

From: Mike Austerberry, Corporate Director – Enterprise & Environment

To: David Brazier, Cabinet Member – Transport & Environment

Decision No: 13/00049

Subject: Westwood Relief Strategy - widening of Poorhole Lane and associated junction improvements

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: N/A

Future Pathway of Paper: Cabinet Member Decision.

Electoral Division: Broadstairs & St Moses Montefiore, Margate & Cliftonville, Birchington & Villages, Ramsgate

Summary: Approval to take the highway improvement scheme through the next stages of development including authority to enter into land and funding agreements.

Recommendation(s): The Cabinet Member for Transport & Environment be recommended to:

- i. approve the scheme for the improvement of Poorhole Lane and associated junctions shown as an outline design together with land acquisition requirements on Drg No. A3/KHS/PL/BID/106 Rev0 for land charge disclosures and development control.
- ii. give approval to progress the scheme for the improvement of Poorhole Lane and associated junctions shown as an outline design on Drg No. A3/KHS/PL/BID/106 Rev0 including any ancillary works such as drainage and environmental mitigation.
- iii. give approval for Legal Services to complete the acquisition of the land required to deliver the scheme for the improvement of Poorhole Lane and associated junctions shown indicatively on Drg No. A3/KHS/PL/BID/106 Rev0 including but not limited to any ancillary works such as drainage and environmental mitigation on terms to be agreed by the Director of Property and Infrastructure Support.
- iv. give authority for the S151 Officer to formally accept the DfT Pinch Point funding offer when received and subject to being satisfied with the terms and conditions.

1. Introduction

1.1 Kent County Council (KCC) and Thanet District Council (TDC) have been working together to improve the local economic condition by developing employment opportunities for Thanet's residents. The growth of Westwood Town Centre with the Westwood Cross Retail Development and Canterbury Christ Church University Campus has helped the local economy and created a significant number of jobs for local people.

1.2 These developments, however, have led to severe congestion at peak times during weekdays and Saturdays at the Westwood Roundabout as the intersection

point of roads between Ramsgate, Broadstairs and Margate and at the heart of Westwood Town Centre.

1.3 The Westwood Roundabout is significantly over capacity and this is leading to extremely long delays and unreliable journey times. As a result, traffic is experiencing severe delays on the A256 Westwood Road and the local community and businesses have raised considerable concerns about the impact of this severe congestion on their quality of life and business. In addition, the Thanet Loop (a well used circular bus service, operating in two directions every 7/8 minutes and linking the main Thanet settlements) has been severely disrupted with unreliable journey times and indeed one operator has withdrawn a route service.

1.4 KCC and TDC would like to see Westwood and Thanet continue to grow to increase employment opportunities and reduce the levels of deprivation. There are major development sites that are being held back because of the traffic conditions until there is a sustainable solution and indeed were a significant consideration in the bid that secured the funding.

1.5 KCC and TDC have developed a congestion relief strategy for Westwood and Thanet area and the proposed scheme for the improvement of Poorhole Lane is an important element of Phase 1 of that strategy. See the strategy plan and the scheme for the improvement of Poorhole Lane and associated junctions, shown as an outline design together with land acquisition requirements, on Drg No. A3/KHS/PL/BID/106 Rev0 attached.

1.6 Following a successful bid to the Department for Transport (DfT) for Local Pinch Point funding, the Transport Secretary has awarded £1.562m towards the overall cost of the scheme. S106 contributions have been secured for the remainder of the estimated scheme cost of £2.242m. KCC must proceed rapidly to conclude negotiations with landowners to secure the necessary land and progress the scheme design.

1.7 A condition of DfT funding is that the scheme must be completed by 31 March 2015 and hence there is considerable urgency to progress the scheme through the next stages to see if its delivery remains a viable albeit challenging proposition.

2. Financial Implications

2.1 Scheme development costs can be covered initially by the Major Schemes Preliminary Design budget allocation until the 2013/14 tranche of Pinch Point funding is received.

3. Bold Steps for Kent and Policy Framework

3.1 Supports the objectives of supporting existing businesses, encouraging economic activity and job creation by improving accessibility by reducing traffic congestion and improving safety.

4. Critical Aspects

4.1 Narrow strips of frontage land need to be acquired. Discussions with landowners have indicated an in principle willingness to sell the land to KCC by voluntary negotiation. This very welcome support for the scheme needs to be confirmed by the completion of negotiations on purchase price and the formal transfer of the land to KCC.

4.2 The land is generally wooded scrub and an environmental screening report may be required to allow the Head of Planning Applications to give a screening opinion to confirm that an Environmental Impact Assessment is not required and that the scheme does not require planning permission and can be delivered as Permitted Development.

4.3 A detailed topographical survey needs to be commissioned together with associated environmental, drainage and geotechnical surveys to allow the detailed design to be developed.

4.4 Margate Road and Westwood Road are likely to be key utility corridors and identifying the impacts of the proposed roundabout junctions and any required diversions or protection measures will be important aspects of scheme cost and programme.

4.5 Scheme cost, construction procurement and construction period are key factors in affordability and target end date delivery and these aspects will be considered in detail in the coming months as the detailed design is progressed by Amey – our new engineering and transportation term consultant. However, the scheme is a relatively straightforward improvement but any difficulty in securing the land or a need for planning permission could put pressure on the ability to deliver the scheme by the 31 March 2015 deadline and hence the need to make urgent progress on these initial critical aspects.

5. Cabinet Committee Comments

5.1 The proposed Decision was considered and endorsed by the Environment, Highways and Waste Cabinet Committee on 19 June 2013

6. Conclusions

6.1 The approval of Pinch Point funding is a welcome acknowledgement of the efforts being made by KCC and TDC to implement the traffic relief strategy for Westwood. The funding deadline is challenging and it is therefore important that KCC makes urgent progress on securing the land and developing the detailed design.

7. Recommendation(s)

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That the Cabinet Member for Transport & Environment agree to:

i. approve the scheme for the improvement of Poorhole Lane and associated junctions shown as an outline design together with land acquisition requirements on Drg No. A3/KHS/PL/BID/106 Rev0 for land charge disclosures and development control.

ii. give approval to progress the scheme for the improvement of Poorhole Lane and associated junctions shown as an outline design on Drg No. A3/KHS/PL/BID/106 Rev0 including any ancillary works such as drainage and environmental mitigation.

iii. give approval for Legal Services to complete the acquisition of the land required to deliver the scheme for the improvement of Poorhole Lane and associated junctions shown indicatively on Drg No. A3/KHS/PL/BID/106 Rev0 including but not

limited to any ancillary works such as drainage and environmental mitigation on terms to be agreed by the Director of Property and Infrastructure Support.

iv. give authority for the S151 Officer to formally accept the DfT Pinch Point funding offer when received and subject to being satisfied with the terms and conditions.

7. Background Documents

Local Pinch Point Funding Application – February 2013

www.kent.gov.uk/transportfunding

8. Contact details

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