

From: Barbara Cooper - Corporate Director Growth, Environment & Transport

To: Mike Whiting - Cabinet Member for Planning, Highways, Transport and Waste

Decision No: 18/00027

Subject: A28/A291 Sturry Link Road, Canterbury

Summary: This paper seeks approval to the preferred outline design of the Sturry Link Road.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Member for Planning, Highways, Transport and Waste, is asked to agree to:

- i) give approval to the revised preferred outline design scheme for the Sturry Link Road Drawing No. 430392/000/71 Rev 0 – Fig 2, updated to incorporate amendments arising from the public consultation, for development control and land charge disclosures.
- ii) give approval to all acts required to acquire the land and rights for the carrying out and completion of the A28/A291 Sturry Link Road scheme, including by means of a compulsory purchase order, and any other necessary statutory orders.
- iii) accept, if necessary, any blight notice that may be served, on terms to be agreed with the Director of Infrastructure, Strategic and Corporate Services.
- iv) the delegation to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment & Transport, under the Officer Scheme of Delegations, to take further or other decisions as may be appropriate to deliver the A28/A291 Sturry Link Road scheme in accordance with these recommendations and the earlier overarching decisions given under Record of Decisions 15/00070A and 17/00061, that remain extant.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 A report to this Committee in September 2015 gave an overview and a concept design of the Sturry Link Road that led to a number of approvals to allow the scheme to progress. Some Members were concerned about the breadth of approvals and the decision was taken to allow for 'further specific authorities as necessary and with reversion to this Committee on matters of significance'. This would be the case in any event with a major scheme that takes several years to progress from concept to completion. The record of decision 15/000070 is in Annex A
- 1.2 A further update report was presented to this Committee in July 2017 which approved outline designs with a request that a further update be provided after completion of the consultation exercise undertaken between 26 July 2017 and 6 September 2017. The record of decision, 17/000061 is included in Annex B.

- 1.3 It is now appropriate to provide an update report on the outcome of the consultation and to advise on amendments made to the design, and seek approval to the preferred outline scheme design, shown on Fig 2. - Drawing No. 430392/000/71 Rev 0.
- 1.4 The A28 Sturry/Island Road is a principal road corridor between Canterbury and Thanet that also serves residents and businesses to the north east of Canterbury and Sturry. At Sturry, the A291 Sturry Hill provides a link to Herne Bay.
- 1.5 The section of A28 through Sturry is particularly difficult because of the level crossing of the Canterbury - Thanet railway line and the inevitable interruption to traffic and queuing through the centre of the community.
- 1.6 Canterbury City Council's District Local Plan, adopted in July 2017, has identified land at Sturry and Broad Oak, which lies north of the railway and west of the A28/A291, as a suitable allocation for 1,150 homes, as well as assorted infrastructure improvements including a Sturry Link Road to relieve the level crossing and access the new housing, together with station access improvements. Other land use allocations at Hersden and towards Herne Bay may also in part be related to the Sturry Link Road.
- 1.7 A bid to the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SE LEP) for funding has been approved which together with contributions from the developers of Broad Oak, Sturry and other development sites gives the opportunity to deliver the Sturry Link Road.

2. Scheme Overview

- 2.1 The Link Road would run to the north and west of the A28 and A291. See Figure 1 attached. It would commence at a new junction on the A28 and head northwards across two arms of the Great Stour and over the railway line - (See A-B on Figure 1). Route alignment is highly constrained and is challenging in engineering terms. A combined viaduct solution approx. 250m long is proposed rather than individual bridges because of the poor ground conditions, the flood plain and the proximity of the Great Stour to the railway.
- 2.2 From the railway, the route would turn eastwards to connect back to the A291 at points (C) and (D). The alignment is less constrained and will be influenced by avoiding areas of ancient woodland and the layout of the proposed housing development. A junction in the area of (E) would allow separate connections to be made to the A291. The existing junction of A28 Island Road and A291 (F) will also be amended to reflect and influence the changed direction and priorities of traffic flow.
- 2.3 The housing development will also be required to provide a road connection to Broad Oak Road/Shalloak Road north of the railway between points (B) to (G) with possible upgrading of the level crossing signals. A level crossing risk assessment is being undertaken to determine any change in risk of operation of the crossing due to these proposals.

2.4 The Link Road would allow all A28/A291 through traffic to avoid the Sturry level crossing although the level crossing would need to be retained for local movements and for buses. It would open further opportunities for improvements to the station including a potential car park (F)

3. Public Consultation

3.1 A public consultation exercise was undertaken for 6 weeks from 26 July 2017 to 6 September 2017. The consultation involved 3 local exhibitions, was available online through the County Councils Consultation website; <https://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti/Sturrylinkroad/consultationHome> and through the online web based virtual exhibition 'Sticky World'. A copy of the Consultation Booklet is provided in Annex C.

3.2 Presentations were given in advance of the public consultation to the Canterbury Joint Transport Board on 15 June 2017 and to the Sturry Parish Council on the 27 June 2017.

3.3 The event was publicised through delivery of postcards to the residents of Sturry and Broad Oak, a poster in the local libraries and at the Sturry Parish Council offices, by press release with articles run by Kent Online and the local papers, via the Sturry Parish Council Website and Twitter as well as the KCC Twitter site. A copy of the Poster is shown in Annex E.

3.4 There was a good level of interest shown in the consultation, which is summarised in the following bullet points.

- The three local exhibition events were attended by over 250 people.
- The consultation booklet detailing the scheme was downloaded 885 times from the consultation website.
- The virtual online exhibition 'Sticky World' received 928 views and 170 comments were made on the website.
- Feedback was requested through a questionnaire available at the exhibitions and available to download from the website. The questionnaire asked for views on the road layout, its features and its impact on the surrounding environment including suggestions for improvement. In total, 116 completed questionnaires were received.
- Some respondents chose not to use the questionnaire form to respond to the consultation and instead provided their views in the form of a letter or email. Overall, 23 letters or emails were received.

3.5 Overall, there is generally good support for the Link Road in the wider surroundings; however locally there is an equal mix of opinion. Key reasons for support were: reduced congestion through Sturry, improved journey times and the opportunity to avoid the Sturry level crossing. Wider congestion and increased air pollution were the main concerns of consultees not in support of the Link Road, many of whom took the view that the Link Road would not reduce congestion but just move it to another area.

3.6 Comments on the layout of the Link Road proposals focused heavily on pedestrian and cycle provisions and questioned whether the balance between all the competing transports demands were equitable. Examples included

suggestions for additional and wider cycle routes, segregated cycle/pedestrian provisions and requests for more signal-controlled crossings.

- 3.7 Consultees were also asked to consider and comment on their preference for one of three junction options presented for the A28/A291 junction. The reconfiguration of this junction is needed to improve and influence the traffic flow once the new link road has been completed.
- 3.8 The proposed options for the A28/A291 junction attracted much local interest and were for many the key focal point of the consultation. Whilst most consultees understood the need and reasons to alter the junction, particularly the need to restrict some traffic turning movements, concerns over traffic re-routing through the local estate roads and the impact on accessibility to local facilities were the main issues. The junction layout shown in Fig. 3 has been selected for the final scheme design comprising a fully signalised configuration including signal-controlled pedestrian crossings.
- 3.9 The preferred junction would ensure that traffic on the westbound A28 Island Road uses the A291 and the proposed Sturry Link Road, avoiding the Sturry Crossing and Sturry Village by prohibiting, except for buses, the turning movement into Sturry. East bound traffic along the A28 still has the option of using the old A28 through Sturry rather than the Sturry Link Road however uncertainty of any delay at the Sturry Crossing and priority given by the traffic signals should encourage through traffic to use the new road. As an indication of the change in traffic flow with the new junction layout, the following is a comparison of flows predicted over the next fifteen years and flows of today.
- Between 70 to 85% reduction in traffic on the level crossing, depending on the time of day.
 - Traffic flows along the A28 Island Road will be redirected along the A291 Sturry Hill; this will increase the existing flows on the 150m section of Sturry Hill between the A28 and the proposed roundabout.
 - Traffic levels on Island Road will be unchanged.
 - Congestion will be eased during operation of the level crossing with traffic on the A28 Island Road to A291 Sturry Hill able to flow freely to the A28 Island Road.
- 3.10 Access to Sturry (south) from the westbound A28 Island Road can be gained via a 'u' turn at the new roundabout on Sturry Hill to the north, an overall distance of 0.6km, or via the Link Road and back onto the A28 to the west of Sturry
- 3.11 The full consultation report is provided for information in Annex D.

4. Scheme Updates in Response to Feedback.

- 4.1 Chapter 6 of the consultation report in Annex D includes a summary table of responses to the feedback received during the consultation.
- 4.2 Amendments incorporated into the revised design include:

- Shared-use footways/cycleways have been widened by 0.5m. This ensures 'effective' cycle widths of 3m or 3.5m where appropriate.
- Widening of the existing Shalloak Road between the Broad Oak Crossing and the proposed Link Road has been included to remove the existing pinch point that causes backing up over the level crossing; a safety concern for Network Rail. This will improve the approach to the level crossing and ease a Network Rail concern about increased use and associated risk of traffic using the Broad Oak Crossing. Some land fronting the north of Shalloak Road will be required for the widening and initial discussion are underway with the land owner.
- A footway on the southern side of the link to Shalloak Road is to be widened to 3m and changed to a shared footway/cycleway facility.
- An additional signal-controlled crossing (staggered) is to be provided on the northern approach to the roundabout on the A28 to replace the uncontrolled crossing.
- 3 additional formal pedestrian crossing points have been provided along the route.
- Where provided, pedestrian refuges have been widened so that they are suitable for both pedestrians and cyclists.
- The surface water attenuation pond is to be relocated within the area of severed land to the north-east side of the roundabout adjacent to 'Perryfield Farm'.
- Locations of bus stops have been agreed with the bus operator 'Stage Coach
- Providing continuity of footway along the A291 Sturry Hill.

5. Scheme Delivery

- 5.1 Discussions have been held with the City Council and the Broad Oak and Sturry developers on a possible delivery model.
- 5.2 The intention is that KCC would deliver the section of the Link Road from the A28 over the Great Stour and railway. The developers of the Sturry site would deliver the remainder of the Link Road as part of their development. The works would be programmed to ensure that the whole of the Sturry Link Road would be opened on completion of the KCC element of the works.
- 5.4 Alterations to the A28/A291 junction would be carried out immediately after the opening of the Sturry Link Road.
- 5.5 2020 is the earliest date envisaged for construction of the Link Road but that will be significantly influenced by satisfactory progress through planning and statutory order stages.

6. Current Position

- 6.1 The KCC Major Capital Programme Team has completed the outline design and feasibility work for the section of the Link Road from the A28 over both arms of the Great Stour and railway to connect to a proposed roundabout within the development site. A viaduct is proposed;

- to minimise the impact on the flood plain and to avoid the need for additional land acquisition to provide flood storage compensation and
- to provide confidence in cost and programme and eliminate the risk associated with constructing embankments on poor ground.

6.2 Along the A28 frontage, there is a natural gap in existing development between a car showroom and a water treatment plant to the west and a farm house to the east. The optimum route is one that also generally follows land boundaries and is shown on Fig 2 attached. A route further to the west would affect land allocated in the Local Plan for employment uses and any potential expansion of the treatment plant. A route further to the east would encroach more onto the flood plain and bring the route closer to the farm house. While a route more to the west is more beneficial for the owners of the farm house the scheme will be on a raised viaduct where it crosses both the railway and the river arms and unfortunately will always be intrusive.

6.3 The proposed Sturry Link Road will provide;

- 1.5km of single carriageway (A28 to A291) with one lane in each direction
- 3 new roundabouts.
- 250m long bridge structure (viaduct).
- 3.5m wide continuous shared cycleway and footway between A28 and A291.
- Nine formal pedestrian crossing points including two signal-controlled crossings.
- Bus lane south bound across the viaduct to A28.
- Street lighting provided, but not on viaduct.

6.4 The section of the Link Road between the A28 and the development is proposed as being three lanes with one lane dedicated for use by buses approaching Canterbury. This is effectively an extension of the bus lane along Sturry Road. Future bus provision and routing still needs to be confirmed before the number of services that will divert to the Sturry Link Road and the benefit of this provision can be established although initial consultation with Stagecoach has identified the preferred locations for bus stops.

6.5 Three developers, Environ Design (Sturry) Ltd, Barrett Homes and David Wilson Homes, have completed master planning for the Sturry and Broad Oak sites to deliver a total of 1,150 homes. The proposed route of the Sturry Link Road has been included in the master plan. Public consultation of the master planning was held with the local community in April 2017. A planning application has been submitted to Canterbury City Council by Environ Design (Sturry) Ltd for 700 homes. A further application from Barrett Homes and David Wilson Homes together for 450 homes is expected soon.

6.6 Early developer contributions of £1.45m have been secured in s106 agreements to fund the design and planning of the works.

6.7 The proposals have been developed in consultation with the landowners, however the next steps will be to hold more detailed discussions with land

owners effected by the proposals on the detailed aspects of the scheme and land take requirements.

7.0 Next Steps

- 7.1 Following the public consultation and an assessment of all the responses and practical considerations and scheme objectives, the Cabinet Member is invited to approve the preferred scheme to take forward, subject to the views expressed by this Cabinet Committee.
- 7.2 A planning application will then be submitted to the County Council as a Regulation 3 application for the whole scheme that will include the indicative route that will be indicated within the developers, planning applications.
- 7.3 Land acquisition will commence by voluntary agreement if possible, but a compulsory purchase order will be published, following planning approval; together with other statutory orders as necessary, to give land and programme certainty.
- 7.4 Procurement of a design and build contract and appointment of a designer to complete the structural design of the viaduct. There will be a break clause in the contract should the scheme not progress to construction.

8. Financial Implications

- 8.1 The overall estimated scheme cost is £29.6m. The allocation from the Single Local Growth Fund of £5.9m was formally confirmed by the SELEP Accountability Board in June 2016. This funding together with an earlier advance developer contribution of £1.45m is being drawn down to support scheme development costs and there is a requirement to utilise all the LGF allocation before the end of 2020/21. A total of £23.7m is to be provided via developer contributions.
- 8.2 A funding mechanism is proposed for the developer contribution element of the scheme cost that will be agreed with Finance and Procurement and subject to the implementation of S278 agreements. The agreement will ensure that all the County Council's costs are met including the provision of a robust allowance for risk and inflation and the provision of a bond by the developers, where appropriate. Heads of terms have been agreed but substantive progress on the agreements can only be expected when the developers have secured planning consents.

9. Policy Framework

- 9.1 The Link Road supports the 2015-2020 Strategic Statement 'Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes' and the strategic statement of 'Kent Communities feel the benefits of economic growth'. The scheme will reduce congestion, improve safety and help mitigate associated air quality concerns. By providing additional capacity it will contribute to unlocking development potential for new homes and jobs in north east Canterbury. The benefits will broaden out to Herne Bay and Thanet.

9.2 The Sturry Link Road is included as priority within the 'Local Transport Plan 4: Delivering Growth without Gridlock 2016-2031', which highlights how investment in these infrastructure projects is vital to boost Kent's economy and support a growing population.

10. Legal and Equalities Implications

10.1 There are no immediate legal implications. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been prepared, updated and approved and this will continue to be reviewed as the scheme development and design is progressed.

11. Conclusions

11.1 The A28 through Sturry and the issues with the level crossing have long been a concern. The potential of development at Broad Oak and Sturry and at other sites to contribute to the City Council's housing needs, and the confirmed allocation of LGF funding gives the opportunity to deliver the Link Road. This will achieve both direct benefits and the opportunity to facilitate wider benefits.

11.2 Progress of the scheme development has been significant. KCC has completed surveys and developed a design in co-operation with the developers and in discussion with Canterbury City Council, Network Rail and the Environment Agency. The proposals have been subject to a public consultation exercise, with many of the suggestions incorporated into the preferred outline design. The developers also have prepared their masterplan as a precursor to the submission of planning applications.

11.3 The purpose of the report and recommendations is to adopt a preferred outline design to allow the scheme to progress. With a project of this nature and time frame further specific authorities may be necessary and the Cabinet Member will be invited to take those decisions following reversion to this Committee as appropriate on matters of more significance, with the Corporate Director invited to take other decisions where appropriate and where authorised under the Officer Scheme of Delegations.

12. Recommendations

- 12.1 The Cabinet Member for Planning, Highways, Transport and Waste, is asked to agree to:
- i) give approval to the revised preferred outline design scheme for the Sturry Link Road Drawing No. 430392/000/71 Rev 0 – Fig 2, updated to incorporate amendments arising from the public consultation, development control and land charge disclosures;
 - ii) give approval to all acts required to acquire the land and rights for the carrying out and completion of the A28/A291 Sturry Link Road scheme, including by means of a compulsory purchase order, and any other necessary statutory orders;

- iii) accept, if necessary, any blight notice that may be served, on terms to be agreed with the Director of Infrastructure, Strategic and Corporate Services;
- iv) the delegation to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment & Transport, under the Officer Scheme of Delegations, to take further or other decisions as may be appropriate to deliver the A28/A291 Sturry Link Road scheme in accordance with these recommendations and the earlier overarching decisions given under Record of Decisions 15/00070A and 17/00061, that remain extant;

13. Background Documents

Appendix A – Proposed Record of Decision

Annex A - Record of Decision 15/00070 dated 25 September 2015

Annex B - Record of Decision 17/00061 dated 14 July 2017

Annex C - Sturry Link Road Consultation Booklet

Annex D - Sturry Link Road Consultation Report

Annex E - Sturry Link Road Consultation Poster

Figure 1 – Drawing no. 430392/000/17 Rev 1 – Indicative Layout

Figure 2 – Drawing no. 430392/000/71 Rev 0 - Scheme Plan

Figure 3 – Drawing no. 430392/000/72 Rev 0 - A28 Island Road/A291 Sturry Hill Junction Improvement.

Equalities Impact Assessment dated Version 6 dated 21 July 2017

14. Contact details

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