

From: Michael Payne, Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport
Barbara Cooper, Corporate Director, Growth, Environment & Transport

To: Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee – 17 July 2020

Decision No: 20/00028

Subject: A20 London Road Aylesford Junction Improvement.

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: None

Future Pathway of Paper: Key Decision by Cabinet Member

Electoral Division: Aylesford South

Summary: Approval to take the highway improvement for A20 London Road Aylesford Junction through the next stages of development and delivery including authority to progress statutory approvals and to enter into funding, land and construction contracts.

Recommendation(s): The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport on the proposed decision as follows:

- i) give approval to the outline design scheme for the A20 London Road Aylesford in Tonbridge & Malling for development control and land charge disclosures, drawing number **A20HR-CAP-HGN-00-DR-C-0043**;
- ii) give approval to progress all statutory approvals or consents required for the scheme, drawing number **A20HR-CAP-HGN-00-DR-C-0043**;
- iii) give approval to enter into land agreements with third parties as necessary;
- iv) give approval to enter into construction contracts as necessary for the delivery of the scheme and
- v) give approval to undertake engagement with all relevant stakeholders as identified in the communication plan.
- vi) The Corporate Director for Growth, Environment & Transport, under the Officer Scheme of Delegations and in consultation with the Corporate Director for Finance and Procurement, to enter into relevant legal agreements and take other actions necessary to implement this decision.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The MITP (explain MITP) aims to reduce congestion and ease traffic movements through Maidstone and Tonbridge & Malling. The scheme will assist in fulfilling the strategic aims of delivering the local housing and employment growth targets.

- 1.2 This element of the MITP is the proposed improvements to the existing signalised junction on the A20 London Road at the junction with Hall Road and Mills Road at the Retail Park entrance. The A20/Mills Road/Hall Road Roundabout is located on the A20 primary route and is in close proximity to the strategic highway; the M20. This junction leads to an industrial and retail area and gives access to potential residential development.
- 1.3 The scheme is located is within the Borough of Tonbridge and Malling, close to the Maidstone Borough border and is interlinked with the built-up area of Maidstone. The Malling portion of Tonbridge and Malling (known as Ditton in the census built-up areas) is almost contiguous with Maidstone. The proposed scheme is located on the A20 which is one of the key radial routes leading through the Maidstone built-up area to the town centre, via a Park & Ride site and new housing sites. The A20, in the opposite direction, also serves a built-up ribbon through Malling (initially Aylesford and Royal British Legion Village). The location is shown in Figure 1.1 This ribbon development includes a variety of retail parks, the Royal British Legion Village and developing housing sites. It serves as a key route to Maidstone Hospital (B2246 Hermitage Lane) and the Maidstone NW strategic allocation.

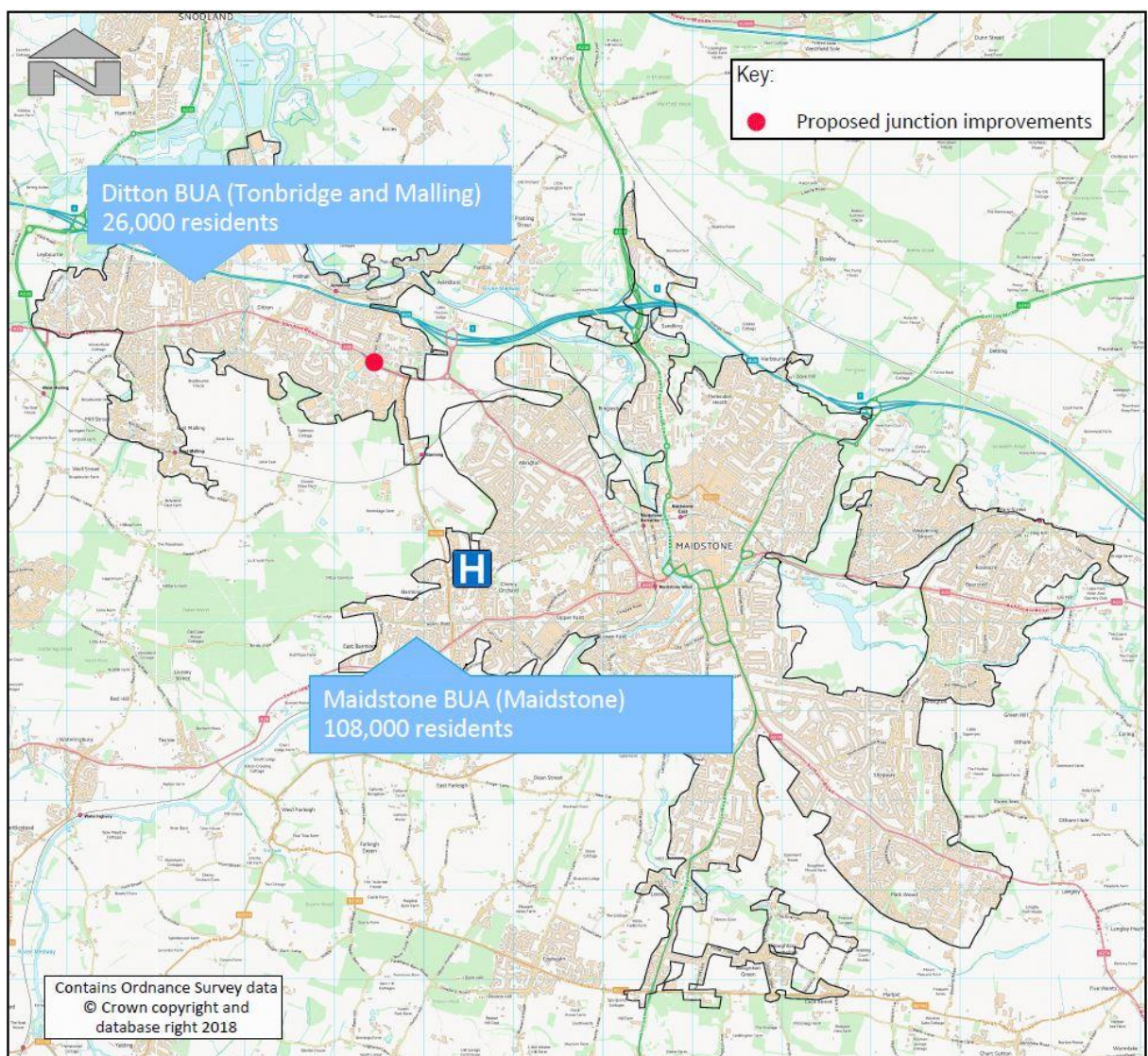


Figure 1.1 Maidstone and Ditton built-up areas (scheme shown)

- 1.4 The junction is in close proximity Junction 5 of the M20 and potential housing/business units. To the west of the site, the A20 continues into Tonbridge and Malling passing through the settlements of Ditton, Larkfield and Leybourne. This section of the A20 experiences congestion and some queueing at junctions.
- 1.5 The junction experiences significant congestion, particularly during the AM and PM peak periods and is a designated Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). A corridor study carried out by Kent County Council identified a package of measures to reduce congestion and improve journey time reliability. The adjacent retail park is a key local business area that see's high volumes of visitors. This intervention will improve access to the retail park. Improvements to the junction to improve capacity would allow growth both for employment and for residential developments through the forthcoming Tonbridge and Malling Local Plan. Additionally, a junction improvement would improve capacity, assist in the free-flow of traffic, reduce journey times and pollution, helping to address the issues within this AQMA.
- 1.6 Complementary highway improvements adjacent to the site are also proposed including Local Growth Fund improvements to Coldharbour Roundabout (recommended at E&T on 10th October 2019).
- 1.7 The scheme is aiming to reduce congestion for the study area, both private motor vehicles and for the bus routes between Maidstone and Malling. Important bus routes are the 71/72 Arriva Greenway (Maidstone – Ditton), and one of the routes from the hospital to the town centre. These are shown in Figure 1.2.



Figure 1.2: Bus routes

- 1.8 There are significant development proposals in the area adjacent to the proposed junction improvement. The junction improvement will help to unlock these sites for development. Proximal development sites to A20/Mills Road /Hall Road Junction Improvement.

Location	Area	Dwellings
Maidstone NW	Maidstone	1200
Whitepost Field, Aylesford (Gladman)	Malling	800
East Malling Research (EMR)	Malling	1300
Preston Hall	Malling	200
Nursery Fields	Maidstone	400
Total		3900

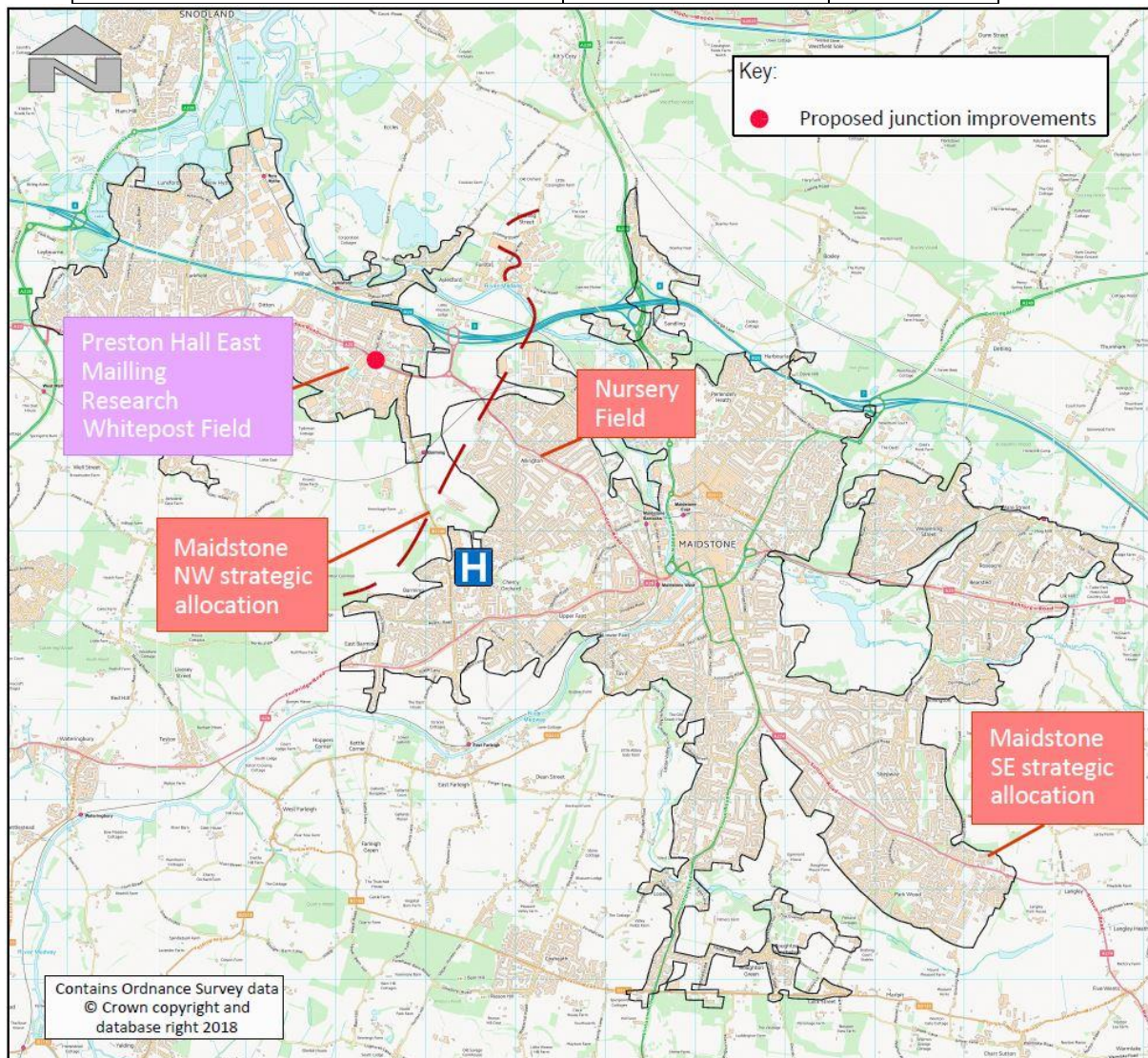


Figure 1.3: Development sites

- 1.9 Allowing the existing situation to continue is likely to worsen the levels of congestion and delays described above. This will present a constraint to the planned development for the west side of Maidstone Borough and the east of Tonbridge & Malling Borough.

1.10 The introduction of further homes and employment opportunities to the local area will inevitably increase the number of people using the already saturated highway network. Increasing delay and congestion will encourage drivers to use inappropriate minor roads and to take longer circuitous routes to their destinations.

1.10.1 Bus services will be exposed to the same delay and congestion which will worsen journey times and the reliability of services. The air quality recorded at the monitoring station was already above the recommended threshold in 2008 and it will deteriorate because of additional traffic travelling through this congestion 'hotspot'. Excessive congestion at key points on the network will further inhibit movement around Malling. This in turn will make the area less accessible and consequently less attractive as a retail and business location.

1.10.2 There are no capital financial implications or risks for KCC. All costs associated with the scheme and its construction, currently estimated at £3.5m (including 2020/21 costs), are to be funded through the award of the Local Growth Fund through the SELEP and Sec106 developer contributions (see below), including all staff/land costs associated with the delivery of this scheme. Sec106 contributions, in the whole, have been banked and the remaining will be received by KCC prior to award of contract. This scheme is very well supported by the SELEP Board, Local Authorities, Parishes and has received endorsement from the Tonbridge & Malling Joint Transportation Board. The risk of this scheme not proceeding is low and KCC will continue to engage with the relevant stakeholders to keep them updated on programme and progress.

2. Financial Implications

2.1 The estimated cost of the A20 London Road Ayelsford roundabout scheme is **£3.5m**; the allocation from the Local Growth Fund is **£2.2m** and Developer Contribution of **£1.3m**.

£000s	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	Total
LGF Contribution		£2200k		£2200k
Developer Contributions S106's		£1300k		£1300k
Total		£3500k		£3500k

2.2 Costs of developing the scheme are included within the estimate. Feasibility design work was funded via a previously endorsed SELEP Business Case.

3. Policy Framework

3.1 The scheme supports policy objectives of supporting existing businesses and encouraging economic activity with housing growth and job creation by reducing congestion and improving infrastructure and accessibility.

4. Scheme Detail

- 4.1 A preliminary modelling exercise has recently been undertaken, using traffic data collected in 2018, to update the baseline situation and confirm the proposed scheme continues to demonstrate operational and capacity benefits to the local and strategic network. The results have demonstrated benefits with a noticeable reduction in overall delays and queues on the A20 London Road Aylesford.
- 4.2 The majority of the scheme can be delivered within the highway curtilage of the A20. However, land to the south west of the existing junction, at no cost, Crown Estates are dedicating the land for the scheme and giving KCC a Licence for construction working space. Both the Licence and Dedication Agreements are agreed and ready to complete upon the E&T Decision. Planning consent is not required, no other land needs to be acquired and it is unlikely that any other statutory approvals or consents will be required but is included in the decision recommendation as a contingency safeguard.
- 4.3 Substantial investigatory works have been carried out in the early stages of the design process. The details of which are being used to positively inform the detailed design and provide a more robust cost estimate. Topographical surveys, ecology surveys, geotechnical surveys, drainage surveys, core testing and arboricultural surveys have all been completed.
- 4.4 Air quality and noise assessments have been undertaken and demonstrate a positive impact of the scheme on these elements. The base data will then be utilised to inform the post scheme review.
- 4.5 It is recognised this will have a significant impact on the local area, particularly during construction, and as such initial meetings have been undertaken with Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council, Maidstone Borough Council and Highways England and a steering group formed which continually updates and feeds back progress and concerns. A virtual Consultation has been agreed and will be launched at the end of July 2020 with specific engagements sessions (if Government Guidelines allow) will be arranged in a locally convenient location to outline the schemes advantages and address concerns of the local community. The use of social media will play an important role in the dissemination of information. A dedicated email address and 'Twitter' account will be operational for this purpose. Newsletters will be delivered prior to, and during construction and will offer details of specific operations, progress and key dates.
- 4.6 Delivery of the scheme in practical terms will be dependent on completing the procurement process, under European procurement rules. Delivery will also be dependent on the cost and affordability. Cost estimates have been developed with a pre-tender estimate being completed by an independent cost consultant.
- 4.7 On the basis the procurement proceeds satisfactorily and road space permits to carry out the works affecting the A20/M20 being granted by Kent County Council, a start of construction in November 2020 is anticipated.

5. Risks

- 5.1 A scheme Risk Register has been formulated for this project and identified associated risks captured accordingly. This register identifies the likelihood and mitigation measures of any such risks. An uncontrollable risk remains around the uncertainty of transition at the end of December 2020, this could have an implication on the project costs and or deliverability. KCC remain confident that the estimates, undertaken by an independent Cost Consultant, has a significant contingency allowance for any fluctuation in market prices. Liaison will also continue with the KCC Streetworks team to ensure roadspace remains available to deliver the scheme in the timescales identified. There does remain a risk in delivering beyond the Growth Deal, however, SELEP have been made fully aware of this and a construction contract will be entered into prior to the end of the growth deal as will be combined with the Coldharbour Roundabout scheme.

6. Equality Implications

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for this project, see background documents. This has concluded that none of the Protected Characteristics are affected by the proposed scheme and therefore KCC will periodically review this document whilst keeping all the relevant groups informed and updated.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 Heads of Terms have been drafted for the sale of the required third-party land and are to be communicated to the landowner in due course. It is not anticipated that this process will be delayed, and negotiations continue with the landowners representative who attends the Project Steering Group Meetings.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 This is a significant investment in Tonbridge & Malling which benefits the Maidstone area and is an important scheme to help reduce congestion on the A20 strategic route, whilst supporting housing development, job creation and growth in the local area. Considerable investigatory and preliminary work has been carried out and there is confidence that a construction date of November 2020 can be achieved.

9. Recommendation(s):

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10. Background Documents

General Arrangement Drawing Numbers **A20HR-CAP-HGN-00-DR-C-0043**

EqIA Report

11. Contact details

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