

From: Mike Whiting, Cabinet Member for Planning, Highways, Transport and Waste

To: Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee – 31 January 2018

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, M2 Junction 5 Improvements and KCC's response to the National Infrastructure Commission's consultation, 'Congestion, Capacity and Carbon: Priorities for National Infrastructure

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, M2 Junction 5 Improvements and KCC's response to the National Infrastructure Commission's consultation, 'Congestion, Capacity and Carbon: Priorities for National Infrastructure

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 successfully completed and was officially opened by the Chairman of KCC on Friday 19 January;
- Hermitage Lane improvement scheme, in Maidstone was successfully completed in November 2017;
- Jackson Civil Engineering started work on the A226 London Rd/St. Clements scheme in Dartford on 15 January 2018; and
- A Public Inquiry was avoided on the A28 Chart Rd widening scheme, Ashford and construction is due to start in March 2018.

Bids for new Transport Schemes

2.2 DCLG has confirmed that the decision on the **Housing Infrastructure Fund (Forward Funding Schemes)** Expressions of Interest has been deferred to March 2018. The bids were:

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

Other Transport Schemes

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

3. M2 Junction 5 Improvements

3.1 Following the non-statutory consultation in September/October last year, a preferred scheme announcement is expected in 'early 2018' and a statutory consultation in summer 2018. As of 19 January, the preferred scheme announcement has not yet been made and the consultation report is still to be published.

3.2 Highways England inform us that the views expressed in the consultation are still being taken into account before a decision is made on which scheme to progress. Kent County Council's view that 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, has been acknowledged. In its response to the consultation last autumn, Kent County Council 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. We await the consultation report and preferred scheme announcement due anytime now.

4. National Infrastructure Commission's (NIC) consultation, 'Congestion, Capacity and Carbon: Priorities for National Infrastructure.'

4.1 The NIC has recently consulted on an interim National Infrastructure Assessment (NIA), entitled 'Congestion, Capacity, Carbon: Priorities for National Infrastructure'. The responses will be used to inform the content of the National Infrastructure Assessment (NIA), which is due to be published in 2018 and which will set out recommendations for how the identified infrastructure needs and priorities should be addressed.

4.2 The consultation focused on seven key priorities

- Building a digital society;
- Connected liveable city regions;
- New homes and communities;

- Low cost, low carbon;
- Revolutionising road transport;
- Reducing risks of extreme weather; and
- Financing infrastructure in efficient ways

4.3 Due to the closing date of 12 January, it was not possible to bring a full response to Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee. A summary of the response is outlined below.

4.5 KCC considers that the NIA will be a critical opportunity to help unlock barriers to the delivery of infrastructure and is fundamental to achieving sustainable growth. .

4.5 KCC's response has drawn from the draft GIF update 2017. The response emphasised that KCC is well positioned and willing to work with Government to deliver economic and housing growth, in the midst of an increasing awareness in Government of the importance and benefits of strategic planning and the leading role of county councils in preparing strategic plans.

4.4 The response also highlighted the problems in delivering current growth – in light of potential pressures from London (with the current London Plan underway) and if the Nationally Objectively Assessed Housing Need (NOAN) approach is taken forward by Government.

4.5 In relation to the seven key priorities the following points were included:

- Kent and Medway is at the frontline of impacts from Brexit and is therefore proactively engaging with partners and Government in developing solutions for maximising opportunities and mitigating risks from Brexit. This includes the vital importance on the readiness of the UK's border for Brexit to protect the freight industry and passenger industry from costly delays at ports;

The need for the development of a long term digital strategy including an extension to the coverage of ultra-fast digital connectivity across the UK.

- The need for a formal county council role in strategic planning, and the role and importance of the GIF in identifying the cost of infrastructure needed to support predicted levels of housing and economic growth;
- How S106 and CIL regimes can be improved to capture land and property value uplift and help fund infrastructure;
- The need to consider how demand for water can be reduced and for incentivising developers to drive-down water demand and for coordinated approaches in flood risk management; and
- The need for a national energy efficiency programme which should cover the the need for local distributed energy generation for new developments and also the need to concentrate on improving the flexibility of the grid to

support renewable technologies in the future, linking to the development of a Kent and Medway Energy and Emissions Strategy.

- 4.6 A copy of the full response can be found at:<http://kcc-app610:9070/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=SD5281&ID=5281&RPID=19600315>

5. Recommendation(s)

Recommendation(s):

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

6. Contact details

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