

Maidstone Joint Transportation Board



**April
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	6 April 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 – May 2022
- A20 Coldharbour Roundabout – January 2023
- A20 London Road/Hall Road – Autumn 2023 (subject to co-ordination with Coldharbour)
- A229 Loose Road – Wheatsheaf Phase 1 – 28 March 2022
- A229 Loose Road - Armstrong Road- September 2022
- A229 Loose Road – Sheals Crescent – September 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 11 February 2022, the Board resolved:

1. To Note the update on project delivery.
2. To Agree to allow the Project until the April Board meeting (29 April 2022) to secure the listed building consent required to enable the relocation of the ragstone wall associated with Mote Park (required to enable delivery of Phase 1 of the Project).
3. To Note that a further delivery update will be brought to the April 2022 Board meeting, which will include confirmation as to whether the required consent to relocate the ragstone wall has been secured.

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>

(Note: the April Accountability Board meeting has subsequently been deferred until 27 May 2022)

2. SCHEME UPDATES:

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

- 2.1.1 Planning permission for the HGV link at the end of the Newnham Court Access Road and for the drainage outfall and settlement lagoon within the crematorium was granted by KCC and MBC, at their respective February Planning Committee's. KCC are now preparing the required information to discharge the planning conditions associated with these applications.
- 2.1.2 The work to prepare the required information to discharge the planning conditions associated with the new access road within Newnham Court is underway, with priority focused on discharging the pre-commencement conditions and in particular the Construction and Environment Management Plan (CEMP).
- 2.1.3 It is unfortunate that the overall delivery of the project has been delayed but this has provided an opportunity to review the overall design and benefits of the project, particularly considering central government's recent drive on active travel and accessibility initiatives. Consequently, this has led to the development of an enhanced proposal for the dualling of Bearsted Road between the A249 and New Cut Road roundabouts. It is felt that this proposal delivers significant improvements, particularly with additional provisions for pedestrians and cyclists now built into the scheme. The key changes include:
- 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 exact form of structure is still to be determined.
 - 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 The dualling proposal was recently considered at KCC's Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee to allow the Cabinet Member for Highways & Transportation to formally issue a record of decision for this enhanced scheme. Please see link below to view the committee report:
<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=831&MId=8794>.
- 2.1.5 The improvements along Bearsted Road were previously assessed as Permitted Development and did not require planning permission. It is understood that the dualling proposal still meets the requirements to be assessed as Permitted Development, but a formal screening opinion is being sought from KCC Planning to confirm this.
- 2.1.6 Advanced vegetation clearance is being carried out during March and early April. As this work is being undertaken during nesting bird season this is being carried out under the supervision of an ecologist carrying out daily nesting bird inspections. The clearance is being managed in stages to allow any reptiles present to naturally migrate to adjacent habitats, prior to its removal to ground level.
- 2.1.7 KCC are currently working with the contractor to develop the detailed construction programme for the revised scheme and expect to start works in early May on archaeology investigations, initial offline drainage works and to setup the site compound, with the main construction works starting shortly afterwards when the relevant planning conditions have been discharged and the screening opinion has been concluded.
- 2.1.8 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 works commencing.
- 2.1.9 It is anticipated that the construction phase will be substantially complete by the end of April 2023.

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

- 2.2.1 The procurement process has commenced with the publication of the Selection Questionnaire documents. This will allow contractors to be shortlisted for the tendering process, based on their suitability and experience for this type and size of construction project. A contractor is expected to be appointed in October 2022.
- 2.2.2 Construction is expected to start with the off carriageway works in January 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 autumn 2023.
- 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 can be made in the first 6 months of the TRO. 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 some 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 further 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 is nearing its conclusion. The improvement will be delivered by KCC's term contractor, Amey, and discussions are currently ongoing with KCC Street Works Team to confirm road space availability. Due to planned utility works in the area, it is not expected to commence until September 2022, with works being completed by Spring 2023, prior to the Phase 2 Wheatsheaf construction works.

2.3.9 A229 Loose Road junction with Sheals Crescent

2.3.10 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.

2.3.11 A229 Loose Road junction with Cripple Street/Boughton Lane

2.3.12 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.

- 2.3.13 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.
- 2.3.14 This alternative proposal is currently being costed and an estimate of utility diversions being sought to allow the cost/benefits to be properly considered.
- 2.3.15 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, it is now intended for MBC to consider the application at the May 2022 Planning Committee.
- 2.4.6 It should be noted that this junction is identified within the local plan for improvements but is heavily constrained on all sides which makes significant improvements impossible without the costly acquisition of third-party land, and which would most likely be only achievable through a contentious compulsory Purchase Order process and more significant impacts to the grounds of Mote Park. Efforts have been made to minimise impacts to the boundary wall but to deliver any benefits within the land constraints at this junction the current proposal is the only viable option.
- 2.4.7 Whilst the funding is currently secured for this part of the MITP project, there is a risk that any further delays in achieving listed building consent and agreement to reposition the wall may result in SELEP withdrawing the funding and relocating this elsewhere. This consent is a key milestone for SELEP, to provide comfort that the scheme can be delivered.

2.4.8 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 Spring 2023, although it would 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 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.

2.5.2 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.

2.6 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 As per the decision at SELEP Accountability Board on 12th February 2021 and endorsed at subsequent Accountability Boards, all LGF schemes that can demonstrate that they met the SELEP conditions by September 2021 will be able to spend their LGF allocation after the end of the Growth Deal. This has been achieved for all of the LGF funded MITP schemes with the exception of A20/Willington Street, which needs to achieve the listed building consent for the re-positioning of the Mote Park boundary wall.

3.2 If permission can be achieved for the listed building consent, KCC are confident that the current programme as detailed above, will demonstrate that sufficient progress has been made on the schemes to ensure that the SELEP conditions can be met.

3.3 The approval of the two outstanding planning permissions for the Bearsted Road project and approval of the dualling option at KCC's E&T Cabinet now means that the detailed construction programme can be developed for Bearsted Road with more confidence, and once fixed will give more certainty on the overall delivery programme for the MITP projects.

Appendix 1: Map of Highway Improvement Schemes in Maidstone

