

**Luton & South Bedfordshire Joint Committee**

**29 February 2008**

**Agenda Item No. 8**

<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>PURPOSES</b>	<b>To brief the Joint Committee on the latest position on the major transport schemes</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>The Joint Committee is recommended to note the report.</b>
<b>REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<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>

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This report summarises the latest position on the major transport schemes.
- 1.2 Following the local authorities joint submission in September 2007 of a programme of development to be funded under the third tranche of Growth Areas Fund (GAF3), on 6 December the Government allocated a total of £22M GAF3 funding to Luton and South Bedfordshire. At a meeting of the Interim Member Delivery Group on 25 February, Members received a presentation from Senior officers about the proposed schemes and studies to be funded by GAF3, and decided on the allocations for each. These 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 Luton Northern bypass and the Woodside Connection.

## **2. M1 WIDENING AND A5-M1 LINK INCLUDING M1 JUNCTION 11A**

- 2.1 The Highways Agency (HA) is continuing to work with the three local authorities and key Developers 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.

- 2.2 The GAF3 submission includes £6M 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.
- 2.3 The Pre-Inquiry meeting for the M1 widening (J10 to J13) was held on the 29<sup>th</sup> November, at which the HA indicated that start of the Public Inquiry would be delayed, probably until early June, due to the need to take account of the results of updated Regional modelling. The Borough, County and District Councils 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.

### **3. LUTON DUNSTABLE BUSWAY**

- 3.1 The updated Business Case was submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) on 24 December. On 24 January, The Borough Council received a letter from the DfT about information they considered was not included in this submission. On 8 February the Borough Council responded to the issues raised, and a revised Business Case was submitted to the DfT this week. It is anticipated that we should receive a response from the DfT on the updated Business Case in early June.
- 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 was published on 6 February 2008 in the Official Journal of the European Union. Potential contractors have until 26 March to complete the Pre Qualification Questionnaire, and these responses will be assessed during April to draw up a shortlist of contractors. The Tender documents will be issued to these contractors in June 2008, once approval of the Business Case is received from the DfT. It is anticipated the preferred contractor will be appointed in late 2008 to commence the design and construction work.
- 3.3 The GAF3 submission includes a bid to carry out feasibility studies for an extension to the busway to serve potential development areas north of the conurbation.

### **4. OTHER MAJOR TRANSPORT SCHEMES**

#### East Luton Corridor M1 Junction 10a to Airport

- 4.1 The issues in relation to a section of reinforced earth embankment between Gipsy Lane and Park Street have now been resolved. The Contractor, Birse Civils, has now submitted a revised programme that anticipates completion of the works in late 2008.

#### Luton Town Centre Transport Scheme

- 4.2 Following public consultation on the scheme held in November 2007 (including exhibitions of the scheme proposals in the High Town Methodist Church Hall and the Arndale Centre), the assessment of the responses has been completed. The outcome of the consultation was reported to the Borough Councils Executive on 25 February. Taking the various responses into account, together with consideration of the environmental impact, buildability, and cost of implementing the scheme, the

recommendation to the Council's Executive was to declare the Red option as the Preferred Route.

- 4.3 The total cost of this option is £21.9M at 2007 prices, of which £14m is currently allocated in the Regional Funding Allocation. The GAF3 submission includes £4M to fund the construction of this scheme; it is anticipated the balance will be secured from Developer contributions. Subject to completion of the statutory procedures and full approval of the scheme, works are expected to start in early 2010.

#### M1 J10a

- 4.4 The HA's holding objection to the planning application for the extension of the Mall in Luton due to the impact that traffic generation could have on M1 Junction 10a has heightened the importance of developing a scheme for the improvement of M1 Junction 10a. The Borough Council is finalising 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 views of Statutory bodies, the Parish Councils for Caddington, Hyde and Slip End, and residents of Bullwood Cottages have been sought.
- 4.5 The GAF3 submission includes £1M to progress the development of the proposed improvements to Junction 10a.

#### Luton Northern Bypass/Woodside connection

- 4.6 The views on options for these schemes as part of the consultation on the Core Strategy Issues and Options consultation are noted in the report on the responses to that consultation being presented to this meeting. The GAF3 submission includes bids to carry out further studies for both schemes.

### **5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The need to undertake Equalities impact assessments will need to be considered as each scheme is developed. Many Highway schemes tend not to have impacts on specific groups of people as their impacts are generally felt by all residents/businesses in close proximity to the scheme. However the Luton Dunstable Busway does impact on particular groups and the impact assessments for that scheme will need to take account of facilities at stops to assist groups such as people with disabilities to access busway services.

### **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Each of the schemes being promoted by the Borough or County Councils will need to progress through the various stages of the Government's funding approvals process. It will also need to be ensured that the business case for these schemes is robust enough to ensure ongoing funding approval through the Regional Funding Allocation process, which is due to be reviewed between Summer 2008 and Summer 2009. These implications were agreed by the Borough Council's Environment and Regeneration Finance Manager on 15 February 2008.

### **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no legal implications to be considered by this committee. Agreed by John Secker, Luton Borough Council Legal Services, on 15 February 2008.