

From: Matthew Balfour, Cabinet Member for Planning, Highways, Transport and Waste

To: Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee – 30 November 2017

Decision No: N/A

Subject: Cabinet Member – Written Updates

Classification: For Information

Past Pathway of Paper: N/A

Future Pathway of Paper: N/A

Electoral Division: Countywide

Summary: This paper provides an update to Members of the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee on the major roads programme, KCC's response to Highways England's consultation on its proposed improvement to Junction 5 of the M2, lorry parking and the South East rail franchise.

Recommendation(s):
The Cabinet Committee is asked to note the report.

1. Introduction

1.1 This paper provides an update to Members of the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee on the major roads programme, KCC's response to Highways England's consultation on its proposed improvement to Junction 5 of the M2, lorry parking and the South East rail franchise.

2. Road Improvement Schemes Update

Current KCC Major Capital Programme

2.1 Good progress has been made on the Major Capital Programme. Highlights include:

- Rathmore Road, Gravesend is on track to finish on site in November 2017;
- Hermitage Lane improvement scheme, Maidstone, is on track to finish in November 2017;
- Jackson Civil Engineering has been awarded the contract to construct the A226 London Road/St. Clements Way scheme, Dartford, with work due to start in January 2018;
- The design of the A28 Chart Rd, Ashford, widening scheme is also well underway and Jackson Civil Engineering is on target to construct the scheme,

commencing January 2018, subject to the Public Inquiry, which is due to start on 21 November (as a result of the CPO);

- The preparation of Planning Application for the Sturry Link Road scheme is well underway and it is intended to submit an Application to KCC in December 2017; and
- Design of A2500 Lower Road/Barton Hill roundabout, Swale is well underway. With the very good news that our bid to the DfT was successful for the Lower Road widening, it is intended to construct both schemes under the same contract. Details of the delivery programme are being finalised, with construction due to start in 2018/19.

Bids for new Transport Schemes

2.2 Both bids to the DfT's National Productivity Investment Fund, NPIF, were successful:

- Upgrade of 2 roundabouts on A249 at Kent Medical Campus, Maidstone
- A2500 Lower Road widening, Swale

2.3 The M20 J7 signalisation bid to the **Highways England's Growth and Housing Fund**, will be recommended by HE to pass through to the next stage of the bidding process.

2.4 Two Expressions of Interest (see below) have been made by KCC to the **DCLG's Housing Infrastructure Fund (Forward Funding Schemes)** with an announcement of those passing to the next stage anticipated on or around the Autumn Statement:

- Physical Infrastructure for Otterpool Park, Shepway e.g. roads and rail improvements
- Highway infrastructure, Swale

2.5 KCC has endorsed a number of district bids to **DCLG's Housing Infrastructure Fund (Marginal Viability Schemes)** including new highway infrastructure in Thanet and Dover. Announcement of successful bids is anticipated on or around the Autumn Statement:

Other Transport Schemes

2.6 Highways England are due to start construction of the new junction M20 J10a early 2018.

3. Junction 5 (M2) Consultation

3.1 Kent County Council responded to Highways England's consultation on its proposed improvement to Junction 5 of the M2. The consultation was open between 6 September and 17 October.

- 3.2 While we welcome improvements to this junction being included in the Road Investment Strategy (RIS) as part of Government's investment of £15 billion for major A-roads and motorways, Highways England's current preferred option, Option 12A, is a missed opportunity to address and mitigate existing congestion and is wholly inadequate to accommodate future planned growth. Our response to the consultation did not support the proposed Option 12A scheme as it does not provide a free-flow link for movements north and south along the A249. The proposed introduction of a signalised 'Hamburger' roundabout will cause unnecessary conflicts and will fail to increase capacity or improve safety.
- 3.3 Improvements to this junction are a key transport priority for Kent, as set out in our newly adopted *Local Transport Plan 4: Delivering Growth without Gridlock (2016-2031)* as the A249 is a strategically important link between the M2 and M20 corridors. In the peak period there are often high levels of congestion and delay on approaches to the junction, especially from the A249 both southbound and northbound. This congestion is expected to worsen in the future due to planned development and population growth. The volumes using the route will also increase with the opening of the new Lower Thames Crossing in 2026 creating a new strategic route along the M2/A2 corridor from the Channel ports to the Midlands and the North. In addition, the ports are forecasting significant growth, and as such, the need for resilience between these corridors linking the Channel ports to the rest of the UK will be further increased. The A249 is also part of the Strategic Road Network linking the Port of Sheerness, which is also forecasting significant growth, as well as a key inter-urban corridor between Maidstone and Sittingbourne, each with substantial housing and employment growth strategies.
- 3.4 In our response to the consultation we argued that the previously discarded Option 4 is the only feasible option that will increase capacity, improve journey times, journey time reliability and safety through the junction as it would provide a grade separated free-flow north-south link for the A249. Kent County Council has therefore urged Highways England to reconsider its options appraisal and bring forward the previously discarded Option 4 as the scheme that will deliver sufficient capacity improvements to enable growth.

4. Lorry parking

- 4.1 The pilot A20 lorry enforcement scheme that covers the A20 from Charing to Ashford has started. The enforcement commenced on the 30 October and on the first night 10 lorries were clamped. Over the first week of the scheme, 120 lorries have been clamped.
- 4.2 There has been no dispersal reported into residential or rural areas as yet and counts in Henwood and Cobbs Wood industrial estates (estates without overnight lorry parking bans) have not indicated a displacement into these areas.

5. South East rail franchise

- 5.1 The Department for Transport (DfT) is expected to publish the Invitation to Tender (ITT) and service specification very soon. This will set out the minimum requirements for service start and finish times and frequencies for each route in the new franchise, for Monday-Friday, Saturday and Sunday.
- 5.2 Each of the short-listed bidders for the new franchise – Abellio, Govia and Stagecoach – will then return their tender submissions to the DfT, most probably by January 2018 demonstrating how they would meet the minimum service requirements set out in the specification and how they could exceed these with their own innovative ideas.
- 5.3 The DfT will then consider each of the tender bids during 2018, with the announcement of the new franchise award due in August, although realistically this could now slip to September. The start date for the new franchise is Sunday 9 December 2018, with any significant changes in service levels or operating practices likely to follow later.
- 5.4 Kent County Council has played a full and detailed role in the franchise process, and is due to meet each of the bidders separately during November for a second time. KCC's principal rail officer also represents the Council at the monthly meetings of the DfT's franchise team, ensuring that the needs of our passengers are heard in the process of determining the franchise specification.
- 5.5 Once the franchise operator is announced, KCC will engage with the successful company to ensure that they are fully apprised of our expectations for the new franchise.

6. Recommendation(s)

Recommendation(s):

- 6.1 The Cabinet Committee is asked to note the report.

7. Contact details

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