

Local Members' Interest	
P. Atkins	East Staffordshire - Uttoxeter Rural
G. Morrison	East Staffordshire - Uttoxeter Town

Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee – 7 March 2014

A50 Growth Corridor

Recommendation/s

1. That the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee consider proposals to improve the A50 in Uttoxeter, through the construction of two separate grade separated junctions and the removal of two at grade roundabouts.
2. That the Committee's views on these proposals are reported to the Cabinet at their meeting on 19 March 2014 for them to take into account in their consideration of this matter.

Report of Mark Winnington, Cabinet Member for Economy & Infrastructure

Summary

What is the Select Committee being asked to do and why?

3. The purpose of this report is to update members on proposals to approve the A50 in Uttoxeter, and to seek the Committee's views before the Cabinet meeting on 19 March 2014.

Report

Background

4. Proposals to improve the A50 in Uttoxeter were announced by the Government as part of the National Infrastructure Plan and the Autumn Statement on 4 and 5 December 2013. The announcements do not provide any details or costings for the improvements, but do, significantly, highlight that the improvements must start no later than 2015-16.
5. These improvements are in response to existing congestion on the A50 in Uttoxeter and emerging proposals for residential and business growth in and around the town.

- (a) There is already significant congestion on the A50 in the centre of Uttoxeter, at the 'McDonalds' roundabout. The majority of traffic using this 'at grade' roundabout is through traffic (about 90%) travelling from the M6 in North Staffordshire to the M1 in the East Midlands. This conflicts with local traffic moving north to south across the A50, and business and visitor traffic travelling south into Uttoxeter and north to Rocester, Alton Towers and the Peak District.
- (b) A significant amount of new housing and job growth is planned for Uttoxeter. This will take place on sites already granted planning consent, sites allocated for development in the East Staffordshire Local Plan and potentially on other sites as well. Over the Local Plan period, up to 2031, this could include up to 1,800 new houses and up to 4,800 new jobs.
- (c) In addition, on 6 December 2013 JCB announced major expansion plans for several of their plants in and around Uttoxeter, which could create up to 2,500 jobs directly, and many more in the supply chain and through the multiplier effect. It is also relevant that engines and transmissions which are made in plants in Derbyshire and Wrexham, will need to be transported along the A50 for use in machine assembly on production lines in JCB factories in Uttoxeter, Rocester and Cheadle.

County Council Involvement

- 6. The A50 is a trunk road and is managed by the Highways Agency (HA), an executive agency of the DfT. The management of the A50 is sub-contracted by the HA to Connect Roads, a subsidiary of Balfour Beatty.
- 7. The County Council's role in delivering the two infrastructure projects, is therefore, subject to the agreement of the HA. It has been agreed with the HA that the County Council will be their 'delivery partner', responsible for all aspects of delivery.
- 8. The County Council's involvement will be set out in a number of legal agreements between the County Council and the HA. Broadly, these will give the County Council the authority and all the relevant permissions required to do works on the Trunk Road network, and govern all aspects of design, approvals, procurement, delivery and funding. The HA has indicated that it is prepared to enter into these agreements based, in part, on the success of the works carried out by the County Council at the i54 South Staffordshire site, and the excellent working relationship developed between the County Council and the HA.
- 9. The County Council will also have a role as Planning Authority, as the planning applications for the projects will be determined by the County Council.

Projects

10. The A50 Growth Corridor investment works will be delivered through two separate and discrete projects.
 - (a) Project A: Western Grade Separated Junction; The first project will include the construction of the completely new grade separated junction to the west of Uttoxeter. This junction will provide access to the proposed housing and employment site to the south of the A50, and the existing and new JCB factories to the north of the A50. Project A will require its own planning application and compulsory purchase order. It will also be delivered under a separate construction contract.
 - (b) Project B: Eastern Grade Separated Junction; The second project will be to reconfigure the existing Dove Way bridge over the A50, by converting it to a grade separated junction. This will involve constructing new roundabouts at each end of the existing bridge and slip roads down to the A50 carriageway.

It will also include closing the two 'at grade' roundabouts in Uttoxeter, in the centre of Uttoxeter, adjacent to 'McDonalds' and the roundabout to the east of Uttoxeter adjacent to the Premier Inn Hotel.
11. The two projects will be managed by an Executive Board supported by a Steering Group. The Board will include officers and political representatives from the County Council and East Staffordshire Borough Council, and officers from the Highways Agency and the Department for Business Innovation and Skills. The Board will meet bi-monthly. The project steering group will include a multi-disciplinary team of officers from the County Council, East Staffordshire Borough Council and the Highways Agency.

Planning

12. The projects will both require planning consent, which will be determined by the County Council under Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992.
13. An extensive public engagement and consultation exercise on the draft designs took place at the end of February, and the start of March, including public exhibitions in Uttoxeter. Feedback from the consultation exercise is currently being evaluated, and the designs reviewed in the light of these responses.
14. It is currently envisaged that a Planning Application for Project A will be submitted to the County Council in early April and will be determined by mid August 2014.

Land Acquisition

15. A key element of these projects, and one of the most significant risk factors, will be the need to acquire significant parcels of third party land, upon which to construct the highway works. (It will also be necessary to acquire rights over appropriate land, for example for drainage, rather than the full freehold interest). All the land ownerships in the area have been mapped, and all owners identified. Meetings are currently being held with key landowners. The District Valuer has been employed to undertake this work on behalf of the County Council.
16. The acquisition strategy is to 'twin track' the purchase of all the land needed;
 - (a) Firstly, to seek to acquire all the land and rights by negotiation and agreement. This is, invariably, quicker and easier, than seeking to acquire the land compulsorily.
 - (b) However, at the same time make Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPOs) covering all the lands to be acquired, under Part XII of the Highways Act 1980 and the Acquisition of Land Act 1981, to ensure that any land that cannot be acquired by agreement can be acquired compulsorily. This is particularly important where, as in the case of Project A, there is a tight timetable for delivery. It is anticipated that the CPO for Project A will be made in April 2014. The timetable for the CPO being approved is, to some degree, uncertain and depends on the extent of potential objections and the extent to which any objections can be resolved.
 - (c) Where businesses are affected by the CPOs assistance will be given to help identify sites for relocation.

Government advice on making CPOs is given by OPDM Circular 06/2004. The test the Secretary of State applies in deciding if a CPO should be confirmed is that of a "compelling case in the public interest". It is considered that this test is met for both of the proposed CPOs.

Finance

17. The costs of both Project A and Project B are still being calculated, but, it is anticipated that this may be in the region of about £40m-£50m. This will cover all the anticipated costs of civil engineering works, land acquisition, compensation, internal and external professional fees, and other incidental costs. It must be stressed that this is a broad estimate at this stage.
18. The majority of the costs will be met by the DfT, with a relatively small proportion being secured from local developers and employers.
19. The County Council is not making a financial contribution to the scheme, and will recover all appropriate costs. This principle will be incorporated into the funding agreements between the County Council and the DfT.

Procurement

20. There are a number of options for procurement of the civil engineering works. These are currently being discussed with the HA. These may include the new Infrastructure + company.

Supply Chain

21. In addition to the jobs created directly within JCB, it is expected that there will be at least the same number of jobs created in JCB's supply chain. JCB has indicated that any support that local partners can provide to companies in their supply chain to expand their business operations would be very welcome. Meetings have been held with JCB to take this forward. There may also be inward investment opportunities to attract some suppliers to Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

Timetable

22. Project A: Western Junction. It is proposed to build this junction first, and to commission its construction as soon as planning consent has been obtained, the relevant third party land has been acquired and the necessary funding agreements have been entered into with the HA.
23. Project B: Eastern Junction. This junction will be built second, and will take significantly longer to commission than the western junction. The acquisition of third party land is likely to be relatively complicated and lengthy due to the number of parcels of land to be acquired, and the nature of the occupiers. Several residential and business premises are affected directly by these improvement works.
24. These proposals will support major job growth and housing development in the Uttoxeter area, and will contribute directly to the Council's strategic objective of creating prosperity.

Link to Strategic Plan

25. The proposed improvements to the A50 will help to facilitate major employment growth in and around Uttoxeter, and will contribute directly to the County Council's corporate priority where 'the people of Staffordshire will be able to access more good jobs and feel the benefits of economic growth'.

Contact Officer

Name and Job Title: Steve Burrows, Commissioner for Business and the Enterprise
County
Telephone No.: 01785 277204
Address/e-mail: Staffordshire Place 1, First Floor, Room 10
steve.burrows@staffordshire.gov.uk

Appendices/Background papers

None

Summary of Community Impact Assessment (including a Health Impact Assessment if applicable) for A50 Growth Corridor

	Impact Assessment	
SCC's Priority Outcomes & Impact Areas	Impact: (positive / neutral / negative)	Provide brief detail of impact
Prosperity, knowledge, skills, aspirations	Positive	Increased opportunity for employment at all ability levels.
Living safely	Positive	The proposals will improve road safety on the A50.
Supporting vulnerable people	Neutral	
Supporting healthier living	Neutral	
Highways and transport networks	Positive	The A50 projects will significantly improve the highway network in and around Uttoxeter.
Learning, education and culture	Positive	The considerable number of new jobs available will provide in work learning and development opportunities for many more local people.
Children and young people	Positive	The considerable number of new jobs available will provide many new opportunities for young people. It will help to raise aspirations, and provide direction for young people's learning, development and career choices.
Citizens and decision making, improved community involvement	Neutral	
Physical environment including climate change	Neutral	
Maximisation of use of community property portfolio	Neutral	

Equalities Impact	Impact: (positive / neutral / negative)	Provide brief detail of impact
Age	Positive	The considerable number of new jobs should create employment opportunities for all people seeking work regardless of personal circumstances.
Disability	Positive	
Ethnicity	Positive	
Gender	Positive	
Religion / Belief	Positive	
Sexuality	Positive	
Impact / Implications		
Resource and value for money (in consultation with finance representatives)	The cost of these projects is estimated to be in the order of £40m - £50m. The County Council are not making a financial contribution to the projects and will recover all costs incurred.	
Risks identified and mitigation offered (see corporate risk register categorisation)	The principle of full cost recovery has been acknowledged by the Highways Agency / Department of Transport and will be incorporated into appropriate Funding Agreements which are currently being progressed. In advance of those agreements being formally signed, costs are being incurred in respect of fees and may need to be spent upfront in order to purchase land required to deliver the projects. Although it is understood that these costs incurred in advance will all be recoverable, it should be noted that such expenditure is 'at risk' until such time that the Agreements have been finalised.	
Legal imperative to change if applicable (in consultation with legal representative)	As set out in the Report.	

Report Commissioner: Steve Burrows