additional capacity for the junction to cater for the likely volumes of traffic during these events.
- 1.3 The site is very constrained by residential and commercial buildings and this has limited the footprint of the scheme to existing highway land or land which is under KCC's ownership or control. This includes a strip of land that has been secured through a Section 106 agreement for the adjacent development of St Clements Lakes to the southwest of the London Road roundabout and an area of land that has been retained by KCC from the original construction of St Clements Way located to the west of St Clements Way.
- 1.4 The improvements will include an enlarged roundabout at the existing A226 London Road/A206 St Clements Way junction and a new bus lane in each direction between the London Road and Crossways Boulevard roundabouts.

## **2. Financial Implications**

- 2.1 The overall estimated cost is £8.5m. The allocation from the Single Local Growth Fund is £4.2m. A major scheme business case is required to be submitted to the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) for approval

before the funding can be released. This is planned for submission to SELEP during 2016. The remaining £4.3m is to be provided by the Kent Thameside Strategic Transport Programme (STIP) funding allocation, which is derived from developers S106 contributions and HCA funding.

- 2.2 Costs associated with developing the scheme are included within the estimate and will be covered by the STIP funding as the Local Growth Funding is not currently allocated to be released until 2018.

### **3. Policy Framework**

- 3.1 The scheme supports KCC's Strategic Statement objectives by reducing congestion and improving the highway infrastructure to provide more reliable journey times and improved public transport links and accessibility, to support Kent business growth and encourage economic activity to benefit the local and wider communities.

### **4. The Report**

- 4.1 A preliminary traffic assessment of the junction was undertaken in 2015, using new traffic data collected during 2015. The existing operation of the roundabout junction was assessed using ARCADY to provide baseline figures as a measure against the different layout options that were tested.

- 4.2 The traffic assessment highlighted that although the existing junction currently operates just within theoretical capacity, observations are that the junction suffers from regular congestion and delays during peak hour periods. Modelling confirms that additional capacity at the junction is required when forecast traffic demand and growth is taken into account.

- 4.3 A feasibility study into different junctions options was undertaken, and options considered included the following:

- Option A - Enlarged standard circular roundabout
- Option B - Fully signalised junction
- Option C - Enlarged oval shaped roundabout
- Option D - Signalised oval shaped roundabout

An earlier design option that had been considered by KCC in 2003 was the provision of a low headroom underpass for cars only. This was looked at as part of this assessment but was not considered viable due to the presence of a high water table, the length of underpass required would exceed the space available, construction costs and buildability issues.

- 4.4 The findings of the feasibility study showed that Option C - the enlarged oval roundabout gave the best results in achieving the increased capacity required to deal with current congestion issues and allow for future growth. Although predicted to be over capacity in 2035 this option presents the best overall balance for an improvement within a very constrained site and it is hoped that by 2035 other highway improvements in the area will have come forward to

alleviate future pressure on the junction. See Appendix C (Indicative Layout – Option C).

- 4.5 The scheme can be built within the existing highway curtilage or on land that is owned/controlled by KCC and so does not require any land acquisition to deliver the scheme. It is unlikely that planning will be required and the scheme can be delivered as Permitted Development, although this will need to be determined by the KCC's planning team when an outline scheme has been developed. It is therefore unlikely that any statutory approvals or consents will be required but it is included in the decision recommendation as a contingency safeguard.
- 4.6 As part of the feasibility design and initial data acquisition, a topographical survey was carried out, existing drainage infrastructure records were obtained, and engineering and cost consultants provided input into the design and cost estimates.
- 4.7 Both St Clements Way and London Road are key utility corridors and identifying the impacts of the scheme and any required diversions will be an important aspect of the scheme cost and programme. Early engagement with the utility companies is planned as part of the next stage of the design to mitigate this risk.
- 4.8 Once the outline design is sufficiently developed it is proposed to hold an engagement exercise with key stakeholders, the local community and general public to allow the scheme to be refined and the design to be confirmed, prior to moving onto the detailed design and procurement stages.
- 4.9 Delivery of the scheme will be dependent on completing the detailed design of the scheme and procuring a contractor through a competitive tender process under European procurement rules. The current project estimate includes a risk and inflation allowance but a more robust estimate will be prepared as part of the outline design, where it will be possible to provide a more accurate assessment of the project risks.
- 4.10 On the basis of the Single Local Growth funding being confirmed, design and procurement proceeding satisfactorily a start of construction in early 2019 is anticipated.
- 4.11 An initial equalities impact assessment has been carried out for the scheme. This has identified the need to further consider the provisions for the elderly and those with disabilities associated with the positioning of controlled crossing facilities. This will be addressed as part of the scheme development. In addition those travellers who regularly use or rely exclusively on public transport should experience more reliable journey times by the proposed improvements at the London Road roundabout and the introduction of additional bus lanes.
- 4.12 It is anticipated that the surplus land retained by KCC following the original construction of St Clements Way can be sold following the completion of this scheme.

4.13 Following the overarching decisions related to the recommendations in this report being requested from the Cabinet Member, any further decisions required to allow the scheme to proceed through to delivery will be taken by the Corporate Director for Growth, Environment & Transport under the Officer Scheme of Delegations following prior consultation with the Cabinet Member.

## 5. Conclusions

5.1 This is an important scheme to help reduce congestion at the St Clements Way/London Road junction in Dartford to support housing development, job creation and general economic activity. The announcement of Single Local Growth funding, combined with the STIP funding that will allow the scheme to proceed is very welcome news. On the basis of the funding agreements being confirmed and design and procurement proceeding satisfactorily, a construction start date in 2019 is anticipated.

## 6. Recommendation(s)

### **Recommendation(s):**

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Environment & Transport on the proposed decision as follows and as indicated on the proposed decision sheet attached at appendix A.

i) give approval to the feasibility design for A226 London Road/A206 St Clements Way, Greenhithe Improvement Scheme for development control and land charge disclosures shown in principle on Drawing No. 4300384/000/05 Rev B.

ii) give approval to progress to a detail design stage, the A226 London Road/A206 St Clements Way Improvement Scheme shown as a feasibility design on Drawing No. 4300384/000/05 Rev B, including such work as drainage and environmental mitigation.

iii) give approval to progress all statutory approvals and consents required for the scheme shown in principle on Drawing No. 4300384/000/05 Rev B.

iv) give approval to carry out public engagement for the scheme shown in principle on Drawing No. 4300384/000/05 Rev B.

v) give approval to enter into Single Local Growth Fund funding agreement subject to the approval of the Corporate Director of Finance & Procurement.

vi) give approval to enter into construction contracts as necessary for the delivery of the scheme subject to the approval of the Commissioning Board to the recommended procurement strategy.

vii) give approval for any further decisions required to allow the scheme to proceed through to delivery to be taken by the Corporate Director of Growth,

Environment & Transport under the Officer Scheme of Delegations following prior consultation with the Cabinet Member.

## **7. Appendices**

- Appendix A – Proposed Record of Decision
- Appendix B – Feasibility Design Drawing No. 4300384/000/05 Rev B
- Appendix C - Indicative Layout – Option C

## **8. Contact details**

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