

Report to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport
Report submitted by: Interim Executive Director for Environment
Date: 10 October 2014

Part I

Electoral Division affected:
None

M65 Motorway – Replacement of Crash Barriers
(Appendix 'A' refers)

Contact for further information:
Shaun Capper, 01772 530251, Environment Directorate,
shaun.capper@lancashire.gov.uk

Executive Summary

The current Capital Programme includes the provision of £2.64m for the replacement of the M65 crash barriers.

The current estimated cost of replacing the barriers is £4.3m.

Approval is sought to the increased cost of the scheme.

The scheme will require removal of the current street lighting from the central reservation as part of the works. This has been an integral part of the scheme from the outset.

This is deemed to be a Key Decision and the provisions of Standing Order 25 have been complied with.

Recommendation

The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport is asked to approve the increased cost of the replacement of the M65 crash barriers to £4.3m.

Background and Advice

Lancashire County Council constructed a 10km section of the M65 motorway between junctions 10 and 14 during 1981 and 1988 and is responsible for its on-going maintenance. The Highways Agency is responsible for the remainder of the motorway between junctions 1 and 10.

The length of motorway between junctions 10 and 14 is two lanes in either direction with a narrow central reservation, complete with steel safety barrier and street lighting separating the east and west routes.

In 2010 an inspection of the existing steel safety barriers within the central reserve identified varying levels of corrosion and the need for its replacement.

The approved capital programme for 2012/13 included provision for the replacement of the crash barriers at an estimated cost of £2.64m.

In accordance with current design standards the replacement safety barrier will be of a concrete construction as this minimises the risk of cross-over accidents, reduces the need for repair and maintenance, thereby reducing the impact on the travelling public arising from lane closures. In addition the whole life cost for a concrete safety barrier is considerably lower than that of steel, as concrete has a design life double that of steel.

However the resultant impact of providing a concrete safety barrier in the central reserve means that the current street lights will need to be removed. The existing lighting associated with the slip roads and junctions is not affected by these proposals and will remain in place.

The current estimated cost of the scheme has increased to £4.3m, which includes a provision of £0.4m for traffic management. The increase in the estimated cost is due to more extensive preparatory works being required, for example to the hard shoulders so that they can be used for traffic during works, and additional works following detailed site investigation, for example to the communications and drainage systems in the central reservation. Given the lack of recent local tendered rates for traffic management of the scale required, this element of the budget remains uncertain and will only be confirmed through the procurement process.

Prevailing weather conditions in east Lancashire mean it is important to carry out the works, predominantly in the summer months and it is anticipated the works could start in June 2015.

Street Lighting

Since 2009 the Highways Agency (HA) have been turning off selected street lights on their motorway network between midnight and 5.00am as part of a carbon reduction energy management strategy.

A number of sites with a good safety record and low traffic flows between midnight and 5.00am were selected. Following the part night switch-off, the HA monitored accident statistics for 12 months and subsequently reported that the safety record at these sites had not been compromised. As a result, the HA extended the part night switch-off to other sections of motorway, including the M6 between Junctions 27-29 and also between Junctions 31-31A.

Following further policy reviews the HA permanently turned off, in 2011, the street lighting on three stretches of motorway in Lancashire, the M58 between Junctions 4-6 and the M65 between Junctions 7-10.

The latter section of the M65 motorway above is adjacent to the section under consideration in this report.

Along the remainder of the M65, only the sections between Junctions 1A (M6) – 2 (M61) and Junctions 6 – 7 (Whitebirk Interchange) are illuminated.

In November 2011, part night lighting was introduced on the County Council's section of motorway from J10 – J14, with the lights switched off from midnight to 5.00am.

Traffic Safety Assessment

A traffic safety assessment has been carried out for the 24 month period after the lighting modification was implemented; a copy of the report is attached for information at Appendix 'A'.

The assessment report includes a comparison of the 59 personal injury accidents on the M65 J10 – J14 (5 year search: 2005-2009) against the 14 personal injury accidents recorder between 01.12.2011 and 30.11.2013.

The report indicates that assuming that no major traffic pattern change will occur in future, then based on the current 'after' accident trend, the proposed lighting column removal along the M65 mainline in Lancashire County will not adversely affect safety. However, a 3 year 'after' period would produce a more acceptable statistical analysis and conclusions.

Consultations

Lancashire constabulary have been consulted and verbally they have indicated that they would not support a total switch off of the street lighting along this section of motorway.

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Risk management

The inspection in 2010 of the existing steel safety barriers highlighted various levels of corrosion. It is accepted that until such time as the barriers are replaced the level of risk to both the authority for possible failure to maintain appropriately and to persons using the motorway, associated with failure of the barrier upon impact, will increase.

With the data available in relation to personal injury accidents in the 24 month period since the street lighting was switched off between midnight and 5.00am it suggests that removal of the street lighting will not have an adverse effect on safety.

However, it is not possible to draw absolute conclusions on the impact of removing the street lighting on the motorway and it is recommended that the impacts on personal injury accidents are monitored over a 3 year period following completion of the works.

Informal feedback from the HA is that nationally accident figures have not increased as a result of lighting switch offs.

Financial

The existing allocation within the capital programme for the replacement of the safety barriers is £2.64m. It is proposed that the additional £1.66m be the first call on the 2015/16 provisions for maintenance of highway assets within the capital programme.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Directorate/Tel
-------	------	-------------------------

Nil

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A