

HERTFORDSHIRE LOCAL TRANSPORT BODY

SPECIAL INFORMATION NOTE

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GOVERNMENT AUTUMN STATEMENT – KEY POINTS OF INTEREST FOR HERTFORDSHIRE

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1 Purpose of briefing note

- 1.1 To update the Board on the Government's Autumn Statement announcement and preceding Roads Investment Strategy (RIS) launch and to highlight key transport points that relate to Hertfordshire.

2 Summary

- 2.1 The Chancellor of the Exchequer gave the annual Autumn Statement on 3 December 2014. This announcement was preceded by the launch of the Government's RIS on 1 December, which contained much of the transport investment information that was identified within the Autumn Statement. Both of these announcements contained information that impacts, or is likely to, on transport within Hertfordshire, either directly or indirectly.
- 2.2 Greater information on the Autumn Statement can be found online at <http://tinyurl.com/as-dec14>, while greater information on the RIS can be found online at <http://tinyurl.com/ris-dec14>.
- 2.3 Through the Autumn Statement announcement and publishing of the RIS, the Government has announced £15 billion of road funding across England. This funding is being made as part of a longer-term commitment alongside the changes being made to the Highways Agency, in which they will become a Government owned company (Highways England) from April 2015 for which the intention is for the longer-term funding to support the aspirations established within the RIS.
- 2.4 The projects that are identified within the RIS that are located in or bordering/ influencing Hertfordshire include:
 - 1) A1(M) J6-8 Smart Motorway
 - 2) M11 J8-14 technology upgrade
 - 3) M11 J7 additional capacity
 - 4) M25/A10 junction improvement
- 2.5 In addition to scheme delivery, two studies were identified within the RIS that may be likely to influence travel within the county:
 - 1) A1 (M25-A47) long-term corridor study
 - 2) Cambridge to Oxford Expressway

- 2.6 Additional announcements in the budget include continuing the freeze in fuel duty and capping regulated rail fare increases at the rate of inflation.

3 Background

- 3.1 The Autumn Statement saw the announcement of £15 billion of road funding across England alongside the release of the Roads Investment Strategy (RIS), which sets out the long-term ambitions for motorways and major roads alongside a funding commitment for investment. The RIS sets the long-term direction for the Highways Agency as it becomes a Government owned company from April 2015 under the branding of Highways England.
- 3.2 While the £15 billion forms the headline announcement, some caveats/caution should be applied to the figure. The principle caveat in regard to the total figure is that not all of the funding is newly available, with some of the £15 billion having been previously announced in 2013. Caution should also be taken with regard to some funding being partially or, occasionally, wholly dependent on other contributions and some being for the funding period beyond 2020.
- 3.3 Within the funding announcement, several roads schemes were identified within or bordering/likely to influence travel in Hertfordshire. As it currently stands, these schemes have been identified for delivery late in 'Road Period 1', which runs from 2015/16 to 2020/21. The schemes that have been identified are highlighted below alongside a brief description:
- 3.3.1 A1(M) J6-8 Smart Motorway – this will see the development of a dual three-lane Smart Motorway between junctions six to eight, which will see the development of hard shoulder running such has been implemented at several other locations throughout England.
- 3.3.2 M11 J8-14 improvements – the provision of a technology upgrade between Stansted Airport and Girton Interchange which is to include emergency roadside telephones, signals on sliproads, Motorway Incident Detection and Automatic Signalling, Variable Message Signs, CCTV cameras and gantries.
- 3.3.3 M11 J7 additional capacity – the provision of additional capacity on J7 through upgrading the junction and use of additional technology.
- 3.3.4 M25/A10 junction improvements – the provision of signals, free-flow left turn and widening.
- 3.4 Alongside of schemes that would be delivered, two studies have been identified within the RIS that are likely to have an impact upon Hertfordshire:
- 3.4.1 Long-term A1 corridor study (M25-A47) – an aspiration was indicated within the RIS to modernise and standardise quality along the A1, and highlights the opportunity to examine applying motorway standard north of Hertfordshire through Bedfordshire through to Huntingdon.
- 3.4.2 Cambridge to Oxford 'Expressway' – examining the opportunity to build on duelling of the missing link between Cambridge and Bedford (A421/A428 –

between Camborne and the A1 and highlighted as being funded within the RIS) to build a strategic 'Expressway' link between Cambridge and Oxford.

- 3.5 The concept of an 'Expressway' was introduced in the RIS, with the intention being to standardise the quality of the busiest A-roads. The general standards that have initially been identified for 'Expressways' include them being largely or entirely dual carriageway; having junctions which are largely or entirely grade separated; having modern safety standards; and using technology to manage the networks.
- 3.6 There are no plans indicated within the RIS to develop any 'Expressways' within Hertfordshire.

4. Key Points

- 4.1 The announcement of funding and delivery of these schemes will address a number of congestion hotspots for users of the strategic road network in and around Hertfordshire.
- 4.2 While the funding announcement is to be welcomed, it is essential that there is a continuing lobbying effort and engagement with the Highways Agency/Highways England to ensure that proposed schemes are delivered. As projects progress through gateway delivery stages and feasibility, cost and risk become more certain for all proposals throughout England, it is possible that there may risks to delivery for some/all of these projects.