

meeting COUNTY COUNCIL

date 30<sup>th</sup> June 2011

agenda item number **8**

## **REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS**

### **A453 IMPROVEMENT M1 (J24) TO A52 NOTTINGHAM**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek approval of County Council in a) reaffirming the Council's support for the improvement of the A453 (Trunk Road) between the M1 junction 24 and the A52 (Trunk Road) and b) to authorise the investment of £20m as a local contribution to the cost of this urgently awaited project.

#### **Key Decision**

2. This report leads to a Key decision as expenditure of more than £1m would be incurred and/or there would be a significant effect on communities in two or more electoral divisions in the County Council area. Notice of intention to make the decision was published on the County Council's Forward Plan in June 2011.

#### **Background**

3. Members will be aware that this project has a considerable and lengthy history with public consultation on scheme options as long ago as 1985 and debated at Public Inquiries in the 1990's and more recently in 2009. A decision on the 2009 Public Inquiry was however deferred when the scheme was included in the Government's spending review in 2010.
4. In October 2010 the Secretary of State for Transport announced the outcome of the spending review and set out the outline programme of major highway schemes on the strategic trunk road network. This announcement listed 14 Highways Agency schemes which are being prepared for start of construction by 2015. The A453 improvement scheme does not feature in this priority list of trunk road schemes.

5. The Secretary of State's announcement also listed 14 further Highways Agency schemes for potential construction in future spending review periods i.e. post 2015. These schemes include the A453 scheme in Nottinghamshire / Leicestershire.
6. In Order to ensure that the current trunk roads programme retains sufficient flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances or to enable additional investment the Highways Agency (HAg) is looking to possibly accelerate schemes or a scheme from a reserve pool to start before 2015 if circumstances allow.
7. The Secretary of State has asked the HAg to identify a small number of the reserve schemes as priorities for acceleration. The A453 scheme is well advanced in terms of statutory procedures and is potentially deliverable at short notice and is considered a strong contender for inclusion in the short list.

### **The case for improvement**

8. Members will be aware and as referenced above, local authorities and businesses have supported the case for the A453 improvements over many years. As the main arterial route into the Nottinghamshire from the South, the County is ill-served by one of the most congested and unsafe roads in the country. It carries between 23,000 and 30,000 vehicles per day and a high proportion of heavy goods vehicles (up to 19% in the rural section compared with a national average of 10% on rural trunk roads (source:HAg statement of case October 2009)) Removing this congestion will offer massive journey time savings to all users of the route whether business related or private journeys.
9. In the five years up to October 2010 there had been 185 personal injury accidents on the Nottinghamshire section of the route. Additionally residents living in nearby villagers regularly voice concerns regarding unacceptable levels of traffic finding alternative routes to the A453.
10. In addition to the highway benefits to be gained from the scheme the widening will help to boost the economic prosperity of the county and assist the County Council to create the conditions which will allow businesses in Nottinghamshire to survive and expand. The recent announcement regarding the creation of an Enterprise Zone on the Boots site is most welcome and will be very well complemented by the proposed improvement to the A453.
11. A broad range of organisations including East Midlands Councils support the scheme and the British Chambers of Commerce consider this to be a top national priority. The Highways Agency in its Major Scheme Business Case submitted to DfT during July 2009 estimated benefits of around £320m will be brought to the region through the implementation of the scheme over the 60 year appraisal period. The A453 has an important national and cross regional role as a major trunk route linking cities, large towns, ports, airports and key destinations throughout the country. The

route also links Nottingham to the M1, the A52, City Ring Road, East Midland Parkway and East Midlands Airport. It is an absolutely vital part of the road infrastructure and is central to keeping businesses and the public moving throughout the region.

12. The scheme is well placed to be accelerated forwards for commencement before 2015 given the development and design which has taken place with early contractor involvement and the statutory process' which have been completed. The inspector has submitted the report of the Public Inquiry to the Secretary of State for consideration, as referred to in paragraph 3 of this report the decision on the inquiry was deferred due to the comprehensive spending review. Given that the review is now concluded a decision could reasonably be expected in respect of the inquiry at any time.

### **Budget Implications**

13. In order to offer the A453 the best possible opportunity to be accelerated by the DfT for commencement before the 2015 spending Nottinghamshire County Council intends, subject to necessary approvals, to offer a £20m investment in the project. Although yet to be determined likely timescale on the contribution is forecast for 2015/16. Such an investment dramatically increases the local contribution to the scheme thereby reducing that of Government. The County Council will encourage further local contributions to be made to the project wherever possible from partner authorities and if possible private stakeholders.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

14. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, personnel, crime and disorder and those using the service and where such implications are material they have been described in the text of the report.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

15. It is RECOMMENDED that:

Council fully endorse the A453 Improvement Scheme as contained in the Secretary of State's published draft Statutory Orders (January 2009) and seek the inclusion of this project into the trunk road programme for start of construction before 2015.

Council authorise the contribution of £20m to the Department of Transport subject to approval and commencement of the scheme.

**COUNCILLOR RICHARD JACKSON**  
**Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways**

## **Comments of the Service Director – Finance**

Variations to the Capital Programme in excess of £2m require Full Council approval, in line with section 4.2.6.3 of the Financial Regulations, and if approved, the Capital Programme will be amended accordingly. The revenue implications of the proposed contribution will need to be considered as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy. These are estimated at £1.5m in the first year, decreasing to circa £0.5m at the completion of the financing, assuming a 40 year period. (MA 02.06.11)

## **Legal Services Comments**

Full Council has the power to approve the Recommendation. (SHB 01.06.11)

## **Background Papers Available for Inspection**

Investment in Highways Transport Schemes.

Available from Department of Transport :

<http://www2.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roads/network/strategic/highwaystransportschemes/>

## **Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

All

HW0001  
2 June 2011