

HERTFORDSHIRE LOCAL TRANSPORT BODY

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HERTFORDSHIRE'S STRATEGIC ECONOMIC PLAN DELIVERY – MAJOR PROJECTS UPDATE

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1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update in relation to the Major Schemes to be delivered as part of the Hertfordshire Strategic Economic Plan (SEP)

2 Background

- 2.1 As part of the current SEP, three projects designated as 'Major Schemes' are programmed for delivery within the period 2015-2019 – Croxley Rail Link (CRL); A120 Bypass (Little Hadham) and Flood Alleviation Scheme and A602 Improvements (Stevenage to/from Ware). This report provides a programme update for the A120 and A602 schemes, as well as setting out the current position for the CRL scheme, which is now to be delivered by Transport for London / London Underground.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 It is requested that the Board note this report.

4. Programme Update

A120 Hadham Bypass

- 4.1 At the April LTB meeting, a report was presented setting out how feedback from the pre-application public exhibition and engagement process has been considered and where feasible, appropriate and affordable, ways in which the design of the scheme (both in terms of physical design, including proposed mitigation measures and in specification and procurement planning) has been refined to address issues raised. The full Statement of Consultation (with the full detail of the pre application consultations) will form part of the Planning Application.
- 4.2 Since April, work has been continuing to prepare the Planning Application for the project, in particular finalising the Environmental and Transport Assessments. The target date for submission of the planning application for the scheme is early August.
- 4.3 The planning authority will then undertake a statutory consultation on the planning application, providing the public, stakeholders and interested parties a further opportunity to comment. The application will be considered by the Development Control Committee. The current programme anticipates this taking place in January 2016. Draft Side Road Orders and Compulsory Purchase Orders for the scheme are programmed for publication in November 2015.

- 4.4 The requirement for a Public Inquiry to be held into the scheme may be triggered during either the planning application process or the making of CPO orders. The overall project programme takes this potential into account.
- 4.5 Subject to the project progressing satisfactorily through statutory processes a procurement process to appoint a contractor will take place during 2016. Construction could commence in 2017 with the scheme operational by 2019.
- 4.6 Key target milestones for the scheme are set out below.
- Submission of planning application – Aug 2015.
 - Publication of Draft CPO/ SRO – Nov 2015
 - Planning Decision – January 2016
 - Potential Public Inquiry – Spring/summer 2016
 - Procurement – Late 2016
 - Construction in Summer 2017 (scheme operational by 2019)

A602 Improvements

- 4.7 At the April LTB meeting, the progress report set out the approach to project development and the intention for the three sections of the overall A602 scheme to be taken through separate planning applications. It is not currently anticipated that a public inquiry will be triggered by either the planning application or order publication processes.
- 4.8 The pre-planning public consultation for the overall A602 improvement opened in May and closed on 14th June 15. An initial analysis of the feedback has highlighted the following themes:
- Concerns about joining the A602 from side roads due to perceived increases in vehicle speeds and the free flow of traffic.
 - Requests for increased provision for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians.
 - Comments that the new traffic signals should be part-time
 - Congestion caused by HGVs on Westmill Road by the Household Waste Recycling Centre and Landfill sites
- All of the comments received will now be carefully considered and, where appropriate, the scheme design will be refined.
- 4.9 The scheme itself is following a similar development route to the A120, albeit marginally behind in time.
- Key target milestones for the scheme are set out below.
- Submission of planning application – October 2015.
 - Publication of Draft CPO/ SRO – Nov 2015
 - Planning Decision – Spring 2016
 - Procurement – Late 2016
 - Construction in phases starting Spring 2017 (scheme operational by 2019)
- 4.10 Further updates will be provided for both schemes as they reach key milestones.

- 4.11 As reported at the last LTB, the DfT have indicated they wish to retain approval oversight of the economic case for these two major schemes. The project team are in contact with DfT case officers to progress this and to better understand the degree of scrutiny required. DfT have indicated that for some projects, they recognise a more 'proportionate assessment' approach is appropriate, rather than an appraisal that requires full compliance with the DfT "WebTag" guidance.

Croxley Rail Link

- 4.12 An update on the CRL project was provided verbally at the April LTB meeting. The process reported at that time has since been formally agreed by the parties involved. In summary:
- 4.13 The March 2015 Budget included an announcement that the DfT would contribute £109.2m to the project, and sign off was received following a decision by Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to provide an additional £37.35m for Croxley Rail Link from its Growth Deal, on top of the £50.5m it has already allocated to the project. Along with £46.5m from London Underground, HCC's funding of £30.5m and £9.6m from Watford Borough Council this completed a funding package to the value of £284.4m.
- 4.14 The Mayor of London issued a directive to Transport for London (TfL) on March 26th which stated:
- " The Mayor:*
- *Directs TfL to take over responsibility for delivering the entire project including civil engineering works, systems and the procurement of additional rolling stock.*
 - *Directs TfL to provide £46.5m of funding towards the costs for delivering Croxley Rail Link based on a total cost of the project of £284.4m*
 - *Directs TfL to be responsible for any cost overruns above the current project estimate of £284.4m. "*
- 4.15 Conditions attached to the DfT grant require the establishment of the Watford Regeneration Board with senior membership from Watford Borough Council, HCC, the Hertfordshire LEP and developers of key sites set to benefit from the Croxley Rail Link to seek to ensure that the economic growth benefits on which the Government's decision to approve the project was predicated are achieved in practice. LU are required to report to this Board to ensure that the local stakeholders represented are regularly kept informed of progress in delivering the scheme. It is anticipated the inaugural meeting of this Board will take place in the next two months.
- 4.16 A further condition of the DfT grant funding to TfL for the project is that TfL will work to a target in service date of 2019 for the Rail Link.
- 4.17 Hertfordshire County Council has been designated to lead the consortium of local funding partners (including Herts LEP, Watford BC) and has for the last three months been working closely with London Underground (LU) to transition the project across. Both organisations have been working collaboratively to continue to make progress on preliminary works for the rail link before LU begins the line's main construction, which is expected to start later this year.
- 4.18 This transition process is due to formally complete by early August.