

Report to: Lead Member for Transport and Environment
Date of meeting: 14 March 2022
By: Director of Communities, Economy and Transport
Title: East Sussex County Council Major Road Network A22 Outline Business Case Submission
Purpose: To advise Lead Member for Transport and Environment of the proposed Major Road Network (MRN) package of improvements for the A22 corridor in Hailsham and Stone Cross, the outcomes of the recent consultation on the proposals and the intention to submit an Outline Business Case to the Department for Transport for MRN funding.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Lead Member is recommended to:

- (1) Note the proposals for the A22 corridor in Hailsham and Stone Cross to support the delivery of housing and employment growth in the Eastbourne/South Wealden area;**
 - (2) Note the outcome of the stakeholder and public consultation held in summer 2021 on the proposals which will help shape the next design phase for these schemes;**
 - (3) Approve the progression of the A22 corridor proposals to detailed design; and**
 - (4) Approve the submission of an outline business case seeking £29.2m of Major Road Network funding to Government at the end of March 2022, and delegate authority to the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, to agree the final content of the Outline Business Case.**
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1 Background Information

1.1 In 2018 the Government published the outcome of its consultation on the creation of a Major Road Network (MRN) within its Transport Investment Strategy. The MRN sits between the Strategic Road Network (SRN), which is the responsibility of National Highways (formally Highways England), and the local road network, which is the responsibility of local authorities, and comprises the busiest and most economically important local authority A roads.

1.2 The creation of the MRN intended to provide more long-term certainty of funding, with a portion of the National Roads Fund being dedicated to the MRN. For East Sussex this means that several roads have been included as part of the MRN, including the A22 Eastbourne to Forest Row (including Golden Jubilee Way) and the A2290 Lottbridge Drive. A plan showing the extent of the MRN alongside the strategic road network is at Appendix 1.

1.3 In 2019, Transport for the South East (TfSE) were asked by the Department for Transport (DfT) to identify their highest priority early entry (Phase 1) MRN schemes for potential funding. Following an assessment process, TfSE identified two potential MRN schemes in East Sussex within the 10 priority schemes across their geography – the A259 corridor between Brighton and Eastbourne and the southern section of the A22 corridor around Hailsham and Stone Cross. Local authorities with prioritised projects were asked to develop five cases in the business cases for submission to Government in accordance with the DfT's business case guidance. The type of business case (strategic, outline or full) initially developed was dependent on where each scheme was in their development cycle.

2 Supporting Information

A22 Hailsham and Stone Cross junction improvement package

2.1 A package of transport improvements including several junctions on the A22 around Hailsham and Stone Cross, were identified in the Wealden Local Transport Plan Study (2018) as necessary infrastructure required to support the current and planned housing and employment

growth in the now withdrawn 2020 Wealden Local Plan. Whilst the Plan was withdrawn, a number of the identified development sites in the south Wealden area have continued to come forward as planning applications, and the majority of which have subsequently been approved.

2.2 These junctions, and the proposed improvements at each, comprise:

- Boship roundabout; Hailsham – enlargement of the existing roundabout and introduction of traffic signals including pedestrian/cycle crossing facilities
- Hempstead Lane Hailsham – replace the existing left in, left out junction into Hempstead Lane East from the A22 with an all move roundabout, as well as a pedestrian/cycle crossing to the south of the junction
- A295 South Road roundabout, Hailsham – introduction of a slip lane from the A295 South Road onto the A22 southbound carriageway as well as a pedestrian/cycle crossing to the north of the junction
- the A27/A22 roundabout, Stone Cross – increased capacity on the approaches to the roundabout
- A22 Golden Jubilee Way/Dittons Road roundabout, Stone Cross – replace the existing roundabout with a traffic signal controlled crossroads including pedestrian and cycle crossing facilities

2.3 The Council's Capital Strategy identifies these improvements as part of the package of basic need transport infrastructure requirements that are necessary to support the delivery of growth allocated in Local Plans across the county. The Strategy also expects that these basic need transport infrastructure requirements would be principally funded by Development Contributions including the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and external funding sources. Therefore, alternative funding sources are being sought via the MRN fund to deliver these schemes which will contribute to the County Council's priorities of driving sustainable economic growth and maximising resources.

Outline Business Case Development

2.4 To help secure the necessary funding, the County Council has been developing and refining an Outline Business Case (OBC) for the A22 Hailsham and Stone Cross junction improvement package for submission to Government. The OBC sets out the strategic need for the proposed improvements; the economic benefits that they generate; the financial requirements to develop and deliver the scheme; how the project will be managed and the governance structure, and commercially how the final package of improvements will be procured and delivered by a contractor.

2.5 The current estimated cost of the package of improvements is £34.4m (2018 prices which include a proportion for risk/contingency (20%) as well as optimism bias (15%) relating to where the project is in its delivery cycle). £29.2m is being sought from the Government's MRN funding with a 15% contribution of £5.2m coming locally from development contributions and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) secured by Wealden District Council.

Public Consultation and Outcomes

2.6 As part of the outline business case submitted to Government, the outcomes of stakeholder and public consultation is required to demonstrate acceptability for the proposals.

2.7 A public consultation was undertaken on the A22 Hailsham and Stone Cross junction improvement proposals between 12 July and 3 September 2021. In addition, consultation also took place upon some additional preliminary proposals along the southern section of the A22 and the A2290 (Lottbridge Drove) in Eastbourne to help shape the development of these schemes as part of a future and separate business case. A copy of the consultation proposals are available on the East Sussex consultation hub at [A22 and A2290 Improvements - East Sussex - Citizen Space](#). A copy of the consultation brochure is attached at Appendix 2.

2.8 Engagement was also carried out prior to the consultation with key stakeholders including local County, District, Borough, Town, and Parish Councillors. A complementary survey was also

undertaken with the businesses along the corridor to capture their views on the proposals.

2.9 A total of 706 survey responses were received, the majority of which were from the Hailsham, Polegate and Eastbourne areas. For each of the five junctions, at least 45% to 50% of respondents were in favour of the proposed improvements, with the A22/A295 Eagles roundabout receiving the highest amount of support with 67% of respondents in agreement. There were some concerns raised through the consultation about the impacts of the proposed improvements in relation to increasing congestion especially where traffic lights are being introduced at junctions; the general transport impact of additional housing in the area, and the wider traffic impacts that the construction of these improvements would bring. An executive summary of the consultation outcomes is at Appendix 3.

2.10 However, from the work undertaken to support the now withdrawn Wealden Local Plan, these improvements are necessary to support the housing and employment growth plans in the Eastbourne and South Wealden area and if these improvements were not implemented in a 'do nothing' scenario, the road network would experience further congestion in the future; with increased queuing at these junctions, increased journey times and a general degradation in the efficiency of the highway network in the Eastbourne/South Wealden area.

Integrated sustainable transport measures

2.11 More detailed analysis of the consultation outcomes has highlighted a greater desire by respondents towards increasing the sustainable transport measures for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users already included in the proposed package of improvements to the junctions along the A22. Therefore, building on the evidence and proposals within the East Sussex Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), a further package of sustainable transport measures has been identified and developed for the south Wealden area which addresses the comments raised in the consultation. These include:

- Cuckoo Trail access improvements in Hailsham
- LCWIP cycling scheme - Polegate High Street
- LCWIP cycling scheme - Dittons Road, Stone Cross
- LCWIP Hailsham Core Walking Zone
- LCWIP cycling scheme Hempstead Lane
- Hempstead Lane Traffic Management Improvements
- Digital bus priority – Boship Roundabout

2.12 The delivery of this package of sustainable transport improvements will be subject to local public consultation and securing funding. Together the package of junction improvements and sustainable transport measures, will improve strategic and local connectivity of communities in the south Wealden area to facilitate economic and housing growth by creating better travel opportunities that interlink with one another, encourage walking and cycling for local journeys, benefit buses travelling through the junctions and in doing so help to reduce carbon emissions, local air pollution and noise generated by traffic.

2.13 In light of the consultation outcomes on both the junction improvements and the need to progress a package on integrated sustainable transport measures as part of the overall package for the A22 corridor, it is recommended that both these elements are taken to detailed design stage.

Submission of Outline Business Case and Programme Delivery

2.14 Work on the updated OBC is nearing completion. Officers have been regularly engaging with and seeking feedback from DfT officials on particular sections and documents related to the business case ahead of formal submission, currently programmed for the end of March 2022.

2.15 A programme setting out the next phases for the project through to construction is at Appendix 4. Subject to the outline and then final business case being approved by the Department for Transport, it is anticipated that construction of the A22 Hailsham/Stone Cross package could start at the earliest, in summer 2023, with completion programmed for summer 2025 at the earliest.

3 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 As part of the Major Road Network (MRN), the A22 corridor performs a key function in supporting the economic connectivity of our county. With the existing and planned growth in the south Wealden and Eastbourne area at the southern end of the corridor, there is an identified need to ensure that the A22 continues to provide its existing functionality by supporting the additional housing coming forward in the area through the respective Local Plans for Eastbourne and Wealden as well as enabling access to existing and new jobs as well as leisure and shopping.

3.2 A package of improvements has been identified for five junctions on the A22 corridor in Hailsham and Stone Cross as necessary to support the planned and future growth in the south Wealden area. The proposed junction improvements were subject to a stakeholder and public consultation in summer 2021. Whilst there was a level of support for the proposals, there were some concerns raised in relation to the potential level of congestion at these junctions in the future, especially by introducing traffic signals at some to manage the traffic, and the impacts of construction. However, without these improvements traffic in the area would increasingly experience longer journey times, increased queuing and there would be a reduction in the network's efficiency to accommodate the planned housing and employment development. The detailed comments made at the consultation will help to shape the development of the schemes and it is recommended that the A22 corridor schemes are taken to detailed design.

3.3 The consultation analysis also highlighted the need to develop a further package of sustainable transport measures for the area over and above the walking, cycling and public transport improvements already included in the proposals. The further package of sustainable transport improvements are currently being developed in more detail and will be subject to local public consultation.

3.4 These junction improvements are part of the package of basic need transport infrastructure requirements identified in our Capital Strategy as necessary to support the delivery of growth allocated in Local Plans across the county, which would principally need to be funded by Development Contributions, including the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), and external funding sources.

3.5 As one of Transport for the South East's 10 MRN priority schemes across their geography, £29.2m of MRN funding is being sought from Government for the A22 Corridor junction improvements through the development of an Outline Business Case, with a further 15% local contribution of £5.2m coming from development contributions. It is recommended that the Outline Business Case seeking MRN funding is submitted to Government at the end of March 2022 and that authority is delegated to the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, to agree the final content of the business case.

RUPERT CLUBB

Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Contact Officer: Jon Wheeler / Rebecca Newby

Tel. No. 01273 482212 / 01273 336434

Email: jon.wheeler@eastsussex.gov.uk / rebecca.newby@eastsussex.gov.uk

LOCAL MEMBERS

Councillors Nick Bennett, Gerard Fox, Tom Liddiard, Steve Murphy, Daniel Shing, Stephen Shing

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None