

**To:** Tonbridge & Malling Joint Transportation Board  
**By:** KCC Highways and Transportation  
**Date:** 2 December 2024  
**Subject:** Kent Street Junction improvement update  
**Classification:** For Information

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Summary: This report provides an update on the proposed Kent Street/Malling Road highway improvement scheme following the Board's recommendation in September 2023 to proceed to detailed design and construction.

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## 1.0 Introduction and background

- 1.1 S106 funding was secured from Kings Hill Phase 2 development and carried through to the S106 for the Phase 3 development.
- 1.2 The funds are for 'Local Traffic Management and Calming' for:
  - A scheme at Kent Street, Mereworth junction with the A228 designed to mitigate the impact of traffic arising from the Development and to enhance safety and conditions for local residents, pedestrians and cyclists; and
- 1.3 Design options were undertaken aimed at improving visibility at the Kent Street junction with the A228 along with widening of A228 Malling Road between Kent Street and Beech Road.
- 1.4 A signalised junction incorporating a controlled pedestrian crossing on the A228 (visibility improvements could not be achieved whilst exiting Kent Street without incorporating a signalised junction) and widening the carriageway between Kent Street and Beech Road was consulted on and a recommendation to proceed to construction agreed by this Board in September 2023.

## 2.0 Scheme update

- 2.1 Over the last 12 months, detailed design work has progressed along with agreeing additional land requirements outside the existing highway boundary with the adjacent landowner.
- 2.2 The designs have altered following the consultation feedback with the removal of the cycleway between Kent Street and Beech Road. The footway provision on the north side of the A228 extent has been reduced to a length between Kent Street and a new bus stop north of Kent Street – **see Appendix A – finalised designs** to provide budget savings. There is an existing footway on the south side.
- 2.3 The project has now got to a point where the detailed design is complete and a contractor has been appointed. In the following few months the co ordination of the various elements of the scheme is required which includes, finalising and instructing utility companies to undertake the diversion of their underground and overground apparatus, gaining appropriate approvals for the removal of the hedgerow, removing

the hedge and trees within the hedgerow prior to the bird nesting season (February to August generally), placement of a temporary or permanent fence line along the new highway boundary to secure the landowners land and make provision for a compound area to accommodate machinery, materials and welfare facilities.

- 2.4 The construction is likely to be phased, starting in January 2024, with the removal of the hedge and installation of the boundary fence. The rest of the work will then follow a few months later when the weather improves and all works are coordinated. A programme of work will be developed along with the temporary traffic management phasing as although some of the work can still accommodate 2 way running lanes of traffic, there will be the need for temporary traffic lights and road closures at various times to install ducts across A228, provide sufficient working space and resurface parts of the road.
- 2.4 Advance notification of the work will take place and temporary traffic signals manually operated when necessary to reduce the impact of the work however delays will occur as the A228 is a busy route. During road closures, there will be a signed diversion route which will be a significant detour although it is anticipated that local traffic will find their own routes. We will be working with the local Parish Councils to agree how best to reduce the impact on the minor roads.

### **3.0 Environmental, Ecological and Arboriculture Assessments**

- 3.1 KCC has commissioned Waterman consultants to undertake all necessary Environmental, Ecological and Arboriculture assessments and to advise on any relevant approvals, mitigation and actions to be undertaken.

### **4.0 Finance**

- 4.1 The estimated cost of the scheme is £1.3m and is being funded partly by developer contributions (£1.0m) and Kent County Council via the Kent Lane Rental Fund (£0.3m).

### **5.0 Programme**

- 5.1 It is anticipated that the construction period will be from January 2025 to November 2025 but in a phased approach as stated in paragraph 2.4.

### **6.0 Legal**

- 6.1 The proposals are permitted development and do not require planning permission.
- 6.2 Consultation with the Local Planning Authority in relation to the removal of hedgerows is being undertaken (as they have been identified as protected hedgerow under the Natural Environmental and Rural Communities Act 2006 - NERC Act, 2006).

### **7.0 Equalities**

- 7.1 The Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) is included in **Appendix B** and shows that there will be positive impacts for all users as the proposed improvements will separate users from vehicular traffic wherever possible therefore creating a safer environment for all users, encouraging walking and wheeling bringing overall health benefits.

- 7.2 In the temporary arrangement during construction, there will be a need for a number of alterations to the existing pedestrians facilities.
- 7.3 Access to properties will be maintained at all times. KCC site staff will be agreeing appropriate access with those immediately affected by the work.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX A**

- (i) Drawing Reference – 2232-S106-TM-01-1100/10 – Additional land requirements
- (ii) Drawing Reference – 2232-S106-TM-01-HRN-01 & 02 – Hedge Removal Notice Plan
- (iii) Drawing Reference – 2232-S106-TM-01-100/01 – Site Clearance and Accommodation Works
- (iv) Drawing Reference – 2232-S106-TM-01-1100/01 – Proposed Traffic Signal Installation
- (v) Drawing Reference – 2232-S106-TM-01-1100/02 – Proposed Traffic Signal Installation
- (vi) Drawing Reference – KCC/ITS/2023/0202/S/1 – Proposed Traffic Signals – phasing

### **APPENDIX B**

Equality Impact Assessment