

To : Maidstone Joint Transportation Board
By : Tim Read – KCC Head of Transportation
Date : 3rd September 2014
Subject : Maidstone Bridges Gyratory
Classification: For Information

Summary : Kent County Council has received confirmation that the Bridges Gyratory Improvement Scheme has qualified for Local Growth Fund support. This funding will be supported by Maidstone Borough Council's New Homes Bonus. Construction is intended to commence in 2015/16.

1. Background

1.1 The scheme (as shown on the attached plan) involves the construction of two additional northbound lanes on the eastern side of the River Medway, with new junctions controlled by traffic signals. This would enable northbound traffic on the A229 to avoid crossing both bridges, thereby reducing journey distances and travel times and enabling the regeneration of the western riverside.

1.2 The Gyratory is a recognised congestion and air quality hotspot within Maidstone Town Centre, lying at the point where the A20, A26, and A229 routes converge and cross the River Medway. The significant housing and employment growth proposed by the emerging Maidstone Local Plan is expected to exacerbate these issues.

1.3 The scheme has been the subject of a successful bid to the government's Local Growth Fund and will also be supported by Maidstone Borough Council's New Homes Bonus. Construction is intended to commence in the next financial year (2015/16).

1.4 The total cost of the scheme is £5.7m. The scheme is expected to increase the capacity of the overall junction by some 10-20% in each of the peak hours, resulting in the reduction of delay of some 25% to drivers using the gyratory.

2. Next Steps

2.1 The next step will be the commissioning of the detailed design of the scheme, in preparation for construction to commence in accordance with the requirements of the LGF award.

2.2 One further issue will be considered alongside this design work. A recent permission (following a public inquiry) has been granted to the Baltic Wharf (Powerhub) site for a supermarket on St Peters Street. The permission includes an obligation on the developer to widen the carriageway on the northern bridge to increase capacity. This would reduce the width of the footway to some 2.5 metres, and result in the loss of the segregated cycle route that currently occupies part of the footway.

2.3 There are limited opportunities for cyclists to cross the river in the town, and the reduced width has raised some concern that the proposal would be contrary to the overall MBC aim of encouraging sustainable transport.

2.4 KCC proposes to look at further capacity calculations with the addition of the permitted supermarket, and consider whether the improved capacity to be provided by the Bridges Gyratory scheme would be sufficient to allow us to retain the footway/cycleway on the northern bridge at its current width.

3. Summary

3.1 The Bridges Gyratory scheme will now progress to detailed design, with the intention that construction will commence in 2015/16.

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