

Maidstone Joint Transportation Board



**August
2022**

Maidstone Integrated Transport Package (MITP)

Decision Making Authority	Kent County Council/Maidstone Borough Council
Lead Director	Philip Lightowler (Interim Director)
Lead Head of Service	Tim Read
Lead Officer and Report Author	Barry Stiff/Lee Burchill
Wards and County Divisions affected	Maidstone Borough including Tonbridge & Malling
Which Member(s) requested this report?	Committee

This report makes the following recommendations:

For Information. That this report be noted.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Maidstone Joint Transportation Board – Update Report	03 August 2022

Maidstone Integrated Transport Package (MITP)

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 This report provides an update in respect of the major schemes currently in progress within Maidstone and the proposed junction improvements contained within the Maidstone Integrated Transport Package (MITP). A map showing the locations of these schemes is included as Appendix 1.

1.2 Projected start dates for the various schemes are as follows:

- A249 Bearsted Road – August 2022
- A20 Coldharbour Roundabout – May 2023
- A20 London Road/Hall Road – January 2024 (subject to co-ordination with Coldharbour)
- A229 Loose Road – Wheatsheaf Phase 1 – 28 March 2022
- A229 Loose Road - Armstrong Road - October 2022
- A229 Loose Road – Sheals Crescent – October 2022
- A229 Loose Road - Wheatsheaf Phase 2 – April 2023
- A229 Loose Road – Cripple Street/Boughton Lane – TBC (Currently Paused)
- A20 Ashford Road/Willington Street – April 2023 (Subject to coordination with Wheatsheaf Phase 2)
- A274 Sutton Road/Willington Street – TBC (Currently Paused)
- A26 Tonbridge Road/Fountain Lane – TBC (Insufficient Funding in Place)

1.3 KCC provides regular project updates to the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) and at the latest Accountability Board on 15 July 2022, the Board resolved:

1. To note the update on the project.
2. To note that, due to the risk rating for the project reducing following the confirmation of listed building consent, updates will no longer be provided at each Board meeting. Noting that the project will continue to be closely monitored and further update reports will be provided to the Board if new risks are identified.

A summary of the decision is available on the SELEP website by using the link below:

<https://www.southeastlep.com/good-governance/our-boards/accountability-board>

2. SCHEME UPDATES:

2.1 A249 Bearsted Road Major Infrastructure Project (Funded through National Productivity Investment Fund):

- 2.1.1 As advised in the April report, a formal screening opinion was being sought to confirm that the proposed dualling of Bearsted Road met the requirements for Permitted Development. This was confirmed by KCC Planning on 18 May 2022.
- 2.1.2 The work to prepare the required information to discharge the planning conditions associated with the new access road and HGV link within Newnham Court continues. The primary focus has been on the discharge of the pre-commencement conditions and in particular the Construction and Environment Management Plan (CEMP). This has taken longer than originally envisaged but the CEMP was formally discharged on 13 July 2022.
- 2.1.3 Work has continued to finalise the design of the dualling layout, with the summary of the main changes listed below.
- Two lanes in each direction, with central island, between the A249 and New Cut Road roundabouts, this will provide significant benefits when undertaking maintenance operations or utility works as traffic flows can be maintained with works being undertaken under lane closures.
 - Provision of a shared footway/cycleway on the southern side of Bearsted Road, to provide better connectivity between Bearsted Road and New Cut Road.
 - Proposed footway along eastern side of New Cut Road is omitted, avoiding the need to remove mature trees and close working by residential properties.
 - Proposed signalised crossing on eastern side of the New Cut Road Rbt is omitted – removing the need to extend the existing culvert and avoiding the need to remove mature trees.
 - Existing footway along western side of New Cut Road to be widened to create shared use facility, and new toucan crossing provided west of New Cut Road roundabout.
 - Proposed crossing in Newnham Court Way changed to Toucan Crossing and footway on NE corner of New Cut Road Rbt changed to a shared facility.
 - Left in/Left out junction is provided at the Crematorium which will prevent prohibited right turning movements.
 - The overall footprint of the scheme is very similar to the three-lane option, so no additional vegetation clearance is required.
 - A higher retaining wall will be required in places on the north side of Bearsted Road. The detail design is currently being finalised, but the form of the wall has now been fixed as a concrete block gravity retaining wall with a textured finish. The finish will imitate a natural stone and will be in keeping with the ragstone wall of the Crematorium. This type of wall has recently been used in the historic setting of Mote Park, located close to the ragstone boat house. It is therefore considered to also be suitable for the Bearsted Road setting.
 - There will be some loss of landscaping behind the higher retaining wall compared with the 3-lane option, but landscaping can still be provided along approximately 75% of the wall.
- 2.1.4 Some advanced works such as site clearance and trial holes have already been carried out but now that the pre-commencement planning condition for the CEMP has been discharged and the dualling has been confirmed as permitted development, it is now possible for the works to be programmed.

- 2.1.5 It is unfortunate that it has taken longer than envisaged to reach this stage, but it is expected that the archaeology investigations, initial offline drainage works and the site compound setup will start in August, with the main construction works starting shortly afterwards.
- 2.1.6 Engagement with residents and other key stakeholders is currently being planned and newsletters will be issued to provide an update on the current proposals and construction programme ahead of the main works commencing.
- 2.1.7 It is anticipated that the construction phase will be substantially complete by the end of August 2023.

2.2 A20 Coldharbour Roundabout/A20 London Road - Hall Road (LGF Scheme):

- 2.2.1 The procurement process has commenced, and we have completed the Selection Questionnaire process, which has shortlisted 6 contractors to tender for the construction contract, from the 11 contractors who returned submissions. The selection was based on their suitability and experience for this type and size of construction project. Due to the delays with the commencement of Bearsted Road, we have delayed the next stage of the procurement process to ensure that the period between the tenders being returned and commencement onsite is kept to minimum. This is to ensure that the pricing of the contract and risks to KCC and the Contractor are not unduly affected by the volatile market that currently exists, largely due to the worldwide impacts on material availability/costs because of the war in Ukraine as well as increased, fuel, energy and inflation costs. A contractor is now expected to be appointed in early 2023.
- 2.2.2 Construction is expected to start with the off carriageway works in May 2023 with construction being co-ordinated with the A249 Bearsted Road scheme, to avoid unacceptable conflicts with roadworks near two key junctions of the M20. Completion is expected in early 2024. It may be possible to bring this date forward but will be dependent on the final phasing the Bearsted Road project, which is currently being agreed with the appointed Contractor.
- 2.2.3 The proposed scheme for the A20 London Road/Hall Road, Aylesford, continues to be developed alongside the Coldharbour scheme.
- 2.2.4 The procurement and construction of these works will follow on from the Coldharbour scheme, subject to availability of road space. The delivery of these two schemes will be closely linked due to their proximity and the need to reduce impacts on both the local road network and the M20 corridor.

2.3 A229 Loose Road Corridor (LGF Scheme):

- 2.3.1 The Loose Road corridor comprises of four separate junction improvement schemes:
- A229 Loose Road junction with the A274 Sutton Road (Wheatsheaf junction)
 - A229 Loose Road junction with Armstrong Road/Park Way
 - A229 Loose Road junction with Sheals Crescent
 - A229 Loose Road junction with Cripple Street/Boughton Lane – paused following the consultation process

2.3.2 A229 Loose Road junction with the A274 Sutton Road (Wheatsheaf junction)

2.3.3 The first phase of this project commenced on 28 March 2022, with the implementation of the Experimental TRO for the trial closure of Cranborne Avenue. This will be in place for a minimum of 6 months and up to a maximum period of 18 months. Objections and comments are currently being collated and will be assessed in September when the first 6 months of the experimental TRO has been completed. After 6 months has lapsed, it will be possible to make the Order permanent subject to addressing any comments/objections that may be received.

2.3.4 The closure of this junction is a key component of the final design solution and will allow additional traffic data to be collected on how the junction will operate with the Cranborne phase of the signals removed. This will allow refinements to the layout to be made based on real information, rather than modelling data. It is also expected that the closure itself will provide capacity benefits in the short term ahead of the second phase of the scheme being implemented, which will include the demolition of the pub and construction of the new junction.

2.3.5 It is planned to carry out at least two surveys to assess traffic flows and to analyse how the displaced traffic from Cranborne Avenue will be redistributed. This will assess any additional intervention measures that may be required at other adjacent junctions (including Plains Avenue).

2.3.6 The phase 2 construction works are currently expected to be carried out between Spring 2023 and Spring 2024.

2.3.7 A229 Loose Road junction with Armstrong Road/Park Way

2.3.8 The Armstrong Road junction improvements will create a right turn lane for southbound traffic and relocate the pedestrian crossing to the south side of Loose Road. This scheme falls under permitted development and detailed design work has been completed.

2.3.9 The improvement will be delivered by KCC's term contractor, Amey, and discussions are progressing with them to confirm the construction phasing. Due to planned utility works in the area and subject to their timely completion and coordination of utility works required for this scheme, works are anticipated to start in October 2022, with works being completed by Spring 2023, prior to the Phase 2 Wheatsheaf construction works. Should there be insufficient time to complete these works prior to the Christmas embargo, it may be necessary to delay the start until the beginning of 2023. Residents, road users and other key stakeholders will be notified of the exact start date and programme ahead of the works commencing.

2.3.10 A229 Loose Road junction with Sheals Crescent

2.3.11 The Sheals Crescent junction improvement will provide a filter straight into Sheals Crescent for southbound traffic by removing the need for traffic to give way when turning right into Sheals Crescent. It is anticipated this will be delivered in conjunction with the works to Armstrong Road.

2.3.12 A229 Loose Road junction with Cripple Street/Boughton Lane

2.3.13 The status of this scheme remains the same as reported in the April update, which is as follows:

2.3.14 This design was paused following the consultation process but a revised scheme to avoid any impact to the landscaped area in front of the shops has been developed. Whilst this may deliver some minor improvements to the length of the right turn lane into Cripple Street, it is not expected to deliver any noticeable capacity benefits.

- 2.3.15 Half bus laybys have also been considered in the design, which will allow some vehicles to pass a stationary bus and whilst this may help with driver frustration at being held up it will not provide any capacity benefits to the junction.
- 2.3.16 This alternative proposal is currently being costed and an estimate of utility diversions being sought to allow the cost/benefits to be properly considered.
- 2.3.17 A further update on this proposal will be provided once costings are known.

2.4 A20 Ashford Road junction with Willington Street (LGF Scheme):

- 2.4.1 This improvement will provide additional capacity on the Eastbound A20 approach to the junction by extending the length of the two-lane approach and also providing wider lanes that will allow eastbound vehicles to pass the queuing right turning traffic more easily. Currently eastbound traffic is frequently blocked by larger vehicles turning right and this only adds to the length of the eastbound queue to the junction. These amendments will allow more traffic to move through the junction at each change of the signals.
- 2.4.2 To accommodate the additional widening of the eastbound carriageway, it will be necessary to widen the westbound carriageway into the existing verge and toward the Mote Park boundary wall, which will require the wall to be repositioned. There are currently utilities and highway street furniture including road signs, lamp columns and a VMS sign which all need to be relocated into the verge. The street furniture will need to be located with sufficient lateral clearance to the edge of carriageway to avoid being struck and to allow access for maintenance. Utilities need to be retained within the verge to minimise the impact of any future maintenance works.
- 2.4.3 A short additional lane is also being provided on the westbound approach to the junction to provide additional capacity on this approach.
- 2.4.4 The boundary wall of Mote Park forms part of the listed curtilage to Mote House and consequently requires a listed building consent submission to Maidstone Borough Council.
- 2.4.5 Following the deferral of the listed building consent application in December 2021, a report was taken to the Maidstone Borough Council May 2022 Planning Committee. The application was subsequently approved by the Committee.
- 2.4.6 With the listed building consent now in place, SELEP have confirmed that the funding is now secured for this improvement.
- 2.4.7 Due to other projects being carried out on the network in the near vicinity, the construction will be planned with KCC's Street Works team alongside the other network pressures and will need to be programmed after the completion of the A249 Bearsted Road project. Accordingly, the earliest this could be delivered would be after August 2023, although it may be possible to bring this date forward subject to the traffic management requirements for Bearsted Road. It will also need to be co-ordinated carefully with the Wheatsheaf improvement scheme.

2.5 A26 Tonbridge Road junction with Fountain Lane (Developer Funded Scheme):

- 2.5.1 The status of this scheme has not changed since the April update, which is as follows:
- 2.5.2 An outline scheme has been identified which would provide a dual roundabout to replace the existing signalised junction. This requires the acquisition of adjacent third-

party land, and negotiations are ongoing with the relevant landowner for the voluntary acquisition of the property.

2.5.3 The feasibility design is complete but further design work is required to progress this junction improvement further. There are currently insufficient S106 contributions available that will allow this scheme to be progressed. KCC are continuing to work with MBC and TMBC to seek other funding opportunities to be able to deliver this scheme in conjunction with the MITP projects. Until such time as funding becomes available it is not possible to predict when this could be delivered, but it should be assumed that the design, planning required for the demolition of the property and procurement could take at least 12 months to complete.

2.5.4 Following comments made at previous JTB's, KCC's Traffic and Network Solutions Team has reviewed the operation of the current signals and has determined that there are no other improvements that can be made to the junction signals within the constraints of the existing layout.

2.6 A274 Sutton Road junction with Willington Street (Developer Funded Scheme):

2.6.1 This is a developer funded scheme with no deadline on the spend, and as such, this scheme will be promoted towards the end of the overall programme to allow schemes with funding constraints to be delivered first. This will ensure that other funding streams which have been secured are not lost and reallocated outside of the County.

3. CONCLUSION:

3.1 Following the approval of the listed building consent for the re-positioning of the Mote Park boundary wall, SELEP have now confirmed that the funding is secured for the A20 Ashford Road/Willington Street improvement.

3.2 It is unfortunate that there have been further delays in commencing the Bearsted Road project but two significant steps have now been taken to enable the programme to be finalised. These are the confirmation that the dualling of Bearsted Road is Permitted Development and the discharge of the pre-commencement planning condition relating to the Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). Once the construction programme has been fixed, it will provide more certainty on the overall delivery programme for the MITP projects.

3.3 The procurement process for Coldharbour roundabout has commenced with the appointment of a contractor now planned for early 2023 and the appointment of Amey for the Armstrong Road improvements is at an advanced stage.