

***Luton & South Bedfordshire Joint Committee***

***29 November 2007***

***Agenda Item No. 9***

<b>AUTHOR</b>	<b>Joint Officer Team (Richard Watts BCC and Keith Dove LBC)</b>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>Major Transport Schemes Update</b>
<b>PURPOSE</b>	<b>To brief the Joint Committee on the latest position on the major transport schemes</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATION</b>	<p><b>The Joint Committee is recommended to note the report.</b></p> <p><b>In relation to the M1 Widening, the Joint Committee is requested to:</b></p> <p><b>1) support the proposed Exchange Land north of Kestrel Way</b></p> <p><b>2) object to the proposed Exchange Land in the Vicinity of Toddington Road near its junction with Coverdale</b></p>
<b>REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION</b>	<p><b>The Joint Committee receives regular reports on the progress of the major transport schemes, which are crucial to the housing and economic growth of the area. Reports enable the Committee to identify any actions required to ensure schemes are progressed as rapidly as possible.</b></p>

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This report summarises the latest position on the major transport schemes.
- 1.2 The local authorities jointly submitted a programme of development to the Government on the 26 September 2007, which set out the key needs of the growth area in order to deliver the planned levels of housing and employment. The submission will be used by the Government to provide money for projects from the third tranche of Growth Areas Fund (GAF3). The GAF3 submissions included funding to progress certain aspects of schemes at various stages of the Government's approvals process for major transport infrastructure

(summarised below), as well as to further develop options for the Luton Northern bypass and the Woodside Connection.

- 1.3 A Government decision on the GAF3 funding is expected in December 2007.

## **2.0 A5 TO M1 LINK (DUNSTABLE NORTHERN BYPASS)/M1 JUNCTION 11a LOCAL CONNECTIONS**

- 2.1 The Highways Agency (HA) held an exhibition on the 19/20 October 2007 at Chalton Village Hall to provide an update on the latest position with regard to the Link and Junction 11a. Local Parish Councils are concerned about the impact of the connection on the existing local communities.
- 2.2 The HA work on design of a connection of J11a with the local highway network continues. Part of this work includes modelling of the traffic impacts on the local network of such a connection.
- 2.3 Included in the programme was a bid to fund the interest payments on a loan to bring forward construction of J11a and possibly all of the A5 to M1 Link, to enable an opening in 2011.

## **3.0 LUTON DUNSTABLE BUSWAY**

- 3.1 The revised Business Case is being prepared. Drafts of Sections 1 (Background, Strategic Objectives, and Scheme Description) and 3 (Project Management, Procurement, and Stakeholder Involvement) were submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) on 23 October 2007. The full Business Case, which includes Section 2, on the updated appraisal of the Busway and Low Cost Alternative, will be submitted to the DfT at the end of November 2007.
- 3.2 Since the last meeting of this Committee, the Procurement and Employers Requirements sub-groups have been working with Arriva and our consultants Mott MacDonald to progress various aspects of the form of contract and associated contract documentation. A Contract Notice will be published in early December in the Official Journal of the European Union. Following the completion and assessment of the Pre Qualification Questionnaire early in 2008, tenders for the Design and Build contract will be issued to short-listed contractors in early Spring 2008, with the expectation that the preferred contractor will be appointed in mid 2008 to commence the design and construction work.
- 3.3 The first round of the GAF3 submission to Government in September 2007 included a bid to carry out feasibility studies for an extension to the Busway to serve potential development areas north of the conurbation.

## **4.0 OTHER MAJOR TRANSPORT SCHEMES**

- 4.1 East Luton Corridor M1 Junction 10a to Airport  
Work is generally progressing well, but an issue has arisen in relation to a section of reinforced earth embankment between Gipsy Lane and Park Street. As a result of this the anticipated completion of the works has been delayed.

#### 4.2 Luton Town Centre Transport Scheme

Consultants Pell Frischmann have completed work on the indicative engineering and environmental design of the scheme. Exhibitions of the scheme proposals were held in the Methodist Church Hall in High Town on the 9 and 14 November 2007, and in the Arndale Centre on the 10 and 12 November 2007.

Subject to completion of the statutory procedures and full approval of the scheme, works are expected to start in early 2010.

#### 4.3 M1 widening, J10 to J13

A Pre-Inquiry meeting is to be held on the 29 November 2007, with an expectation of a start of the Public Inquiry itself at the end of January 2008.

Members will recall that based on a report about the M1 Widening scheme to the meeting of this Committee on 15 June 2007, the Joint Committee resolved to:

***1) confirm its support for the scheme in general as an essential infrastructure element to support the Growth Area;***

***2) urge the Highways Agency and Secretary of State for Transport to include the construction of Junction 11A in the M1 Widening scheme in order to:***

***a) facilitate the early construction of the A5 – M1 Link Road (Dunstable Northern Bypass)***

***b) avoid the need for further disruption to the Motorway at a later date when the J11A bridge is constructed***

***c) allow the development of land in the vicinity of J11A;***

***3) request the Highways Agency to urgently resolve design and other matters relating to the bridge carrying the disused railway line over the M1, as this could impact on the process for the procurement of a contractor for the Luton Dunstable busway;***

***4) notify the Highways Agency of its holding objection relating to the environmental design to mitigate the scheme's impact on landscape and biodiversity, together with issues relating to protection of the environment (noise, water and air quality);***

***5) object to the proposed replacement open space at Coverdale/Toddington Road, Luton;***

***6) ask the Highways Agency to provide a safe route for pedal cyclists and pedestrians between Toddington and Harlington through the Junction 12 complex.***

The Borough, County and District Councils also submitted individual objections to the proposals and, following further discussions with the HA and their consultants, are currently considering those issues that they wish to retain and, in particular, whether to appear at the Public Inquiry.

Progress has recently been made on issues 3 and 4 above. The HA has confirmed that they expect the bridge to carry the Busway over the M1 will be completed in Spring 2010 (which is consistent with the construction timescales for the Busway). In relation to Junction 12, plans are currently awaited from the HA's consultants showing potential pedestrian and cycle routes. The HA have also undertaken to agree all temporary access arrangements with the relevant local authorities. It is proposed that, whichever of the three Councils leads on particular aspects of the M1 Widening proposals, they should refer to the support of the Joint Committee in relation to those matters that were referred to in the Joint Committee report on 15 June 2007.

Currently it is anticipated that the main issue likely to be debated at the Inquiry will be Exchange Land for Replacement Open Space (led by Luton Borough Council). Specifically in relation to the issue of Exchange Land for Open Space, Members should note that the Government has recently published the draft Section 19 Certificates. Letters of objection and support for the proposed Exchange Land need to be sent to the Government Office by 30 November. Members are recommended to use the relevant section of the report of 15 June 2007, as the basis for supporting the proposed Exchange Land north of Kestrel Way, and objecting to the proposed Exchange Land in the Vicinity of Toddington Road near its junction with Coverdale.

#### 4.4 M1 Junction 10a improvements

Members will recall that the report to the last meeting of this Committee indicated that the HA have acceded to the Borough Council's request to review the speed limit on the M1 spur in conjunction with the development of proposals for M1 Junction 10a.

The Borough Council is currently updating the modelling and the business case for the scheme to ensure consistency with the Government's guidelines for the promotion of major transport projects. As part of this process, the Parish Councils for Caddington, Hyde and Slip End have been consulted about the proposals, and the views of residents of Bullwood Cottages have also been sought.

The first round of the GAF3 submission to Government in September 2007 included a bid to progress the development and construction of the proposed improvements to Junction 10a.