

## Progress Report on Major Capital Projects

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### Glossary of Terms

AFC	Ashford's Future Company
AFPB	Ashford's Future Partnership Board
DCLG	Department of Communities and Local Government
GAF(2)	Growth Area Funding – 2 <sup>nd</sup> tranche
GAF(3)	Growth Area Funding - current 3 <sup>rd</sup> tranche
CIF	Community Infrastructure Fund
RIF	Regional Infrastructure Fund
DfT	Department of Transport
PE	Programme Entry
CA	Conditional Acceptance
LCA Part 1	Land Compensation Act 1973 Part 1
MTP	Medium Term Plan
NR	Network Rail
LTP	Local Transport Plan
CPO	Compulsory Purchase Order
SRO	Side Roads Order
SEEDA	South East England Development Agency
S106 contribution	Contribution under the Town & Country Planning Act
S106 Scheme	Navigable waterway Order under the Highways Act
S278 Agreement	Developer funded and constructed highway works

**Everards Link Phase 2 (EL2)**

Phase 2 will provide a link from the bus interchange at Greenhithe Station (Everards Link Phase 1) through to Ingress Park and eventually onto Swanscombe Peninsula. This will become part of the Fastrack riverside route.

Construction, by Birse Civils Limited, was completed at the end of July 2008. The final account has been agreed. The cost has been funded by a £5.3m allocation from DCLG's CIF programme. Crest Nicholson are being pressed to reimburse the £0.5m costs of the extended underpass works at The Avenue carried out on their behalf in accordance with an Agreement.

The scheme cannot be brought into use until Crest Nicholson, the developer of the Ingress Park site, has completed its connection of the route into Ingress Park. This is a planning obligation on the development of the site.

The underpass has been physically sealed at both ends, the excavation has been secured and overall access to the bus way boarded off.

**Northfleet Embankment**

This is another link in the Kent Thameside Fastrack public transport network. SEEDA is Master Planning the development of the Northfleet Embankment area, broadly the land from Grove Road at Northfleet eastwards to the existing Imperial Business Estate at Gravesend. This development will include dedicated Fastrack links.

The current network is missing a dedicated link from Bath Street, Gravesend to the Imperial Business Estate. DCLG is funding the feasibility assessment of this link and this work will be completed in April 2009. The intention is to complete the outline design and approve it for development control and Land Charge disclosures. It will be progressed to a planning application at this stage as the scheme is not programmed for the immediate future.

**Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road**

The Relief Road will provide a link across Milton Creek, linking Ridham Avenue and Castle Road, where existing developer funded sections of the Relief Road have already been built. It is a complex and expensive scheme because in addition to the Creek crossing, the scheme crosses the Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway and a redundant landfill site.

The funding approval in principle is based on an estimated cost of £43.0m and funded by £29m LTP, £9.9m DCLG and £4.1 S106 developer funding.

The statutory Orders were confirmed by the Secretary of State on 23 December 2008 following a Public Inquiry held in July.

All efforts are now being directed at securing the next stage of DfT/DCLG funding approvals, satisfying the pre-commencement planning conditions, completing the detailed design and procuring a contractor.

The update of the business case was submitted to DfT at the end of February. Both DfT and DCLG are being helpful and pragmatic in respect of the information that they require to support their Conditional (CA) and Full Approval (FA) funding considerations.

Early entry onto land has been negotiated to allow scrub and tree clearance before the bird nesting season. This work has commenced and this will allow trapping of environmentally protected species and their relocation in the spring to provide a screened and clear route corridor.

Notices have been published in the OJEU inviting contractors to be considered for inclusion on the tender list and the submissions are currently being assessed.

The objective is to make a main contract start or at least a substantive start no later than September 2009 in order to formally implement the Relief Road planning consent.

This is a period of intense activity and the next two months will be critical particularly in respect of DfT progress in progressing the next stage of funding approvals.

### **Rushenden Relief Road**

The County Council is progressing this scheme on behalf of and at the request of SEEDA. The scheme provides a new link between the A249 and the regeneration areas avoiding the unsuitable Main Road. The estimated cost is about £13m and would be funded by DCLG and SEEDA resources.

SEEDA are the Lead body for funding and have assembled all the land and satisfied the key pre-commencement planning conditions. They have also awarded a contract for works to facilitate their gateway developments and this includes works to also facilitate the Relief Road construction.

Tenders for the Relief Road have recently been returned and they are currently being assessed.

SEEDA are in discussions with DCLG on the revised funding and spend profile required to deliver the scheme.

The objective is to award a contract to allow an April 2009 start but a formal Agreement is also required with SEEDA covering funding and risk and this is the urgent focus of activity.

All major infrastructure projects are difficult and the County Council and SEEDA continue to work in partnership to deliver this important regeneration infrastructure scheme for Sheppey.

### **Ashford**

#### **Ashford Ring Road 2 Way Transformation**

The scheme is for the transformation of the Ring Road to 2 way and enhanced public realm and shared space concepts to the south and west sectors between Station Road and New Street. The scheme also includes enhanced public realm to Bank Street between Tufton Street and Elwick Road.

The total cost of the scheme is some £16m and is in the main funded from DCLG GAF(2) and GAF(3) but with other public, private and European funding.

Any major changes to a town centre road are difficult and controversial but this is compounded by the introduction of innovative shared space concepts and complex public realm designs, art and materials.

While much of this is new and at the forefront, Ashford is not a 'one-of' and these ideas are increasingly being promoted and advocated nationally as a solution to balance the needs of all users in town centres across the UK.

The main feature of the scheme is the public realm works to Elwick Road/Godinton Road/West Street/Forge Lane and this was substantially completed and opened to traffic at the start of November 2008. Achieving this objective was important so that there were no major traffic management measures and inconvenience to the town centre and Ashford business community in the pre- Xmas trading period.

This is an innovative scheme and the operation of the shared space elements particularly at Elwick Square will be monitored closely. Excessive speed was an early concern but

average speeds are coming down closer to the 20mph speed limit as drivers become more familiar with the layout and concept. However there is no intent to be complacent and 'SID' (speed indicator device) will be used regularly to reinforce the need to drive slower.

The other key issue is how pedestrians will come to terms with the shared space. Most pedestrians seem to be embracing the concept without difficulty. Others who are more cautious have a nearby Pelican crossing or courtesy crossings around the edges of the Square. It is the latter that will be monitored closely. They are differentiated in alternating strips of different coloured paving but the contrast is not bold and they do not have the signage and lining that would accompany a formal 'Zebra' crossing. The concern is that there may be confusion with drivers not giving them particular regard and pedestrians regarding them as quasi 'Zebra' crossings and a right to cross and expectations that drivers will always stop.

Other aspects of the overall layout are being monitored and in particular it is likely that the Apsley Street junction will require some modification.

In addition to formal Safety Audit processes the Project Manager and key people involved in the scheme meet regularly to review the operation of the scheme. A workshop has also been held with representatives of local access groups to explain the scheme and get their initial reactions to any issues of concern.

### **Newtown Road Bridge, Ashford**

The scheme is to replace the deck carrying the railway and gain width and increased headroom so that the route is available for a future high quality SMARTLINK bus service and to provide a better and less oppressive route for pedestrians and cyclists. The scheme has £4.8m Growth Area and £0.2m LTP IT funding and is being delivered on our behalf by Network Rail.

The scheme was completed and Newtown Road reopened to traffic in December 2008.

### **Ashford – Transport Strategy**

The County Council is actively working on two projects that are the immediate priority within the overall Transport Strategy for Ashford:

- Victoria Way Phase 1 - A link between Victoria Road and Leacon Road. It will provide a new town centre street to reflect the growth of the town centre and also offer a degree of traffic relief to the town centre.

Funding will be from GAF(3) and CIF if the current bid is successful – decision expected in March 2009.

Considerable progress has been made on developing the scheme and a public exhibition was held on 27 & 28 February together with a number of targeted local briefings. Plans will be on display at the Board meeting and the scheme will be formally reported to a future meeting of this Board.

### **Drovers Roundabout to M20 Junction 9 - Improvements and signalisation of Drovers roundabout, signalisation of Junction 9 and a new footbridge over the M20. The scheme is related to development proposals including the proposed Park and Ride.**

Funding will be from GAF(3), RIF if current bid is successful – decision expected in March 2009 - and developer funding.

Drovers Roundabout is a difficult junction with five dual carriageways entering a relatively small roundabout. The proposed improvement and signalisation was highly constrained by proposed land use. Further assessment work using more current traffic data has confirmed

client doubts about the design and this is being reviewed with the benefit of the land constraints being relaxed.

The improvements to M20 Junction 9 remove the pedestrian provision and the intent is to provide a new foot/cycle bridge to the east on a more appropriate desire line between Eclipse Business Park and the town centre.

At the crossing point the M20 runs adjacent to Simone Weil Avenue. Ashford's Future Partnership Board is to consider whether the bridge should be to higher design standard and whether it should also bridge over Simone Weil Avenue. Further GAF funding has been made available to Ashford's Future Company that allows consideration of this aspect of the scheme.

The scheme will be formally reported to a future meeting of this Board when a suitable improvement scheme for Drivers Roundabout has been identified and the proposals for the bridge have been determined.

### **Operation Stack Lorry Park**

The County Council has identified the Aldington site as the preferred location for a lorry park because it is on the M20, mid way between junctions 10 & 11, has no statutory environmental designations, is relatively well screened by the M20, CTRL and the Sellindge Converter Station.

Topographical and initial geotechnical surveys have been completed. An environmental scoping report has been produced to inform the main surveys and the wintering birds survey has been completed. The main programme of seasonally dependent environmental surveys are about to commence and will be completed in the autumn.

Outline design of the lorry park and M20 junction has commenced. Contact has been established with the Environment Agency as issues of flooding, drainage and water supply will be key factors in the design.

MVA has been retained to research and articulate the economic impact of Operation Stack that could become the basis of a future business case for funding.

In project management terms, Strategy has taken responsibility for the wider strategic and economic aspects and Countywide Improvements will focus on developing the lorry park proposals.

### **East Kent**

#### **Eurokent Phases 4 & 5, Thanet**

In partnership with Thanet District Council (TDC), SEEDA, and Rosefarm Estates, the County Council is constructing the access road at Eurokent. The County Council is forward funding the bulk of the Phase 5 construction costs on the back of the uplifted land values. The scheme will facilitate the development of the site and provide a local bypass to a particularly poor section of Haine Road.

The overall cost is some £6.7m and SEEDA and Rosefarm are contributing £1.3m leaving the net cost to the County Council of £5.4m consistent with the budget allocation.

Construction by Jackson Civil Engineering started in January 2008 and opened to traffic on target at the end of November. Junction changes and connection works that were only possible after the main route opened were completed at the end of February.

Old Haine Road has been given a reduced speed limited of 30mph and a weight restriction – other than for access – of 7.5tonnes. There has been considerable correspondence with local residents who feel that too much traffic is still using the old road and that the speed and weight restriction are not being followed or enforced.

The difficulty is that the new road is primarily to access new development and not a bypass in a conventional sense. It is a longer route with several roundabout junctions and hence the old road inevitably remains an attractive option particularly with the current level of traffic in the Westwood area and before further development obligations to provide infrastructure improvements are implemented.

The scheme has only recently been fully completed and all new layouts take time to settle down however, residents feel very strongly about the situation. In addition to formal traffic volume and speed monitoring, discussions will be held with the East Kent Transportation Manager to see whether further measures should be considered, and with the Police about enforcement aspects.

### **East Kent Access Phase 2**

Government indicated its intent in principle to fund the £64m cost when Programme Entry status was approved in July 2006. Since then, the estimated cost of the scheme has increased to £72.00m. The bulk of this increase is the result of programme slippage, construction inflation and only a small element of the increase can be attributable to a direct increase in cost arising from the detailed design development of the scheme.

The statutory Orders were published in October 2006 and a Public Inquiry was held in April 2007. The main statutory objections were successfully negotiated away.

EDF has a sub-station that requires to be moved and they look to the County Council to secure the necessary land that was not included in the CPO. The land was acquired in January 2009. It is frustrating that EDF has still not formally withdrawn their holding objection but it is hoped this will be done soon so that the Secretary of State can confirm the Orders.

In anticipation of confirmation of Orders, the updated business case has recently been submitted to DfT as part of the Conditional Approval (CA) submission. Unfortunately, in line with their national policy, because the scheme cost and funding requirement has increased, DfT require further traffic modelling work to be done involving additional cost and time. However, DfT are being helpful in advising on the most effective way of carry out this work and they are also willing to consider the CA on an incremental basis to save time.

Network Rail is actively involved and co-operating in principle but their processes are onerous and their stance can be inconsistent. The railway bridges, particularly the Foads Lane underpass, are such critical components of the scheme that some higher level Officer or political engagement with Network Rail may now be appropriate as the construction phase approaches.

Construction tenders have been issued and they are to be returned in late March 2009. Only three firms passed the rigorous selection process and one firm subsequently withdrew. The return of tenders will give a more accurate view of the project costs and funding need, including the archaeological investigations which are likely to be more extensive than previously thought following a recent detailed data review by the Environment Team.

Advance works to construct a new pond in Southern Water's land at Ebbsfleet Lane to provide replacement ecological habitat was completed in February 2009.

The objective is to make a main contract start or at least a substantive start no later than September 2009 in order to formally implement the planning consent.

### **Fort Hill De-dualling, Margate**

As part of the regeneration of Margate Fort Hill has been reduced to a single carriageway to reduce severance and integrate the Turner Contemporary and Rendezvous sites more with the town and particularly the old town.

The scheme will include public realm and accessibility improvements to Harbour View and King Street, and to The Parade and Duke Street that are being promoted by Thanet District Council.

The overall cost is about £1.2m and funding is £550,000 from the County Council, £200,000 from the Integrated Transport allocation for footway enhancements and the remainder from Objective 2 funding secured by Thanet District Council and the County Council.

The basic de-dualling works were completed in October 2008. This then allowed a Stopping Up Order for the area of redundant highway to be promoted and this was obtained in November 2008 to complement the Turner construction programme.

The Parade was completed in summer 2008 and the public realm works to Duke Street and King Street were substantially completed in February 2009. This leaves Harbour View that will commence soon with its construction phase integrated into the Turner construction programme.

### **Mid Kent**

#### **Borough Green & Platt Bypass**

Following issues that led to the abandonment of the Celcon Planning Application Public Inquiry in 2007, the Leader gave a commitment that the County Council would submit a new planning application for the Bypass.

All environmental, engineering and traffic surveys have now been completed and an outline design developed. The key issue is that the process of sand extraction and backfilling has trapped areas of water and created an ideal habitat for great crested newts. Some 5 hectares of replacement mitigation land must be identified to support and form part of the Bypass planning application. Contact has been made with the main landowners and there are on-going discussions to try and identify suitable land. I am hopeful that a mutually acceptable solution can be found but this will take time and hence a planning application is unlikely to be possible before July/August 2009.

The traffic surveys and modelling has also shown that the attraction of traffic onto the Bypass will put the capacity and operation of the A20 White Hill roundabout under pressure and appropriate improvements are being investigated.

#### **A2 Slips Canterbury**

The Minister for State for Transport agreed in December 2007, that the on-slip at Wincheap can proceed and on the basis that associated measures are progressed in parallel to ensure the benefits to the City Centre are captured.

The on-slip is estimated to cost £1.5m and will be funded from the Integrated Transport allocations.

All environmental, engineering and traffic surveys have been completed and the design developed.

Public consultation is now in hand with the intent to firm up the proposals and start the promotion of the statutory Orders over the summer 2009.

### **Maidstone Schemes**

#### **Maidstone Bridge Gyrotory**

There has been an idea for some time to consider widening the Fairmeadow leg to make it two-way and thereby take pressure off the rest of the gyrotory and particularly the St Peters Street entry.

When looking at the proposal in detail over the summer 2008 it was clear that this would be an expensive scheme. There are significant utilities that would need to be moved and in particular the EDF sub-station would need to be relocated in a more compact form at the back of its site. Although near the river, EDF has no immediate plans or need to move the sub-station and it is not critically vulnerable to flooding. Construction would also be difficult because of the constraints of working in the middle of the gyratory and the associated traffic management that would be required.

The overall cost would be about £3.5 - £4m. This is likely to be prohibitive but because the gyratory is such a key junction in the Town, it has been agreed with the Borough Council to carry out a review of the current traffic situation and benefits of such a scheme. This work is in hand and should be completed in April 2009.

### **South East Maidstone Strategic Link (SEMSL)**

The County Council has agreed with the Borough Council to fund on a shared basis, up to £150,000, work to assess development options and any implications for SEMSL in terms of route, standard and junction strategy to inform the Borough Council Local Development Framework (LDF).

### **Land & Property**

On-going work to process requests from individuals, companies and Property Group to release land if not required for highway purposes

### **Land Compensation Act Part 1 Claims (LCA Part1)**

Claims are being received and assessed for:

#### **County Council Schemes:**

A228 Leybourne & West Malling Bypass  
Fastrack Phase 1 Major Scheme  
Everards Link Phase 1

#### **Develop Funded Schemes:**

M20 Junction 4  
Hawkinge Bypass – Phase 1  
Hawkinge Bypass – Phase 2  
Kemsley Fields, Sittingbourne

On-going liaison with Developers to give them confidence in the assessment process because they have the financial liability which can be significant in some cases.