

From: Barbara Cooper, Corporate Director – Growth, environment and Transport

To: Matthew Balfour, Cabinet Member for Environment & Transport  
Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee

Decision No: 15/00011 Highways & Transportation Schemes Funded through the South East Local Enterprise Partnership

Electoral Division: Tonbridge, Deal, Maidstone Central, Maidstone Rural West, Maidstone North East, Malling Rural North, Swale Central, Southborough & High Brooms Wards. All electoral divisions within Sevenoaks, Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells and Maidstone district and the Dartford and Gravesham District Wards within the area defined as Kent Thameside.

**Summary:** Funding for a number of highway and transportation improvement schemes has been allocated to Kent County Council, following successful bids to central government via the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP). Each scheme, to be delivered between 2015/16 and 2020/21, is aimed at enabling and supporting *Growth Without Gridlock*.

**Recommendation(s):**

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.

- Tonbridge Town Centre Regeneration Scheme, in drg. No. 4300127/000/11,
- North Deal Transport Improvements, in drg. No. NDTI-1,
- Maidstone Sustainable access to Employment areas, in drg. No. MSAEA-1,
- Sittingbourne Town Centre Regeneration, in drg. No. STCR-1,
- A26 London Rd/Speldhurst Rd/Yew Tree Rd, Tunbridge Wells, in drg. No. KCC/LTP/YTR/001,
- West Kent Local Sustainable Transport Fund and
- Kent Thameside Local Sustainable Transport Fund.

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 Single 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 & Background

- 1.1 In the Growth Deal announced in July 2014, the Government allocated £442 million from the Local Growth Fund (LGF) to capital projects across the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) area. Of this, almost £100 million has been allocated to 21 transport schemes in Kent.
- 1.2 This report provides an overview of the project and recommendations for the required decisions to allow the 7 of these 21 LGF schemes to be progressed:
1. Tonbridge Town Centre Regeneration
  2. North Deal Transport Improvements
  3. Maidstone Sustainable Access to Employment Area
  4. Sittingbourne Town Centre Regeneration
  5. A26 London Rd/Speldhurst Rd/Yew Tree Rd, Tunbridge Wells
  6. West Kent Local Sustainable Transport Fund and
  7. Kent Thameside Local Sustainable Transport Fund.
- 1.3 Where plans are available these are shown at **Appendix A**.

## 2.0 The Schemes

- 2.1 Tonbridge Town Centre Regeneration is a £2.65m (£2.4m LGF) scheme to be delivered between 2015/16 and 2016/17. The scheme is being developed in partnership with Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council. Phase 1, to be implemented during 2015/16, includes widened footways, a raised speed table, defined delivery areas level with the footways, a 20mph speed limit and quality street furniture. Phase 2 in 2016/17 is to include further pedestrian routes and cycle links to the Railway Station and improvements to the Fiveways, Bordyke and Cannon Lane/ Hadlow Road traffic signal junctions and potential extensions to the High Street 20mph speed limit. The scheme will provide a more attractive environment to boost the local economy, reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality. A consultation has been undertaken and reported to the JTB.
- 2.2 The North Deal Transport Improvements is a £1.55m scheme (£0.8m LGF) to be delivered between 2015/16 and 2016/17, subject to progress by the developers. The proposal is to provide a new road between Albert Road and Church Lane, Deal, which will relieve the neighbouring residential estate roads of freight traffic accessing Minter's Yard (Industrial Estate) and the local HWRC. The road will enable a residential, supermarket and office/industrial mixed use development. Benefits include removal of traffic from unsuitable local roads, resolution of rail/road safety conflicts, improved access to employment and housing and facilitating new housing and jobs. The LEP funding will facilitate private sector investment and long standing aspirations in the area to be realised.
- 2.3 The Maidstone Sustainable Access to Employment areas is a £3m scheme (£2m LGF) to be delivered between 2015/16 and 2016/17 to improve the towpath along the river Medway between Aylesford and Maidstone. It will provide an enhanced, fully accessible, traffic free corridor on a North – South

axis through the centre of Maidstone linking over 7,000 households, 3,000 businesses and 7 schools, all within 1km of the route. It is anticipated that the route will contribute to residents' wellbeing, enabling exercise as part of a daily commute, and attract business investment and tourism. The scheme has been developed in consultation with Maidstone and Tonbridge & Malling Borough Councils. Maidstone Borough have committed £1m of match funding.

- 2.4 The Sittingbourne Town Centre Regeneration is a £4.5m scheme (£2.5m LGF) to be delivered in 2015/16, subject to progress by the developers. The aim of the scheme is to bring significant regeneration to Sittingbourne Town Centre by improving the public realm. The scheme involves a redesign of the highway space to make it more pedestrian friendly and to provide a better public transport interchange. A new cinema, restaurants and retail will help to retain commercial activity in the town which will be supported by a more pleasant pedestrian environment to make the area more attractive. The LGF funding will match the £2.0m put up by developers for the scheme. Planning Permission was granted by Swale Borough Council on 16 March 2015.
- 2.5 A26 London Rd/Speldhurst Rd/Yew Tree Rd, Tunbridge Wells is a £1.8m scheme to be delivered between 2015/16 and 2016/17. Outline design has been considering options for new junction layouts and controls at both junctions as well as to investigate and make improvements on the A26 route as a whole in order to improve flow and reduce congestion. The scheme options are currently being discussed with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.
- 2.6 The Kent Thameside Local Sustainable Transport Fund is for a £7.65m (£4.5m LGF) package of schemes to be delivered between 2015/16 and 2020/21. The schemes, each of which are under £1m, focus on improving sustainable access to town centres and public transport services and interchanges. Schemes to be implemented in 2015/16 include the replacement and upgrading of the 21 *Fastrack* buses – the LGF funding amounts to a £613k contribution to Arriva who are covering the bulk of the costs, Gravesend station access improvements in partnership with Southeastern, a *Wayfinding* pedestrian signage scheme in Dartford, extension of the local cycle network and bus stop access upgrades. The package is being developed in consultation with Dartford and Gravesham Borough Councils and will be subject to future reports to the JTBs.
- 2.7 The West Kent Local Sustainable Transport Fund is for a £9.06m (£4.9m LGF) package of schemes to be delivered between 2015/16 and 2020/21. The schemes, each of which are under £1m, focus on improving sustainable access to town centres and public transport interchanges. Schemes to be implemented in 2015/16 include Snodland Station forecourt improvements in partnership with Southeastern complementing the new High Speed Rail Service from the station, a *Wayfinding* pedestrian signage scheme in Tunbridge Wells linking to the town centre shared space/ public realm improvement, extension of the local cycle network, bus stop access upgrades and grants to schools and businesses to implement measures in combination with their Travel Plans. The package is being developed in consultation with Maidstone, Tonbridge & Malling, Tunbridge Wells and Borough Councils and will be subject to future reports to the JTBs.

### **3. Financial Implications**

- 3.1 The LGF will be released quarterly in advance in accordance with the scheme spending profiles, subject to the approval of a Transport Business Case for each scheme. The match funding has been secured from other local government programmes, developers and public transport providers as set out above in the respective scheme paragraphs. This match funding will be secured through a legal agreement to be signed by the contributors and the County Council.
- 3.2 The Transport Business Cases for 3 of the 7 schemes (Tonbridge Town Centre Regeneration, Kent Thameside Local Sustainable Transport Fund and West Kent Local Sustainable Transport Fund) were submitted to the SELEP for assessment and LGF funding was confirmed for these schemes at the SELEP Board meeting on 20th March 2015.
- 3.3 The LGF funding for the remaining 4 schemes is not required in the first quarter of 2015/2016, therefore it is anticipated that the Transport Business Cases for the remaining 4 schemes will be considered by a future meeting of the SELEP Board later in 2015.
- 3.4 Costs of developing the schemes are included within the estimates.

### **4. Policy Framework**

- 4.1 One of the strategic outcomes in Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes is that Kent communities feel the benefits of economic growth by being in work, healthy and enjoying a good quality of life. The regeneration potential and transport improvements delivered through the implementation of these schemes will help to meet this outcome. The key priorities set out in the County Council's Integrated Transport Strategy *Growth without Gridlock* in terms of providing additional highway capacity, improving accessibility and reducing congestion are also delivered. The schemes are covered in the HT&W Strategic Priority Statement 2014-15 under Key Priority 3:
  - Transportation Action 5 – Produce realistic growth plans and transport strategies by working closely with District council colleagues. The schemes have been developed by KCC working in partnership with the district councils to deliver District Transport Plans.
  - Transportation Action 9 – Deliver the programme of crash remedial measures, small schemes and our LSTF programme – introduce an improved process to successfully bid for funds and ensure the published programme is completed on time, budget and the right quality.

### **5. Conclusions**

- 5.1 These are important schemes to help the Kent economy to grow, whilst providing additional highway capacity, improving accessibility and reducing congestion. The recent announcement of Single Local Growth funding that will allow the schemes to proceed is very welcome news. The programme will be

challenging but some preliminary work has already been done and there is confidence that the delivery dates for these schemes can be met.

## 6. Recommendation(s)

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## 7. Contact details

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## Appendix A – Scheme Plans