

Report to: Lead Member for Transport & Environment

Date of meeting: 24 October 2022

By: Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Title: Proposed Ersham Road/Diplocks Way/South Road roundabout, Hailsham – consultation and next steps

Purpose: To advise the Lead Member on the proposed Ersham Road/Diplocks Way/South Road roundabout consultation outcomes and to seek approval to progress to detailed design and construction.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Lead Member is recommended to:

- (1) Note the outcome of the public consultation to introduce a four-arm roundabout at the Ersham Road/Diplocks Way/South Road junction in Hailsham; and**
 - (2) Agree that the scheme progress to detailed design and construction.**
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1 Background Information

1.1. The South Road/Ersham Road mini roundabout and South Road/Diplocks Way priority junction lie next to each other and are located less than half a mile southwest of Hailsham town centre. Locally, both junctions are on an important part of the road network serving the south of Hailsham and the town centre that experience high levels of traffic and congestion, particularly at peak times.

1.2. In November 2012, the Movement and Access Strategy for Hailsham and Hellingly (MASHH) identified the transport infrastructure required in the Hailsham and Hellingly area to support development up to 2027 within Wealden District Council's adopted 2013 Core Strategy. MASHH identified that there was a clear need for improvements at these junctions and forecasts suggested that without improvement the junctions would not be able to cope with anticipated future traffic growth, resulting in:

- increasing journey times and congestion
- restricting access to and from Hailsham Town Centre and Diplocks Industrial Estate
- cause traffic to divert on to local roads which are unsuitable for higher levels of traffic
- impact on journey time reliability of bus services passing through the junction linking Hailsham to Polegate and Eastbourne

1.3. The 2018 Wealden Local Plan Transport Study undertaken by the County Council and Wealden District Council in support of the development of the then emerging Wealden Local Plan reaffirmed the need for improvements to these two junctions to support the planned increase in housing and employment growth in Hailsham.

2 Supporting Information

Proposals

2.1 As part of the wider package of transport improvements identified to support the housing and employment growth in the Hailsham area proposals have been developed to provide a single

roundabout junction as a replacement for the existing South Road/Ersham Road mini-roundabout and South Road/Diplocks Way T-junction. As shown as Appendix 1, the design comprises:

- Two lane entry and exits on the South Road arms (northbound and southbound) to the roundabout with two lanes on the entry from Ersham Road with a one lane exit. The entry and exit from the Diplocks Way arms would be one lane. The roundabout has been designed to ensure that all sizes of vehicles up to heavy goods vehicles and low loader trailers can move safely around the junction
- pedestrian and parallel cycle crossings on Diplocks Way, Ersham Road and South Road (north only) to provide increased access through the junction for non-motorised users and allow connection to other pedestrian and cycle routes in the town, including the Cuckoo Trail
- realign the access to The Old Bricklayers residential properties onto the roundabout which would allow access to all properties from all directions
- access to the petrol station would be retained and through the access to the east, allowing for both right and left turn access. The existing exit onto South Road will be retained as a left-out only, with southbound traffic directed through the existing exit onto Diplocks Way
- the relocation of the existing electricity sub-station which is currently adjacent to the Ersham Road/South Road mini roundabout

2.2 The introduction of the proposed roundabout requires the land adjacent to the two existing junctions which was previously designated as the Ersham triangle village green. Following submission of a joint application by Wealden District Council, Hailsham Town Council and the County Council, the Planning Inspectorate confirmed the deregistration of this land as a village green on 25 May 2022 with alternative provision having already been provided by a development site in south Hailsham immediately adjacent to the Cuckoo Trail. Wealden District Council are proposing that the former village green land is transferred to the County Council.

2.3 The scheme will help to reduce carbon emissions by reducing the current level of idling and queuing traffic at the junction, thereby reducing congestion. In addition, the improvements for pedestrians and cyclists on the approaches and through the junction will seek to encourage shorter journeys, which otherwise might have been undertaken by car, to be undertaken by non-motorised modes. The design of the scheme has considered equalities characteristics and an Equalities Impact Assessment (EQIA) has been carried out for the proposals. The EQIA is a live document and will continue to be reviewed and updated during the detailed design and construction stages, ensuring any issues that arise are addressed.

2.4 The scheme would be delivered using £1.5m from Wealden's Community Infrastructure Levy receipts. The scheme will be added to county's highway asset register and the ongoing maintenance costs will be included in the County Council's future highway maintenance programme.

Public Consultation outcomes

2.5 Public consultation on the proposals was undertaken between 25 April and 20 May 2022. The consultation process was undertaken online via the County Council's consultation hub which included a brochure setting out the rationale for the proposals, details of the design proposals themselves and accompanied by a questionnaire which included open questions to encourage qualitative feedback. Leaflets about the consultation were distributed to over 1,300 properties within approximately 1km of the proposed junction improvement.

2.6 A total of 215 responses were received with 85% of these responses from residents in the Hailsham area. Overall, there was a high level of support for the proposals with 83.7% either supporting or strongly supporting the scheme. A breakdown of the number of responses and the level of support received is shown below:

Responses received	Strongly Support / Support	Oppose / Strongly Oppose	Don't Know / No preference	Not answered
215	83.7%	11.1%	4.7%	0.5%

2.7 Respondents were also asked how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the importance of improving facilities for specific users. 88.4% of responses agreeing/strongly agreeing with the importance of improving facilities for pedestrians public transport; with 63.3% agreeing/strongly agreeing that it was important to improve facilities for cyclists

2.8 In the comments provided alongside the consultation responses, a number of issues were raised. The issues and the response to these are set out below:

Issue	Response
Loss of village green would negatively affect the local area and would be missed if removed	Following an application to the Planning Inspectorate, the Ersham triangle village green was de-designated in May 2022. As part of the application process, there was the opportunity for local residents and stakeholders to comment on the proposal which would have been taken into consideration by the Planning Inspectorate. Alternative village green provision has been made as part of a development in south Hailsham adjacent to the Cuckoo Trail.
Larger roundabout to replace the current roundabout and T-junction will not achieve the desired objectives, especially reduce congestion	The modelling undertaken as part of the design process identified that the proposed roundabout design would reduce congestion in comparison to a 'do nothing' scenario.
Could a traffic signal control junction be introduced instead to help keep traffic flowing?	As part of the optioneering stage, the potential to introduce a traffic signal controlled junction was considered. The signalised junction option did not perform as well compared to the roundabout and therefore was discounted.
Pedestrian crossings were inappropriately located and likely to increase congestion rather than alleviate	Whilst the introduction of parallel pedestrian & cycle crossings on three of the arms of the proposed roundabout will mean traffic has to stop to enable these movements, they will help improve pedestrian and cycle accessibility around the junction for movements between south Hailsham, Diplocks Way Industrial Estate and the town centre.
Improvements are not value for money	Whilst a value for money assessment has not been undertaken, on a qualitative basis the proposed junction improvement will reduce queuing and congestion as well as improve journey time reliability and accessibility to the town centre and employment in the town. In addition, it will improve active travel and public transport travel choices as well as safety for all road users.
Impact of loss of on-street residential parking on Ersham Road	It is recognised that there will be some loss of on-street parking on Ersham Road as a result on introducing the proposed new roundabout.
The scheme design means that it is not able to accommodate longer vehicles	The roundabout has been designed to ensure that all sizes of vehicles up to heavy goods vehicles and low loader trailers can move safely around the junction and in one movement. For some of these movements, the vehicle will need to utilise both lanes around the roundabout, but can all be accommodated within the design.

3 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 The Movement and Access Strategy for Hailsham and Hellingly (MASHH), and more recently the 2018 Wealden Local Plan Transport Study, identified the need to improve the Ersham

Road/South Road mini-roundabout and South Road/Diplocks Way junction to support the planned housing and employment growth in Hailsham.

3.2 Proposals have been developed to replace the existing two junctions with a single four arm roundabout in order to help reduce congestion and queuing in the area, improve accessibility to the town centre and employment areas, improve active travel and public travel choices as well as improve safety for all users. To accommodate the proposed new roundabout necessitated the de-designation of the Ersham triangle village green. Following submission of an application to the Planning Inspectorate by Wealden District Council, Hailsham Town Council and the County Council, the village green was de-designated in May 2022 with alternative provision being provided elsewhere in the south of the town.

3.3 The results of the public consultation undertaken in April/May 2022 show that there is a strong level of support for the introduction of a single four arm roundabout at the Ersham Road/Diplocks Way/South Road junction. Therefore, it is recommended that the roundabout proposals are taken forward to detailed design and construction.

RUPERT CLUBB

Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Contact Officer: Jon Wheeler

Tel. No. 01273 482212

Email: jon.wheeler@eastsussex.gov.uk

LOCAL MEMBERS

Councillor Fox, Councillor Murphy

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Ersham Road/Diplocks Way/South Road roundabout, Hailsham – consultation report