REGIONAL TRANSPORT FORUM – 11 November 2011

East of England Final Schemes

Report by: Southend Borough Council and DfT

Purpose of report:

• To update members on the current status of the East of England schemes.

Recommendation:

1. Members are asked to provide an update on their areas schemes.

1 Background

1.1 The RTF meeting on 11 March 2011 considered a report detailing the outcome of the Spending Review announcements made in February 2011 on transport funding for the East of England, including the situation on Local and National Major Transport Schemes. This report now informs the RTF of announcements relating to Local Major Schemes made since March 2011.

2 Current situation

2.1 The schemes have been through two processes during October 2010 and February 2011. The next process is the Best and Final Funding Offer which enabled bids and supporting information to be submitted to DfT for a number of the bids by 9th September 2011. The schemes and their new status are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1 – Local Major Transport Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scheme</th>
<th>Original Funding Sought (£m)</th>
<th>Current Funding Sought (£m)</th>
<th>October 2010 Pool</th>
<th>February 2011 Pool</th>
<th>September 2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ipswich Fit for the 21st Century</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td>Funding Confirmed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norwich Northern Distributor Road</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>Development Pool</td>
<td>Development Pool</td>
<td>Submitted for Best and Final Bid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watford Junction Interchange</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>Pre-Qualification</td>
<td>Not supported</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luton Town Centre Transport Scheme</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>Pre-Qualification</td>
<td>Development Pool</td>
<td>Submitted for Best and Final Bid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Essex Rapid Transit</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>Pre-Qualification</td>
<td>Development Pool</td>
<td>Submitted for Best and Final Bid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croxley Rail Link</td>
<td>136.5</td>
<td>81.7</td>
<td>Pre-Qualification</td>
<td>Development Pool</td>
<td>Submitted for Best and Final Bid</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.2 Announcements on the decisions of the schemes that have been submitted for the best and final funding offer shall be made by the end of December.

A11 Fiveways to Thetford

2.3 Advance works for a major road improvement scheme that will improve journeys on the A11 in Norfolk and support economic growth in the region have been brought forward by one year to start on Monday 17 October. Work to upgrade the track network used for farming operations on the Elveden Estate has been accelerated to ensure main construction work to widen the remaining single carriageway section of the A11 between Norwich and the M11 starts on schedule in 2012-13.

2.4 Roads Minister Mike Penning said that "The Government is committed to delivering transport projects which improve journeys and help economic growth so I am pleased to announce that advance works are being brought forward to ensure that this vital scheme proceeds to construction in 2012/13".

Ipswich Fit for 21st Century

2.5 Suffolk County Council to provide an update at RTF.

A14 Ellington to Fen Ditton Scheme

2.6 The A14 Ellington to Fen Ditton scheme was unaffordable and so was withdrawn in the 2010 Spending Review. The Highways Agency and the Department have published a large amount of information to support decision making about the scheme. The DfT is commissioning a joint study with local stakeholders to identify cost effective and practical proposals which bring benefits and relieve congestion.

M25 J30-31

2.7 Following the Government’s 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review, the Department for Transport published in October 2010 details of its investment decisions for major road projects on the strategic road network. Investment in Highways Transport Schemes confirmed a project for M25 Junction 30 among a list of 14 schemes for delivery in future spending review periods.

2.8 At the end of this year Ministers will be taking a view on the allocation of development funds amongst these ‘future schemes’. This will see a small investment in a number of schemes to progress pre-construction work and thereby maintain a pipeline of major investment in the strategic road network.

Dartford Crossing

At the spending review in autumn 2010, the Department announced its intention to increase the charges as part of a package of short, medium and long term measures for the Crossing, including:

- suspension of charges to allow free use of the Crossing at times of severe congestion
- introduction of free-flow charging and
- review of options for additional Crossing capacity.

Details of the proposals to increase the level of charges at the Dartford Crossing were published on 30 June for public consultation. The consultation period ended on 23
September 2011 and the Department is considering the responses made during the consultation before making any announcements on its conclusions.

The Highways Agency began a six months trial on 1 July 2011 of an operation protocol which would see the suspension of the charge when circumstances are such as to amount to an emergency. Such situations are considered on a case by case basis, and when appropriate, the crossing charge would be suspended in either one or both directions until such time as traffic conditions return to agreed levels.

The Highways Agency are also developing options and the business case for the implementation of newer charging technology at the Dartford Crossing. The introduction of free-flow charging provides the opportunity to re-design the road layout to improve the flow of traffic, and the new charging option would see the introduction of new payment methods for pre-registered users and the use of automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) cameras to enable free-flow charging at the Crossing.

The Government has recognised that in the longer term additional capacity is needed at Dartford and that it would review the evidence and consult upon the options for additional crossing capacity at three possible sites:

- At the site of the existing Dartford-Thurrock River Crossing
- Between the Swanscombe Peninsula and the A1089
- Between the east of Gravesend and the east of Tilbury

The detailed timing of the review is yet to be confirmed.