

To: **Tunbridge Wells Joint Transportation Board**

By: **KCC Highways, Transportation & Waste**

Date: **2 October 2023**

Subject: **B2160 Maidstone Road/Mascalls Court Road
Paddock Wood Junction Improvements**

Classification: **Information Only**

Summary: **This report updates Members on the background to the schemes and programme for delivery**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 A report was presented to the October 2021 meeting of this Board at the start of the development of the scheme. Two years have passed, and it is an appropriate time to update the Board.

2. Background

- 2.1 Paddock Wood is a housing growth area within the Tunbridge Wells Local Plan. Three developments at Mascalls Court Farm, Mascalls Farm and Church Farm were given planning consent in 2018. Development progress is at various stages but has started at all three sites and together they will deliver nearly 1,000 new homes. As part of the traffic mitigation to accommodate these new developments, improvements were identified for the B2017 Badsell Road/A228 (A228 roundabout) and the B2017 Badsell Road/B2160 Maidstone Road/Mascalls Court Road (B2160 junction) junctions.
- 2.2 The proposed improvement of the A228 roundabout is for an enlarged roundabout within the existing highway boundary to provide a larger diameter, wider entries and more circulating space. The proposed improvement of the B2160 junction is to locally realign Badsell Road to change the current staggered priority junction into a traffic signal-controlled crossroads together with pedestrian crossing facilities.
- 2.3 As three developments are involved with no individual developer willing to take overall responsibility or liability to implement the works under a S278 agreement, the former Leader of the County Council decided in 2014 that KCC would deliver the junction improvements and the S106 agreements were completed on that basis.
- 2.4 The cost of both junction improvements was estimated at £3.695m in 2015 and this matches the total of the contributions that were requested in the three S106 agreements that were completed in 2018. With indexation to cater for inflationary cost increases, this has now risen to circa £4.79m. This contribution is available and being held by KCC.

3. A228 Roundabout

- 3.1 The proposed roundabout identified at the planning stage of the developments was highly constrained by needing to keep within the existing highway boundary. The layout was also highly aspirational with proposals for three lane entries to the roundabout and three lanes around the circulation area.
- 3.2 Further work by our consultants has confirmed that this layout is impractical with a roundabout of such modest diameter. Any improvement within the highway boundary would at best only provide marginal capacity improvements, but it is considered that these would be offset by the inconvenience and disruption to traffic during the works.
- 3.3 Any meaningful improvement of this roundabout can only be achieved by making it bigger and that in turn would require land acquisition and higher cost. It is considered that such a scheme is only likely to be achievable as a standalone scheme or more likely as part of a Colts Hill Bypass that may be identified as a requirement within the Borough Council evolving Local Plan that is currently in the Examination in Public stage.
- 3.4 As a consequence, no further work is currently being done to progress the improvement of this roundabout.

4. B2160 Junction

- 4.1 The proposed improvement is to locally realign Badsell Road to change the current staggered priority junction into a traffic signal-controlled crossroads together with pedestrian crossing facilities. The scheme has a deliberate focus on providing for the high number of pedestrian movements associated with Mascalls Academy and residents in the evolving development at the Mascalls Farm site. The bypassed section of the B2170 will be severed where it currently connects to the B2160 and a turning head provided. It will remain as a route for pedestrians and as vehicular access to two residential properties. The scheme is shown on Drawing No. 60660469-ACM-01-SW-DR-HW-0102 in Appendix A.
- 4.2 Finalising the scheme has proved difficult because it is located on a watercourse route that generally follows the west side of the B2160 from Gedges Lakes to the south and passing in a culvert under the B2160 at the junction. While the junction scheme is modest in layout it does increase the impermeable area and with the increasing concern relating to climate change there has been a focus on mitigating the potential enhanced flood risk that was not a primary consideration when the outline scheme evolved as part of the planning for the three housing development sites.
- 4.3 The Environment Agency has required comprehensive flood risk modelling and analysis. At the time of writing this report, the Environment Agency has not fully signed off the proposals, but it is understood that acceptable flood risk mitigation can be achieved by the provision of storage/attenuation basins situated on the severed area of land between the existing B2017 and the realigned section of new road as shown on the scheme plan.

5. Programme

- 5.1 Subject to final acceptance of the flood mitigation proposals by the Environment Agency, the intention is to submit a planning application for the scheme in October 2023. The application will be, what is known as, a Regulation 3 application and will be submitted to KCC Planning Applications Group for determination.
- 5.2 Subject to planning consent, the intention is to proceed with the detailed design of the scheme and procurement of a contractor so that initial works can take place in summer 2024 to take advantage of the school holidays and also a planned closure of the B2160 by the water company to undertake works to their pipe infrastructure. Some advance site clearance may be undertaken in February 2024 prior to the bird nesting season. The scheme construction works are expected to take up to 9 months and therefore should be completed by spring 2025.

6. Public Engagement

- 6.1 The principle of the scheme was established as part of the consideration of the planning consents for the three developments and hence public consultation in the normally accepted sense is not appropriate. However, because of the passage of time, and as a pre cursor to submitting the planning application, a plan of the scheme and explanatory letter was distributed to local residents and other interested groups and organisations such as emergency services and bus operators in early August 2023.
- 6.2 At the time of writing this report, KCC had received one enquiry from a local resident making three comments as follows (i) What noise prevention is going to be put in place as they have concerns about the current level of noise along Badsell Road, largely associated with anti-social behaviour from motorists. *KCC Response: Space for noise mitigation is limited due to the land available but KCC will review requirements with our designers* (ii) Suggestion made to undertake offline works first to mitigate disruption. *KCC Response: The appointed contractor will be responsible for the sequencing and programming of the work, but they will want to optimise their programme and it is likely they will construct the offline works as an early phase in the project,* (iii) Will a pedestrian access be provided from the new development near to Maidstone Road. *KCC Response: Currently there is only one access planned from the development, located at the western end of the new road but KCC will discuss the possibility of providing an additional access with the housing developer.*
- 6.3 KCC Officers are also planning to attend the Paddock Wood Town Council full council committee meeting on 18 September to give a further briefing on the scheme.

7. Funding

- 7.1 As a result of the scheme delay, dealing with the flood risk assessments and high inflation and high interest rates, the estimated cost of the scheme has increased to about £4.25m although that does include an allowance for risk.
- 7.2 The s106 agreements for the three developments were structured on the basis of both this junction and the A228 roundabout being improved. It did

not contemplate a scenario of only one junction improvement being able to proceed. KCC wrote to the three developers in early August 2023 explaining the situation and asking for their agreement for their contributions being directed to the B2160 junction improvement with any surplus being held for use to fund future feasibility studies for a wider improvement of the A228 roundabout, or towards sustainable transport measures in the local area.

- 7.3 No response has yet been received from the developers yet although this is understandable because of the holiday period, but any update will be reported verbally to the Board meeting.

8. Summary

- 8.1 Improvement of the A228 roundabout cannot proceed at the present time.
- 8.2 The scheme for the B2016 junction has been finalised following expected formal acceptance of the flood risk mitigation aspects by the Environment Agency.
- 8.3 A planning application for the scheme will be submitted soon with a view to construction commencing in summer 2024.
- 8.4 The three developers have been contacted with regard to the redirection of their s106 contributions to reflect the current situation of the A228 roundabout not being able to proceed.
- 8.5 The B2160 junction improvement will help offset the highway implications of three major housing development sites in Paddock Wood that are together delivering nearly 1,000 new homes and in particular will provide enhanced pedestrian crossing facilities.
- 8.6 Further Reports will be presented at appropriate key stages as the scheme progresses towards construction, or as requested by the Board.

9. Recommendation(s)

For Information Only

10. Background Documents

Appendix A – Drawing No. 60660469-ACM-01-SW-DR-HW-0102

Contact Officer

Report Author:

Barry Stiff / Victoria Van Veghel
Major Capital Programme Team
Senior Project Manager / Assistant Project Manager