

9 March 2016		ITEM: 15 (Decision 01104359)
Cabinet		
A13 Widening – Scheme Development – Progress Report		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key	
Report of: Councillor Oliver Gerrish, Portfolio Holder, Highways and Transportation		
Accountable Head of Service: Ann Osola, Head of Service, Transportation and Highways		
Accountable Director: Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

In July 2014, the Government announced a funding allocation for A13 widening of £5m for the development of the scheme plus up to £75m for delivery, as part of the Growth Deal for the South East Local Enterprise Partnership. In addition to the Government's funding, the Dubai Port World (DP World) will contribute a sum of £10m to the widening scheme.

This report sets out the progress that has been made in developing the A13 widening scheme since the announcement in 2014. It describes the background to the proposed scheme, the activities completed to date, and tasks that are in hand. It also contains the next steps following signing of the legal agreement with London Gateway that will lead to the appointment of the contractors to implement the widening in early spring 2017.

1. Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet:

- 1.1 Acknowledges the progress on the A13 widening project;**
- 1.2 Confirms the approach to scheme development;**
- 1.3 Agrees to continue the works towards obtaining the main funding for the construction of the project and any actions required to allow contractors to start constructions in early spring 2017;**

1.4 Agrees that progress on the project should be reported to PTR O&S on regular basis.

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 This report sets out the progress that has been made in developing the A13 widening scheme. It describes the background to the proposed scheme, the activities completed to date, tasks that are in hand and those that are planned.
- 2.2 The A13 is a vital strategic route for the South East of England and London forming a link of national importance. Regionally it connects communities and businesses along the Thames Gateway and South Essex and is a key strategic route linking development at the Ports of Tilbury and London Gateway, Grays, and Lakeside.
- 2.3 Thames Gateway is Europe's largest logistics park, with warehousing distribution and associated businesses, it will provide up to 13,000 new jobs by 2026. Additionally, the Port of Tilbury is likely to expand considerably adding an additional 1,600 to 3,800 new jobs by 2026.
- 2.4 A lack of capacity on the A13 restricts the competitive advantage such ports might offer and would have a similar affect upon the significant development agenda and potential economic growth of the Thurrock / South Essex region and beyond.
- 2.5 Thurrock Council has commissioned initial information gathering on A13 widening scheme in 2013. In support of widening of the A13 between Orsett Cock and The Manorway, a feasibility report and an outline business case were prepared and submitted for funding approvals to the Government via South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SE LEP). In July 2014, Government announced a funding allocation for the development of the A13 widening scheme of £5m with provisional up to £75m for its delivery, as part of the Local Growth Fund (LGF) for SE LEP.
- 2.6 In November 2014, Cabinet authorised the then Director of Planning and Transportation, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to enter into an agreement with the London Gateway (DP World) and to act as an agent for "the harbour authority" (DP World) under the Harbour Empowerment Order 2008. The Cabinet also endorsed the Director to carry out the tender processes and award contracts necessary for works to be carried out in advance of the main widening works, including consultancy services, detailed design, works, and removal of flora and fauna of the site as appropriate.
- 2.7 Since that time, the Transportation and Highways team have continued to engage with the scheme funding bodies such as Department for Transport (DfT); SE LEP and the operators of London Gateway Port (DP World). This is to ensure all matters of governance and process are in place to allow funding to be secured and programme key dates met.

- 2.8 Much of the environmental assessment associated with the widening had been carried out for the development of the London Gateway Port. In order to assess the current situation consultants, Ecus, carried out environmental surveys in the area surrounding the length of the A13 to be widened during 2015.
- 2.9 The Transportation & Highways Project Board are supported by staff from consultants Mott MacDonald in order to procure the next stages in scheme development. Land surveyors, Masons Land Surveys Ltd, were commissioned to carry out a topographic survey along the A13 and in adjacent land that would be affected by the widening. At the same time, a tendering exercise was carried out to commission consultants to produce the preliminary design of the widening. The commission also included the requirement to prepare tender documents for detail design and construction of the works. The contract for £1.7m preliminary design was awarded early in February 2016 by the then Director of Planning and Transportation, in consultation with the Leader.
- 2.10 The contract was awarded to URS and will include:
- Development of the design to Preliminary Design stage resolving all uncertainties identified at Outline Design stage;
 - Preparation of tender documents and all associated works information required to allow detail design and construction contracts to be awarded through the Highways Agency Collaborative Delivery Framework (managed by Highways England);
 - Technical support to the council during the Design and Build tender process;
 - Technical and supervisory support to the Council during the construction phase of the works (subject to funding for works being secured); and
 - Identification and support of procurement of any required advance works.
- 2.11 Appendix A shows the February 2016 Monitoring Report to the Department for Transport, setting out the delivery milestones and funding profile. The Council's committed expenditure on scheme development costs for the 2015/16 financial year is £1.1m, funded by partner contributions. The Council has managed cash flow to allow development works to progress without delay. However, this is the only cost to the Council, as all project expenditure will be reimbursed.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 Consultants Mott MacDonald have also been commissioned to prepare a full business case as required by DfT to secure funding for the works. A development of a business case involves setting out of strategic, management, financial, commercial and economic cases.

- 3.2 For the economic case, a transport model is essential to demonstrate the economic benefits and thereby calculate the Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR). The project team have liaised closely with Highways England and secured their approval to make use of their transport model developed for testing of the Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) options.
- 3.3 The routes proposed in the LTC consultation, launched by Highways England on 24 January 2016, have been developed on the assumption that the A13 widening scheme will have been already delivered. Specifically, it is stated that Route 4 has been designed on the basis that the A13 has already been widened to three lanes in each direction. It is recognised by the LTC project team that widening of the A13 is required in its own right and is not linked to the LTC. However, the use of the transport model developed for LTC options will save time and cost as it avoids the need to develop a transport model from scratch.
- 3.4 Legal agreements have been finalised between the Council and the London Gateways covering:
- **Works Licence** – London Gateway Port Limited (LGPL) grants the Council a licence to undertake the A13 widening works. LGPL authorises the Council access the A13 widening land pending transfer of the land to the Council. The Council indemnify LGPL against any liability related to the scheme.
 - **Works Agreement** - LGPL agrees to pay the Council an initial payment of £1.15m and a final payment of £750k towards the A13 widening scheme in lieu of their obligation to undertake works to the Orsett Cock roundabout.
 - **Land Acquisition Agreement** - this agreement provides for LGPL to acquire the land for the A13 widening and for the Council to agree the compensation for the land owner and to pay LGPL reasonable costs. It also provides for the land to be transferred to the Council and for the Council to indemnify and insure LGPL.
- 3.5 The next steps in the project involve the land purchase and the construction works which are to be progressed through powers embodied in the London Gateway Port Harbour Empowerment Order (HEO). The land agent will be appointed to represent the Council during any negotiations with landowners affected by the works and to liaise with DP World who will be acquiring the land using their powers under the HEO. Once the land is acquired, it will be transferred to the Council.
- 3.6 Towards the end of summer 2016, tenders will be issued to a detail design and construction contractor. Tender sums received will be incorporated into the full business case whereby a robust BCR will be calculated. The BCR is a final prerequisite of the economic case which is required for a sign off of the full business case necessary for endorsement of £75m. The contract for detailed design and construction will only be awarded on receipt of confirmation that all the promised funding is confirmed.

- 3.7 In order to avoid any delays due to seasonal environmental constraints on the main works it is proposed that the advance site clearance, involving removal of fauna and flora as per environmental expert's advice are planned for autumn 2016. The advance works will also include utility diversions and relocation of noise fences. The scale of this work will depend on cost and the availability of sufficient preparation funding.
- 3.8 The construction works are anticipated to start in 2017 and are expected to last two years. The works will include, widening of the carriageway, new street lighting, new signing, reconstruction of four bridges to increase their span and drainage works to avoid any increase in flood risk.
- 3.9 The proposed works are intended to involve traffic management on running lanes whilst the on-line A13 widening constructions are carried out on both sides of the existing carriageway. The concept was developed as part of the Planning Application for the creation of the London Gateway Port and therefore powers to carry out the work and to acquire land are embodied in the HEO. The construction options are restricted by the area of land covered by the powers and will be limited to innovation in detail design rather than any significant changes in alignment. The HEO powers expire in May 2018. Works must start before this date.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 To inform Cabinet Members of the details of project development and obtain confirmation of the direction of travel, to allow officers to progress the delivery of the project and to agree future reporting arrangements to Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 5.1 The widening of the A13 was considered at the Public Inquiry into the proposed London Gateway Port. The principle of widening has therefore already been considered and the public has had the chance to comment on the proposals.
- 5.2 In addition to direct correspondence, a press release was issued to inform the public about the traffic management required for the survey of the existing carriageway.

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

- 6.1 The A13 widening supports the corporate priority by encouraging and promoting job creation and economic prosperity.

- 6.2 The outline business case was produced in 2013 and carried out an assessment of how the proposed A13 widening contributed to Council's policies.
- 6.3 With regards to Thurrock Council Transport Strategy 2013 – 2016 (2012) - the scheme would contribute to the following ambitions:
- **Delivering Accessibility** – Thurrock Council, in partnership with other organisations will enable better access to employment and educational opportunities and other key services, particularly to those in disadvantaged groups or areas.
 - **Tackling Congestion** – Thurrock Council will manage the demand for travel in Thurrock through a policy of encouraging sustainable development patterns and use of public transport, walking and cycling.
 - **Improving Air Quality and Addressing Climate Change** – To contribute towards the mitigation of climate change and reduce the vulnerability of the transport network in Thurrock to climate change impacts, whilst also protecting human health from the adverse effects of air pollution.
 - **Safer Roads** – Thurrock Council will work to achieve a reduction in the number of casualties on the Borough's transport network.
 - **Facilitating Regeneration** – Thurrock Council, in partnership with other organisations, will ensure that the transport infrastructure required to deliver better opportunities for residents and employees is delivered in a timely and coherent manner
- 6.4 With regards to Thurrock Local Development Framework. Core Strategy and Policies for Management of Development (Proposed Submission Draft May 2013) the scheme would contribute to the following ambitions:
- CSTP1 – Deliver a minimum of 18,500 dwellings between 2001 and 2021.
 - CSTP6 – Provision of 445 hectares of industrial and mixed use land between 2009 and 2026 creating Key Strategic Economic Hubs.
 - CSTP8 – Maintain and promote the viability / retail function of existing centres.
 - CSTP14 – Tackle congestion in urban areas by promoting modal shift and improve economic activity.
 - CSTP16 – Improve access to key centres for development and change, ports and strategic employment locations, and ensure the efficient functioning of strategic and regional roads as well as good connections by public transport between regional transport nodes.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Sean Clarke**
Director of Finance and IT

In July 2014, Government announced a funding allocation for A13 widening of £5m for the development of the scheme plus up to £75m for delivery, as part of the Growth Deal for the South East Local Enterprise Partnership. There is no risk to £5m which will be transferred to the Council as of April 2016. The only cost to the Council is cash flow as all project costs will be reimbursed. In addition, DP World, operators of the London Gateway Port have committed to funding a further £10.8m towards the project costs. The section 106 agreement with DP World was signed in January 2016 which ensures their initial contribution to the scheme.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Vivienne Williams**
Planning & Regeneration Solicitor

The land purchase and the works are to be carried out using powers embodied in the London Gateway Harbour Empowerment Order. The powers to acquire land expire in May 2018 thus it is imperative for the construction work to start prior to that date.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Natalie Warren**
Community Development and Equalities Manager

The proposed works will improve capacity on the existing A13 corridor, reducing congestion and will have a positive impact on local residents, businesses and the communities upon completion.

7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

- None

8. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- 11 December 2013 Cabinet report: A13 Carriageway Widening – Agreement to Proceed to Tender for Detail Design Package
- 3 September 2014 Cabinet report: Local Growth Fund Transport Programme Mobilisation
- 5 November 2014 Cabinet report: A13 widening – Scheme Development
- Atkins A13 feasibility study and outline business case 2013

9. Appendices to the report

- Appendix A – February 2016 Quarterly Monitoring Report to DfT

Report Author:

Les Burns

Chief Highways Engineer

Transportation and Highways