

## **NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL DECISION**

**DECISION OF:** COUNCILLOR ELFAN AP REES. THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING, HIGHWAYS, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING.



**WITH ADVICE FROM:** THE DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT.

**DECISION NO:** 18/19 DE 382

**SUBJECT:** M5 Junction 21 Northbound On-Slip Merge Congestion Relief Scheme

**KEY DECISION:** YES

### **BACKGROUND:**

In 2015 Officers reported to the Executive Member details of the proposed scheme at the northbound on-slip on to the M5 motorway at junction 21 (Weston-super-Mare) and the proposed funding package.

To recap; the scheme will change the existing single traffic lane onto the motorway to become twin lanes for the entire length of the slip. This will increase vehicular capacity through J21 onto the motorway and help reduce congestion on the approaches to J21, most notably in the morning peak. The scheme is to be implemented by Highways England in association with other maintenance works they already have planned, offering significant cost savings.

The total scheme cost is £1.237m and is to be funded from three sources;

<b>Source</b>	<b>Sum (£)</b>
Growth & Housing Fund	675,000
Revolving Infrastructure Fund	450,000
S106 contributions specifically for congestion relief at J21, already received.	112,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,237,000</b>

Two funding sources required funding applications, both have been made and both have been successful;

- The Growth & Housing Fund is managed by Highways England and is specifically to address pinch points on the motorway network to unlock house building and job creation. Officers argued that congestion in W-s-M in the mornings, arising from the northbound merge, is making the town a less desirable place to live and work. Highways England have allocated £675,000 towards the scheme.

- S106 funding has been secured (but not yet received) from Weston Villages specifically to mitigate the impacts of the developments at J21. However, with current buildout rates this funding is not expected to become available until around 2025. The Revolving Infrastructure Fund (RIF) is managed by West of England LEP and is designed to forward fund interventions ahead of S106 receipts. Officers submitted a funding bid to RIF successfully arguing that early intervention would improve house build out rates and job creation. The RIF award is £450,000, to be reimbursed when the S106 funding is received.

The scheme costs are thus;

Cost	Sum (£)
North Somerset Council; site investigation, surveys, design	162,000
Highways England; Implementation	1,075,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,237,000</b>

All preparation works, including site investigations, surveys and preparations of designs, are being undertaken by North Somerset Council. The scheme is to be implemented by Highway England in conjunction with other maintenance schemes at the same location. This arrangement is assessed to save £360,000 from the scheme cost if it were implemented in isolation.

The Growth & Housing Fund allocation will pass direct to Highways England. The Revolving Infrastructure Fund allocation will come to North Somerset Council. In due course North Somerset Council will be required to transfer funds to Highway England;

Source	Distribution	Fees
Growth & Housing Fund; £675,000	Direct to Highways England (no interaction with NSC)	Highways England; Implementation; £1,075,000
Revolving Infrastructure Fund; £450,000	NSC transfer to Highways England; £400,000	NSC; Preparation and Design; £162,000
	Retained by NSC; £50,000	
Section 106 receipts; £112,000	Retained by NSC; £112,000	
<b>Total</b>		<b>£1,237,000</b>

Although initially funded by the Revolving Infrastructure Fund allocation and subsequently reimbursed from S106 contributions, £450,000 should to be recognised as North Somerset Council's contribution and is required to be included within the Capital Programme. The S106 receipts already received, £112,000 should also be recognised as North Somerset Council's contribution and is required to be included within the Capital Programme. The Executive Member is therefore asked to approve the inclusion of £562,000 in the Capital Programme.

#### **DECISION:**

The Executive Member approves the inclusion of £562,000 within the Capital Programme.

#### **REASONS:**

The Northbound Merge Scheme helps relieve traffic congestion on the highway network approaching Junction 21, making Weston-super-Mare a more desirable place to live and work.

### **OPTIONS CONSIDERED:**

The need for the scheme to mitigate the impacts of developments in W-s-M was identified in the early 2000s in conjunction with other measures, such as the improvements at J21 implemented in 2014. Detailed scheme options have been assessed and the proposed layout is regarded as most appropriate.

The scheme is on Highways England's motorway network and only they can implement the scheme. Implementation without the associated maintenance schemes is not considered a reasonable option given the cost saving achieved by coordinated implementation.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

#### **Costs**

The total scheme costs are £1,237,000. With North Somerset Council's fees being £162,000 and Highways England's being £1,075,000.

#### **Funding**

The total scheme funding comes from three sources;

- Growth & Housing Fund, £675,000;
- Revolving Infrastructure Fund, £450,000;
- Section 106 receipts, £112,000.

### **LEGAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS**

North Somerset Council is acting under its powers as Local Highway Authority (Highways Act 1980).

The scheme will be implemented and operated by Highways England under its powers as Highway Authority (Highways Act 1980).

### **CONSULTATION**

Consultation will be undertaken with key stakeholders by Highways England, in due course.

### **RISK MANAGEMENT**

Risks exist around Highways England's maintenance schemes not progressing as anticipated and Highways England's failure to deliver the scheme within budget. All such risks are managed through continuous dialogue between Highways England and North Somerset Council Officers.

Risks exist around the S106 funding from developments at Weston Villages either being delayed or less than anticipated. If the S106 funds are not forthcoming North Somerset Council would need to repay RIF from its own resources. However, the RIF loan is interest free and repayment is not time limited. It is noted that the scheme is intended to stimulate house building and job creation, making the S106 contributions more certain.

### **EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

Have you undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment? Yes / No

The scheme has no direct equality implications. However, the delivery of the scheme has a range of indirect implications which are consistent with the council objectives of improving transport accessibility and wider social objectives to combat social exclusion.

**CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

Delivery of the scheme supports the corporate priorities of improving transport infrastructure and promoting safe travel. It also directly contributes to a number of corporate aims including protecting and improving the environment; enhancing health & well-being and increasing prosperity.

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Executive Member decision 15/16 DE65 – approves submission of Growth & Housing Fund bid.
- Executive Member Decision 18/19 DE376 – Joint Local Transport Plan Integrated Transport Programme – approves the scheme be implemented and approves allocation of received S106 funds.

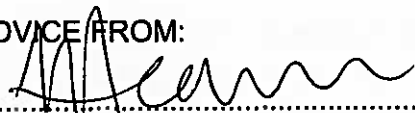
**SIGNATORIES:**

**DECISION MAKER(S):**

Signed: .....  ..... Executive Member for Strategic Planning, Highways, Economic Development and Housing

Date: ..... 15/4/2019 .....

**WITH ADVICE FROM:**

Signed: .....  ..... Assistant Director (Placemaking and Growth) Development and Environment. In accordance with paragraph 1.5 of the Council's constitution (May 2018), officer authorisations and delegations

Date: ..... 15/4/2019 .....