



<b>TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM No: 2.4</b>
<b>6 MARCH 2020</b>	<b>PUBLIC REPORT</b>

## A47 Dualling

### 1.0 PURPOSE

1.1. To summarise progress on the A47 Dualling project to date and outline next steps.

<b><u>DECISION REQUIRED</u></b>	
<b>Lead Member:</b>	<b>James Palmer, Mayor</b>
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	<b>Paul Raynes, Strategy and Delivery Director</b>
<b>Forward Plan Ref: Insert ref no on FP</b>	<b>Key Decision: No</b>
The Transport and Infrastructure Committee is recommended to:  (a) Note the content of this report and proposed next steps.	<b>Voting arrangements</b>  A simple majority of members

### 2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1. The Mayor, Combined Authority and partner organisations have long recognised the strategic importance of the A47 to the regional and national economy. The Mayor has committed to a number of ambitious and strategic transport improvements including the dualling of the A47.

2.2. This scheme will provide:

- (a) vital connectivity to the north of the Combined Authority area and will complement other Combined Authority transport and infrastructure priorities such as Wisbech Rail and the development of a new Garden Town at Wisbech.
- (b) Enhancing the route is anticipated to stimulate economic growth in the north of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Region. Notably in housing, education, employment and the agri-tech economy.

- (c) Provide a safer strategic route offering improved journey times and journey time reliability as incidents can be better handled by reducing diversion route lengths.
- 2.3. The commissioning of study work was a key commitment as part of the 100 day programme which led to £500,000 of Combined Authority funding being approved by the Combined Authority Board in June 2017 for the development of a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) and Options Appraisal Report (OAR).
- 2.4. In June 2018 the initial SOBC was produced utilising local plan growth assumptions of approximately 20,000 homes for this corridor and demonstrated a strong strategic case for dualling the A47 between Thorney and Walton Highways.
- 2.5. As the study has progressed the full growth potential of the corridor has emerged. This could lead to significant new employment opportunities and a further 30,000 new homes. This has been sensitivity tested and further strengthens the case for dualling.
- 2.6. The Options Appraisal Report (OAR) which assessed the shortlisted 12 route options, recommends three identified route options to be considered for further development and future consultation.
- 2.7. In the paper presented to the Combined Authority Board in June 2018, Board approval was given to commence the procurement of the next stage of the project and engage with the Department of Transport.
- 2.8. In July 2018, the Mayor met Jim O'Sullivan (CEO Highways England) who welcomed the proposals and approved engagement with his wider team, to seek to establish these proposals within the Highways England Roads Investment Strategy 2 (RIS 2) period for development and design with a view to construction commencing in early RIS 3 (post-2025).
- 2.9. Engagement with Highways England and DfT established that for the scheme to be considered for inclusion in the RIS 2 period for development and design, the project would need to comply with the Highways England Project Control Framework (PCF) Stage 0. Moreover, the project would then be required to be independently reviewed via the Highways England Stage Gate Assessment Review (SGAR).

### **3.0 Progress to Date**

- 3.1. The Combined Authority with the technical support of its partners including Cambridgeshire County Council and in collaboration with Highways England developed the PCF 0 documentation.

- 3.2. The PCF 0 documents underwent the SGAR and successfully achieved a Green status in December 2019. This therefore means that the project is in a position to progress to the next stage of development, PCF 1, Options Identification.
- 3.3. During the process of developing the PCF 0 documentation broad estimates were produced that are significantly higher than those proposed by the Combined Authority. For example, the proposed Route 1 option cost estimates are detailed in the table below:

	Best Case	Most Likely	Worst Case
CPCA	£350m	£600m	£800m
Highways England	£925m	£1,756m	£2,414m

- 3.4. Highways England's rationale for estimating significantly higher costs is the area's current designation as a flood zone, with a mitigation approach to managing the risk of flooding in their estimating is to assume that each option will require construction of a 5.83m high bank for the entirety of the route resulting in considerable amount of aggregate material, civil engineering and time.
- 3.5. CPCA, however, propose that a flood barrier or barrage north of Wisbech, currently being explored by Anglian Water as part of both the Wisbech 2020 vision and their own water management plans, will change the flood risk designation of the area removing the need for creating embankments, reducing material, civil engineering and time costs bringing the estimate in line with those suggested by the Combined Authority.
- 3.6. The current cost estimate for the flood defence is in the region of £150m - £200m with a potential saving to the road scheme of circa £1.6bn on the worst-case cost estimate.
- 3.7. The Mayor and Combined Authority have continued to engage with both Highways England and DfT in December 2019 and January 2020 emphasising the need for the project to be included in RIS 2, for development and RIS 3 for Construction.

#### **4.0 Next Steps**

- 4.1. It is proposed that the road scheme alongside the flood defence project should be progressed further. This in turn supports the Wisbech Garden Town development and generate economic growth in the north of the region.
- 4.2. The Mayor and Combined Authority will continue to engage with DfT prior to any announcements in relation to the RIS programme.
- 4.3. The current technical suppliers have been tasked with costing the PCF stages 1 & 2, this will support any future funding decisions should DfT defer the RIS 2 & 3 inclusion decision.

## 5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. The current 2019/20 financial year approval to spend is £410,000 with a forecast of £197,431, this variance is due to the delays in a decision from DfT and uncertainty as to whether additional work may be requested.
- 5.2. There is funding allocated in the Mid Term Financial Plan (MTFP) of £218,500 for next financial year subject to approval, if Highways England include this scheme into RIS 2, this budget will not be required going forward as it will most likely be funded by Highways England directly.
- 5.3. Should Highways England not include this scheme into RIS 2 we should consider maintaining momentum and continue to develop the PCF stage 1 Options Identification as a considerable amount of this work has already been completed in the original SOBC stage, we have commissioned the current supplier to estimate the costs to complete a PCF stage 1 suite of products in line with Highways England's requirements and this will be available in April. The current MTFP figure of £218,500, which is still within the original approved budget, would enable us to maintain momentum into the next phase whilst funding requirement is established and a supplier procured. Match funding would most likely be sought from DfT.

## 6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. No direct legal implications at this stage.

## 7.0 OTHER SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. None at Present

## 8.0 APPENDICES

- 8.1. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Board Paper of 31 October 2018

<u>Background Papers</u>	<u>Location</u>
List background papers:	<a href="https://tinyurl.com/CPCAagenda31102018">https://tinyurl.com/CPCAagenda31102018</a>