

To: Tonbridge & Malling Joint Transportation Board
By: KCC Highways and Transportation
Date: 2nd December 2024
Subject: Scheme Update – A26 Tonbridge Road, Hadlow – Footway Improvements
Classification: For information only

Summary: This information report provides an update regarding the progress in relation to the petition that was received for a cycleway connecting Three Elms Lane to Hadlow College.

1.0 Background

1.1 In November 2022, KCC received a petition requesting a new commuting / leisure cycle route along the A26, which would connect Hadlow & Tonbridge.

1.2 On 18th September 2023, an information report was presented at the Tonbridge & Malling Joint Transportation Board to outline high level route options. It was recommended that Kent County Council make an internal bid for funding improvements via the Local Transport Plan (LTP).

1.3 The subsequent outline design investigations identified a number of engineering & ecological site constraints, meaning that delivery of a cycle route was not considered to be economically viable. After engagement with key stakeholders, it was agreed to proceed with a footway enhancement scheme.

1.4 Funding for phase one of the route was secured in early 2024. Funding for future stages shall be subject to the same LTP bid process and is not guaranteed.

2.0 The proposal

2.1 The proposed three route phases are:

Phase 1 – Three Elms Lane to Haywards Farm Shop (funding confirmed)

Phase 2 – Haywards Farm Shop to the existing public right of way (PRoW) – Footpath number MT145 (funding TBC)

Phase 3 – Blackmans Lane to Hadlow College (funding TBC)

2.2 A fourth phase between PRoW footpath number MT145 to Blackmans Lane has also been considered but is not currently an active option after initial discussions were held with landowners along the A26.

2.3 For phase one, a 3 metre wide footway shall be provided where possible. The only section that will remain at existing width footway is from the 50 / 40 mph speed limit terminal located near Redlands heading north to the bus stop just south of Haywards Farm Shop.

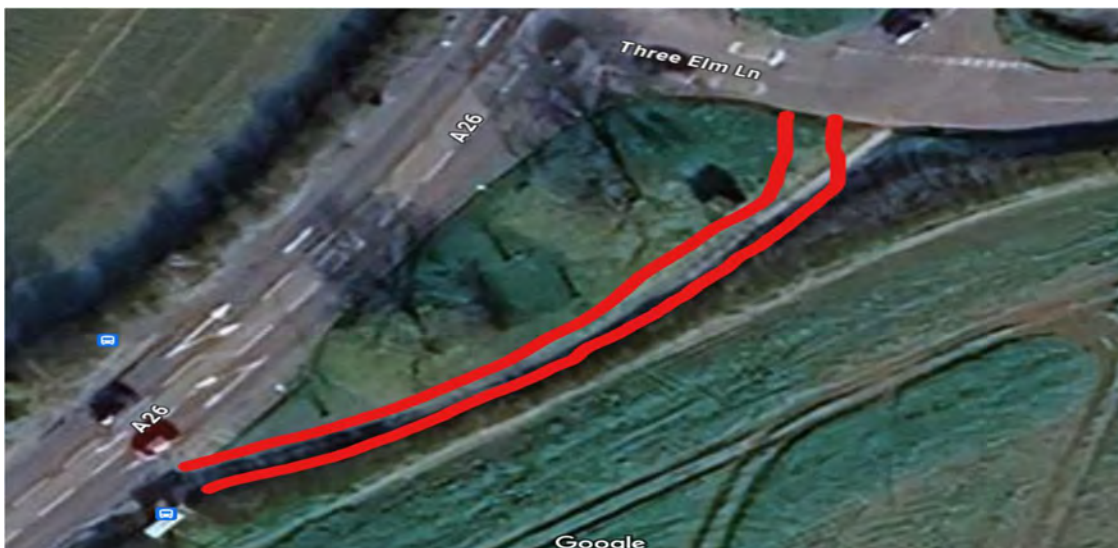
3.0 Phase 1 – Three Elm Lane to Haywards Farm Shop

3.1 Starting at Hadlow Road East junction, there is an existing footway, bus stop and refuge island to which we are proposing to make some minor improvement to provide a more defined scheme start/end point for users. We will install a new dropped crossing point just inside of Hadlow Road East junction, along with tactile paving. We will also provide siding out to the existing footway, as well as vegetation cut back leading up to the bus stop to ensure the full existing footway is available to users.



3.2 Bus stop to Three Elm Lane

Vegetation along the existing footway is overgrown and will be requested to be cut back and sided out to uncover the full footway width. We will also be widening the existing footway to allow for a 3 m wide facility. The existing footway alignment will be changed, as it currently terminates opposite the access road junction to the service station.



3.3 Three Elm Lane junction

We are proposing to slightly build out the northern kerb line to allow for a straighter pedestrian crossing movement. This may also have a positive traffic calming effect on

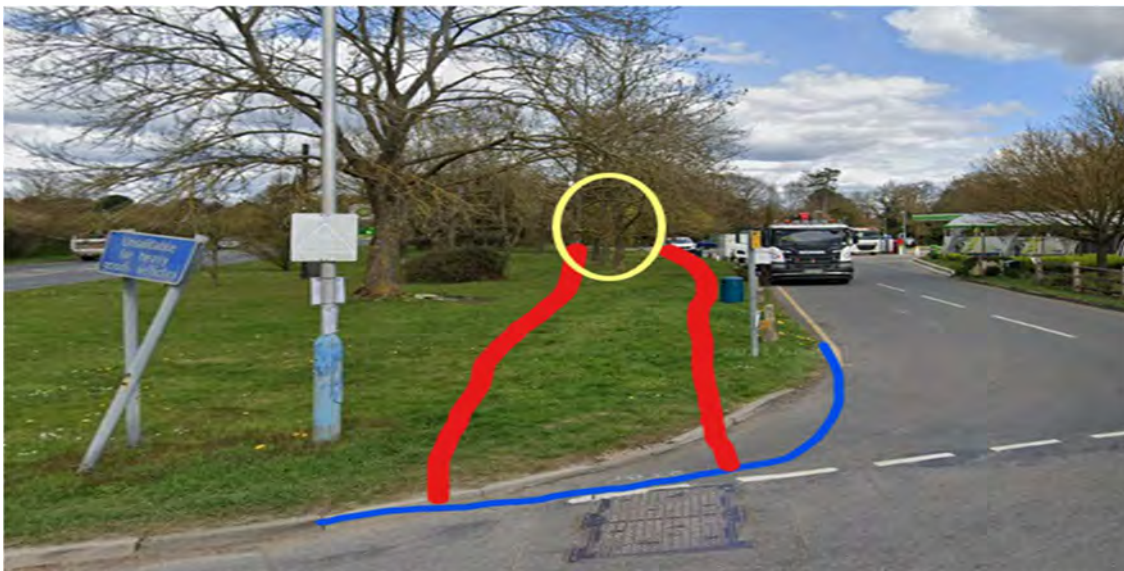
existing vehicle swept paths into the service road, meaning they would need to enter at a lower speed, helping to provide enhanced safety for pedestrians.



3.4 Verge opposite BP Garage

It has been confirmed by our soft landscaping team that some tree removal (around four) will be required to facilitate a new footway here. Some other trees may also be close in terms of their root protection zone. A decision will need to be made on site at the time of construction regarding any further tree removal.

Towards the northern end of the service road there is a clump of dense shrub vegetation which will require removal.



Any vegetation loss has been kept to the absolute minimum at design stage, we will look to replace any trees removed in the nearby area.

3.5 Redlands junction

We will look to install a 3 metre wide footway for this section, providing a straighter crossing point at the junction with Redlands, to connect to the verge opposite the service station.



3.6 Redlands junction to existing bus stop north of Cuckoo Lane

The existing footway is currently 1.5 metres wide so we propose the existing vegetation is cut back and siding out completed to ensure the full width of the footway is useable. This option also retains the existing verge buffer zone to give separation between the footway & carriageway.

Options to widen the footway were considered but ultimately were deemed economically unviable.



3.7. Drainage ditch behind bus stop

This is the narrowest part of the scheme, with existing footway widths reducing down to 1 m in places due to the drainage ditch. The bus stop flag shall be repositioned to maximise the available width.

Like the previous section, options to widen the footway were considered but ultimately these were deemed economically unviable.



3.8 Bus stop to Haywards Farm Shop

This section of verge enables us to install a new 3 metre wide footway up to the farm shop access and is the end of phase 1.

Phase 2 would then start on the northern side of the access (subject to funding being agreed).



4.0 Project Risks

4.1 Underground & overhead utilities (Gas/Water/Electric) need to be considered when excavating to ensure there is no damage or interference with existing assets. We have carried out statutory undertaker searches and have been in discussions with the relevant utility owners to help ensure our proposal will not have any detrimental impacts.

4.2 Tree removal & vegetation clearance works will need to be carried out in February 2025 to avoid bird nesting season. Phase one construction is programmed for April 2025 during the Easter school holidays.

4.3 KCC Highway Improvements Team shall seek LTP funding for phase two in early 2025. There is currently no guarantee funding will be secured.

5.0 Conclusion

5.1. Subject to the current project timeline, and any risks outlined above, phase one scheme construction should be complete by May 2025.

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APPENDICES

A: 23-TM-LTP-1143 Rev3 (Design)

Note: The design is in the final stages of our internal technical approval process so may be subject to minor change.