

14 JUNE 2012**Agenda Item:****REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR, HIGHWAYS****A453 IMPROVEMENT SCHEME UPDATE****Purpose of the Report**

1. To inform Committee of the current status and the anticipated timescale of delivery of the A453 improvement scheme.

Information and Advice

2. For many years the need for a significant highway improvement scheme along the A453 corridor between the M1 at Junction 24 and the A52 at Clifton /Silverdale has been accepted. The road itself is nationally recognised as one of the most congested of its type, with a poor safety record and high traffic volumes. The route forms part of the Trunk Road network and as such falls within the stewardship and responsibility of the Highways Agency.
3. The improvement scheme has been a top priority for Nottinghamshire County Council for many years. This is because of the daily congestion experienced mainly by business travellers and freight travelling between the M1 motorway and Nottingham. Business colleagues from across the county have cited delays on the A453 as a concern for their operations and factor into decisions being made regarding potential relocations. Removing this congestion will offer massive journey time savings to all users of the route whatever the nature of the journey. The scheme also offers significant accident savings which is an NCC priority also.
4. The Government's Comprehensive Spending Review of October 2010 suspended all major transport schemes being considered for funding, including the A453 improvement and sought to reassess all such projects. The result of the spending review was to place the A453 improvement project into a category of schemes to be developed for start of construction in future spending reviews. In essence this was a set back for the project compared to its previous position and delayed any funding announcement until beyond 2015.

5. Following this announcement Nottinghamshire County Council supported by local business and neighbouring authorities embarked on a campaign to encourage Government to make available funding for the much needed project. Members will recall that at the Full Council meeting of 30th June 2011 it was determined that an NCC contribution of £20 million be made towards the A453 project subject to its funding approval by Government and commencement on site. This contribution being made in an attempt to accelerate a positive decision from Government regarding the scheme which NCC considered to be at an advanced state of readiness for delivery.
6. As part of the November 2011 Autumn Statement the Chancellor announced that the £168 million (DfT October 2010) A453 widening scheme was to be prepared for start of construction before 2015, subject to the outcome of statutory process. This latter point relating to the required Secretary of State sign off in respect of the Public Inquiry into the scheme which was held during November 2009. This necessary sign off was confirmed in writing on 29th March 2012.
7. The made orders associated with the scheme were published on Thursday 24th May 2012 and available to view for a 6 week period up to Thursday 5th July 2012, this is a statutory requirement. During this period any interested party may make representations to the Secretary of State that the necessary statutory procedures have not been followed correctly. Subject to any representations being made this concludes the statutory process required to deliver the project.
8. The proposed scheme will involve the dualling (with central reservation) of the 9km section of the A453 from the M1 Junction 24 to a new roundabout (Mill Hill) close to the urban edge at Clifton. Between the new roundabout and the Farnborough Road existing traffic signalled junction the road will be upgraded to a four lane carriageway with no central reservation. The scheme is shown on the accompanying drawing.

Current Programme

8. The Highways Agency contractor Laing O'Rourke will be finalising the more detailed work programme and construction method statement upon completion of the statutory process. The following dates may be subject to change as the programme develops.
9. During Autumn 2012 diversion of statutory services will commence along with the site clearance in October. Site compounds at West Leake and Crusader Roundabout will be established during November 2012 and fully occupied from 7th January 2013 as the main contract construction commences. The first few months of 2013 will involve the start of construction of bridges along the route. It is anticipated that the urban section of the improved route will be complete in May 2015 and the rural section in November 2015. Further reports will be brought to Committee as more detail of the method of works and effect upon the highway network emerge.

Network Management

10. There are significant traffic management implications for NCC during the construction of the scheme arising from road closures required and also in general terms as it will be the case that many motorists will simply avoid the A453 during the entire construction period. Most obvious routes for transferred traffic to use are the A610 (from M1 junction 26), the A52 (from junction 25) and the A606 which will pick up any traffic exiting the M1 at Junction 21a and using the A46 to reach Nottingham.
11. It should also be noted that whilst the A453 project is being constructed the NET phase 2 extension will be under construction to its terminal points at Clifton Park and Ride site adjacent to the A453 and to the Bardills Park and Ride site off the A52. In addition with the temporary closure of Nottingham Rail Station for a period during Summer 2013 and the transference of a number of services to Beeston Rail Station and East Midlands Parkway this will further impact upon the Highway Network.
12. In order to manage the road network as well as is possible and minimise disruption to the public a number of co-ordination meetings have taken place involving all parties involved in the projects. Whilst every effort is being made in advance of, and during, the construction periods to minimise disruption and communicate to the public it remains inevitable that there will on occasion be serious and unavoidable delays to road users. A key message that will be related to the public is that throughout the construction period the County and City will remain open for business as usual. This will be particularly important at the time of key events such as the Ashes test match taking place at Trent Bridge during 2013 and again in 2015.

Other Options Considered

13. Over many years several scheme suggestions have been considered by the Highways Agency as offering the best project for delivery. The proposed scheme has been through public inquiry and has full approvals to proceed.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

14. This report is presented for information only.

Statutory and Policy Implications

15. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are

described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The contents of the report be noted.

Neil Hodgson
Team Manager Major Projects and Improvements

For any enquiries about this report please contact: Neil Hodgson (0115 977 2720)

Constitutional Comments (SB 15th May 2012)

There are no constitutional comments as the report is for noting only.

Financial Comments (MA 24th May 2012)

As noted in the report Nottinghamshire County Council has allocated £20m as a contribution to this scheme, phased as £2.5m in years 2013/14 and 2017/18 and £15m in year 2015/16.

Background Papers

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

Soar Valley. Councillor Lynn Sykes

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