

From: **Barbara Cooper - Corporate Director Growth, Environment & Transport**

To: **Matthew Balfour - Cabinet Member for Environment & Transport**

Decision No: **14/00162: Maidstone Bridges Gyratory – Construction of two new northbound lanes & traffic controlled junctions.**

Electoral Division: Maidstone Central

Summary: Approval to take the highway improvement through the next stages of development and delivery including authority to progress statutory approvals and to enter into funding and construction contracts.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport is asked to give approval to:

- i) to the outline design scheme for Maidstone Bridges Gyratory on the eastern side of the river Medway for development control and land charge disclosures shown in principle on Drg. No. 4300066/000/05;
- ii) progress all statutory approvals or consents required for the scheme shown in principle on Drg. No. 4300066/000/05;
- ii) enter into Single Local Growth Fund funding agreement subject to the approval of the Corporate Director of Finance & Procurement, and
- iii) enter into construction contracts as necessary for the delivery of the scheme subject to the approval of the Procurement Board to the recommended procurement strategy.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Maidstone Gyratory is a recognised congestion and air quality hotspot within Maidstone Town Centre, lying at the point where the A20, A26, A229 and A249 primary routes converge and cross the River Medway.
- 1.2 The scheme involves the construction of two additional northbound lanes on the eastern side of the River Medway, with new junctions controlled by traffic signals. This would enable northbound traffic on the A229 to avoid the existing Gyratory system, thereby reducing journey distances and travel times and enabling the regeneration of the western riverside.
- 1.3 The recently announced award from the Single Local Growth Fund is very welcome news and, together with Maidstone Borough Council New Homes Bonus and Kent County Council LTP contributions, will now allow the scheme to proceed.
- 1.4 This report provides an overview of the project and recommendations for the required decisions to allow the scheme to be progressed.

2. Financial Implications

2.1 The overall estimated scheme cost is £5.74m. The allocation from the Single Local Growth Fund is £4.6m. The remaining £1.14m is available from Maidstone Borough Council.

2.2 Costs of developing the scheme are included within the estimate.

3. Policy Framework

3.1 The scheme supports the BS4K objectives of supporting existing businesses and encouraging economic activity with housing growth and job creation by reducing congestion and improving infrastructure and accessibility.

4. Scheme Update

4.1 A preliminary traffic modelling exercise has recently been undertaken, using Linsig and 2013 traffic data, to update the baseline situation and confirm the proposed scheme continues to demonstrate operational and capacity benefits to the local network. The results have demonstrated similar benefits to the previous modelling exercise (undertaken by Jacobs) with a notable reduction in overall junction delays and queues, particularly on the northbound A229 approach.

4.2 The scheme is totally within the highway curtilage of the A229. Planning consent is not required, no land needs to be acquired and it is unlikely that any other statutory approvals or consents will be required but is included in the decision recommendation as a contingency safeguard.

4.3 In connection with previous work undertaken by Jacobs, as part of the Kent County Council Professional Services Contract, some data such as engineering details, traffic modelling and a topographical survey have already been obtained.

4.4 The proposal is well established within the context of major development consents but is probably not well known to the local community. The scheme has been raised at the local Joint Transportation Board (JTB) with a favourable response. Kent County Council are working closely with the consultant of the Powerhub development in relation to the planning condition of an additional vehicular lane on the northern bridge, which Maidstone Borough Council have concerns relating to the reduction in footway/cycleway facilities. It is recognised this will have a significant impact on the local area and as such initial meetings have been undertaken with Maidstone Borough Council and a steering group formed to continually update and feedback progress and concerns. This includes incorporating landscaping of the central islands and grassed areas that will be altered as part of the scheme. Public meetings will be arranged in the MBC offices to outline the schemes advantages and address concerns of the local community. An information letter drop will be carried out when the scheme programme has been developed in more detail with further communication, as would be done for any highway scheme, when appropriate.

4.5 Delivery of the scheme in practical terms will be dependent on completing the detailed design of the scheme and procuring a contractor through a competitive

tender process - probably under European procurement rules. Delivery will also be dependent on the cost and affordability and this will be clearer after the detailed design has been completed and a more robust estimate prepared. A scheme specific business case needs to be submitted to the Department of Transport for approval before the £4.6m Single Local Growth funding is confirmed.

- 4.6 On the basis of the Single Local Growth funding being confirmed, design and procurement proceeding satisfactorily and road space permits to carry out works affecting the A299 being granted by Kent County Council, a start of construction in early 2016 is anticipated.

5. Conclusions

This is an important scheme to help reduce congestion on the Maidstone Bridges Gyratory, of the A229 strategic route and support housing development, job creation and general economic activity. The recent announcement of Single Local Growth funding that will allow the scheme to proceed is very welcome news. The programme has been developed and some preliminary work has already been done and there is confidence that a construction start date of early 2016 can be achieved.

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7. Background Documents

- 7.1 None.

8. Contact details

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