

## Strategic Transport Forum

22<sup>nd</sup> June 2018

### Agenda Item 6b: Major Road Network: Early Programme Entry

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that the Forum agree to submit the proposed package of improvements for the A414 Corridor to the Department for Transport for consideration as an 'early entry' to the MRN programme of investment.

#### **1. Context**

- 1.1. At its meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> March this Forum responded to the Department for Transport's consultation on how to take forward the proposal to identify a Major Road Network.
- 1.2. The Forum will recall that the consultation document confirmed that from 2020/21 Vehicle Excise Duty will be ring-fenced for investment in the road network, with a proportion of the resulting fund (the National Roads Fund) being earmarked for investing in the Major Road Network.
- 1.3. This Forum's response to the MRN consultation confirmed that, initially at least, it supports the MRN definition as set out in the consultation document: this reflects the fact that the work associated with the 'expressway' and the 'connectivity' study are required before considering any change to that network.

#### **2. Early Entry into the MRN Investment Programme**

- 2.1. The Department for Transport recently approached all of the emerging Sub-national Transport Bodies inviting them to put forward a prioritised list of potential early entry MRN schemes for their (the Department's) consideration.
- 2.2. The EEH Business Unit approached all Local Transport Authorities across the Heartland inviting them to put forward any scheme they wished to have considered.
- 2.3. To be considered, the scheme has to be able to start construction in 2020/21, meaning that it needs to be in a good state of preparedness. Local Transport Authorities were reminded of the indicative value for schemes identified in the MRN consultation document - £20m to £50m - although schemes outside of this range might be considered if they meet the other criteria. Schemes should look to add capacity, relieve congestion and/or support the economy.
- 2.4. The Department for Transport has requested that schemes to be considered for early entry need to be identified by 24<sup>th</sup> June.

#### **3. Potential Schemes**

- 3.1. In the time available and having taken into consideration the requirements set out above, in the end the only scheme put forward for consideration is a package of

measures from Hertfordshire County Council for the A414 corridor. An overview of the proposal is attached as Annex 1.


- 3.2. It is recommended that the proposal is supported by the Forum and submitted to the Department for Transport for its consideration.

#### **4. Transforming Cities Fund**

- 4.1. In parallel with consideration of potential schemes for early entry into the MRN programme the EEH Business Unit was approached by some of the partner organisations to support proposals being submitted for this Fund.
- 4.2. Letters of support were provided to two proposals – one submitted by Milton Keynes Council, the other prepared jointly by Luton Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough Councils.

Martin Tugwell  
**Programme Director**

June 2018

	<p><b>MRN Funding Proposal</b></p> <p><b>A414 Corridor Hatfield to Watford Capacity Improvements</b></p>
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## **1 Strategic Need**

- 1.1 The A414 corridor is the strategic east-west transport corridor which runs from Harlow to the east of Hertfordshire's boundary to St Albans, where it bifurcates with one leg running to Hemel Hempstead as the A414 and the other running through to Watford via the A405 and A4008
- 1.2 It intersects and connects the A1(M), M1 and M25
- 1.3 The A414 / A405 and all the local roads within the corridor provide an escape valve when there is disruption to the M25 and therefore the corridor provides supporting resilience to the Strategic Route Network.
- 1.4 Observed daily traffic flows along the route on a weekday are in the order of 30,000 vehicles in most locations in Hertfordshire with the exception of the section between St Albans (M25/M1) and Hatfield (A1(M)) where flows typically exceed 46,000 vehicles, reflecting the interchange function it provides between the motorways in the Strategic Road Network.
- 1.5 The road is of dual carriageway standard throughout Hertfordshire; however, it has a number of 'pinch points' along the route which cause significant delays and during the morning and evening traffic peaks along with unreliability in journey times. These delays currently occur at junctions in and around Hemel Hempstead, St Albans, Hatfield, Hertford, and Harlow.
- 1.6 The emerging spatial strategies being developed by Hertfordshire's district councils currently state that an additional 50,000 homes, at least, will need to be accommodated within a 5 miles radius of the A414 route in the next 15 years.
- 1.7 Cumulatively this is the equivalent of a town the size of greater Watford.
- 1.8 Approximately 80,000 new jobs are expected to be generated alongside the housing growth
- 1.9 Traffic modelling indicates this translates into a growth of up to 30% in peak hour vehicle trips

## **2 Corridor Strategy**

- 2.1 The transport challenges within the corridor have been captured within Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan 4 Vision (adopted May 2018) and a detailed strategy for the corridor is in the process of adoption.

- 2.2 The strategy to the mid-late 2020's is based on the current understanding of the medium term transport pressures, the modelling of current travel behaviours and the current 'tool kit' of transport solutions including the implementation of networked technology to enable smart management of this section of the route.
- 2.3 However, it recognises the need to adapt to the further increased housing numbers, the approaching step change in technology and the way people will want to travel in future.
- 2.4 The early years' strategy includes two major projects, viz:
- A £26.5m -36.5m package of on-line junction capacity improvements between Hatfield and Watford at OBC stage, but ready to start delivery in 2019/20
  - £150m Hertford Bypass at SOBC Stage programmed to start construction in 2023/24
- 2.5 The objectives of both these projects are to:
- Provide additional capacity to reduce congestion and improve journey reliability
  - Provide supporting resilience to the Strategic Road Network
  - Support the delivery of over 50,000 new homes locally
  - Support the creation of 80,000 jobs across Hertfordshire
  - Provide opportunities for more sustainable travel
  - Reduce local severance
- 2.6 Whilst the Hertford Bypass proposal would be a good candidate for seeking a funding contribution from the MRN in future years, this proposal seeks funding for the Hatfield to Watford Package.
- 2.7 The Hatfield to Watford Package aims to sweat the existing links, which can carry more than their design flows, but to improve the nodes, which are saturated.

### 3 Project Description

- 3.1 The £34.5m Package comprises 5 sections to be delivered between 2019/20 and 2021/22, subject to funding.

Junction	Description	Construction	Cost
A1 / A414 Junction 3 - 4 upgrades	Capacity improvements	2020/21	£3m
Colney Heath	Capacity and safety improvements	2019/20	£1.5m
London Colney	Capacity and sustainable user improvements	2019/20 – 20/21	£14m
Park Street	Capacity upgrades	2020/21	£7m
M1 / A41 Berrygrove Interchange	Capacity and safety upgrades	2021/22	£9m

- 3.2 The aim is make the improvements within existing highways boundaries, which avoids the need for statutory processes.