



## **Report to Solent Transport**

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**Subject: M27 Smart Motorways Travel Demand Management**

### **Purpose of the Report**

To seek the Joint Committee's approval for Solent Transport playing a local co-ordinating role in working with Highways England (HE) to offset the impact of major works on the M27 during the implementation of the Smart Motorways project.

### **Recommendations**

- i) The Joint Committee approves Solent Transport carrying out a coordinating role across the four Solent Transport highway authorities to engage effectively with Highways England, transport operators, local businesses, the Solent LEP and other major stakeholders to collectively deliver a programme of Travel Demand Management measures during the implementation of Smart Motorways on the M27 and the wider Highways England Road Investment Strategy (RIS 1) projects in the Solent area.**
- ii) That Solent Transport submits a bid for funding to Highways England which would propose that Solent Transport manages the Travel Demand Management programme on behalf of Highways England as part of the M27 Smart Motorways project.**
- iii) The Joint Committee approves Solent Transport carrying out a coordinating role across the four highway authorities, to ensure that effective strategic traffic management is undertaken, and operational resilience of the road network is maintained during a**

## **time of significant works on the M27 and surrounding local road network.**

### **1. Background and Introduction**

- 1.1 The M27 motorway plays a major role in the Solent transport network, and therefore in the Solent economy but suffers from congestion at several locations particularly in the morning peak hours. This causes delays, unpredictable journey times and frustration for residents and businesses. These delays are predicted to get worse in the future. As part of its national strategy to reduce congestion on the country's motorway network, Highways England will be implementing a programme of Smart Motorways on the M27 between junction 4 (M3 Interchange) and junction 11 (Fareham), currently scheduled to start on site during Spring 2018. The works are likely to last approximately 2.5 years.
- 1.2 Once complete, the project will deliver variable speed limits and hard shoulder running at certain times of the day, which in turn will provide greater capacity, improved flow of traffic, more predictable journey times, shorter journey times and fewer accidents. All these improvements will be of great benefit to the local economy in the medium and longer terms. However, there will be disruption of varying degrees for the duration of the works, and it is vitally important that the local Highway Authorities work closely together in a coordinated manner with Highways England, the Solent LEP, transport operators and local businesses to minimise the impact of the works.
- 1.3 It is also important to note that as part of Highways England RIS 1 investment programme, there are other Highways England road improvement schemes in the pipeline for the Solent sub-region over the coming years which could potentially be under construction over the same timeframe as the Smart Motorways project. The implementation of all these schemes, along with more local highway schemes implemented by the local highway authorities will need careful coordination to avoid making the short term traffic situation worse than it needs to be. We will see an unprecedented scale of highway improvement works in the Solent area during the RIS 1 period (to 2021).
- 1.4 The other Highways England RIS 1 schemes include M271/A35 Redbridge roundabout upgrade, A3057 Romsey Road bridge replacement over the M27, eastern access to Southampton City Centre from J8 of the M27 to encourage more drivers to use the local road network rather than the motorway. Further schemes to be taken into account include the M3 junction 9, Stubbington bypass and the A31 congestion reduction scheme at Ringwood.

## **2. Strategic Traffic Management Coordination**

- 2.1 It will be important for the regional traffic management functions to be strategically coordinated over the coming years to consider the potential impact of the Highways England RIS 1 schemes in addition to local road schemes.
- 2.2 Solent Transport can play a role in bringing together the traffic management functions of each highway authority and to work with Highways England and the respective HE Project Management teams.
- 2.3 There will be a need to establish a major project works programme that is optimised to minimise network disruption, as well as a need to consider restrictions to other highway-related works e.g. local traffic schemes, utilities works, and to plan for strategic diversion routes.

## **3. Travel Demand Management**

- 3.1 Travel Demand Management is the application of strategies and policies to reduce travel demand or to redistribute demand by either time of day, alternatives routes or alternatives modes of travel. Managing demand can have benefits for individuals, businesses and the environment and financial benefits to the local economy.
- 3.2 Highways England is seeking to develop a Traffic Management Toolkit which will provide guidance to its staff and local highway authorities on interventions which can help reduce congestion on its own network and on the nearby local networks.
- 3.3 The Solent Transport authorities and partners have built up considerable expertise in behaviour change programmes over recent years through the implementation of several projects including the Local Sustainable Transport Fund, Better Bus Area Fund, My Journey, School & Workplace Travel Planning and business engagement. This has involved working with private sector partners and transport operators to maximise the impact of behaviour change initiatives. Solent Transport is therefore well placed to play a coordinating role across the local highway authorities, including close liaison with the highway authority Traffic Managers, to ensure that the Smart Motorway project is delivered as smoothly as possible and the short term impact of the road works is minimised.
- 3.4 Southampton CC and Hampshire CC have been successful in securing funding through the DFT's Access Fund for a programme of sustainable transport initiatives for the Southampton travel to work area. The funding runs from 2017/18 for three years and will provide stability and continued resource for the delivery of My Journey and associated behavioural change measures. This resource and

continued expertise presents a good foundation for the HE Travel Demand Management to be managed locally, and for the programme to be developed across the Solent area.

#### **4. Proposal to Highways England**

- 4.1 It is recommended that Solent Transport submits a fully costed proposal to Highways England setting out the role it can play in delivering the Travel Demand Management aspects of the Smart Motorways project.
- 4.2 The proposal would include several work streams. Firstly, Communications – early notification of the works and explanation of the long term benefits; alternative travel options; engagement with businesses to encourage more flexible working hours for employees; and working with the media. A considerable strand would be to work with bus and rail operators to promote alternative modes of travel and seek the possibility of additional bus and rail services. It will also be important to include a coordination role between Highways England and the highway authority Traffic Managers to minimise the risk of causing further congestion.
- 4.3 The proposal would set out costs for each work stream, and the delivery of the project would be dependent on funding being provided by Highways England. The potential work streams could include:
- Strategic Traffic Management Coordination
  - TDM Communications
  - TDM Workplace Travel Plan Network
  - The promotion of Public Transport alternatives – bus rail, ferry

#### **4. Conclusion**

- 4.1 The M27 plays a major role in moving people and goods around the Solent area, but congestion causes unpredictable journey times and regular delays in peak hours. The parallel road network is also congested so there is little scope for diverting traffic away from the motorway in the case of accidents or incidents on the motorway.
- 4.2 Highways England is investing in a programme of Smart Motorways in the Solent, initially between junctions 4 and 11. There are a number of other HE and local highway authority road schemes that will also be under construction during the RIS 1 period to 2021, leading to an unprecedented amount of large highway projects being undertaken at the same time. This amount of investment is to be welcomed, but will need careful coordination across several agencies and local authorities.
- 4.3 This report proposes that Solent Transport and its private and public sector partners should work closely with Highways over the coming

year to plan for these works, and then through the implementation period. By working together in a coordinated way through Solent Transport, the local highway authorities, transport operators, the Solent LEP and local businesses will have the best chance providing as much mitigation as possible during the disruption. To this end, it is recommended that Solent Transport submits a proposal to Highways England to manage the Travel Demand Management aspects of the Smart Motorways project.

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background papers

**The following documents disclose facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and has been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report.**

NB the list excludes:

1. Published works.
2. Documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.

TITLE

LOCATION

None