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**A2500 Lower Road / Barton Hill Drive, Minster, Sheppey**

To: **Swale Joint Transportation Board – 17 December 2018**

Main Portfolio Area: **Growth, Environment & Transport**

By: **Simon Jones, Director of Highways, Transportation and Waste**

Classification: **For Information**

Ward: **Sheppey Central, Sheppey East and Queenborough & Halfway**

Division: **Sheppey**

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**Summary: Update on proposals for improving the A2500 Lower Road between Cowstead Corner and Barton Hill Drive and progress of the junction improvement at Lower Road / Barton Hill Drive - Minster**

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## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 Members will be aware of the scheme to improve the A2500, Lower Road and Barton Hill Drive junction, Minster, from previous reports and attendance by officers at meetings of this Board - most recently 25 June 2018.
- 1.2 This report gives a further update of the programme to deliver the A2500 Lower Road Improvement Schemes.
  - Phase 1 – Lower Road/Barton Hill Drive - Junction Improvement
  - Phase 2 – Lower Road Widening – Cowstead Corner to Barton Hill Drive
- 1.3 The scheme for Phase 1 is a new roundabout at the junction of the A2500 Lower Road with Barton Hill Drive. The proposals are shown on the scheme plan in Appendix A
- 1.4 The scheme for Phase 2 is to widen a 1.1km section of the A2500 Lower Road between the A249 at Cowstead Corner and Barton Hill Drive, including the construction of a new shared footway/cycleway along the north side of the road that will improve and provide the infrastructure for all road users, currently lacking in this location. The proposals are shown on the scheme plan in Appendix A.
- 1.5 Approval to progress these proposals was confirmed following the Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee meeting on the 15 May 2018.

## **2.0 Current Situation**

### **Phase 1**

- 2.1 The South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) funding has been confirmed and developer contributions from s106 agreements have been confirmed.
- 2.2 A construction contract has been awarded to Breheny Civil Engineering as the Principal Contractor to undertake the works. The works commenced on 25 June 2018
- 2.3 The roundabout has been developed to incorporate the potential for a spur road from a fourth arm to serve as access to the development site identified as Policy A12 in 'Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Local Plan 2017.
- 2.4 The landowner, who also holds the land allocated under Policy A12 has made the land available for the scheme at nil cost. Access has been granted to allow construction to proceed while the formal transfer of the land is progressed by solicitors.
- 2.5 To facilitate the construction of the new roundabout, a temporary road closure of Barton Hill Drive was put in place from 10 September for 12 weeks with traffic diverted via Thistle Hill Way. Temporary parking restriction have been imposed along the diversion route. The closure has been extended by a few weeks until the 18<sup>th</sup> December to avoid the need for 3-way traffic lights while undertaking work at the tie ins to the existing Lower Road.
- 2.6 Further temporary road closures and/or night-time working will be required to fully complete the tie-ins of the new roundabout to the existing carriageway. These works will be scheduled for January 2019 and details will be publicised nearer the time.
- 2.7 Following the implementation of the temporary parking restrictions on Plover Road and Thistle Hill, requests have been received to make the parking restrictions permanent. A Traffic Regulation Order to make these parking restrictions permanent was put on public deposit on 29 November with comments required by 24 December 2018. Once comments have been received a report will be presented to this committee for a decision on implementation of the Order.

### **Phase 2**

- 2.8 The improvement of the Lower Road is part of the Local Plan Policy A12 and is to be provided in association with the proposed residential development.
- 2.9 A National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF) bid for part funding of Phase 2 was confirmed in October 2017.
- 2.10 Match funding and the provision of the land required for the widening of Lower Road has been identified and agreed in principal with the promoters of the site

of Policy A12. The match funding and land for Phase 2 will be conditional on receipt of planning consent for housing on the site of Policy A12 and this will need to be secured through a s106 agreement. A planning application has been made to Swale Borough Council in relation to this development.

- 2.11 The provision of the new shared footway / cycleway will provide an important connection between the residential area of Minster with the retail and business areas at Rushenden and Neat's Court. The proposals are for a 3.5m shared footway cycleway offset from the carriageway. As detailed in Appendix A
- 2.12 WSP has been engaged as the engineering consultant to provide the detailed design and construction drawings for Phase 2.
- 2.13 A screening opinion has been submitted, to the Planning Applications Group of the County Council, for Phase 2, to determine if a full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required. As the nature of the site of Phase 2 is similar to Phase 1 it is anticipated that an EIA will not be required and hence the scheme will also be able to proceed as Permitted Development.
- 2.14 An option to carry out Phase 2 of the scheme has been included in the construction contract awarded for the Phase 1 works.
- 2.15 The detailed design has been developed to increase the capacity on the Lower Road approach to and exit from the existing roundabout at Cowstead Corner.
- 2.16 A ghosted right turn junction at the access to Wall End Farm has also been incorporated into the design. This will also help the free flow of traffic in the east bound direction along Lower Road.
- 2.17 As part of the detailed design, options to reduce the construction impact on traffic flow have been considered. The design has been amended to position the combined footway cycleway at or close to existing ground level and offset from Lower Road so that it can be used as a temporary running lane whilst the widening is being constructed. This will significantly reduce the need for temporary 2-way traffic lights whilst undertaking these works.
- 2.18 As with Phase 1 there will be careful consideration of traffic management in the summer holiday period, July through to mid-September.

### **3.0 Programme**

- 3.1 The works are being carried out in two phases. The roundabout on Barton Hill Drive is due to be completed in February 2019 with the work to improve the A2500 Lower road following on later in the year, subject to progress on site planning and completion of a s106 agreement.
- 3.2 The current programme is;

#### **Phase 1 - A2500 Lower Road / Barton Hill Drive Junction Improvement**

- works commenced on 25 June 2018.
- Barton Hill Drive reopened and new roundabout in use on 18 December 2018
- The completion date for all the Phase 1 works is February 2019

## **Phase 2 - A2500 Lower Road Improvement – Cowstead Corner to Barton Hill Drive**

- complete detailed design – December 2018
- developer to obtain planning consent for the site of Policy A12 – early in 2019
- confirm funding and land agreements
- removal of vegetation prior to bird breeding season in February 2019 if possible
- commence works Spring 2019 – subject to land and s106 contributions

3.3 Consideration is being given to ensure that construction works have minimal impact during the main tourist season. The timing and traffic management for the Phase 2 works involving the online widening of Lower Road, is more critical than it has been for Phase 1 and will be planned in detail with the Streetworks Co-ordinator.

### **4.0 Communications**

4.1 A Communications Plan has been developed. This will involve informing residents, road users and key organisations of the proposals and timescale for each of the phases of the project.

4.2 An exhibition was held at Minster Parish Council Offices on Tuesday 5 December 2017 and this was attended by approximately 40 people. The proposals were generally well received. Attendees included a representative from the Lower Road Action Group who welcomed the proposals for the new footway/cycleway link. This was followed up by a presentation to Minster Parish Council on 7 December 2017 and again on 5 July 2018. A further presentation to Minster Parish Council is planned for the 6 December 2018.

4.3 Notification of the roadworks will continue to be advised by temporary variable message signs, and by a letter drop to local residents. Further updates will be provided as the works progress and the contractor implements the various traffic management proposals.

### **5.0 Financial**

#### **Phase 1**

5.1 The cost estimate of the Barton Hill Drive Roundabout is £1.8m and includes the land contribution from the landowner. Contributions of £540,000 are being sought from the proposed developments at Plover Road and Harps Farm, with the balance of £1,260,000 being funded by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership through the Local Growth Fund.

5.2 The s106 agreement with the developers of Harps Farm and Plover Road have been signed with their contribution due for payment prior to commencement of the developments.

#### **Phase 2**

5.3 The cost estimate for the widening of Lower Road is £4.85m.

- 5.4 The current cost estimate is robust and is based on outline proposals that have been reviewed by external cost consultants. It includes;
- construction costs
  - budget estimates from the utility companies
  - project management costs
  - allowances for contingencies, inflation and risk

## 6.0 Legal implications

- 6.1 This Report is for information only and hence there are no legal implications for the Board.

## 7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1 The successful award of the SELEP and NPIF funding, the commitments to make all the land available and match funding from s106 agreements will enable the full scheme of highway improvements along the A2500 Lower Road to be delivered. This has delivered the new junction with Barton Hill Drive as well as the means to provide the much need highway improvements along Lower Road including the footway and cycleway link connecting the key areas of Minster and Queenborough

- 7.2 The scheme has made significant progress. The construction on the new roundabout is close to completion and the detailed designs for Phase 2 are progressing well. Subject to confirmation of the match funding, construction of Phase 2 will be ready to start from March 2019.

## 8.0 Recommendations

For Information

Future Meeting if applicable: As necessary but none planned at present	Date: TBA
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Contact Officer:	Richard Shelton - Project Manager (Major Capital Programme Team) e mail: Richard.Shelton@kent.gov.uk tel: 03000 419550
Reporting to:	Tim Read – Head of Transportation

## Appendices

Appendix A	Phase 1 – Scheme Plan – Drawing no. 0167-SK-133
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