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## A2/A251 Update

To: (Swale Joint Transportation Board – 4<sup>th</sup> March 2019)

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

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

Classification: **For Information**

Ward: **Watling**

Division: **Faversham**

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**Summary: Update report on the completed studies of the A2/A251 and A2/B2041 junctions**

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### 1.0 Introduction and Background

#### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report is intended to provide members with an update on studies that the County Council have commissioned for the A2/A251 and A2/B2041 junctions. Two studies have been completed last year, one evaluating the performance of the previously presented roundabout and traffic light scheme designs in respect of the cumulative local plan and recently committed growth. The second study looked at the feasibility of evolving design options that would cater for full local plan build out and growth up to 2031.

#### 2.0 Base conditions survey

- 2.1 Manual classified turning counts were completed at the junctions of The Mall/A2 and A251/A2 on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2018 from 7AM. Automatic Traffic Counts were also completed on the A251 and A2, close to the junction, between Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> February and Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2018. Data for the weekends and those dates in February that were affected by wintery weather were removed so that the evidence represented the average weekday flows.
- 2.2 The AM and PM peaks for the junctions were identified as 07:15 to 08:15 and 16:30 to 17:30 respectively.
- 2.3 The following table shows the current flows on the A2 and A251:

<b>2018</b>	A2 E/bound	A2 W/bound	A251 N/bound	A251 S/bound
AM	1185	1121	457	666
PM	1110	1109	493	481

- 2.4 The results above have been compared to those submitted by the Perry Court application and counts completed at the same junction in 2013.

<b>2013</b>	A2 E/bound	A2 W/bound	A251 N/bound	A251 S/bound
AM	1129	1158	457	552
PM	1201	1167	493	425

- 2.5 The analysis therefore shows that the A2 has had a slight increase in the AM peak and a slight decrease in the PM compared to the 2013 data. Similarly, a review comparing the A251 flows has been undertaken. This comparison showed that no change had occurred on the Northbound movements despite continued growth in Ashford. In the AM a 7%

increase has occurred on the Southbound A251 traffic flows compared to the 2013 data. The PM A251 Southbound flows are again however, only showing very slight increases.

- 2.6 Unsurprisingly the analysis confirmed that all arms of the A2/A251 junction, other than the A2 Eastern arm, are operating over capacity in the AM peak with the A251 showing worst performance. The B2041/A2 junction was largely showing to operate within capacity other than right turn movements into the B2041 in the PM where the demand is greater than the available space in the right turn lane.
- 2.7 In summary, the analysis shows that flows of traffic for 2018 are very similar to those that occurred in 2013 with negligible growth occurring. This is not altogether unsurprising as whilst planning consents have been granted, build out of those sites is very limited.

### **3.0 Future conditions study of the previously proposed roundabout and traffic light scheme**

- 3.1 Analysis was then completed allowing for all those sites currently committed in Faversham and the wider expected Local Plan growth at dates of 2020 and 2031. Both previously proposed improvement schemes have been tested against those expected traffic flows.

- 3.2 The previously proposed schemes are demonstrated at Appendices A and B and include the following two options.

Option 1 – A potential roundabout layout for the A2/A251 junction, complete with a revision to the A2/B2041 T-junction banning right turn movements out of the B2041 and Preston Grove. The expected cost for this scheme had previously been estimated at £1.1m.

Option 2 – A potential signalised layout for the A2/A251 junction. The expected cost for this scheme had previously been estimated at £800,000.

- 3.3 Option 1 Assessment – The assessment shows that this option would operate above capacity in the AM peak and near capacity in the PM peak by 2020. It does however show a relative improvement in performance when compared to the existing layout. There would be notable improvements seen on the A2 West arm and A251, however considerable queuing would be expected to develop on the A2 Eastern arm which currently largely flows unimpeded. The assessment found that the amendments to the B2041 junction would offer no benefit when compared to the current layout. It was further noted by the consultant that the performance of this option could be improved through the provision of a two-lane merge exit on the A2 West, as this would allow A2 East traffic to use both lanes of the approach. The option is found to operate above capacity in 2031 with significant queues developing.
- 3.4 Option 2 Assessment – The assessment shows that with the signals in place the junction would operate with available capacity at 2020 in both the AM and PM peaks. This shows a more marked improvement than the current layout. At 2031 the results suggest that the junction would be well over capacity with significant queues forming on the A2. This option includes an additional benefit to pedestrians through the introduction of controlled crossings.

- 3.5 Summary –

Option 1 offers some benefit in the short term but no benefit to the operation of The Mall. Longer term however, this option is also unable to cope with the expected demand.

Option 2 would appear to offer more immediate relief in the short to medium term and is able to deliver benefits for pedestrian movement. Longer term this option becomes far less efficient and unable to cope with future demand. The inter-peak journey times would have some increases following the introduction of signals.

It should be clarified that the junction testing performed in the study for the 2020 analysis includes full growth which would have assumed some build out of those sites in the Faversham area that were included in the local plan. As mentioned earlier in the report, growth between 2013 and 2018 has been negligible and it should therefore be expected that the 2020 performance of both options would be better than has been reported.

In conclusion, the study finds that the signalised option would offer the greater performance in the short to medium term during the peak hours whilst having additional benefits for pedestrians.

### **4.0 Feasibility study**

- 4.1 A second study on the junction was then commissioned latterly in 2018 to review options that could meet with Local Plan needs of both the A2/A251 and A2/B2041 junctions. This

study is now complete and reviewed two further options, looking at much larger signalised and roundabout schemes. As landowner negotiations have not commenced it would not be appropriate to place the drawings into the public domain. Members will however be informed of the preferred option as soon as meetings have taken place with the affected landowners. It can be stated that, of the two further options reviewed, it was the roundabout option that operated with spare capacity in a 2031 full local plan build out scenario.

- 4.2 The cost of the 2031 scheme is however in excess of what could be reasonably secured from development alone. The scheme would also involve land negotiations as alluded to in the above section. A Local Plan scheme is clearly unlikely to be delivered in the immediate future, being reliant on a currently unidentified grant and successful land acquisition.

## 5.0 Next steps

- 5.1 Landowner negotiations will be undertaken with those affected by the potential 2031 Local Plan scheme. Once these are underway a report will be taken back to the next meeting of this JTB to demonstrate the two proposed 2031 schemes. The next report will be for consideration of a recommended approach.

## 6.0 Legal implications

- 6.1 No update on the legal implications is provided at this time.

## 7.0 Conclusions

- 5.1 This report is for information only and no conclusions are included.

## 8.0 Recommendations

- 6.1 This report is for information only and no recommendations are included.

Future Meeting if applicable:	Date:
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## ***Annex List***

<i>Annex A</i>	<i>Previously Proposed Roundabout Junction Scheme</i>
<i>Annex B</i>	<i>Previously Proposal Signalised Junction Scheme</i>