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## **A249 Key Street and Grovehurst Road junction Improvements**

To: **Swale Joint Transportation Board – 6 September 2021**

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

By: **Tim Read, Head of Transportation**

Classification: **For Information**

Ward:

Division: **Swale West and Sittingbourne North**

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**Summary: Update on the proposed junction improvements on the A249 at Key Street and Grovehurst Road**

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### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 One of the outcomes of the Swale Local plan adopted 2017 was the need to improve the junctions along the A249 at M2J5, Key Street and Grovehurst Road. The improvements would support the delivery of over 6,000 homes in the period 2022 – 2031 identified in the adopted Swale Local Plan, reduce existing congestion and queuing, as well as improving facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 1.2 A detailed funding bid was submitted and in November 2019, Homes England, the non-departmental public body under MHCLG announced that the bid had been successful and £38.1m of grant funding had been allocated for both junction improvements. A Grant Determination Agreement (GDA) between KCC and Homes England was signed in September 2020. A condition of the GDA is that funding was due to be spent by 31 March 2024, however an extension has been requested following the delays in confirming the M2J5 scheme which was also a condition of release of the HIF funding.
- 1.3 This report gives an update on the A249 Junction improvement Schemes at.
  - Key Street
  - Grovehurst Road
- 1.4 Approval to progress these proposals was confirmed following the Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee meeting in March 2020
- 1.5 The M2J5 scheme is being delivered by Highways England. Following a public inquiry, the Secretary of State published a decision approving the project in June 2021.

## **2.0 Current Situation**

- 2.1 Systra have been employed as the consultants to undertake the transportation assessments and the develop the designs for these schemes.

### **Key Street**

- 2.2 The A249 Key Street junction is a two-bridge oval shaped roundabout junction with slip roads on the southern side and connections to the A249, A2 Keycol Hill, Bobbing Hill, Sheppey Way and Chestnut Street. It serves the A2, village communities, and Sittingbourne town centre.
- 2.3 The scheme for Key Street is to improve capacity and safety on the existing Key Street gyratory and to relocate the access to the south bound slip road to the A249 along Chestnut Street, giving due consideration to the proposed access to Wises Lane development granted planning consent by the Secretary of State following an appeal. A new footway cycleway and commuter parking provision are included along Chestnut Street. The proposals are shown on the scheme plan in Appendix A.
- 2.4 The new roundabout on Chestnut Street is due to be provided as part of the Wises Lane development. Details of the proposals are required to be submitted to Swale Borough Council Planning to approve and discharge the reserved matters.
- 2.5 An alternative scheme without the Wises lane development roundabout on Chestnut Street was prepared whilst awaiting the outcome of the planning appeal, this could still be delivered should the development not come forward within the funding timeframe. The proposals are shown on the scheme plan in Appendix B
- 2.6 The connection onto the A249 from the new roundabout will be delivered as part of the Key Street Improvement works.
- 2.7 These improvements are considered permitted development, so a planning consent is not required.

### **Grovehurst Road**

- 2.8 The A249 Grovehurst Road junction is a double roundabout layout with a single two lane carriageway bridge over the A249 connecting the two. It is the main route for traffic heading towards the Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road to the east and Iwade village to the west. The junction also has connections to Grovehurst Road and Swale Way
- 2.9 The scheme for Grovehurst Road is to provide an additional bridge over the A249 creating a full gyratory junction. The pedestrian and cycle facilities included signal controlled crossings within the junction have been revised following comments received during the recent public consultation exercise. The proposals are shown on the scheme plan in Appendix C
- 2.10 The land required for the gyratory has been safeguarded through the planning process and s106 agreements.

2.11 A planning application is being prepared for submission in October 2021

### **A249 and Highways England and Interface with the M2J5 Project**

2.12 The A249 from the M2 to Sheerness is managed under a Design, Build, Finance and Operate (DBFO) Contract with Highways England. Any amendments, improvements or additions to the A249 that influence the route will be subject to agreement by Highways England and the DBFO contractor.

2.13 Initial discussions have been held with representatives of Highways England and Graham the contractor for the M2J5 improvements to consider programme and traffic management implications for the delivery of these projects within the funding timeframe.

## **3.0 Programme**

3.1 An interim scheme to install traffic signals at the junction of the A249 north bound exit slip road and the Key Street Gyratory was completed 07 August 2020.

3.2 The current programme is;

### **Key Street**

- complete detailed design - February 2022
- procurement - February 2022 to July 2022
- commence works - Earliest October 2022 (see para 3.3)
- Works completed - July 2024

### **Grovehurst Road**

- Submit planning application - October 2021
- complete detailed design – February 2022
- confirm s106 contributions and land agreements – February 2022
- procurement - February 2022 to July 2022
- commence works - October 2022
- Works completed - July 2024

3.3 Consideration is being given to reduce the impact that construction works will have of the A249 and the local highway network. The timing and traffic management for both the improvements at Key Street and Grovehurst Road works will be planned in detail with the KCC Streetworks Co-ordinator and Highways England.

## **4.0 Communications**

4.1 A public consultation has been undertaken. The consultation ran for eight weeks from Wednesday 2 December 2020 until Tuesday 26 January 2021. Details of the consultation and the subsequent reports are available to view [www.kent.gov.uk/a249swalejunctionimprovements](http://www.kent.gov.uk/a249swalejunctionimprovements).

- 4.2 A Communications Plan is being developed. This will involve informing residents, road users and key organisations of the proposals and timescale for each of the phases of the project.
- 4.3 Notification of the roadworks will be provided prior to commencement of construction using temporary variable message signs, and by a letter drop to residents.

## **5.0 Financial**

### **Key Street**

- 5.1 The cost estimate for the improvements to Key Street is £5.9m.
- 5.2 Contributions of £0.5m have been collected from the developments at
- High St Newington planning reference 16/501266
  - Spirit of Sittingbourne, planning reference 14/505440,
  - Crown Quay, planning reference 16/507877
- 5.3 The balance of £5.4m being funded by the Housing Infrastructure Fund
- 5.4 The new roundabout on Chestnut Street is due to be provided as part of the Wises Lane development.

### **Grovehurst Road**

- 5.5 The cost estimate for the improvements to Grovehurst Road is £32.7m, which is being fully funded by the Housing Infrastructure Fund
- 5.6 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
- 5.7 It is anticipated that further s106 developer contributions will be available to cover any shortfall that may materialise. However, the development of the outline designs and later detailed design and construction procurement strategy will all be aimed at achieving value engineering savings and optimising costs.

### **Recovery Strategy**

- 5.8 As part of the HIF funding agreement there is a recovery strategy that will claw back developer contributions from developments that have a traffic impact on the Key Street and Grovehurst Road junctions and that would have been expected to contribute to the improvements. There is an expectation that this could raise in the region of £8.0m that will be used for the purposes of investing into much needed infrastructure necessary to enable further future housing within the Borough of Swale.

## **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 Homes England HIF funding, the commitments to make all the land available and match funding from s106 agreements will allow the highway improvements of the A249 Junctions at Key Street and Grovehurst Road to be delivered, in support of the Swale Local Plan; Bearing Fruits 2017.

## 8.0 Recommendations

For Information

Future Meeting if applicable: As necessary after planning and prior to construction.	Date: TBA
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## Appendices

Appendix A	Key Street General Layout Plan - with Wises Lane development roundabout on Chestnut Street - Drawing no. 108945-dwg-ks-101-01 rev P0
Appendix B	Key Street General Layout Plan – without Wises Lane developer roundabout on Chestnut Street
Appendix C	Grovehurst Road Scheme Plan – Drawing no. 109617-dwg-101-01 rev P3