

A28 Chart Road, Ashford - JTB Update June 2017 – Barry Stiff, 30 May 2017.

1. Funding

£10.2m of Local Growth Funding had already been secured via the South Eastern Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) from Central Government for the £32.8m scheme and the recent approval of the planning application for the Chilmington Green development has now confirmed the remaining £22.6m funding required for the scheme through s106/s278 agreements. Kent County Council will be forward funding the developer contributions to enable the project to be delivered as a single scheme, with the loan being repaid by the developer over a 10 year period, starting in 2021.

2. Land

Progress on land acquisition has been hindered due to the delays in completing the S106 but positive discussions are still ongoing with land owners about the voluntary acquisition of land required for the scheme but to safeguard both the programme and funding a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) was published on 11 May 2017. It is now hoped that land required for the scheme will be agreed by Christmas 2017.

KCC, however, have been able to acquire East Lodge, the Grade II Listed Building. KCC were served with a blight notice by the owners of the property during 2016 and agreement was reached for the purchase of the property and this was subsequently completed in March 2017. A narrow strip of the garden is required for the scheme and Listed Building Consent was granted by Ashford Borough Council, for the rebuilding of the boundary wall in June 2016.

3. Appointment of Contractor

KCC have recently appointed Jackson Civil Engineering Ltd on an Early Contractor Involvement (ECI) Contract to assist Amey in finalising the detail design of the scheme. They will provide valuable construction experience and input into the final design of the scheme, as well as carrying out additional site surveys and investigations, in order to manage and mitigate some of the key construction risks prior to the start of the construction phase. The ECI and detail design period is due to run until the end of October, after which time KCC will be in a position to award the Construction stage of the scheme, subject to the completion of the land acquisition required for the scheme.

4. Construction Programme & Phasing

The construction programme is subject to the completion of the land acquisition but it is currently envisaged that the vegetation clearance will be carried out in January/February 2018 and the main construction work will commence in March 2018 with completion in the autumn of 2019. A detailed construction programme will be provided at the end of the ECI period. Should there be delays in acquiring any of the land this may delay the start of the scheme, possibly until 2019.

The detailed phasing of the scheme is being considered as part of the ECI contract but it is anticipated that two way flow of traffic can be maintained for the majority of the construction works, with the eastern side constructed first before moving onto the western side. The new bridge and retaining walls are offline to the existing carriageway so can be built with existing A28 Chart Road traffic unaffected. However, to lift in the separate elements of the bridge, a series of overnight rail possessions have been agreed with Network Rail and for safety grounds it will be necessary to close the A28 Chart Road during these times.

5. Public and Stakeholder Engagement

Further engagement with residents, businesses, Parish Councils and other key stakeholders is planned for mid-July 2017, with an exhibition at Godinton village hall being held to advise on progress to date and to also give some initial indications of the likely construction phasing. A newsletter is due to be distributed during June to advertise this event.

An exhibition and engagement is also planned for November 2017 following the completion of the detail design and ECI stage to provide the detailed information on the construction programme and phasing.

A project update will also be provided to future JTB's.