

Maidstone Joint Transportation Board

**10 July
2019**



B2246 Hermitage Lane/A26 Tonbridge Road Project

Decision Making Authority	Kent County Council/Maidstone Borough Council
Lead Director	Simon Jones
Lead Head of Service	Tim Read
Lead Officer and Report Author	Russell Boorman/Benjamin Cuddihee
Wards and County Divisions affected	Maidstone Borough including Tonbridge & Malling
Which Member(s) requested this report?	Councillor Rob Bird

This report makes the following recommendations:

That the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board recommends that the current options for the B2246 Hermitage Lane/A26 Tonbridge Road Project are not progressed.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Maidstone Joint Transportation Board	10 July 2019

B2246 Hermitage Lane/A26 Tonbridge Road Project

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This report provides an update in respect of the proposed junction improvements contained within the B2246 Hermitage Lane and A26 Tonbridge Road project.
- 1.2 The road project was previously part of the Maidstone Integrated Transport Package (MITP) but was removed due to the lack of demonstratable benefits and good value for money. The project has since continued to be developed via a Member led working group utilising S106 funding.

2. Optioneering:

- 2.1 Through the Member led working group, several options have been worked up. However, the reduced funding available for the scheme must be highlighted, now that the proposals are being progressed through S106 contributions and not the Local Growth Fund. The scope of the works has thus reduced and subsequently the proposed options comprise of minor alterations to the existing junctions to derive short term benefits. Largely focusing on targeting congestion at each of the identified scheme junctions.
- 2.2 Appendix 1 outlines the current s106 contributions committed by developments in the nearby vicinity of the project. The board are asked to note that further housing development is planned along Hermitage Lane and in other nearby locations. Therefore, further developer contributions may be committed to the project to add to the existing funding available.
- 2.3 There is a reasonably large pot of funding available for the project from committed s106's. Although it is noted that a relatively low amount of the committed contributions has been received by KCC and any funding will only be received when the relevant triggers are reached. This may have some impact on the programme of the scheme.
- 2.4 The working group have considered a range of options, to try and find the best solution to current congestion issues. A number of these options have been discarded, due to a range of concerns including the availability of the land, the suitability of the proposals and the impact of the proposal on the current road network in terms of safety and/or operation.
- 2.5 Table 1 provides a list of options previously discounted by the working group.

Option	Description	Reason for discounting
1	One-way system: Fountain Lane one way northbound, St. Andrews one way eastbound, A26 Tonbridge Road remains two way.	Diversion of traffic wishing to travel southbound along Fountain Lane.
2	A proposed double roundabout at the junction between Fountain Lane/Tonbridge Road.	Land Take requirements, cost, safety concerns for pedestrians crossing the junction and Safety concerns for vehicles turning left from Farleigh Lane into Tonbridge Road.
3	Bus Lane along A26 Tonbridge Road for eastbound buses.	Availability of the land, removal of parking and utility diversions.
4	Upgrade the A26 Tonbridge Road/Queens Road junction to a roundabout	Road safety concerns, land take requirement, utility diversions, unlikely to reduce congestion.
5	Hermitage Lane southbound no right turn into Heath Road, with right turners directed through Heath Grove.	Unsuitability for HGV's, reconstruction of local roads to increase traffic levels.
6	St. Andrews Church land take to assist right turns from St. Andrews road to A26 Tonbridge Road.	Availability of land + utility diversions.
7	Bus Lay by on Fountain Lane on currently vacant shop land.	Road safety issues, land take requirement, CPO, utility diversions.

Table 1: Previously discounted working group options.

- 2.4 The board must note that due to the available funding for the B2246 Hermitage Lane and A26 Tonbridge Road project, the remaining scheme options are not anticipated to deliver long term benefit in terms of relieving the significant congestion experienced at this location. The following schemes have been identified as providing a short-term level of benefit to the area and are proposing the removal of the current Traffic Regulation Order on the no through road along St Andrews road.

3. Working Group Proposed Scheme Options

- 3.1 The two remaining options identified from the design appraisal process reflect schemes which have been adapted through the working group and are thought to be deliverable within the available budget. The following options consist of a do minimum scheme and a do maximum scheme with the later comprising of several further additions in order to maximise the potential benefit derived from the scheme.
- 3.2 Table 2 outlines the two options currently being proposed by the working group.

Option	Description	Cost (incl. full carriageway resurfacing)
1	Amended one-way system: Fountain Lane and A26 Tonbridge Road remain two-way, the no through road restrictions on St. Andrews road removed, to become one-way eastbound. (Appendix 3).	£2,435,079
2	Amended. One-way system with additional works: Northern bus stop along the A26 Tonbridge road converted into a layby to allow a better free flow, adjustment of road markings at southern end of Fountain Lane (one for right turners and one for through traffic), flaring of Heath road/Hermitage Lane junction to increase provision of southbound traffic. (Appendix 4)	£2,881,399*

Table 2: Options currently being proposed.

*Land take requirements for the flaring of Heath road have not been included and would need to be explored.

- 3.3 A Cost Consultant has been engaged to cost the various scheme options. The indicative costings outlined above are the worst-case scenario and thus include the full resurfacing of Tonbridge Road, Fountain Lane and St. Andrews Road. It is not anticipated that this level of resurfacing will be required. Therefore, the final costings are likely to be significantly lower than the above estimates. Revised cost estimates are being sought and will be presented to the board on 10th July.
- 3.4 KCC officers have also engaged a consultant to undertake traffic counts and modelling of the Hermitage Lane/Fountain Lane, A26 Tonbridge Road/Fountain Lane and A26 Tonbridge Road/Queens Road junctions to understand whether the options proposed will deliver the expected benefits and will provide a betterment on the current conditions experienced in the vicinity of the scheme. Officers felt it was necessary to model all three junctions to understand how traffic flows through the full extents of the scheme and to help identify the dominant flows of traffic. Unfortunately, due to slow mobilisation of the consultant and equipment damage, this data was not available at the time of submission of this report.
- 3.5 Instead a base model has been produced using previous traffic data collected as part of 3rd party Housing Developer's Transport Assessments. The modelling includes some assumptions and forecasting owing to the variance in the age and level of data available for each of the junctions highlighted as part of the scheme. Based on the information currently available the two options proposed are likely to provide 3 – 5 years benefit before the adjusted layouts would be overcapacity.
- 3.6 The results of the most recent traffic counts will be reported once they become available. This more detailed modelling is unlikely to demonstrate a significant increase in the viability of the options currently being considered and thus it is unlikely that the benefit cost ratio of either option will improve sufficiently.

4. Associated Costs/Risks:

- 4.1 There are risks with the delivery of either of the two options proposed by the Working Group and these are identified below:
- 4.2 **Option 1:** The amended one-way option requires the removal of the restrictions on an existing residential road to make it a through road which will require a public engagement/consultation event. There is always a risk that this will not be viewed favourably, and the project may suffer significant delays. There would also be a requirement to introduce 2 more signal phases into the Queen's Road and St. Andrews junction, which will increase queue lengths at other junction arms.

Option 2: This option incorporates the risks as highlighted above but with the additional risks related to the extra improvements proposed within this option. The bus lay by will likely require a utility diversion and the relocation of a VAS sign and street furniture. The waiting time for buses using the layby will also increase, especially during peak hours or heavy traffic flows. The adjustment of the road markings at the Southern end of Fountain Lane could result in vehicles overrunning the lanes which would increase the safety risk because of oncoming traffic. The flaring of Heath Road/Hermitage Lane would require the removal of several mature trees, the adjustment of the internal Barming Heath footpath and some land take to suit the new proposed road alignment. There are also rudimentary concerns regarding the operation of the new alignment particularly for traffic movements Northbound through the junction.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 Kent County Council officers recommend to the board that the current proposals are not taken forward due to the limited benefit forecast for the current options being proposed. This recommendation mirrors the similar conclusion reached whilst the scheme was part of the MITP, that the current proposals do not offer sufficient value for money when considering the cost of the scheme and the benefit period.
- 5.2 Whilst there is a relatively sizeable pot of s106 funding available, this is not enough to implement an improvement scheme capable of fully alleviating the impact of predicted future growth in the Hermitage Lane/A26 Tonbridge Road corridor and nearby congestion issues within the Maidstone Urban Centre. Further investment will need to be committed to provide an effective solution capable of relieving the network constraints expected with future predicted growth.
- 5.3 The options presented to the board reflect the range of the scheme designs considered through the member led working group. Unfortunately, none of these options deliver the junction capacity improvements required to mitigate congestion.
- 5.4 The working group will continue to assess minor works to the current operation of the junctions using the s106 contributions available. Initial options being considered include the realigning of the Tonbridge

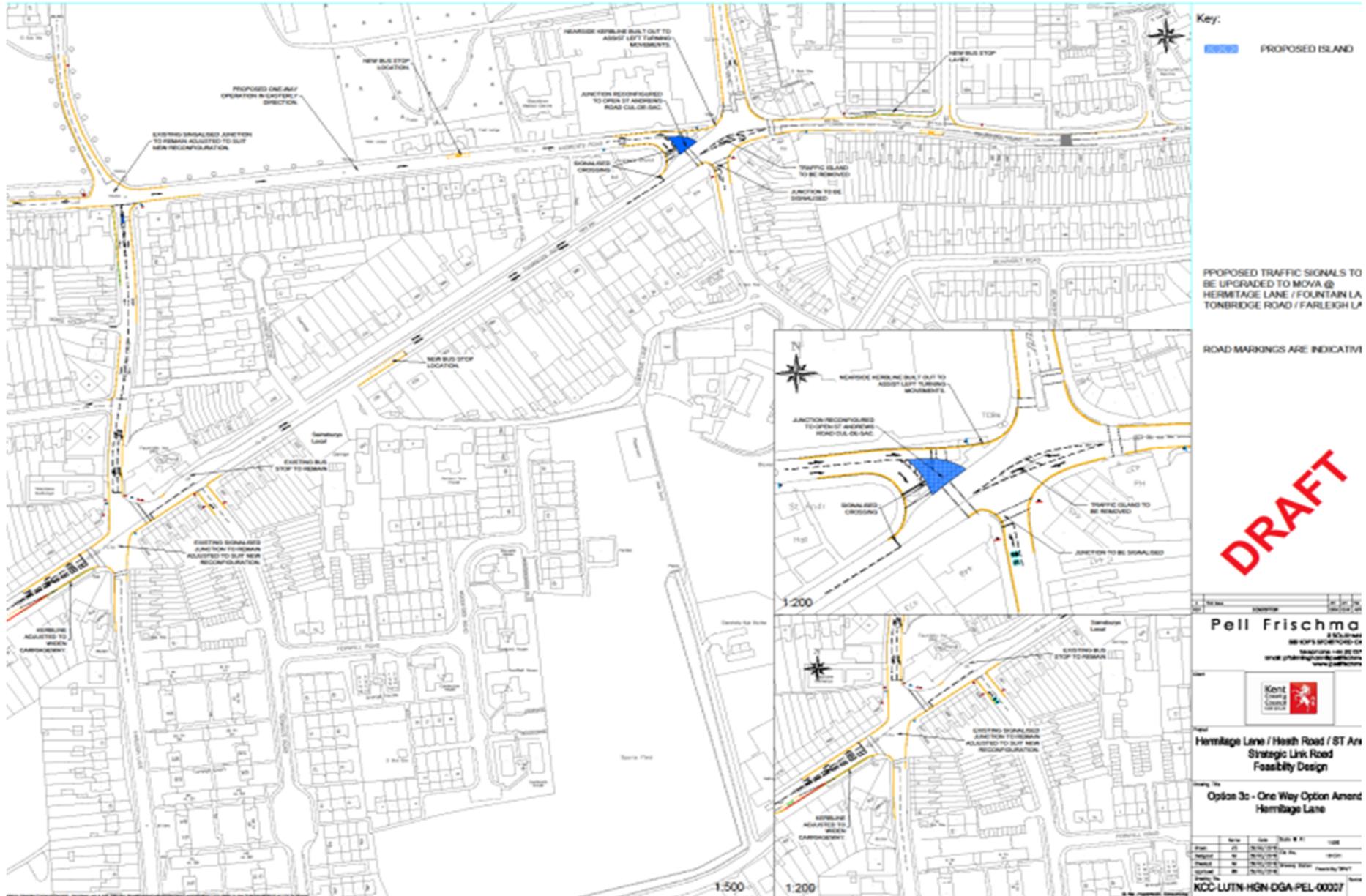
Road/Fountain Lane junction to improve traffic flow, the provision of a pedestrian crossing facility at the Hermitage Lane and Heath Road junction and the installation of intelligent traffic signals at the three junctions highlighted within the scheme.

Appendix 1

Planning Ref.	Developer Agreement	No. of Homes	Tonbridge Road/Fountain Lane	Hermitage Lane/St. Andrews Road/Heath Road	Constraints	Monies Received	Notes
13/1749	Land to East, of Hermitage Lane (MBC s106)	500	£200,000 for junction improvements (£400 per dwelling)	£16,500 (£33 per dwelling for pedestrian crossing). £22,000 (£44 per dwelling for shared cycle pedestrian footway).	Not to occupy any of the dwellings in a phase till 50% of the Highways Contribution for the phase has been paid. Not to occupy more than 50% of the dwelling in a phase until the balance of the Highways Contribution for the phase is paid. Pedestrian Crossings contribution for facilities on Hermitage Lane to the north of the site. Shared footway works on eastern footway of Hermitage Lane.	£40,755.00	£17,160 received for Pedestrian crossing & £23,595 received for Shared Cycle route
13/1702	Land West of Hermitage Lane (MBC s106)	250	1st: £96,250 for junction improvements (£385 per dwelling). 2nd: £338,000 junction improvements	n/a	1st Highways Contribution is due within 28 days of the occupation of 62 nd unit. 2nd Highways Contribution is towards the costs of improving the A20/Coldharbour Lane Junction and A26/Fountain Lane junction due within 28 days of the first occupation of 150 th unit.	0	Awaiting confirmation as to number of units occupied to see if trigger has yet been reached.
13/2079	Land South West of, Oakapple Lane (MBC s106)	80	£32,000 for junction improvements (£400 per dwelling)	£32,480 for Junction Improvements (£406 per dwelling)	Tonbridge road contribution by occupation of 5th dwelling. Hermitage Lane contribution by occupation of 10th dwelling.	0	Trigger not yet met.
14/500412/FULL	Land at Oakapple Lane	65	£29,408 Junction Improvements	n/a	Contribution includes A20/Coldharbour Junction improvements as well. 33% on 1 st occupation, 33% on 20 th and 33% on 35 th .	£29,483.27	Banked (Received 25/06/15)
16/505427/FULL	Erection of 35 Dwellings, Bell Farm, North Street (MBC s106)	35	n/a	£14,210.00	For Pedestrian Crossing Facilities at the Hermitage Lane/Heath Road Junction, prior to 18 th Occupation.	0	Awaiting confirmation to see if invoice has been raised.
12/1749 - 15/507487	Land off Marigold Way (MBC s106)	40	n/a	Condition 23: Refuge Island upon Hermitage Lane to the north of the existing traffic lights. £10,000 has been secured instead	Not viable to close Hermitage Lane for the require TM in such proximity to the Hospital. £10,000 has been secured for the inclusion of a pedestrian phasing to the traffic light signals on the crossroads of Hermitage Lane/Fountain Lane/Heath Road/St. Andrews Road. A pedestrian access to St. Andrews Road will still be provided.	£10,281.58	Banked (01/10/18)
Sub-Total			£526,658	£95,190			
Total				£621,848		£80,519.85	

Table 1: Committed Developer Contributions

Appendix 3 - Working Group Option 1

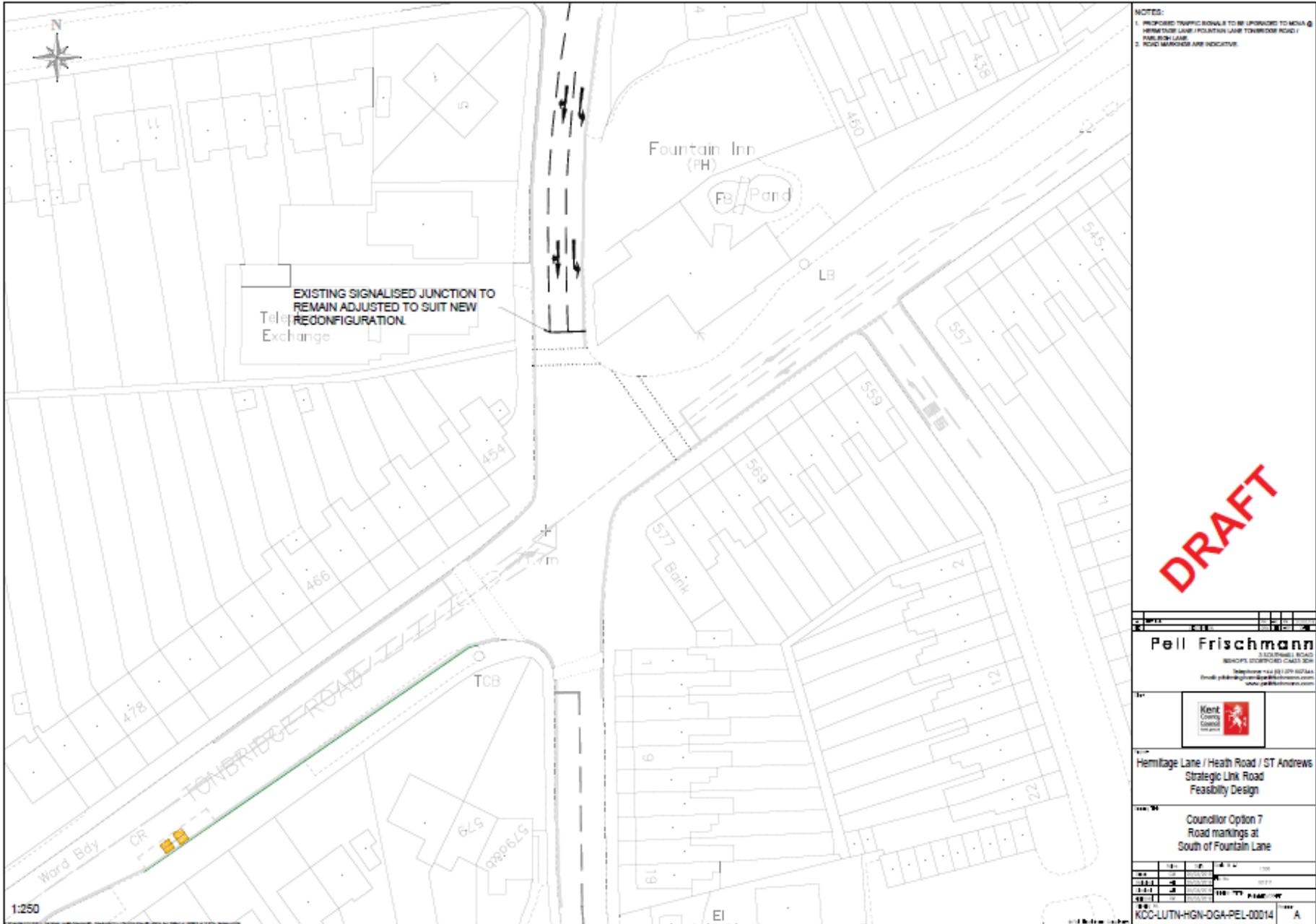


Appendix 4 – Working Group Option 2 add ons

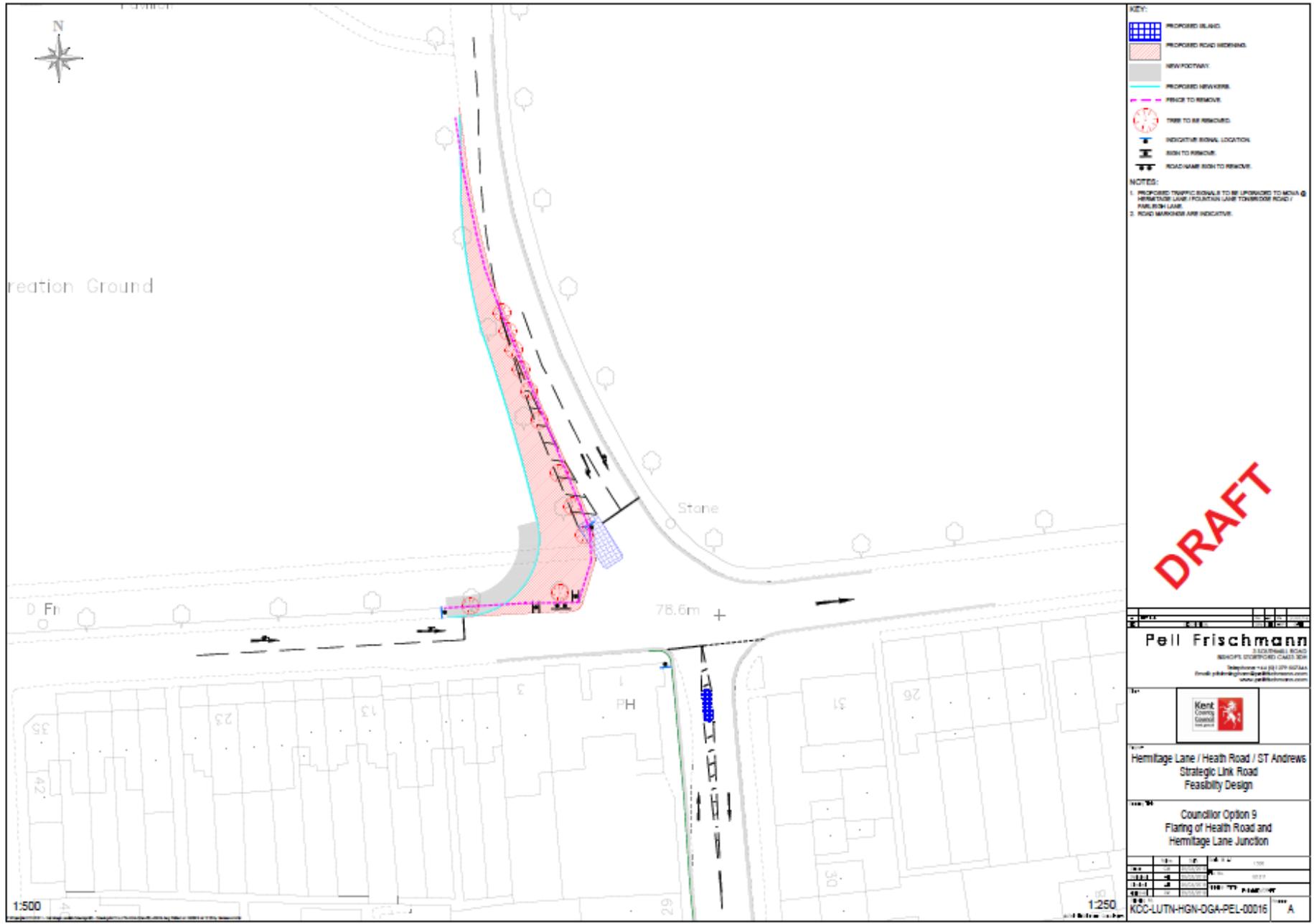
1. Bus Layby along A26 Tonbridge Road



2. Fountain Lane Road Marking Adjustments



3. Flaring of Western extent of Hermitage Lane/Heath Road Junction



- KEY:**
- PROPOSED ISLAND
 - PROPOSED ROAD WIDENING
 - NEW FOOTWAY
 - PROPOSED NEW KERB
 - FENCE TO REMOVE
 - TREE TO BE REMOVED
 - INDICATIVE SIGNAL LOCATION
 - SIGN TO REMOVE
 - ROAD NAME SIGN TO REMOVE
- NOTES:**
1. PROPOSED TRAFFIC SIGNALS TO BE UPGRADDED TO MODULAR HERMITAGE LANE / HEATH ROAD JUNCTION ROAD / HERMITAGE LANE
 2. ROAD MARKINGS ARE INDICATIVE.

DRAFT

<p>Pell Frischmann <small>CONSULTANTS</small> <small>HERMITAGE LANE / HEATH ROAD JUNCTION</small></p>	
<p></p>	
<p>Hermitage Lane / Heath Road / ST Andrews Strategic Link Road Feasibility Design</p>	
<p>Councillor Option 9 Flaring of Heath Road and Hermitage Lane Junction</p>	
<p>1:500</p>	<p>1:250</p>
<p>KCC-LUTN-HGN-OGA-PEL-00016</p>	