

From: Matthew Balfour, Cabinet Member – Environment and Transport
Barbara Cooper, Corporate Director, Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee – 13 March 2017

Subject: **Highways and Transportation schemes funded through Local Growth Fund, Round Three**

Key Decision 17/00025

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Past Pathway of Paper: N/A

Future Pathway of Paper: For Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: Canterbury City South West, Dartford East, Dartford North East, Dartford West, Sheerness, Shepney, Wilmington.

Summary: In January 2017 the Government announced an allocation of £102m of local growth funding for the South East Local Enterprise Partnership for the delivery of a range of transport and business support related schemes. The Growth deal (Round 3) included the allocation of funding for Dartford Town Centre, A2500 Lower Road, Isle of Shepney and A2/A28 Coast bound off slip, Canterbury schemes following the submission of outline business cases for each scheme to SELEP (<http://www.southeastlep.com/growth-deal>).

Recommendation(s):

Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Environment & Transport to give approval to take the schemes listed below through the next stages of development and delivery including authority to progress statutory approvals and consultation where appropriate, and to enter into funding and construction contracts as indicated on the proposed decision sheet attached in Appendix A.

- a) Dartford Town Centre improvements scheme, in drg. No. 4300378/000;
- b) A2500 Lower Road improvement scheme, in drg No. 43000416/000/06;
- c) A2/A28 Coast bound off-slip, Wincheap scheme, in drg. No. 5269/GA01

and specifically to:

- i) give approval to the progress the design of the schemes for development control and land charge disclosures;
- ii) give approval to progress all statutory approvals or consents required for the schemes;
- iii) give approval to carry out consultation on the schemes;

- iv) give approval to enter into Local Growth Fund funding agreement subject to the approval of the Corporate Director of Finance & Procurement, and
- v) give approval to enter into construction contracts as necessary for the delivery of the schemes subject to the approval of the Procurement Board to the recommended procurement strategy.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In the Growth Deal announcements in July 2014 (Round One) and January 2015 (Round Two), the Government allocated £482 million from the Local Growth Fund to capital projects across the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) area.
- 1.2 In January 2017, a further Growth Deal Extension was announced by Government following a SELEP Local Growth Fund Round Three submission.
- 1.3 In total, through the three rounds, £104m Local Growth Fund has been allocated towards the delivery of 25 Highways and Transportation projects in Kent.
- 1.4 An additional £24m has been allocated through the Local Growth Fund to deliver 6 non-transport schemes in Kent.
- 1.5 The Growth Deal extension (Round 3) included the allocation of funding for Dartford Town Centre, A2500 Lower Road, Isle of Sheppey and A2/A28 Coast bound off slip, Canterbury schemes following the submission of outline business cases for each scheme to SELEP (<http://www.southeastlep.com/growth-deal>).
- 1.6 Through the Service Level Agreement with Essex County Council as the Accountable Body for SELEP, Kent County Council is responsible for the programme management of all Local Growth Fund projects in Kent. There are, however, specific projects for which third party organisations are responsible for delivery.
- 1.7 This report provides an overview of the project and recommendations for the required decisions to allow the 3 Kent Transport schemes to be progressed:
 - Dartford Town Centre improvements
 - A2500 Lower Road improvements, Isle of Sheppey
 - A2/A28 Coast bound off-slip, Wincheap, Canterbury

1.8 Where plans are available these are shown at **Appendix B**

2 Dartford Town Centre

- 2.1 The Dartford Town Centre scheme is a £12m (£4.3m LGF) project to be delivered between 2017/18 and 2020/2021. The scheme is being developed in partnership with Dartford Borough Council.

- 2.2 £4.3m Local Growth Fund has been provisionally allocated to the project, subject to the approval of a full business case by the SELEP Accountability Board. The remaining funding is provided by the STIPs Programme (£7.7m)
- 2.3 The bid forms part of a wider programme of work aimed at improving Dartford town centre through the funding of a range of transport/public realm improvements.
- 2.4 The proposed package comprises the following:

- 2.4.1 **Market Street (A226) incorporating Market Place and link through to High Street.** This is a wide road forming part of the town centre ring road and incorporating bus stands. It has a poor, confusing layout for both vehicular traffic, cyclists and pedestrians and it acts as a barrier to pedestrian movement between the High Street and Central Park. Reduced bus use on this stretch of road provides the opportunity to reduce road space, create a more pedestrian-friendly environment and introduce more activity through the creation of a 'market square'. The poor layout also results in unnecessary traffic and bus delays.
 - 2.4.2 **Hythe Street/Westgate Street junction.** This junction has the potential to be the main walking route from the station to the High Street, linking both the Station Mound and Hythe Street major development sites. Currently, it poorly serves cars, buses, pedestrians and cyclists. The project will reconfigure the junction and make public realm improvements.

3 A2500 Lower Road, Isle of Sheppey

- 3.1 The A2500 Lower Road scheme is a £1.805m (£1.265m LGF) project to be delivered between 2017/18 and 2019/2020. The scheme is being developed in partnership with Swale Borough Council.
- 3.2 £1.265m Local Growth Fund has been provisionally allocated to the project, subject to the approval of a full business case by the SELEP Accountability Board. The remaining funding is provided by developer contributions (£540k)
- 3.3 The A2500 Lower Road improvements project will realign and improve the capacity of the A2500 Lower Road/Barton Hill Junction. This junction is currently a pinch point on the principal 'A' road that serves the Isle of Sheppey from its connection with the Strategic Road Network. There are already congestion issues at this junction and as such, the junction is acting as a barrier to the delivery of new housing at specific residential sites.

- 3.4 To remove the constraint, the current signal controlled junction will be replaced by a 3-arm roundabout at Lower Road/Barton Hill Drive.

4 A2/A28 Coast bound off-slip, Wincheap, Canterbury

- 4.1 The A2/A28 Coast bound off-slip scheme is a £8.8m (£4.4m LGF) project to be delivered between 2017/18 and 2020/2021. The scheme is being developed in partnership with Canterbury City Council and Highways England and is one part of the Wincheap Capacity Improvement Masterplan

- 4.2 £4.4m Local Growth Fund has been provisionally allocated to the project, subject to the approval of a full business case by the SELEP Accountability Board.
- 4.3 The scheme will deliver an off-slip in the coastbound direction of the A2, creating a ‘full movements’ junction to improve accessibility to Canterbury City Centre, retail and residential areas. Furthermore, the project is identified by Canterbury City Council as a required scheme to facilitate commercial and residential development in South West Canterbury. The project will also reduce congestion along the Canterbury Ring Road system which is currently used to gain access to the city centre and Wincheap Park and Ride site.

5 Financial Implications

- 5.1 It has been agreed with Government that SELEP and therefore Kent County Council will receive Local Growth Fund in quarterly instalments in advance in accordance with the scheme spending profiles, subject to completion of a Transport Business Case for each project and the approval of the project by SELEP Accountability Board.
- 5.2 The Service Level Agreement between the SELEP Accountable Body (Essex County Council) and Kent County Council transfers responsibility for the delivery of the LGF projects in Kent to the Council.
- 5.3 Any match funding will be secured through a legal agreement to be signed by the contributors and the County Council.
- 5.4 An agreement will be developed for those schemes to be delivered by third parties to transfer the conditions of LGF spend and project management responsibility to them. This will include updating Kent County Council with regular reporting on project progress and spend.
- 5.5 It is anticipated that the Transport Business Cases for these schemes will be considered at future meetings of the SELEP Board in 2017/18.

6 Policy Framework

- 6.1 The delivery of the Dartford Town Centre, A2500 Lower Road and A2/A28 Coast bound off slip schemes will support the Council in meeting its Strategic Outcome for “Kent Communities to feel the benefits of economic growth by being in work, healthy and enjoying a good quality of life”. This will be achieved through the projects supporting continued operation of key transport infrastructure which is vital to the Kent and national economies as well as helping support growth by enabling new residential and commercial development.
- 6.2 The schemes are also included as priorities within the draft Local Transport Plan 4: Delivering Growth without Gridlock 2016-2031, which highlights how investment in these infrastructure projects is vital to boost Kent’s economy and support a growing population.

6.3 The schemes are covered in the HT&W Divisional Level Business Plan 2016-17 under Key Outcomes:

- Improved growth and economic prosperity through having an efficient highway and transport infrastructure.
- People in Kent are able to travel safely, efficiently and pleasantly to employment, education, social and cultural opportunities.

7 Conclusions

7.1 The Dartford Town Centre, A2500 Lower Road and A2/A28 Coast bound off slip schemes are important projects in supporting economic growth, whilst providing additional highway capacity, improving accessibility and reducing congestion. The allocation of Round Three Local Growth Fund to these projects is welcomed in supporting the continued growth in Kent. The programme will be challenging but some preliminary work has already been undertaken on these schemes and there is confidence that the delivery dates for these schemes can be met.

8. Recommendation(s):

Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Environment & Transport is asked to give approval to take the schemes listed below through the next stages of development and delivery including authority to progress statutory approvals and consultation where appropriate, and to enter into funding and construction contracts.

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- v) give approval to enter into construction contracts as necessary for the delivery of the schemes subject to the approval of the Procurement Board to the recommended procurement strategy.

8. Background Documents

Appendix A – Proposed Record of Decision

Appendix B – Scheme Drawings

9. Contact details

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