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A249 Key Street and Grovehurst Road junction Improvements

To: **Swale Joint Transportation Board – 20 June 2022**

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

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

Classification: **For Information**

Ward:

Division: **Swale West and Sittingbourne North**

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

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 National Highways (formally Highways England). Following a public inquiry, the Secretary of State published a decision approving the project in June 2021.

2.0 Current Situation

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

Key Street

- 1.1 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.
- 1.2 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 controlled crossing provision is included along Chestnut Street. The proposals are shown on the scheme plan in Appendix A.
- 1.3 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 – 22/500782/SUB
- 1.4 The connection onto the A249 from the new roundabout will be delivered as part of the Key Street Improvement works.
- 1.5 These improvements are considered permitted development, so a planning consent is not required.

Grovehurst Road

- 1.6 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
- 1.7 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 B
- 1.8 The land required for the gyratory has been safeguarded through voluntary agreement and s106 agreements. Heads of Terms have been agreed and the acquisition will be progressing via solicitors.
- 1.9 Planning consent for the scheme was granted 16 March 2022.

- 1.10 Further extension of the Homes England funding has been agreed and is now available until 31 October 2024.
- 1.11 Advance works on the site are underway, with the Ground Investigation completed in March 2022. Archaeological investigation was completed April 2022, although further mitigation works will be required during construction. Water Voles have recently been identified on site and the required mitigation strategy has been developed. The strategy requires a Natural England Licence, with translocation planned for February/March 2023. A Great Crested Newt (GCN) licence has been obtained from Natural England and a reptile mitigation translocation site identified at Iwade Nature Park with translocation planned for Autumn 2022. Environmental enhancement works will be undertaken during June 2022, this includes the creation of hibernacula, scrub clearance and grassland enhancement.
- 1.12 It is noted that there has been an overlap between the planning application for the KCC Highway Improvements scheme ref SW/21/505738 and the Land east of Iwade development planning ref 19/503974/HYBRID which has a resolution to grant consent subject to signing of the section 106 agreement. To reduce the impact of traffic management on Grovehurst Road it is proposed to include the development access roundabout as part of this scheme, with the developer paying for the cost of this work through a s278 agreement.

A249 and National Highways and Interface with the M2J5 Project

- 1.13 The A249 from the M2 to Sheerness is managed under a Design, Build, Finance and Operate (DBFO) Contract with National Highways. Any amendments, improvements or additions to the A249 that influence the route will be subject to agreement by National Highways and the DBFO contractor.
- 1.14 Discussions have been held with representatives of National Highways and 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	October 2022
Procurement (phase 1)	June 2022 to August 2022
Procurement (phase 2)	September 2022 to December 2022
Construction of Chestnut St roundabout (by others)	December 2022 to June 2023
Contract award	March 2023
Commence works	July 2023
Works completed	August 2024

Grovehurst Road

Complete detailed design	October 2022
Confirm s106 contributions and land agreements	June 2022
Procurement (phase 1)	June 2022 to August 2022
Procurement (phase 2)	September 2022 to December 2022
Contract award	March 2023
Commence works	April/May 2023
Works completed	August 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, National Highways and adjacent developments

4.0 Communications

4.1 A public consultation was 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.

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 local residents.

4.4 A steering group has been established, to ensure stakeholders are kept updated on the progress of the project.

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 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 Wisers Lane development roundabout on Chestnut Street - Drawing no. 108945-dwg-ks-101-01 to 03 rev P2 (DRAFT)
Appendix B	Grovehurst Road Scheme Plan – Drawing no. 109617-dwg-101-01 rev P6