

TO: SWALE JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD

DATE: 9 March 2015

SUBJECT: Draft Swale Transportation Strategy

BY: KCC Head of Transportation

Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: An introduction to the draft Swale Transportation Strategy which has been produced to complement the Swale Local Plan

Decision Required: Members are invited to approve the principles of the Transportation Strategy

Introduction

- 1 The draft Swale Transportation Strategy has been produced to underpin the Swale Local Plan. It provides potential highway and transport solutions to facilitate the proposed growth of 9,200 homes (540 houses per year) and 400,000m² of employment land (approximately 9,000 jobs) identified in the Local Plan up to 2031.

Financial Implications

- 2 The measures detailed in the strategy have been estimated to be worth approximately £22M. Although they can be linked to the larger developments and therefore have identified sources of developer funding, the limited viability in parts of the district may result in a funding gap.

The Report

- 3.1 The draft strategy seeks to build on the objectives of the previous transportation strategy to provide infrastructure that enables regeneration in a sustainable manner; to increase the use of sustainable modes of transport and to increase accessibility by all sectors of the community.
- 3.2 Computer transportation modelling of the impact of the planned growth scenario in Sittingbourne has been undertaken to provide the evidence base required by the planning process. The opening of the Northern Relief Road in 2012 altered the traffic patterns in the district and meant that the model is suitable for high level forecasting only.
- 3.3 Notwithstanding this, the modelling demonstrates that Junction 5 of the M2 will come under greater pressure from the increase in traffic associated with the housing growth. In the short term mitigation can be provided by the construction of an additional lane on the A249 southbound approach to the junction. This road is administered by the Highways Agency as is the junction itself. In the longer term a more comprehensive redesign of the junction will be required and is currently being considered by the Highways Agency.
- 3.4 The model outputs indicate that the extension of the northern relief road to the A2 (the Bapchild link) will not be necessary to deliver the current Local Plan assumptions based purely on traffic arguments. The model outputs also indicate that increasing the housing growth to 740 dwellings per annum does not make a significant difference to the modelled zone. Traffic counts undertaken on the Northern Relief Road (Swale Way) and surrounding roads in 2013 demonstrate that Swale Way carries approximately 10,000 vehicles per day, and there has been a corresponding lowering of traffic flows across the town centre.

3.5 The 4 key themes of the draft strategy are:

Improvements to Transport Infrastructure

- M2 Junction 5 Capacity improvements
- A249 Grovehurst Interchange Capacity and safety improvements
- Sittingbourne Town centre regeneration scheme – this is a LEP funded scheme
- A2 / A251 Capacity and safety improvements at junction
- A2 / A249 Capacity and safety improvements at roundabout
- A2500 / Barton Hill Drive Replace existing traffic signals with roundabout
- A2 Sittingbourne, Newington and Ospringe – improvements to traffic flow in air quality management areas.
- Improvements to intelligent transport systems in Sittingbourne

Improving Safety

- Crash Remedial Measures
- Speed Management
- Lighting
- Education

Alternative Access to Services

- Coverage of high speed broadband
- Increased remote access to public and commercial services by IT
- Community transport

Encouraging Sustainable Travel

- Improvements to walking and cycling
- Improvements to bus services and bus priorities
- Integration of rail services.

3.6 The constrained viability in some areas of Swale means that there is little scope for major highway infrastructure, although developers will be required to mitigate their impact on the immediate highway network.

Conclusions

4. The draft transportation strategy for Swale reflects the fact that travel by private car and by commercial vehicles will be the predominant choice for the majority of trips. Improvements to the highway network will be required to ensure that congestion does not threaten the viability of the industry in the district, but it may not be possible to fund all of this from developer contributions. There is scope within the district to improve the uptake more sustainable forms of transport.

Recommendation

5. Members are asked to consider and endorse the principles of the draft Swale Transportation Strategy.

Background Documents

Draft Swale Transportation Strategy. The strategy can be viewed using this shortcut:

<http://archive.swale.gov.uk/assets/Planning-General/Planning-Policy/Evidence-Base/Local-Plan-2014/Swale-LTS-Final-Draft.pdf>

Contact Officer: Ruth Goudie, Strategic Transportation Planner, KCC Highways.