

# **A2 Pepperhill to Cobham Widening Scheme**

## **A2/A282 Improvement Scheme & M25 J1b to 3 Widening**

A report by the County Engineer to the Highways Advisory Board on 9 January 2007

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### **Introduction**

1. Widening of the A2 trunk road between Pepperhill and Cobham from 3 to 4 lanes in each direction was reported to the meeting of this Board in July last year. This report gives an update on the progress of the works, the works programme and ongoing consultations between SKANSKA (the consortium delivering the project for the Highways Agency), and County and Gravesham Borough Council officers. A diagrammatic version of the scheme is shown at the end of this report.
2. Improvements to the A2/A282 junction are also underway and this report outlines the programme and discussions between the contractor Costains and County officers. A diagrammatic version of the scheme is shown at the end of this report.
3. Both the schemes started in September with off-line works, the A2 Pepperhill to Cobham scheme's being at Tollgate and Pepperhill. Downs Road was closed to the public and will remain closed for the duration of the works. The Tollgate Hotel, which is significantly effected by the widening works, was acquired by the Highways Agency and is being used as a site office and public information centre.
4. The start of works ceremony for both schemes was on 10th November held at the former Tollgate Hotel, being carried out by Dr Stephen Ladyman MP, Minister of State for Transport, who started the bored piling machine for the foundations of the new Tollgate bridge. The day was also the first of two of a public exhibition of both schemes at the former Tollgate Hotel.
5. Regular liaison meetings have been set up for both schemes between the contractors and KHS, including fortnightly co-ordination meetings for the A2 Pepperhill to Cobham scheme, and for the A2/A282 scheme overview group meetings every 2 months; the group consisting of representatives from KCC DBC GBC and HA.
6. The M25 Junction 1B to 3 improvement scheme is currently undergoing public consultation following an exhibition held over 7th 8th & 9th December.

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7. Details of imminent works, including lane closures, are given on the HA's web site [www.highways.gov.uk/A2beancobhamphase2](http://www.highways.gov.uk/A2beancobhamphase2) The SKANSKA public relations officer is Gordon Hounslow who can be contacted on 07831 196325. The works programme is currently as follows:
  - (i) 15<sup>th</sup> January commence construction of additional vehicle crossovers, through central reservation, on A2. This will require traffic management measures with narrow lanes operating between Marling Cross and Thong lane for 8 months.
  - (ii) In May commence work around Pepperhill Junction, requiring traffic management measures lasting approximately 12 weeks.
  - (iii) Mid May closure of Marling Cross over bridge, followed by closure of Hever Court Road. Both closures being for up to 14 months, required to enable statutory undertakers' diversions and construction of the new bridge over A2, new roundabouts and link roads.

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- (iv) April 2008 commencement of 7 further phases of traffic management on the Pepperhill section to enable tying in of new road.
- (v) Dec 2008 traffic will be moved over to new road and start of landscaping of old road.
- (vi) Early Spring 2009 Completion of new road.
- (vii) Late 2009 complete landscaping of old road.

### 8. Main matters under discussion with SKANSKA:

- (i) length of time of Marling Cross bridge closure
- (ii) keeping Hever Court Road open
- (iii) diversion routes for the above
- (iv) roadworks co-ordination
- (v) detail design of the new junctions and connecting roads at Tollgate and Marling Cross which will be transferred to the County
- (vi) old A2 - landscaping, footpaths/cyclpaths, equestrian routes and their bridges over new A2, and links to existing.
- (vii) permanent signing

### **A2/A282 Improvement**

- 9. The proposed completion date of this scheme is Spring 2008. Details of the works programme were unavailable at the time of writing of this report; they will be added following the public meeting on 14th December at their visitor and resource centre adjacent to Waller Park, Green Street Green Road, Darenth. However, details of imminent works, including lane closures, are given on the HA's web site [www.highways.gov.uk/A2A282](http://www.highways.gov.uk/A2A282). The Costain Community Relations officer is Martin Griffiths and the 24 hour public helpline is 0845 603 6374.
- 10. Discussions with the Highways Agency over the deferment of the A2 west to north free flow slip and the safety over the 'interim' scheme continued into October but KHS were unable to convince the HA to overturn their decision.
- 11. KHS are continuing to work with Costains to minimise traffic congestion on Watling Street due to traffic avoiding the road works.

### **M25 Junction 1B to 3 Widening**

- 12. This scheme is one of several being progressed by the Highways Agency to widen all the 3 lane sections of the M25 to 4 lanes. The scheme between Junctions 1B (Princes Rd, Dartford) and 3 (M20 Swanley) will be carried out within the existing highway boundaries, with no widening of structures and utilising the hard shoulder at pinch points. It has a budget of £65.94 million.
- 13. The extra benefits of the scheme will be low noise surfacing, an environmental barrier at the Hawley Road bridge to further reduce the noise and reduce the visual impact of the road and traffic, and new lighting to improve the safety of the road. The lighting will be of the latest technology with close cut off beams of light to minimise light pollution.

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14. The consultation period for the scheme ends on 14th February. Comments will be considered by the Highway Agency and taken into account as they deem appropriate. The scheme and comments will then be considered by the Secretary of State. As the scheme is widening of the existing carriageways within existing highway limits no actual planning permission is required. Hence, subject to the Secretary of State's approval the scheme is proposed to start in August 2007 with completion in April 2009; a contract period of 20.5 months. This is a short construction period and the contractor Costains proposes to utilise appropriate overnight working to keep the contract period to a minimum.
  15. During construction the existing number of lanes will be kept open at peak times, which means for most of the day, although they will be narrow lanes. There will be a 50 mph speed limit with an 'average speed specs speed camera system' as on the A2 scheme. There are no road closures proposed although overhead gantries will be manoeuvred into place overnight using rolling road blocks.
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### **Background Documents – File wT/G/115**

**Map 1** - A2 Corridor Scheme plan

**Map 2** - A2/A282 and M25 J1B to 3 Scheme Plan