

Transport East Forum

Date: 3 November 2020

Item: National Roads Fund - Major Road Network (MRN) and Large Local Majors (LLM) Update

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Purpose

This report provides an annual progress update on Transport East's MRN and LLM programme, including specific items for endorsement by the Forum.

Recommendations

Transport East Forum Members are asked to note progress on the Transport East programme and endorse the items set out in section 3.1

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In July 2019, the Transport East partnership submitted a programme of Large Local Major (LLM) schemes and Major Road Network (MRN) schemes to the Department for Transport (DfT) for consideration for funding from the National Roads Fund between 2020 and 2025¹.
- 1.2 The Department for Transport responded to the Transport East partnership in October 2019 on the status of the individual projects, and each transport authority has subsequently progressed their own projects through the DfT's business case pathway on an individual basis with the DfT.
- 1.3 This report provides an annual progress report across the Transport East programme.
- 1.4 Thurrock, Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex all plan to submit specific projects to DfT for progression through business case gateways over the next quarter on individual projects, and are seeking letters of support from the Forum today to accompany these submissions.

2. The Transport East LLM and MRN Programme

- 2.1 The National Roads Fund (NRF) is administered by the DfT. It was created by ring-fencing Vehicle Exercise Duty and represents £28.8bn investment over five years. The NRF is just one of many funding sources that delivers transport infrastructure the East of England.

¹ <https://www.transporteast.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Transport-East-Agenda-and-Papers-21-Oct-2019.pdf> (p34-40)

- 2.2 Almost all journeys start and finish on local roads and they play a major part in everyone's life, whether as a pedestrian, cyclist, bus passenger, freight operator, driver or passenger. We all rely on a well-functioning road network to access jobs, goods and services. Investment in and better management of our roads has a vital role to play in providing a sustainable transport system. Improvements to our roads form part of a wider package of transport improvements.
- 2.3 The Transport East partnership submitted a list of projects for consideration in 2019, in response to the call from DfT for priority project for the MRN and LLP. These were not in any priority order. All projects were endorsed by this Transport Forum, in accordance with their fit against the Regional Evidence Base.
- 2.4 The progression of individual schemes through the business case pathway, including all statutory, legal and consultation requirements are the sole responsibility of the promoting transport authority. The role of the Transport East partnership was to identify and agree those projects that provided a strategic fit against the goals of both the National Roads Fund and the Transport East strategic objectives, and to ensure the continued sub-national 'single voice' endorsement of that agreed programme.
- 2.5 The status update of each project is set out in appendix 1. One year one from submission of the programme to DfT, three projects will be ready to progress from *Strategic Outline Business Case*² stage to *Outline Business Case* stage between today and our next Forum meeting in February 2021. These are:
- A13 Lakeside Junction East Facing Access, Thurrock BC
 - Norwich Western Link Road, Norfolk CC
 - Long Stratton Bypass, Norfolk CC
- 2.6 In the same time period, four further projects will be ready to progress from *Pre-Strategic Outline Business Case* to *Strategic Outline Business Case*:
- A12 Woodbridge, Suffolk CC
 - Army & Navy Improvements, Chelmsford, Essex CC
 - A127 Growth Package, Essex CC
 - West Winch Housing Access Road, Norfolk CC.
- 2.7 Local authorities have requested letters of endorsement from this Forum for each project, to reiterate Transport East support for the projects as they progress to the next stage. Local authorities are responsible for ensuring all due process has been followed to reach the stage gateways, and the scope of the project remains the same as per the original 2019 proposal.
- 2.8 The Forum should note that the scope of the Army & Navy Improvement project has increased to include a Park and Ride site. The DfT has asked Essex County Council to secure endorsement from the Forum for this change. Details are provided in Appendix 2.
- 2.9 Across the wider programme, it should be noted that one project has been withdrawn (Ipswich Northern Route), whilst two others are currently being progressed with funding from the Government's Housing Infrastructure Fund (Chelmsford North East Bypass and A133-A120 Link Road east of Colchester).
- 2.10 It is expected that further projects will come forward to this Forum for letters of support over the next 12 months. The TESOG will put these forward as standalone items at future Forum meetings, with a full annual programme update next due in October 2021.

² Further details on the DfT's Business Case stages can be viewed [here](#)

3. Specific items for endorsement

3.1 Members are requested to note the annual progress of the programme outlined in Appendix 1 and endorse the following items:

- The Transport East partnership provides individual letters to Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk and Thurrock transport authorities to reiterate our support for the progression of their projects set out in 2.5 and 2.6 as part of the ongoing delivery of the established Transport East MRN/LLM programme.
- The Transport East letter to Essex County Council supports the enhanced scope of the *Army & Navy Improvement Chelmsford* project to incorporate sustainable transport measures, including park and ride, as set out in Appendix 2

4. Next Steps

4.1 Following today's meeting, Transport East will:

- Publish this programme status update on the Transport East website
- Action the items endorsed in 3.1, via letters co-signed by the Transport East Chair and Strategic Director as required by local authorities over the next three months.
- Bring forward further projects for endorsement as standalone items at future Forum meetings where required.
- Provide the next annual update to the Forum in October 2021

Appendix 1:

Large Local Major Schemes: Transport East Programme (2019 bids)

Project	Business Case Stage*				Progress Update	Next steps for Transport East Partnership	Construction starts				
	Pre-SOBC	SOBC	OBC	FBC			20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
Norwich Western Link	✓	✓	✓		Outline Business Case to be submitted to DfT in January 2021	Endorse Letter of support for Outline Business Case					
<i>Ipswich Northern Route</i>	<i>N/A</i>				<i>Project withdrawn. Ipswich Task Force to review alternative options to address transport challenges in Ipswich</i>	<i>Support Task Force</i>					
Chelmsford North East Bypass and Beaulieu Park Station **	N/A				Project awarded HIF and proceeding via this mechanism. Discussions with DfT and MHCLG ongoing.	Continued endorsement for the project as it progresses via HIF					
A133-A120 Link Road east of Colchester and North Essex Rapid Transit **	N/A				Project awarded HIF and proceeding via this mechanism. Discussions with DfT and MHCLG ongoing.	Continued endorsement for the project as it progresses via HIF					
A12 Suffolk Energy Gateway ***	N/A				Timescales remain for delivery of Sizewell C mitigation. DCO examination for SZC due to start.	No action at present time					
A13 Lakeside Junction East Facing Access ****	✓	✓	✓		Outline Business Case to be submitted to DfT in January 21. 18-month DCO process to be applied. Scheme construction expected Autumn 2022 to Autumn 2024.	Endorse letter of support for the Outline Business Case Identify support for additional funds if required.					

*[SOBC = Strategic Outline Business Case, OBC= Outline Business Case, FBC=Full Business Case]

**HIF bids, also submitted via LLMs if funding not forthcoming via HIF.

*** Scheme cannot be completed in time for Sizewell C, however Transport East supported scheme, requested for further consideration should timescales for Sizewell C change.

**** Awarded funding in 2018

Major Road Network Schemes: Transport East Programme (2019 bids)

Project	Business Case Stage				Progress Update	Next steps for Transport East Partnership	Construction starts				
	Pre-SOBC	SOBC	OBC	FBC			20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
A12 East of Ipswich	✓	✓	✓		Outline Business Case to be submitted to DfT in Spring 2021	No action at present time					
A12 Woodbridge	✓	✓			Strategic Outline Business Case to be submitted to DfT end of 2020	Endorse letter of support for Strategic Outline Business Case					
A140 Long Stratton Bypass	✓	✓	✓		Outline Business Case to be submitted to DfT in Dec 2020	Endorse letter of support for Outline Business Case					
A10 West Winch Housing Access Road	✓	✓			Working through technical details relating to land assembly and costs. Anticipating to submit SOBC to DfT at end of calendar year	Endorse letter of support for Strategic Outline Business Case towards end of 2020					
A127 Growth Corridor	✓	✓			Development of the SOBC progressing to programme with the SOBC and Options Assessment Report expected to be submitted to DfT in Jan 2021	Endorsement of submission of SOBC expected 2021/2, FBC 2022/23					
Army & Navy Improvements Chelmsford	✓	✓			Options discussed with DfT with the SOBC expected to be submitted to DfT Nov 2020	Endorse change in scope to enhance sustainable transport offer including provision of Park and Ride. Endorse submission of SOBC					
A140 / A1120 Earl Stonham	✓				Awaiting DfT decision whether scheme is part of MRN programme	Request for clarity from DfT on remaining schemes not yet given permission to progress					

A127 Pound Lane Basildon	✓				ECC has discussed progress with DfT and has agreed that further data will be provided to DfT ahead of submission of an SOBC in 2021/22	Submission of SOBC expected late 2022, OBC 2022/3, FBC late 2023					
A146 Barnby Bends	✓	✓			Developing early Strategic Outline Business Case work, including consultation	Potential role in helping to secure funding for next stage of work					
A17 Pullover Junction, King's Lynn					Work commissioned with consultants to identify options to address issues. Programmed for completion at end of calendar year	Potential role in helping to secure funding for next stage of work					

Appendix 2 Army and Navy Improvements Chelmsford

The Pre-SOBC submitted to DfT in 2019 notes *“The Army and Navy junction is a five-arm roundabout with a tidal flyover structure. The junction sees around 60,000 vehicles using the interchange a day and of these 10,000 vehicles use the tidal flyover. The junction itself is currently at 97% capacity in the morning peak and 95% in the evening peak, with wider highway network capacity being at 96%. As a result, Chelmsford is very congested with high volumes of traffic on all the main links including the junction itself. The solution will need to be based on a combination of sustainable and highway-based modes.”*

Following submission of the Pre-SOBC, ECC made the decision to close and dismantle the flyover as it was deemed to be life expired following damage during hot weather in the summers of 2018 and 2019. This accelerated the need to develop and implement a long term solution at this key junction.

ECC has discussed a range of options with DfT.

- The pre-SOBC, submitted to DfT and approved by Transport East contained 8 options, 5 junction solutions and 3 city wide solutions with minimal improvements at the junction. One of these city wide improvements was a sustainable transport package that included a 3rd P&R, another was a P&R strategy that included a 3rd and 4th P&R, and the final was bus rapid transit.
- As options were examined in more detail it became apparent that a bus rapid transit option would take too long to deliver, as would an option that included 2 additional P&R sites. This reduced options to a sustainable transport package and 5 different junction reconfigurations. On the advice of DfT, ECC combined elements of the sustainable transport package (3rd P&R and improved cycle connectivity to and through the junction) with all 5 junction options.
- All 5 options including the sustainable components were then assessed in detail to ascertain the better performing options, reducing the remaining options to 4 (Hamburger, Split T Junction, Two Way Flyover, Enlarged Roundabout, all including the sustainable package).
- All options are deliverable within the funding envelope contained within the approved pre-SOBC.

DfT officers have asked that if ECC decides to include the sustainable package including the P&R within the scheme ECC should reconfirm that Transport East is content with this approach as DfT believes that this may represent a change from the proposal prioritised by Transport East.

There is a risk that if Transport East does not support the inclusion of P&R and other sustainable measures within the scheme ECC would need to repeat options testing, some economic assessment and some air quality and noise modelling adding approximately 3 months to the programme with consequent cost implications to ECC.

ECC is therefore asking that Transport East reaffirms its support for the Army and Navy Improvements Chelmsford scheme including the P&R and other sustainable transport components within its MRN Programme and the Submission of a Strategic Outline Business Case to DfT in November 2020.

Essex County Council, November 2020