

**Proposed Decision to be taken by the
Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning
on 29th April 2014**

Growing Places Fund – M40 Junction 14 Improvement Scheme

Recommendation

That the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning approves that a bid be submitted to the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership for Growing Places Funding for the M40 Junction 14 Improvement Scheme.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (CWLEP) has launched a competitive process seeking proposals for capital infrastructure projects which will stimulate job creation and economic growth within the area. Highway improvements which support these objectives are identified as potential projects that would be eligible for the funding. A total of £1m is now available from the current Growing Places Fund.
- 1.2 Each of the seven Local Authorities within the CWLEP area has been asked to prioritise its potential projects and submit a single bid for Growing Places funding by no later than 30th April 2014. Bids will be assessed by a CWLEP panel in early May 2014 using the guidance contained in their Investment Appraisal Manual.
- 1.3 Projects that offer match funding will be looked upon favourably. The CWLEP has indicated that due to the relatively small amount of monies available, it is likely that only a limited number of bids will be funded.
- 1.4 This report sets out the proposed bid from the County Council for Growing Places Funding, and seeks approval from the Portfolio Holder to proceed on this basis.
- 1.5 The County Council has recently delivered a joint DfT/WCC funded Local Pinch Point scheme on the A452 Europa Way corridor to reduce queuing onto the southbound running lanes of the M40 between Junctions 15 and 14. This was occurring during the morning peak period due to a heavy demand for movements towards Leamington Spa, and the capacity of the Greys Mallory and Heathcote junctions to cope with these traffic levels. Improvements to both roundabouts have allowed traffic to move more efficiently through these junctions, which has substantially improved the situation at M40 Junction 14.

- 1.6 At the end of the M40 Junction 14 off-slip, a small roundabout is provided to allow non-motorway traffic, which has inadvertently travelled along the A452 Warwick Bypass, to U-turn. Very little traffic makes this U-turn but the current configuration of the roundabout is such that all traffic leaving the motorway must give way. This causes unnecessary delay to traffic leaving the motorway and at times causes queuing back onto the motorway. This in turn creates a significant safety hazard on the motorway with fast moving and stationary traffic in close proximity.
- 1.7 During the development of the previous Local Pinch Point scheme, the potential removal or reconfiguration of this small roundabout was considered. However, from the traffic modelling undertaken at the time it was not clear whether the roundabout was a cause of queuing. Expenditure to remove the roundabout could not therefore be justified. However, observation and analysis following the implementation of the Local Pinch Point scheme has highlighted that there would be significant merit in altering the roundabout to enable Leamington-bound traffic an unimpeded exit from the motorway. This would address the residual queuing which is still occurring at times on the M40 Junction 14 off-slip.

2.0 Proposed Growing Places Bid

- 2.1 It is proposed that the County Council bids for Growing Places funding to part fund reconfiguration of this roundabout. The scheme would see the roundabout altered to a priority junction arrangement, such that any U-turn manoeuvres would be required to give-way to traffic exiting the motorway. This would be accompanied by complementary changes to the vertical alignment of the motorway off-slip and the A452 either side of the roundabout.
- 2.2 Given that the scheme interacts with the motorway network, it will be necessary to seek formal agreement from the Highways Agency (HA) regarding the proposed changes to the M40 slip road and the revised junction arrangement. The HA is supportive of the principle of the scheme.

3.0 Scheme Costs and Benefits

- 3.1 The capital cost of the scheme is estimated to be £500,000. It is proposed to bid for half of this amount from the Growing Places fund, with the balance to be match funded by the County Council. It is proposed that a bid be made to the Council's Growth Fund for this match funding. However, it will not be possible to secure funding from the Council's Growth Fund by the time the Growing Places bid has to be submitted on 30th April. Therefore the offer of match funding will be underwritten using funding from the existing Transport Capital Programme.

3.2 The Scheme is expected to deliver significant benefits in terms of:

- (i) Ensuring that the benefits of the previous Local Pinch Point scheme are fully realised as a result of further modest investment;
- (ii) Delivering a further reduction in queuing on the M40 Junction 14 off-slip thus improving safety on the motorway and improving traffic flows for movements towards Greys Mallory and Warwick/Leamington Spa;
- (iii) Providing support to existing businesses in South Warwick and Leamington Spa as a result of decongestion benefits; and
- (iv) Delivering further investment to support and improve the A452 corridor between the M40 and Warwick/Leamington Spa to help deliver the housing and employment growth proposals set out in the Warwick District Local Plan. The proposed scheme is consistent with the transport advice provided by the County Council to the District Council in relation to the Local Plan, which highlights the importance of the A452 corridor and the need in the medium/long term for dualling between the M40 and the Shires Retail Park junction near Leamington Spa.

4.0 Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

4.1 Subject to the outcome of the decision, the County Council will submit its Growing Places bid to the CWLEP on 30th April 2014. If the bid is successful then the scheme would begin construction later in 2014/15.

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