

Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

BRIEFING NOTE – No.02/22

Date: 1 March 2022

Briefing paper to: All Members of the Regeneration, Culture and Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Purpose: Response to request for information on highways at RCE O&S Committee on 13 January 2022

1. Background:

At the meeting on 13 January 2022 the Committee asked how the Department for Transport (DfT) funding for the A289 Medway Tunnel project was being spent and a breakdown of the £4.9 million was requested, with particular reference to the amount to be spent on Medway Tunnel improvements.

At the same meeting an update was requested in relation to addressing flooding and drainage issues in the vicinity of the Asda store in Pier Road, Gillingham.

2. Response for A289 Medway Tunnel:

Medway Council received £4.9 million from DfT in relation to a bid put together for the Challenge Fund. The bid was centred around the A289 with specific focus on the Medway Tunnel. The cost of the A289 Medway Tunnel project is higher than £4.9 million, with Medway Council providing match funding for the remainder of the project from within existing Highway budget allocations. The total cost for the project is estimated at an initial circa £7.4 Million, subject to tender submissions and final agreements.

The project consists of improvements to the following Medway Tunnel assets:

- Ventilation System
- Variable Message System (VMS)
- CCTV

- VAID (Automated detection system for various alarms)
- SCADA (Medway Tunnel central control computer system for all tunnel systems)
- Pumps and Sumps
- Communications Network
- Air Quality Measurement System
- Sump Gas Sampling
- Replacement of all standard manholes

The project also consists of the following non tunnel elements:

- Rebuild of parapet on Pier Road Retaining Wall
- Resurfacing of several sections on the A289

The current estimated breakdown of spend is 81% on tunnel assets, and 19% on the other elements on the A289. This is subject to tender submissions.

Response to flooding at Pier Road:

Highways have been in discussions with Southern Water in relation to the localised flooding on Pier Road when subject to extreme rainfall. The gullies in this area are owned and maintained by Highways and then drain to a Southern Water pumping station located just by Pier Approach Road.

The flooding is caused by the capacity and pumping limits of the pumping station. It can only hold a certain amount of water and Southern Water are also restricted to the amount of water they can pump upstream without risking fracturing pipes and putting additional pressure on infrastructure. Therefore, in cases of extreme rainfall, these limits can cause water to back up the pipes and out of the gullies onto the road.

With Southern Water being unable to make any changes to their assets, it unfortunately means that Medway Council are limited to looking at options of improvements to the local Highway Drainage network. It is anticipated that any improvement works would be of a large scale and have a high associated cost, which would likely exceed existing budgets. However, Medway Council are exploring the use of external professional services to undertake a feasibility study into the cost and options of these potential works.

In addition, Highways are currently working with the Transformation team to have gully sensors installed to monitor water levels and link them to electronic LED signs. We understand this does not resolve the

flooding problem, but this will mean that when water does start to back up out of the gullies, the signs will immediately be activated and warn drivers on the approach which will hopefully limit the impact.

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