

A131 Braintree to Chelmsford Route Based Strategy – Sheepcotes Roundabout Improvements – Request to go to Tender under the Eastern Highways Alliance Framework.

Forward Plan reference number: FP/357/01/19

Report title: A131 Braintree to Chelmsford Route Based Strategy – Sheepcotes Roundabout Improvements – Request to go to Tender under the Eastern Highways Alliance Framework.

Report to: Councillor Kevin Bentley, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Infrastructure

Report author: Paul Crick, Director for Capital Investment and Delivery

Date: 28th January 2019

For: Decision

Enquiries to: Mark Eves, Project Sponsor, Telephone: 03330 130888, Mobile: 07973 375274

County Divisions affected: Broomfield and Writtle Division

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This Report seeks authority to procure a construction contract with a Principal Construction Contractor (PCC) through the Eastern Highways Alliance (EHA) Framework (using a competitive mini competition tendering process to ensure value for money) for the delivery of a roundabout improvement scheme at Sheepcotes Roundabout, Chelmsford. The final contractor will be appointed by the Director for Capital Investment and Delivery.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To approve the procurement of a Principal Construction Contractor through the Eastern Highways Alliance Framework for the roundabout improvements set out in paragraph 3.5, including the introduction of a dedicated left turn slip at Sheepcotes Roundabout, using a competitive mini competition process.
- 2.2 To Authorise the Director for Capital Investment and Delivery to award the contract to the successful Principal Construction Contractor, providing that the total project cost is within the approved budget, and all required Traffic Regulation Orders are in place.

3. Summary of issue

- 3.1 This project concerns the roundabout on A131/B1008, which acts as one of the main routes into Chelmsford from Braintree and Great Dunmow, providing access to the Chelmer Valley Park and Ride, Broomfield Hospital and a number of primary and secondary schools in the North of Chelmsford. Currently this route suffers from congestion.
- 3.2 Chelmsford City Council has approved plans to build 4,350 new houses, a retail development, new hotel and a new school, some of the construction work for these developments are either complete or underway. Further growth in Chelmsford, beyond 2021, is set out in their next Local Plan 2021 – 2036, which allocates a further 14,000 new homes, a significant amount of which are

A131 Braintree to Chelmsford Route Based Strategy – Sheepcotes Roundabout Improvements – Request to go to Tender under the Eastern Highways Alliance Framework.

planned for delivery in north and north east Chelmsford. This growth will add further pressure along the A131 corridor, which will result in increased traffic along the route.

- 3.3 Additionally, Braintree District Council has plans to build between 11,000 and 15,000 new homes over the next 15 years. Again, a significant portion of the traffic from these new dwellings will head down and along the A131 towards Chelmsford and will put increased pressure on the Chelmsford to Braintree corridor.
- 3.4 The primary aim of this scheme is to improve traffic flows along the A131 Braintree to Chelmsford corridor and address identified highways capacity and safety improvement issues at the roundabout. Transport network improvements along the route are necessary to support significant economic growth and development as described above.
- 3.5 Appendix 2 sets out the proposed works which will alleviate the existing highways capacity issues at the roundabout, which are:
- Providing a dedicated left turn slip from Braintree Road (A131) to Essex Regiment Way (A130).
 - Reducing the size of the central roundabout island to allow two circulatory traffic lanes From Essex Regiment Way (A130) to Braintree Road (A131).
 - Widening the roundabout approach on Essex Regiment Way (A130) to three lanes.
- 3.6 Essex County Council undertook informal consultation with the Little Waltham Parish Council and residents, including residents of Little Waltham and Great Leighs. A public information event was held at Little Waltham Memorial Hall on Wednesday 12th December 2018. The aim of the event was to present the roundabout improvements and listen to visitor's comments on the proposals. A total of 20 people attended the event, and all were supportive of the proposed roundabout improvements at Sheepcotes Roundabout. Three written comments were received which supported the roundabout improvements however they also raised concerns about local traffic issues, that the surrounding roads within Little Waltham are used as a 'rat run' by traffic on a daily basis. It is anticipated that once the works have been completed, the traffic through the roundabout will flow a lot quicker and more smoothly, which will reduce the number of people seeking alternative routes through the local villages. Details of the written comments are included within the appendices. In addition, material was also uploaded through the ECC Insight Portal and views were requested from residents and stakeholders. The informal consultation period was open from Wednesday 12th December until Friday 28th December 2018. A total of 16 people viewed the plans on the portal, but no comments were received.
- 3.7 An application for Certificate of Permitted Development is currently with Chelmsford City Council for determination. Statutory consultation is not needed for planning purposes.

A131 Braintree to Chelmsford Route Based Strategy – Sheepcotes Roundabout Improvements – Request to go to Tender under the Eastern Highways Alliance Framework.

- 3.8 Further consultation will be undertaken by advertising proposals for the Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) required for the scheme; this will be undertaken through the formal governance process at the appropriate time and is outside the scope of this decision. The contract to deliver the works will not be awarded until the traffic regulation orders have been resolved.
- 3.9 The main construction works will be undertaken by a Contractor procured, via a construction contract, through the Eastern Highways Alliance Framework. This framework is specifically available for a range of highway improvement schemes up to an estimate costs of £20m per scheme. ECC are one of 11 members to this alliance and have used it on numerous occasions since its establishment in 2015.
- 3.10 ECC will seek to run a competitive mini-competition tendering process inviting bids from the 6 contractors within Lot 2 appointed to the Framework. These bids will be evaluated on a price/quality ratio of 60/40 and in accordance with the evaluation criteria set out within the Framework.
- 3.11 It is proposed that the Director for Capital Investment and Delivery will award the contract appointing the Principal Contractor to the successful bidder, providing the total project costs are within the approved budget and the successful consultation of Traffic Regulation Orders.

4. Options

Option 1- Continue with the proposed improvements to Sheepcotes Roundabout

- 4.1 Continue with the proposed improvement works at the roundabout and the recommendations set out above. At feasibility stage it was concluded that the best solution was to undertake the proposed improvements at Sheepcotes Roundabout together with the full package of highway improvement measures otherwise the benefits of one individual scheme would not be fully realised.

Option 2 – Continue with a ‘Do Minimum’ alternative for Sheepcotes Roundabout

- 4.2 One ‘Do Minimum’ alternative could be to provide the left turn slip from Braintree Road (A131) to Essex Regiment Way (A130) without modifying the roundabout or providing the increased entry flare, but this would seriously compromise the potential benefits of the whole scheme and would negate any benefits for north bound traffic. The second ‘Do Minimum’ option would be to provide the roundabout improvements and the increased entry flare without the left turn slip. It is considered that this would not provide any discernible benefit for traffic travelling towards Chelmsford and may be regarded as a waste of public money given the congestion during the am peak. A combination of the left turn slip with either the roundabout changes or the entry flare change has also been considered, but again this would not provide the full benefit that this roundabout sorely needs.

A131 Braintree to Chelmsford Route Based Strategy – Sheepcotes Roundabout Improvements – Request to go to Tender under the Eastern Highways Alliance Framework.

Option 3 - Abandon Upgrade of Sheepcotes Roundabout

- 4.3 If this option were selected, current traffic congestion on the A131 Sheepcotes Roundabout would continue to grow. Ultimately, this could have significant implications upon the forecast economic growth and development as detailed above.

5. Next steps

- 5.1 Following on from endorsement of this paper, works will continue to bring the design and tender pack to completion. The tender process will then be completed through mini competition on the Eastern Highways Alliance Framework 2.
- 5.2 Following on from tender return and assessment, the preferred contractor will be selected. Award of contract and appointment of principal contractor will then be undertaken by the Director for Capital Investment and Delivery, provided the requirements in Paragraph 2.2 have been met.

6. Issues for consideration

6.1 Financial implications

- 6.1.1 Sheepcotes Roundabout improvements scheme (including the dedicated left turn slip) is included in the ECC approved capital programme. This scheme forms the final part of the A131 Chelmsford to Braintree Route Based Strategy. The four other elements that make up the package and their current delivery status are listed below:

- Deres Bridge Roundabout Improvements – Complete
- Essex Regiment Way Bus Lane Improvements - Complete
- Chelmer Valley Road Bus Lane Improvements – Complete
- Nabbotts Farm Roundabout Improvements – Target completion Spring 2019

- 6.1.2 The original total scheme allocation within the Capital Programme for A131 Chelmsford to Braintree Route Based Strategy was £7.320m, which was split between SELEP and match funding from ECC; £3.66m SELEP and £3.66m ECC. The total scheme allocation has subsequently been reduced to £6.098m as a result of further clarity in scheme design.

- 6.1.3 The following table summarises the remaining financial profile for this scheme:

A131 Chelmsford – Braintree RBS	18/19	19/20	Total
Total (£m)	2.104m	2.400m	4.504m

- 6.1.4 Monies spent to date of £1.594m predominately relate to design and successful delivery of the four elements of the package identified in item 6.1.1 above through the Ringway Jacobs HST contract. The remaining budget identified within 2019/20 is for the completion of Nabbotts Farm Roundabout

A131 Braintree to Chelmsford Route Based Strategy – Sheepcotes Roundabout Improvements – Request to go to Tender under the Eastern Highways Alliance Framework.

Improvements and the successful delivery of Sheepcotes Roundabout improvements.

6.1.5 The estimated works costs of Sheepcotes Roundabout are £1.9m.

6.2 Legal implications

6.2.1 There are Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO's) required for these works which have already been drafted and will be altered/confirmed by Ringway Jacobs with Essex's Network Assurance team.

6.2.2 The project design and professional services support (Project Management, Project Assurance, Supervision and Contract Administration for the main construction works) is provided through the Essex Highways Design and Professional Services HST (Ringway Jacobs) contract (which is the current practice with all Highway Major Scheme Projects).

6.2.3 The main Construction works will be undertaken by a Contractor procured, via a construction contract, through the Eastern Highways Alliance Framework. ECC are a member to this alliance and have used it on numerous occasions. This will be done by using a competitive mini-competition tendering process to demonstrate value for money. This framework has been procured in a manner which complies with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and ECC's own procurement rules.

7. Equality and Diversity implications

- 7.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
 - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 7.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).
- 7.3 The equality impact assessment indicates that the proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic.

8. List of appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1 - Equality Impact Assessment
- 8.2 Appendix 2 - Plan of proposed works

9. List of Background papers

- 9.1 General Arrangement Drawings
- 9.2 Consultation responses

A131 Braintree to Chelmsford Route Based Strategy – Sheepcotes Roundabout Improvements – Request to go to Tender under the Eastern Highways Alliance Framework.

I approve the above recommendations set out above for the reasons set out in the report.	Date
Councillor Kevin Bentley, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure	07.03.19

In consultation with:

Role	Date
Director for Capital Investment and Delivery	
Paul Crick	05.03.19
Executive Director for Corporate and Customer Services (S151 Officer)	20.02.19
Nicole Wood (delegated S151)	
Director, Legal and Assurance (Monitoring Officer)	
Kim Cole on behalf of Paul Turner	01.02.19