

REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL

MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES

Purpose of the Report

1. This report seeks approval to establish a provisional working budget to advance the necessary design work to have major infrastructure improvement schemes available, in an advanced state, ready for funding opportunities as they arise.

Information

2. The Place strategy, presented to Policy Committee January 2018, highlighted the importance of growth to Nottinghamshire and identified a number of key corridors for future investment to support the growth agenda.
3. A motion was recently presented and agreed at Full Council to dual the A617 Mansfield Ashfield Regeneration Route (MARR), which is one of the corridors identified in the Place strategy, but currently none of the necessary land is either safeguarded or within NCC highway boundaries. The Department for Transport (DfT) recently consulted on designating a Major Route Network (MRN) to support the existing Strategic Route Network (as operated by Highways England). Additional funding opportunities will be available to enhance the capacity of this MRN, potentially from 2021. Working with Midlands Connect, improvements along the A614 have been identified as one of the front-runners for early funding priority across the region. Further details on the MRN are yet to be announced by the DfT but are expected to include the opportunity to bid for schemes for delivery from 2021.
4. To enable these schemes to be eligible for any funding opportunities as they are announced, the proposals need to be as advanced as possible to enable the schemes to be deliverable within a short time frame. No national or regional funding is available to do this preparatory work. Traditionally, the total cost for detailed design for any major schemes comes to in excess of 10% of the total project budget, but full detailed design would not be completed until funding certainty is achieved. Access to any national / regional funding streams is inevitably competitive and typically a local contribution of around 20% is expected. Any funds committed during initial design phases can be included as part of this local contribution.
5. Initial option appraisal / feasibility work on these schemes is either underway or has been undertaken but this now needs more detailed work to progress the design to outline design. Historically there was an advanced design budget to do such works but this has not existed for some years.

Early Priorities & Resource Requirements

6. For a programme of this scale and complexity, it will be necessary to bring on board the best advice and expertise at the right time. The Transport Planning and Programme Development team will oversee the work and any necessary commissions.
7. The above works need to be undertaken as soon as practical in order to establish necessary momentum and to inform business cases that need to be started this year. There is a risk that other schemes in the region could move ahead of Nottinghamshire's, if they are more advanced and deliverable in a shorter timeframe, whilst more certainty over funding criteria is awaited.
8. The total value of the work outlined is in the region of £150,000. As this work relates to growth and investment, subject to Policy Committee approval, it is proposed that the funds are sourced from contingency.

Other Options Considered

9. The 'do nothing option' was discounted, as good infrastructure is one of Nottinghamshire County Council's priorities by making "Nottinghamshire a great place to start and grow your business". The County Council is committed to promoting improvement to our transport and technology infrastructure to make Nottinghamshire a great place to invest and do business. The Council has for a long time said that more investment in transport and infrastructure in the East Midlands could have a transformative impact on the economy and quality of life for the people who live here.

Reason for Recommendations

10. The major infrastructure programme is vital to the economic prosperity of the County and work needs to commence at pace to build upon the excellent progress made to date. Any expenditure will not be abortive as it is reasonable to anticipate further funding opportunities and Policy Committee's approval to commissioning work now, will better place the team to bid for these and secure funding.

Statutory and Policy Implications

11. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

12. The cost of the proposed works detailed in the report is estimated at £150,000. This cost will be funded from contingency.

Implications for Service Users

13. From the outset, the Council has been determined to get the best deal on infrastructure for the whole of Nottinghamshire, our communities and our businesses in terms of better connectivity and a share of economic benefits. There is a huge wealth of experience and potential, the Council can be the driving force in growing a regional economy, and ensuring Nottinghamshire remains a well-connected County for the benefit of all.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Policy Committee:

- 1) Approves up to £150,000 towards commissioning programmes relating to the Mansfield Ashfield Regeneration Route and the Major Route Network for the financial year 2018-2019.
- 2) Agrees to receive an update report at a future meeting.

COUNCILLOR MRS KAY CUTTS MBE Leader of the County Council

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Constitutional Comments [SLB 23/08/2018]

14. Policy Committee is the appropriate committee to consider the content of this report.

Financial Comments [NDR 04/09/2018]

15. The financial implications are set out in paragraph 12 of the report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

- None

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All