

Report to: Lead Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment

Date of meeting: 18 July 2016

By: Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Title: Hailsham Town Centre Improvement Scheme

Purpose: To approve the funding package for the Hailsham Town Centre improvement scheme

RECOMMENDATION: The Lead Member is recommended to approve £1.3m of funding from the East Sussex Local Transport and Highways Maintenance capital programmes is utilised, in addition to £1.2m development contributions, to fund the £2.5m cost of the Hailsham Town Centre Improvement Scheme

1 Background Information

1.1 The Movement and Access Strategy for Hailsham and Hellingly (MASHH) was completed in November 2012. The Strategy has been used to inform East Sussex County Council and Wealden District Council about the transport infrastructure required in Hailsham and Hellingly to support recently constructed and future development up to 2027, as identified in the Wealden District Council Core Strategy adopted in February 2012.

1.2 The package of mitigating measures identified in the Strategy range from new roundabouts and traffic lights which improve traffic flow, improvements for pedestrians and cyclists and enhancements for public transport users. The overall cost of the measures identified in the MASHH is around £5.5m.

1.3 A Steering Group of local Members County, District and Town) and Council Officers was set up to prioritise and take forward the feasibility designs to implementation. Council Officers from the County Council, Wealden District Council and Hailsham Town Council are all present on the Steering Group.

1.4 The key element of the MASHH package is the Hailsham Town Centre Improvement scheme (HTCIS). The proposed improvements include changes to the road layout and the number of parking spaces in the town centre as well as new pedestrian crossings on the High Street, Vicarage Lane, Vicarage Road and George Street. Additionally, traffic speeds in and around the town centre will be reduced, pavements will be widened and additional disabled parking and loading bays will be provided. In order to accommodate these additional bays, the number of general parking bays will be reduced. In Vicarage Road only southbound traffic will be permitted.

1.5 As the desirability of Hailsham grows with the planned and future growth in the town, the number of cars on the road is likely to increase and work needs to be done now to reduce the impact of this growth in the future. In addition to allowing the town centre to operate safely and efficiently, the scheme will:

- Improve traffic flow;
- Support the economic vitality of the town; and
- Improve the quality of the environment for pedestrians, the mobility impaired and cyclists

2 Supporting Information

2.1 At present a total of £1.2m of Section 106 development contributions towards local transport accessibility improvements in the Hailsham and Hellingly area have been secured and are held by either East Sussex County Council or Wealden District Council. Within the Local Transport capital programme approved by the Lead Member at his decision making meeting on 18

March 2016, the estimated cost of the HTCIS was £1m and it was expected that the development contributions available would be used to fully cover the cost of the HTCIS scheme.

2.2 However, following a review of the design and the buildability of the HTCIS scheme, the estimated cost is now at £2.5m and therefore exceeds the level of development contributions available.

2.3 The HTCIS scheme is a high priority for delivery this financial year to support the existing and planned housing development coming forward through the current Wealden Local Plan. Construction is programmed from July 2016 through to the end of the 2016/17 financial year, including a break for Christmas and New Year.

2.4 In order to cover the £1.3m funding gap between the £1.2m of available Section 106 development contributions and the £2.5m overall scheme cost, it is proposed to reallocate funding from the local transport and highway maintenance capital programmes towards the project. This comprises slippage of £700,000 from the 2015/16 Local Transport capital programme, £200,000 from the Highway Maintenance capital programme with the remainder of £400,000 coming from the 2016/17 Local Transport capital programme allocation.

2.5 As highlighted in section 1.2 of the report, the overall estimated cost of the MASHH package is around £5.5m. The remaining elements of the package will continue to be progressed through the local Steering Group with options for further funding to be confirmed from the following sources including:

- development contributions which have been secured but yet to be received (estimated at around £160,000);
- the Local Growth Fund allocations for the Hailsham – Polegate – Eastbourne Movement and Access Corridor (£2.1m) and the Eastbourne and South Wealden Walking and Cycling Package (£8.6m);
- future Local Transport capital programme allocations; or
- other external funding sources which can be secured.

3 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 The HTCIS is a key priority for delivery this financial year and is part of the transport infrastructure package required for Hailsham and Hellingly to support recently constructed and future development up to 2027 within the adopted Wealden District Council Core Strategy.

3.2 The 2015/16 Local Transport capital programme approved in March 2016 identified the estimated cost of the scheme as £1m which would have been met from within the £1.2m development contributions secured towards local transport accessibility improvements in the Hailsham and Hellingly area. However, following a review of the design and buildability of the HTCIS scheme the estimated cost is £2.5m.

3.3 In addition to the £1.2m of development contributions, I recommend that the remaining £1.3m to fund the £2.5m scheme cost is met by utilising the £700,000 slippage from the 2015/16 Local Transport capital programme, £200,000 from the 2016/17 Highways Maintenance capital programme and the remainder of £400,000 from the 2016/17 Local Transport capital programme allocation.

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LOCAL MEMBERS

Councillors Bentley and Keeley

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None