

Subject: Maintenance of A12 Roundabouts

Report to: EMT 18th August 2016
Environment Committee 12th September 2016

Report by: Jane Beck Director of Customer Services

SUBJECT MATTER:

This report seeks to inform members of the current position with the A12 Highway England roundabouts and to consider possible options for their future maintenance provision.

1. INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The condition of A12 Hopton to Great Yarmouth trunk road roundabouts have been a serious concern for the Authority since raised with Highways England in September 2015. The level of maintenance undertaken by the Contractor is considerably lower than Borough expectations.
- 1.2 The current poor maintenance schedule creates Health and Safety implications resulting from poor visibility and has a detrimental impact on businesses, residents and visitors of the Borough.
- 1.3 Highways England currently maintains the roundabouts at Hopton, Gorleston Beacon Park, Middleton Road, Victoria Road and Harfreys industrial estate. The roundabouts at Gapton Hall industrial estate and Vauxhall roundabout are maintained through the Joint Venture Contract with GYB Services.
- 1.4 Highways England acknowledged in September 2015 that the condition of the roundabouts was poor and agreed a range of works to improve the locations bringing them back up to the Highway England defined standard. This work originally due to be undertaken in November 2015 did not take place until February 2016.
- 1.5 Since the work in February minimal works have been undertaken on the five Highway England roundabouts the result being that again all are in poor condition, confirmation has been received that no further work is anticipated to be undertaken on any of these roundabouts until September/October 2016.

2. PROPOSAL FROM HIGHWAY ENGLAND

- 2.1 Highways England have outlined an option for the Council to take over the management and maintenance of the five roundabouts which would be based on a s.142 license agreement.
- 2.2 The License will wholly permit the Council the plant, retain, maintain and replace trees, shrubs, plants and grass to a good standard but agrees to the Council covering completely of undertaking this work.

- 2.3 The agreement will enable the Council to install sponsorship signage provided it is in line with Highway England guidance on Environmental Sponsorship.
- 2.4 Highway England have identified that plans are in place to improve some of the trunk road roundabouts as part of the Government Roads Investment Strategy, works are due to start in the first period which includes up to 2019 this may result in some licenses being suspended during the period of improvements.

3. MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

- 3.1 In order to fully evaluate and cost the proposal to enter into a S142 agreement it is necessary to identify the proposed standard. For the purposes of this report it is recommended that the two roundabouts currently maintained by the Joint Venture Company are used as the baseline.
- 3.2 It is suggested that works are undertaken to reduce health and safety issues relating to working on a busy truck road and further evaluation of this will be addressed in the financial costs of any license agreement.
- 3.3 The proposal by Highways England does not currently offer funding toward the costs of maintaining the roundabouts however this will continue to be explored as part of any negotiations.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Costs associated with entering into a S142 Agreement as contained within the attached appendix. Options range from maintaining planting through to redesign in order to reduce ongoing costs.
- 5.2 Interest has been shown in relation to sponsorship and it may be possible to mitigate costs through local business sponsorship.
- 5.3 GYTABID wish to consider the option to enhance the entrance gateways, Vauxhall and Hopton roundabouts, to promote the tourism industry.

6. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are additional costs in entering into any agreement with Highway England although clearly the overall benefit to the Borough through a much enhanced level of maintenance would benefit businesses, residents and visitors.
- 6.2 Further appraisal will be required should Committee wish to progress this proposal further to ensure current and future risks are mitigated.

7. RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 To progress negotiations with Highways England toward a S142 Agreement.
- 7.2 To identify options to mitigate additional costs through private sector funding.