

## **Maidstone Joint Transportation Board – 17 January 2018**

### **Agenda Item 17 – A274 Sutton Road, Maidstone**

#### **Urgent Update**

#### **6.0 BUS PRIORITISATION**

- 6.1 Additional modelling work has been undertaken to assess the benefits of a bus prioritisation system to be utilised in conjunction with this scheme.
- 6.2 This system would require the existing transport operators' fleet to be fitted with a transponder that would be identified by the traffic signals as a bus approaches.
- 6.3 The traffic signals would 're-phase' and show a green light to allow the bus free flow through the junction.
- 6.4 It has been demonstrated that this system would not have a detrimental effect to the traveling public and could benefit those travelling in close proximity to the bus.
- 6.5 It must be noted that this system will only be successful if the bus is able to approach the traffic signals with ease and not in the congested situation as being currently experienced.

#### **7.0 CONCLUSION**

In order to achieve the traffic benefits in terms of reduced congestion and increased capacity in mitigation for the new housing developments, this scheme needs to be implemented.

Measures have been outlined in this report that mitigates the residents' four common concerns. However, the loss and replacement of vegetation remains a particular concern to the local community. Mitigation proposals were presented at the engagement event and can be achieved via 1 of 2 options:

**Option 1** – This option has reduced opportunity to provide an enhanced planting regime. A section of Bell Meadow will not have sufficient space for planting to be incorporated, and therefore the retaining wall with the acoustic fence (1m high) will be visible.

**Option 2** – This option reduces the width of Bell Meadow to provide passing areas which will act as natural traffic calming. This will allow a full planting regime that will screen the acoustic fencing and A274 from the properties in Bell Meadow. This option will require a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to provide double yellow lines to keep free passage for vehicular traffic. All frontages affected by the TRO have off street parking provision.

Following the recent public engagement event, **9** responses were received by the 8<sup>th</sup> December 2017. **6** responses did not indicate a preference for either option, but **3** have responded they do not favour the **Option 2** proposal.

This does not reflect a majority response in relation to the number of residential properties that front the proposed scheme (predominately the southern Bell Meadow side). Option 2 offers the greatest opportunity to replace vegetation whilst providing screening to the A274 Sutton Road.

It is therefore recommended that **Option 2** is implemented in a temporary measure for a 6 month period during the construction phase. This will require a temporary traffic regulation order for the duration with communication continuing with residents to gain their feedback if the option should be introduced as a permanent feature allowing the additional planting.

---

## **7.0 Recommendation**

- 7.1 Kent County Council recommends the progression of this essential junction improvement. Unilateral undertakings have been signed by Kent County Council, Maidstone Borough Council and respective developers, and mitigation measures identified in the approved planning applications for this specific location.
- 7.2 The four common concerns of the local residents have been mitigated as much as practicable whilst retaining the required traffic benefits.
- 7.3 KCC recognises the emotive nature of this scheme, in particular to the surrounding residents. The improvement is to address the current congestion and future growth and benefit all highway users.
- 7.4 Based on the feedback received to the dedicated email address following the second engagement event, it is recommended that the junction improvement with the inclusion of **Option 2** in a temporary measure and bus prioritisation is progressed to the next stage of construction.