

Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee

BRIEFING NOTE – No. 1/19

Date: February 2019

Briefing paper to: All Members of the Business Support Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Purpose: At the meeting of the Committee held on 29 November 2018, Members asked for a briefing note on progress on the Medway City Estate Connectivity Measures Local Growth Fund Project.

MEDWAY CITY ESTATE CONNECTIVITY MEASURES

The South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) has been established to drive economic growth across East Sussex, Essex, Kent, Medway, Southend and Thurrock. It is one of 39 partnerships set up by the government to determine economic priorities while making investments and delivering projects that will drive growth and create local jobs. Through the SELEP's Local Growth Fund, national Government is investing £40million across schemes for regeneration in Medway.

The Medway City Estate Connectivity Improvement Measures project was awarded £2million from the Local Growth Fund (LGF) in 2015. It is a set of interventions targeting transport improvements and modal shift, aiming to reduce traffic congestion to and from the Medway City Estate (MCE).

Works to Date:

The scheme was split into two phases. Phase 1 consisted of transport elements which included the installation of manually controlled traffic signals on the westbound entrance to Medway Tunnel to regularise flows through the Medway Tunnel and enable easier exit from MCE, provision of a web based CCTV system allowing staff on MCE to see the extent of congestion and make judgements as to when to depart work, and an extension of existing exit lanes on Anthony's Way on to the A289 / Anthony's Way roundabout to facilitate easier traffic movements out of the MCE.

Phase 1 transportation interventions were successfully completed by the end of the 2016 / 17 financial year, with indications of the anticipated improvement in journey times for vehicles leaving the MCE being realised.



Future Works:

Phase 2 proposals (as per the Business Case) included delivery of a river taxi to support better links with Chatham town centre and other sustainable modes of travel. A consultation exercise was undertaken with business owners and employees on the MCE, to garner wide-ranging views with regard to the modal shift which underpins Phase 2 proposals. Consultation outcomes indicated low levels of support for the river taxi that was proposed in the Business Case as the primary means of encouraging modal shift, as well as limited support for sustainable modes of travel.

Alternative measures to form Phase 2 of the project, which reflect the expectations of businesses and users of the MCE, that are transport focussed and more direct in tackling congestion, are currently being developed. Proposals will include the retention of elements to encourage modal shift (in acknowledgement of the potential role for the project in acting as an agent for change), but accepting that the river taxi will not be an output, focus more on cycling and pedestrian interventions, and the likely inclusion of public realm enhancements as a catalyst for change. Additional support for journey time improvements for drivers entering/exiting the estate (a key factor in the survey responses), is also being considered.

Explanation of Reduced Spend:

Due to the proposed change of scope and objectives of the second phase of the project, SELEP requirements are that a new Business Case must be submitted and presented at the SELEP Accountability Board, before any more funding is released, i.e. before work on Phase 2 of the programme can begin. It is expected that a revised Business Case will be submitted to SELEP for consideration at the 7th June 2019 Accountability Board. To date £550,000 of the LGF funding has been spent on the project. Once the revised Business Case is approved, spend on the project can recommence. The project remains deliverable by the end of 2019/20, in line with the original programme.

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