

TO: SWALE JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD
DATE: 8 September 14
SUBJECT: Sittingbourne Northern Relief Road
BY: KCC Head of Transportation and Development
Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: An update on the Northern Relief Road Scheme
Decision Required: For information

Introduction

1. This report has been brought at the request of this Board at its last meeting in June.

Discussion

2. The northern relief road was discussed at the Joint Transportation Board in December 2011 a few days prior to the opening of the creek crossing.
3. The northern relief road has now been open for nearly 3 years and provides a high quality, strategic route from the M2 and A249 to the employment sites at Eurolink Way in north east Sittingbourne. It carries approximately 1100 vehicles in the am peak and 1350 in the pm peak. For comparison, Mill Way carries 1800 vehicles in the am and pm peaks.
4. Public consultation carried out in 2010 on the possibility of extending the northern relief road to the A2 at Bapchild received a mixed reaction, and it was agreed that the scheme should be considered within the then emerging Local Development Framework as part of an area action policy. Within the current plan the proposed route of the northern relief road is indicated as an area of search. Modelling carried out at that time showed that completing the route through to the A2, the Bapchild link, would provide relief in the future to congestion in the town centre and would support new development.
5. Funding was sought for the completion of the route to the A2 through the south eastern Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). The results of all of the bids were announced in July and this scheme was not successful.
6. More transport modelling has been commissioned following the opening of the northern relief road as it was felt that this was a significant change to the road network which had the opportunity to alter driving patterns. The current transportation modelling builds on some of the work that was carried out previously, albeit some of the spatial planning assumptions have changed. A Do Minimum option has been modelled as this shows the effect of general background growth without any strategic allocations.
7. The current model shows that although there would be some relief to the A2 east of Sittingbourne by the construction of the Bapchild link, the traffic flows do not provide justification by themselves. However, the link road would offer the opportunity for further redesign of the highway space in the town centre prompting further regeneration schemes, removing traffic from the air quality management area in East Street, and removing through traffic from Lomas Road.

8. The results of the current modelling work need to be taken in context with the emerging transport strategy and Local Plan which will be reported in full to the LDF Panel towards the end of September.

Financial Implications

9. It is difficult to see how the scheme can be funded without a substantial proportion of the cost coming from public funds. This is unlikely as explained in paragraph 5.
10. The Development allocations in eastern Sittingbourne are unlikely to be able to fund the link road entirely, and the viability of developments in Swale generally will not support a high Community Infrastructure Levy at present.

Decision Required

11. This report is presented for Members' information.

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