



Report To: Greater Cambridge City Deal Executive Board

3 March 2016

Lead Officer: Graham Hughes, Executive Director of Economy, Transport and Environment, Cambridgeshire County Council

Southbound Bus Priority Slip Road J11, M11

Purpose

- 1 This report sets out a high level risk assessment on the issues that impact the inclusion of a southbound bus priority slip road at J11 of the M11 in Tranche 1 of the City Deal programme.

Recommendations

- 2 The Board is asked to:-
 - i. Note the outcome of the high level risk assessment and the progress made on the proposal for a bus only slip road at J11 of the M11;
 - ii. Agree to proceed with the further development of the proposal to assess its final viability for inclusion in the Tranche 1 City Deal programme.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 3 Members wish to see progress within Tranche 1 on a new slip road on the M11 at J11 to support bus access into the Bio-medical Campus but this is not a City Deal programmed scheme. Officers have carried out a high level initial assessment and have set out the issues and risks in this report. While risks do exist, there are no definitive reasons not to progress the scheme further in terms of understanding its costs and benefits. This will involve scheme development costs that could be met from the allocation for Tranche 2 scheme development.

Background

- 4 In December 2015 the Joint Assembly requested that officers consider the likelihood of bringing forward a public transport scheme at J11 of the M11 in Tranche 1 of the City Deal to allow buses priority access off the junction where there is currently queuing in the morning peak. This would support the wider City Deal objectives of supporting growth by encouraging public transport access to a key location for new jobs at the Bio Medical Campus.

- 5 This idea could form part of a potential western orbital bus priority scheme to the west of Cambridge which is also undergoing early consultation in February 2016 although the orbital project is not currently programmed for construction in Tranche 1 of the City Deal.
- 6 Any stand-alone scheme would need to demonstrate a positive 'business case' to justify public investment. Working up this business case involves significant further investigation. As such this early risk assessment is focused wholly on the issues around quick implementation and does not address the details of a business case as this would be further work following this report.

Issues

- 7 *Highways England (HE)* - Any proposal, given its interface with the motorway network, requires HE consent. The idea of scheme has been discussed with HE in principle. They have not indicated any fundamental objection but have stressed the importance of testing proposals against their policy on such matters and furthermore for considering the detailed operational and safety impacts. A more detailed response from HE would only be forthcoming once a specific design was proposed.
- 8 *Trumpington Meadows* - Any proposal would need to cross land currently under planning consideration for new housing and leisure facilities. A pre-application enquiry is with South Cambridgeshire District Council and the proposal is on green belt land not designated for development in the Local Plan. Detailed discussion with the developer is constrained by the role of the County Council in the planning process. However in their scheme promotion role, officers have had informal engagement with the applicant. At this stage based on early master plan layouts for the site seen by officers, there is some potential for integrating bus infrastructure through a future development and linking into the Park & Ride at Trumpington. At this stage there is no fundamental objection to doing so from the developer.
- 9 *Bus operational issues* - Currently no bus route runs off J11 of the M11. Initial informal engagement with bus operators suggests no commercial case for operating such a service because outside of the peaks they consider there would be little passenger demand. However if third parties agreed to subsidise a service this could allow for its operation. Given the costs of running bus services this would require substantial investment. However if such a service were established, the provision of a bus only slip road could benefit its reliability and journey time.
- 10 *Western Orbital* - Any potential wider scheme would be closely linked to infrastructure at J11. Detailed planning on alignments would need to be undertaken to ensure that abortive work did not take place. The early consultation on the Western Orbital options would facilitate the likelihood of integration between the two schemes.

Risks

- 11 *Highways England* - The process of obtaining actual approval for any scheme could be lengthy. Experience of other schemes suggests that the process of arriving at approval from HE could substantially lengthen implementation timescales.
- 12 *Trumpington Meadows* - Third party land will be needed, and agreement on such land will be linked to the owners' aspirations for the site. Given that the site is

not in the Local Plan there is considerable uncertainty as to the outcome of the planning process and its duration. There is therefore a significant risk of substantial delay in obtaining access to the land.

- 13 *Bus Operational Issues* - The likelihood of a commercial service is low and the details of any subsidised service are currently unknown. It is likely that any party subsidising a bus service will wish to see a long term plan for it to become self financing. There is a risk that no bus service comes forward or that if it did come forward, it would be so limited that the facility at J11 would not be justified.
- 14 *Western Orbital* – It may be more efficient to construct any slip road at J11 as part of a larger scheme. Alternatively delaying or removing the Western Orbital scheme altogether could impact the viability of a stand alone scheme at J11. In particular the issues of delay for any bus service using the motorway and exiting it at J13 could make any service that used J11 unreliable therefore impacting patronage and costs. As such there is a viability and cost risk of moving forward at J11 without a full understanding of the Western Orbital context.

Next Steps

- 15 Ordinarily the next step would be the production of an outline business case for a scheme at J11. This would include the following high level work:
 - Environmental assessment
 - Traffic modelling
 - Assessment of land costs and construction costs
 - Outline engineering design
 - Bus operational assessment

This work could be achieved by the September cycle of City Deal Assembly and Board meetings which could then inform a decision whether or not to consult publically on a proposal.

Options

- 16 The high level risk assessment identifies both opportunities and risks with taking forward this scheme. The next stage of outline business case development will involve further resource expenditure however there are no overriding reasons not to take forward the scheme for further work.
- 17 Alternatively Members can integrate the scheme into the developing Western Orbital proposals to ensure that it is considered within this wider strategic context.

Implications

- 18 In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk management, equality and diversity, climate change, community safety and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered: -
 - Financial: Currently there are no resources allocated to this scheme
 - Staffing: Project management undertaken by the Cambridgeshire County Council Major Infrastructure Delivery team.
 - Risk; A project risk register has been developed.

Background papers

No background papers were relied upon in this report.

Report Author: Ashley Heller - Team Leader, Public Transport Projects, Major Infrastructure Delivery, Cambridgeshire County Council.

Telephone: 01223 728137