

## COAST TO CAPITAL LOCAL TRANSPORT BODY – 25 March 2015

### Funding meeting

#### Agenda item 4

#### CRAWLEY

##### Introduction

1. This paper considers the bid for local growth funding from West Sussex County Council for the Crawley Area Transport Package (phase 1).

##### Background

2. This scheme was **not** one of the first five transport schemes accepted by the Local Transport Body in July 2013. It was added to the programme in the second wave of schemes which were developed in the Strategic Economic Plan of March 2014. Funding for the full Crawley Area Transport Package scheme was announced in the Growth Deal in July 2014.

3. The scheme announced by the Growth Deal was:

**Coast to Capital and Central Government have agreed to co-invest in the following jointly agreed priorities:**

...

- **Crawley Area Transport Package – Includes junction improvements, bus priority schemes, modal interchange and improvements to walking and cycling.**

| <b>Coast to Capital LEP commitments</b>  | <b>Central Government commitments</b>                                 |
|--|---|
| ...  | ...   |
| Invest £25m in Crawley Area Transport Package, with a commitment to provide a clear business case and project timeline | Invest £18m in Crawley Area Transport Package (with £2.6m in 2015/16) |

4. West Sussex County Council have elected to develop this scheme in two phases – an initial first phase and a subsequent larger phase 2.
5. This bid relates to the smaller first phase of the scheme. As it costs less than £5 million, a full transport business case is not required. The scheme has already been approved in principle for funding and is not competing against other schemes. The Local Transport Body will need to be assured that the scheme is good value for money and deliverable, and that it has a robust business case.

## **The scheme**

6. Phase 1 includes five schemes to be delivered in 2015-16:

- Three Bridges Station Access Scheme will improve safety and access to the station, for buses, cyclists, taxis, pedestrians and cars. Improvements will also be made to the Station forecourt and highway outside the station including a drop off / pick up point to improve vehicle access.
- Three Bridges Junction Scheme will involve the refurbishment and upgrade of traffic control systems at seven junctions between the Paymaster Generals Roundabout and Worth Road along the Haslett Avenue East alongside Three Bridges Station, also improving cycling access.
- Manor Royal Wayfinder Scheme will install new signage and information to aid navigation around the site.
- Manor Royal Gateway 3: improvements to the Gateway 3 north west entrance to the Manor Royal Business District.
- Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI): upgrading life-expired existing RTPI units and installing new units.

7. The combined schemes have a number of benefits to the SEP transport themes of connectivity, sustainability and resilience. The Station Access and Three Bridges Junction schemes are likely to lead to significant journey time savings, helping to improve the commercial attractiveness of the area. The Wayfinder scheme will help to improve access to Manor Royal. The RTPI scheme will help to improve public transport, especially journey quality and reliability. It could also encourage more people to use the bus as an alternative to the private car.

## **Funding**

8. The scheme has a total cost of £4.266 million. The scheme promoters, West Sussex County Council have requested local growth fund grant of £3.466 million, with the remaining £800,000 being provided as a local contribution.

9. This level of local contribution is 19% of the scheme total. This is slightly below the Assurance Framework's standard local contribution of 20%. As this is stage 1 of a larger scheme, we recommend that the LTB accepts this level of local contribution, provided that the wider scheme (this stage plus the next one) provides a local contribution of 20%.

## **Value for money**

10. The scheme promoters have estimated that the scheme would have a benefit: cost ratio of 11 to 1. If confirmed, this would equate to a "very high value for money" assessment.
11. This BCR has been based on the predicted journey time savings from the Three Bridges Station Access and Junction schemes, when compared against the overall scheme costs.
12. This value for money assessment must be considered as an estimate. It does not include benefits from the other three elements of the project, including reductions in accidents and improvements to sustainable transport. The independent assessor has raised a number of technical questions about the BCR which might affect the overall score. However, as the BCR is comfortably over the LTB's threshold of 2:1, there can be considerable comfort that the scheme will offer at least good value for money, and likely very high for money as claimed.
13. The scheme has a number of wider benefits which have not been quantified, such as improved air quality, regeneration, urban realm enhancements and public health benefits from the encouragement of active travel. As these benefits would only increase an already positive assessment, our recommendation is that there is no need for them to be quantified.
14. The business case has not identified any significant disbenefits to the scheme, other than the usual noise and disruption that might be caused during construction.

## **Deliverability and risk**

15. The improvements are relatively straight-forward, easy to implement and non-contentious. West Sussex County Council has considerable experience of delivering similar schemes. The consultants have recommended a number of key risks which would need to be investigated further.

## **Independent assessment**

16. The business case has been assessed by independent consultants, WYG. They have noted that only some of the improvements have had a quantified assessment of benefits, and have raised some technical questions about the modelling.
17. Their overall recommendation is that "the package is given conditional approval subject to receipt and satisfactory review of the information as set out in this report."

## **Recommendation**

18. The claimed BCR of 11 to 1 (if confirmed) would classify the scheme as delivering very high value for money. The scheme is likely to have wider benefits which have not been quantified. Our recommendation is that these benefits do not need to be estimated as the scheme has such a high value for money rating.

19. However, the independent consultants have raised a number of valid questions about the quantification of the scheme which should be investigated further. Accordingly, we recommend that:

- the scheme be given conditional approval, subject to
  - satisfactory answers to questions raised by the independent consultants on scheme benefits and risks

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19 March 2015