The need for capacity improvements at the Bearsted Road corridor was identified some years ago as part of both Maidstone Borough Council’s Local Plan and Kent Council’s Local Transport Plan. Full funding has been secured and works are forecast to begin this year.
Contents

• For drivers
  - A249 Bearsted Road Roundabout
  - New Cut Road Roundabout
  - Bearsted Road Corridor
  - Traffic Signals
  - Newnham Court Access Road

• For users of sustainable transport
  - Walking
  - Cycling
  - Disability Access
  - Signalised Pedestrian Crossings
  - Buses
  - New Cut Road Footway

• Aesthetics

• Wider Picture

• Further Information
A249 Bearsted Road Roundabout

Driving from the West
- The inside lane will be dedicated for traffic travelling towards M20 Junction 7 marked M20, A249, Sheerness.
- The outside lane will split with the left hand branch becoming a second segregated lane for traffic travelling towards M20 Junction 7 also marked M20, A249, Sheerness and the right hand branch becoming two lanes to join the roundabout both marked for Bearsted.

Driving from the North
- The outside lane will divide into two approximately 100 metres from the roundabout and will both be marked for the A249 Maidstone.
- The inside lane will divide into two approximately 70 metres from the roundabout and both will be marked for Bearsted.

Driving from the East
- The single lane will divide into two approximately 100 metres back from the roundabout.
- The outside lane will divide into two lanes marked for M20, Sheerness.
- The inside lane (after the bus stop) will divide into two lanes both marked for Maidstone.

Traffic Signals
- There will be six new sets of traffic lights.
- One at each entry to the roundabout mentioned above.
- One at each of the three points on the roundabout where traffic would otherwise cross one of the aforementioned entry points above.

Exiting the roundabout
- All three exits are non-signalised and go from two lanes on the roundabout to two lanes on the exit road.
Driving from the West
- There will now be two lanes which will divide into three lanes before the roundabout. The inside lane will be marked Retail, the middle lane Retail, Bearsted, A20 and the outside lane A20.

Driving from the North
- There will be two unmarked lanes entering the roundabout.

Driving from the East
- The single lane will divide into two unmarked lanes after the new pedestrian crossing.

Driving from the South
- The single lane will split into two unmarked lanes before the roundabout.

Traffic Signals
- There will be eight new sets of traffic lights.
- One at each entry to the roundabout from the west, north and south. The signals at the northern entry point will also facilitate pedestrian crossings.
- There will be a pedestrian crossing on the eastern arm, however, the entry to the roundabout from that arm will be beyond the signals and will have give way lines.
- One at each of the three points on the roundabout where traffic would otherwise cross one of the signalised entry points (all but the eastern entry).
- One at the eastbound and northbound exits for pedestrian crossings.

Exiting the roundabout
- The northbound exit is two lanes with a pedestrian crossing a short distance from the roundabout.
- The eastbound exit is one lane with a pedestrian crossing a short distance from the roundabout.
- The southbound exit is two lanes.
- The westbound exit is two lanes narrowing to one a short distance from the roundabout.
The Bearsted Road Corridor

- The current single carriageway for traffic travelling eastbound will become two lanes.
- The vehicular access to Newnham Court Shopping Village from the Bearsted Road will be removed as part of the works and a new access road will be built off Newnham Court Way. As such access will be from the New Cut Roundabout.
- The current single carriageway westbound will remain unchanged other than the entry from the New Cut Roundabout being two lanes reducing to one a short distance from the roundabout.
- Access to the crematorium will remain unchanged in that all vehicles will have to enter by turning left from the westbound carriageway and exit by turning left back onto the westbound carriageway.
The new access road into Newnham Court Shopping Village will take customers to a new roundabout situated at the top of the embankment by the old vehicular entrance from which they can access the car park and other businesses as they would have done from the old access.

Delivery vehicles will be diverted north before the roundabout on a dedicated service road.

Designs for the service road are still being finalised with the landowner.

The entirety of the new access road will not become public highway remaining in private ownership once built.
Signalisation doesn’t need to be on all arms to provide benefit to the operation of the roundabout. The partial signalisation scheme allows us control over the priority given to different movements through the roundabout. Arms which don’t have direct signalisation are provided benefit as the signal sequences provide gaps in traffic to allow the priority-controlled traffic to enter the roundabout more easily.

Signalisation of the roundabouts will allow us to control how different movements get priority through the roundabout. Currently the flows are relatively unbalanced which means traffic travelling in certain directions get significant benefits to the detriment of others. While there may be a minor detriment to those currently benefitting from this imbalance, our traffic model indicates that there will be a significant reduction in the total delay experienced by all users of the roundabouts at peak times.
The pavement on the southside of the Bearsted Road Roundabout will remain relatively unchanged and a continuous route will be maintained from the crematorium to the western extent of the scheme.

Likewise the footways either side of the A249 from the roundabout to M20 junction 7 will remain the same.

The pedestrian crossing just west of the entrance to the crematorium will remain to allow pedestrians to access the pavement on the northern side of the road.

Whilst vehicular access is being removed from the Bearsted Road to Newnham Court Shopping Village pedestrian access will remain. There will be a continuous footway from the private entrance to Newnham Court House on the A249 just south of M20 junction 7, along the Bearsted Road to the east and into Newnham Court Way and the new vehicular access road to Newnham Court Shopping Village.

Two additional signalised pedestrian crossings will be created. One on the eastern arm of the New Cut Road roundabout. The second on Newnham Court Way where it joins the New Cut Road roundabout.

While the original access to Newnham Court Shopping Village is being retained for pedestrians only, the length available has reduced. To avoid having to increase what was already a steep footway, steps will be added to the last section. Wheelchair users will therefore need to use the footway beside the new vehicular access.

### Pedestrian Walking Routes
- The pavement on the southside of the Bearsted Road Roundabout will remain relatively unchanged and a continuous route will be maintained from the crematorium to the western extent of the scheme.
- Likewise the footways either side of the A249 from the roundabout to M20 junction 7 will remain the same.
- The pedestrian crossing just west of the entrance to the crematorium will remain to allow pedestrians to access the pavement on the northern side of the road.
- Whilst vehicular access is being removed from the Bearsted Road to Newnham Court Shopping Village pedestrian access will remain. There will be a continuous footway from the private entrance to Newnham Court House on the A249 just south of M20 junction 7, along the Bearsted Road to the east and into Newnham Court Way and the new vehicular access road to Newnham Court Shopping Village.
- Two additional signalised pedestrian crossings will be created. One on the eastern arm of the New Cut Road roundabout. The second on Newnham Court Way where it joins the New Cut Road roundabout.

### Cycling Routes
- The footway on the northern side of Bearsted Road will become widened to a shared footway/cycleway and will provide a continuous link from M20 Junction 7 along to the New Cut Roundabout.

### Disability Access
- While the original access to Newnham Court Shopping Village is being retained for pedestrians only, the length available has reduced. To avoid having to increase what was already a steep footway, steps will be added to the last section. Wheelchair users will therefore need to use the footway beside the new vehicular access.

### New Cut Road
- To Grove Green
**Signalised Pedestrian Crossings**

**Bearsted Road - Crematorium / Newnham Court**
- The current pedestrian crossing situated west of the entrance to Newnham Court Shopping Village on the northern side of the road and the Crematorium on the southern side will remain in situ.

**Bearsted Road / New Cut Road Roundabout**
- There will be a new push button controlled pedestrian crossing a short distance along the eastern arm from the New Cut Road roundabout. This will enable pedestrians to cross the two lanes on Bearsted Road from the newly extended New Cut Road footway to the northern side of the road and vice versa.

**Newnham Court Way / New Cut Road Roundabout**
- There will similarly be a new push button controlled pedestrian crossing to enable pedestrians to travel across the four lanes on Newnham Court Way including a pedestrian refuge in the middle.
Bus Stops

- Both bus stops, within the scheme extents, are to remain at approximately their current location with the addition of raised access kerbs and painted road markings.

Westbound
- The Vinters Park Crematorium stop on the south side of the Bearsted Road will be re-sited a few metres to the west of its current location just after the lane has divided into two.

Outside the scheme
- The two more recently sited bus stops to the west of the scheme on the Bearsted Road identified as being for the Hilton will likewise not be affected by the scheme.
Taking on board comments received during the outline design phase much effort has been made to take the opportunity of improving pedestrian links at this location.

- The original extent of the scheme ended just south of the New Cut Road roundabout but we are now to create a continuous footway all the way from the new pedestrian crossing, east of the aforesaid roundabout at the Bearsted Road, south to where the current footway ends on the eastern side of the New Cut Road.
- The new footway will remove the present need for people coming from Grove Green on the eastern side to cross to the western side of the New Cut Road to continue their journey.
- A pedestrian route on the eastern side is also better as that is the arm of the New Cut Road roundabout where the Pedestrian Crossing will be sited.
- Investigation was made into utilising the western side of the New Cut Road however the constraints of the Crematorium wall would mean the footway could not continue along the Bearsted Road to the existing pedestrian crossing and as such moving pedestrian traffic to the opposite side of New Cut Road earlier is the safest option to enable them to reach the new pedestrian crossing.
- The east-side route has its own constraints with a number of mature trees however our designers have worked hard and we are confident that by taking a slightly higher route along behind the trees we can avoid having to remove any of them. This will create a 1 in 9 incline, slightly steeper than the current 1 in 11.
Aesthetics

The current embankment which runs along the north side of the Bearsted Road adjacent to Newnham Court Shopping Village will need to be moved backwards to enable the widening of the Bearsted Road eastbound to two lanes. To facilitate this a 1.4m high retaining wall will need to be constructed (as per the blue line on the plan). The intention is to use Kentish ragstone to be in keeping with the crematorium wall on the opposite side of the carriageway as illustrated in the visualisation.
The trees and general level of vegetation currently on the Bearsted Road roundabout and around the scheme will remain. Any vegetation that need to be removed during the delivery of the scheme will be replaced to ensure the scheme remains sympathetic to its surroundings.
The Wider Picture

This scheme is part of Kent County Council’s local transport plan, further details of which can be found on the Kent Council Council website.

Owing to the proximity of the M20 Junction 7 preliminary design work has also been undertaken in the hopes that those junction improvements can be carried out as part of the same contract as the delivery of the A249 Bearsted Road corridor. Full funding has yet to be secured for the junction 7 improvements however the website will be updated as soon as more details become available.

The Maidstone Integrated Transport Package of schemes includes various other junction improvements along the route of traffic travelling through the Bearsted Road corridor such as: Ashford Road/Willington Street and Willington Street/Sutton Road.

Other schemes being developed by Kent County Council which will help alleviate traffic in the Maidstone area include the Leeds and Langley Relief Road, the A229 Loose Road Corridor and the A20 Coldharbour Roundabout, along with more sustainable projects such as the Maidstone Walking and Cycling Improvements.
Further Information
The Local Plan

- Local plans must be consistent with national policy but can also take on board local planning issues that are important to Maidstone.
- The Maidstone Borough Local Plan provides a framework for development until 2031. It plans for homes, jobs, shopping, leisure and the environment, and the infrastructure to support these.
- The policies within the plan will be used to make decisions on planning applications. The countryside is an important part of Maidstone, and the best way to protect it is to allocate specific sites for development. This way we will have the power to fight developments that are not suitable for our communities.
- The A249 Bearsted Road scheme was identified as part of The Local Plan which can be viewed online at www.maidstone.gov.uk
- Any queries about decisions regarding planning and housing in the area are the remit of Maidstone Borough Council who can be contacted at:
  - Website: www.maidstone.gov.uk
  - Telephone: 01622 602000
  - Address: Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone, Kent. ME15 6JQ

Local Transport Plan

- The local transport plan tells you how Kent County Council will work towards their transport vision over the coming years. Local Transport Plan 4: Delivering Growth without Gridlock (2016-2031) brings together their transport policies, looking at local schemes and issues as well as those of countywide and national significance.
- An image of the plan for the Maidstone area was under ‘The Wider Picture’. The full document can be viewed online at: www.kent.gov.uk

Funding for the scheme

- Two separate applications were made last year to the Department for Transport (DfT) for money from their National Productivity Investment Fund. The A249 Bearsted Road scheme was successful on both occasions; securing £5.399 million initially with a further £4 million from the second bid to be put towards the scheme.
- A further £1.5 million has been promised specifically for the scheme as a local developer contribution.
- Maidstone Borough Council have also offered £0.5 million totalling £11.4 million investment in the local area.

M20 Junction 7

- There is an aspiration to gain funding to enable the signalisation of M20 Junction 7 to be included as part of the overall delivery of the Bearsted Road Improvement Scheme which would be more cost effective and reduce the impact on the travelling public.
- An application was made to Highways England via the Growth and Housing Fund for the release of £4.7 million to deliver the signalisation but the Fund was subsequently withdrawn.
- Alternative funding options are being investigated and we will update the website if we manage to secure further funding which could allow works to begin in the summer of 2020, ending early 2021.

Programme

- Dates are subject to change but the current programme is for works to begin in late 2019 albeit the initial works will mainly be offline so we would not expect the works on the Bearsted Road to begin until 2020 with a current end date of Autumn 2020. More detailed timescales will be put on the A249 Bearsted Road Improvement webpage once the tender has been awarded.