

<b>Report to Accountability Board</b>	<b>Forward Plan reference number:</b> FP/AB/144
<b>Date of Accountability Board Meeting:</b>	<b>15<sup>th</sup> June 2018</b>
<b>Date of report:</b>	<b>17<sup>th</sup> May 2018</b>
<b>Title of report: Kent Strategic Congestion Management Programme – Update</b>	
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## **1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to make the Accountability Board (the Board) aware of the latest progress in the delivery of the annual programme of works covered under the Kent Strategic Congestion Management Programme (KSCMP) project (the Programme).
- 1.2 The report provides an update on changes to the outputs which will be delivered through the Programme and changes to the value of LGF applied to individual schemes.
- 1.3 The 2015/16, 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19 business cases have all been through the Independent Technical Evaluator (ITE) process and received approval from the Board for the award of £2m Local Growth Fund (LGF) from a total LGF allocation of £4.8m.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Board is asked to **note** the progress of the Programme and the individual schemes that have been delivered each year.
- 2.2 The Board is asked to **note** that the following schemes will not be taken forward as part of the Programme, which will result in a total of £242,000 being available for alternative investment: Under the terms of the Assurance Framework, this variance is within tolerances for the Partner authority to redeploy without requiring Accountability Board approval.
  - (1) A229 Bluebell Hill approach and northbound off-slip towards the Taddington roundabout - M2 Junction 3 (2015/16 - £102,000)
  - (2) A229/A274 Wheatsheaf Junction Improvements (2015/16 - £40,000).
  - (3) A229 Loose Road, Armstrong Road and Sheal's Crescent Junction Improvements in Maidstone (2016/17 - £100,000)
- 2.3 The Board is asked to **note** the funding of £242,000 LGF from the withdrawn schemes highlighted in 2.2 was applied to the following approved scheme:

(1) The Highways Management Centre (HMC) Technology Refresh project  
2015/16

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 This report is to update the Board on amendments to the schemes being delivered through the Programme.
- 3.2 The Programme is a continuation of improvements being made by Kent County Council (KCC) to maximise the efficiency of the local highway network as traffic levels increase in line with development. The Programme is to be delivered between the financial years 2015/16 and 2020/21 and the total Programme value is £4.8million LGF.
- 3.3 It has previously been decided to submit business cases for schemes on a year-by-year basis. The first four years of the six year programme have already been approved, with the Business Case for 2018/19 having been approved by at the Board meeting on 23rd February 2018.
- 3.4 The annual programmes of schemes are susceptible to some variability due to changes in the scope and timescales of other major LGF schemes that are being delivered in Kent.

### **4. Project Programme**

- 4.1 The schemes that have been delivered to date under the Programme are listed below, with a Red – Amber- Green (RAG) rating based on the overall delivery against the original project budget:
- 4.2 **Green** rated schemes (Delivered in line with the original budget set out in the approved business case).

#### **4.2.1 A225 Princes Road / Darenth Road Hotspot Scheme – 2017/18 (Complete)**

KCC and Highways England (HE) have worked in partnership to implement several schemes around the Dartford Crossing to improve network performance and reduce congestion. The hotspot scheme which has been delivered aimed to keep the local road network as free flowing as possible, improving journey time reliability and enhancing the bus rapid transit network in the area (Fastrack).

#### **4.2.2 A2500 Lower Road / Barton Hill Drive Junction improvements, Sheppey – 2017/18 (Complete)**

A trial junction arrangement with modified traffic signals was implemented and has now been made permanent to address congestion issues at this junction in the interim of the larger LGF3 major scheme being delivered. The interim

scheme has removed some of the permitted traffic movements, increasing green times to the congested arms and reducing the number of times the traffic would have to stop to let opposing movements go green.

#### **4.2.3 EU Connected Corridor – 2016/17 to 2020/21 (ongoing)**

The delayed EU Connected Corridor scheme will be carried forward for delivery in future years of the Programme. The Cooperative Intelligent Transport Systems (C-ITS) scheme is an innovative pilot project which, if successful, will be rolled out nationally on the country's roads. KCC have identified several new ITS initiatives (the A229 extension being one) that link with the A2/M2 corridor proposal and with the Highways Management Centre (HMC) technology refresh (realised as part of this scheme in financial year 2015/16) and it provides an opportunity to align the initiative to bring additional benefits to the residents of Kent.

#### **4.2.4 Elwick Road / A2042 Junction Improvements – 2017/18 to 2018/19 (to be delivered in quarter 1 2018/19)**

The junction improvement scheme intends to improve the operation of the junction and reduce congestion, therefore unlocking the potential development within Ashford Town Centre.

#### **4.3 Amber rated schemes (Delivered above the original budget set out in the approved business case)**

##### **4.3.1 Highways Management Centre (HMC) Technology Refresh – 2015/16 (Complete)**

A full in-depth assessment of the operation of the HMC identified a range of improvements including the database management, CCTV and network coverage of Variable Message Signs (VMS) and as a result all have been upgraded.

##### **4.3.2 A292 Mace Lane / Wellesley Road and Somerset Road/ Canterbury Road Junction Improvements – 2016/17 (Complete)**

Both junction improvements were implemented in 2016/17. The A292 is the main corridor for accessing Ashford, linking growth sites between the north and south of Ashford. The costs for the schemes increased due to the cost of moving utility plant. A significant fibre optic cable had to be moved to facilitate the improvements.

#### **4.4 Red rated schemes (Not delivered as part of the current programme or as set out in the approved business case).**

##### **4.4.1 A229 Bluebell Hill approach and northbound off-slip towards the Taddington roundabout - M2 Junction 3 - 2015/16 (on hold)**

KCC engaged with Highways England (HE) and sought to develop a suitable scheme that improved the crash record, meeting the needs of the HE and the objectives of the Programme. As the scheme was developed it was evident that while this initial scheme had merit, supported by the initial modelling work with HE, it was clear that a bigger scheme could unlock greater growth potential. It is now intended to complete an expanded investigation and submit a separate business case for an improvement scheme.

#### 4.4.2 **A229/A274 Wheatsheaf Junction Improvements - 2015/16 (On hold)**

This location was identified as a priority intervention area and is currently being investigated as part of the Maidstone Integrated Transport Package LGF scheme.

#### 4.4.3 **A229 Loose Road, Armstrong Road and Sheal's Crescent Junction Improvements in Maidstone - 2016/17 (On Hold)**

This location was identified as a priority intervention area and is currently being investigated as part of the Maidstone Integrated Transport Package LGF scheme.

4.5 The following schemes are currently in the planning/delivery stage following approval of the 2017/18 and 2018/19 business cases by the Board:

- (1) Watlington Crossroads Improvement (2018/19);
- (2) Tunbridge Wells ITS Implementation (2018/19);
- (3) MOVA (a traffic signal control process) Implementation Programme (2018/19)
- (4) Dover Tap / ITS Assessment (2018/19)

## 5 **Project Funding**

5.1 Table 1 below highlights the schemes that have been delivered and the final cost against the original budget.

Table 1 – 2015/16, 2016/17 & 2017/18 KSMCP schemes by RAG rating

Scheme Description	Status	Original Allocation (£)	Total LGF (£) (Actual or updated spend forecast)	Variance (£)	Variance (%)
<b>2015/16</b>					
HMC Technology Refresh	Delivered - 2015/16	503,000	753,000	250,000	50%
A229 Bluebell Hill approach and	On hold while further	102,000	0	-102,000	-100%

Scheme Description	Status	Original Allocation (£)	Total LGF (£) (Actual or updated spend forecast)	Variance (£)	Variance (%)
northbound off-slip towards the Taddington roundabout – M2 Junction 3	modelling analysis is carried out				
A229 /A274 Wheatsheaf Junction Improvements	To be delivered under Maidstone ITP LGF scheme	40,000	0	-40,000	-100%
Forward design 16/17		88,000	67,000	-21,000	-24%
<b>2016/17</b>					
EU Connected Corridor – Part 1	Ongoing – to be completed by 2021	300,000	300,000 (forecast)	0	0%
A292 Mace Lane / Wellesley Road and Somerset Road/ Canterbury Road Junction Improvements	Delivered – 2016/17	300,000	510,000	210,000	70%
A229 Loose Road, Armstrong Road and Sheal's Crescent Junction improvements in Maidstone.	To be delivered under Maidstone ITP LGF scheme	100,000	0	-100,000	-100%
Forward design 17/18		88,000	0	-88,000	-100%
<b>2017/18</b>					
EU Connected Corridor - Part 2	Ongoing – to be completed by 2021	300,000	300,000 (forecast)	0	0%
A225 Princes Road/Darenth Road Hotspot Scheme	Delivered - September 2017	270,000	200,000	-70,000	-26%
A2500 Lower Road/Barton Hill Drive junction, Sheppey	Delivered - December 2017	50,000	25,000	-25,000	-50%
Forward design 18/19	Funding carried forward	90,000	60,000	-30,000	-33%
Remaining allocation	To be carried	0	16,000	16,000	100%

Scheme Description	Status	Original Allocation (£)	Total LGF (£) (Actual or updated spend forecast)	Variance (£)	Variance (%)
	into future forward design budget				
<b>Total</b>		<b>2,231,000</b>	<b>2,231,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>

## 6 Impact on Programme Outcomes

6.1 As part of the Business Case submissions, KCC proposed to introduce a programme of congestion management initiatives by 2021. The initial aim of the programme was to enhance the effectiveness of KCC's existing Highways Management Centre (HMC). The HMC is an essential component which supports and strengthens the Council's 'Growth without Gridlock' transport strategy. The HMC improvements are now complete and are intrinsically linked with the delivery of the ongoing EU Connected Corridor scheme. Various aspects of the HMC's infrastructure requires modernising to bring them up to date; and to enable a seamless cross boundary system with the HE and Transport for London (TfL) systems. Therefore, the further investment into this scheme to develop the latest technology and upgrade obsolete systems fits within the remit of the approved business cases and will therefore aim to deliver similar benefits and outcomes. It should be noted that no additional benefits will be achieved through the increased LGF allocation to the EU Connected Corridor Project.

6.2 The secondary aim was to use data from the enhanced HMC to identify network 'hotspots' and invest in small scale (i.e. <£500k) network improvements to improve journey time reliability; air quality; safety; and bus punctuality. Small scale network improvements have also been delivered to date as part of this project and have set out to achieve the specific benefits listed below:

- Alleviate congestion by allowing better flow of traffic
- Supporting economic development in Kent
- To promote accessibility to jobs and services for all
- Provide a resilient network that can respond to disruption and incidents
- Improve air quality

6.3 The following three schemes will no longer be taken forward as part of the Programme:

- A229 Bluebell Hill approach and northbound off-slip towards the Taddington roundabout - M2 Junction 3
- A229/A274 Wheatsheaf Junction Improvements; and
- A229 Loose Road, Armstrong Road and Sheal's Crescent Junction Improvements in Maidstone.

- 6.4 It is intended that A229 Wheatsheaf Junction and A229 Loose Road/Armstrong Road/Sheal's Crescent Junction schemes will be considered for inclusion as part of future phases of the Maidstone Integrated Transport Package. A business case will be brought forward for the approval of future year allocations to the Maidstone Integrated Transport Package, which will confirm the scope and benefits of these projects and will seek the funding required to deliver these interventions.
- 6.5 Whilst the need for an intervention at the A229 Bluebell Hill approach and northbound off-slip towards the Taddington roundabout - M2 Junction 3 is recognised through the transport modelling, a larger scale proposal is required to mitigate the impact of planned development. As such, it is not feasible to deliver the scheme within the current LGF award to the Programme.
- 6.6 The LGF allocation from these three schemes has been transferred to another scheme in the Programme, HMC technology refresh, to mitigate the impact of the cost escalation for this project. The benefits of these three schemes will not be realised under this Programme.
- 6.7 The Value for Money (VfM) assessment for the Programme in 2015/16 and 2016/17 calculated a Benefit to Cost Ratio (BCR) of 3.3:1 (2015/16) and 3.4:1 (2016/17), presenting high VfM. However, in light of the three schemes being removed from the Programme, this is likely to reduce the benefits which will be achieved through the delivery of the Programme.
- 6.8 Of the schemes delivered to date, the A2500 Lower Road/Barton Hill Junction improvement and the A292 Mace Lane / Wellesley Road and Somerset Road/ Canterbury Road Junction Improvements are currently being monitored for post construction journey time improvements to ascertain their true benefits. Currently the schemes public perception has been very positive, however qualitative assessment is required to formalise the records.

## **7 Financial Implications (Accountable Body comments)**

- 7.1 Under the terms of the Assurance Framework, Partners are able to redeploy LGF underspends where they are within the tolerance level of 10% variance, provided that the overall schedule of schemes within the Partner's programme are delivered and this does not result in a reduction in the overall benefit realisation as set out in the Business Case. Any changes within the tolerance level must be informed to the Board and partners are reminded that it is best practice to inform the Board in advance of making any redeployment.
- 7.2 A potential reduction in the benefits associated with this programme, as a result of the reported changes, has been identified in 6.7 above; it is advised that the impact of this reduction on the expected BCR of the programme should be calculated, reported to the Board and, if required, further decisions or approvals sought.

- 7.3 It should be noted that the future allocations to this Programme is dependent on the Accountable Body receiving sufficient funding from HM Government. Funding allocations for 2018/19 have been confirmed, however, funding for future years is only indicative.

## **8 Legal Implications (Accountable Body comments)**

- 8.1 There are no legal implications arising out of this report.

## **9 Equality and Diversity implications**

- 9.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 creates the public sector equality duty which requires that when a public sector body makes decisions it must have regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act
  - (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.
- 9.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation.
- 9.3 In the course of the development of the project business case, the delivery of the Project and their ongoing commitment to equality and diversity, the promoting local authority will ensure that any equality implications are considered as part of their decision making process and where possible identify mitigating factors where an impact against any of the protected characteristics has been identified.

## **10 List of Appendices**

- 10.1 None

## **11 List of Background Papers**

- 11.1 KSCMP Business Case 2015/16
- 11.2 KSCMP Business Case 2016/17
- 11.3 KSCMP Business Case 2017/18

<b>Role</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Accountable Body sign off</b>  <b>Stephanie Mitchener</b> (On behalf of Margaret Lee)	6/6/18