

Briefing Note: M11 Junction 11: Bus-only slip roads 3 December 2015
Lead Officer: Graham Hughes, Executive Director of Economy, Transport and Environment, Cambridgeshire County Council

Summary

- 1 This note sets out further work on the review and assessment of options for a stand-alone south bound bus-only slip road at Junction 11 of the M11
- 2 The Board has requested that officers investigate early view of Highways England on this issue and consider the steps necessary to develop a business case. This note updates Members on the recent progress on these issues.

Further Details

- 3 This work emerged as the result of recommendations made by the City Deal Executive Board on the 1st October 2015. The purpose of this report is to address the following recommendation:

M11 BUS-ONLY SLIP-ROADS FEASIBILITY REPORT

The Executive Board:

- (a) AGREED that improvements to Junction 11 of the M11, as set out in the options of the feasibility report, be investigated further as an urgent standalone project with Highways England (HE) in terms of initially assessing a business case and that an update on progress with this issue is submitted to the next meeting of the Board.*

Highways England Liaison

- 4 Further investigation into the provision of bus-only slip roads at junction 11 of the M11 has been undertaken including discussions with HE with regard to policy and strategy. HE policies regarding 'new' or 'additional' or 'replacement' slip roads off motorways are slightly ambiguous. However in informal discussions it was agreed that some possible concepts could be acceptable at the policy level. For example if the 'bus priority' access was simply another access point off the existing junction, this would be more 'policy compliant' than the creation of a new junction. Issues such as managing potential 'rat running' through the P&R site and/or enforcement of 'bus only' access as well as safety and overall traffic impacts would all require detailed assessment and mitigation proposals.
- 5 Following these meetings Officers are currently seeking a written position from HE on the range of potential options for J11. Although it should be noted that HE timescales for agreeing proposals in principle and in detail can be significant, officers will press for a response from them at the earliest opportunity given the Boards concern to reach a clear conclusion on this matter.

Business Case

- 6 Early outline assessment work on the business case suggests that a major viability concern is the absence of any existing bus routes which could benefit directly from the scheme at J11.

- 7 The introduction of new bus routes would improve the likelihood of any positive business case. There is the possibility of some employer led bus services being provided for a limited period which could make use of a new P&R slip road. Further details on the potential demand for this service will be considered by officers. The University also sponsors the Uni 4 bus route between Addenbrooke's Hospital and the Madingley Road Park & Ride which could have some possible use of a new facility at J11 at peak times.
- 8 Early engagement with Stagecoach, the main commercial operator, does not suggest significant short term demand for this scheme, but the specific commercial case for a route would need to be assessed in terms of wider bus network impacts and also any financial support that could be obtained to 'pump prime' such a service.
- 9 The Western Orbital Study will also consider the longer term demand potential for an orbital route which could also involve new infrastructure at other M11 junctions.
- 10 The proposed Western Orbital consultation in February 2016 will also add greater clarity to the potential joined up benefits of a stand alone scheme at J11. It would be essential for any stand alone scheme to be 'future proofed' in terms of possible integration with a wider Western Orbital Scheme
- 11 Finally, Members should note that allowing cars, as well as buses, priority access to the P&R at this junction could enhance a business case, but would bring with it additional traffic management issues.

Conclusion and next steps

- 12 Work to date suggests there is some potential for HE agreement to a future scheme at this junction but further design must be done before any definitive conclusion on that could be reached. Officers are seeking formal clarification of the HE position
- 13 The stand alone business case for a scheme at J11 would depend on the likelihood of new bus services using this facility. Officers are conducting further discussions with potential funders and operators in order to update the Board in February.
- 14 Members should note that a full business case would start with an outline assessment of potential viability and would ordinarily continue on with more detailed design, surveys, and environmental assessments and include traffic modelling and is likely to take 6 to 12 months to complete