

## **COPY OF AN EMAIL RECEIVED FROM ANDREW ROBERTS, HIGHWAYS AGENCY 12 JULY**

### **INFORMATION REQUESTED BY THE INSPECTOR DURING MATTER 22 REGARDING M49**

I have been asked to provide the Inspector with information regarding the position of the Highways Agency with a proposed new junction on the M49. I hope the information set out below addresses his questions.

In his Autumn Statement the Chancellor announced a Pinch Point Eradication fund of some £200m. The fund is directed to the delivery of improvements to the Strategic Road Network in England that can help stimulate growth in the local economy. The schemes promoted need to be supported by the LEP and need to be delivered by 31st March 2015. There is an indicative ceiling of £10 million for a single scheme. Schemes are being developed in June/July and then considered for prioritisation during the summer with Programme finalisation and approval being sought in September 2012. Schemes will be assessed against: policy criteria (stimulus to growth); value for money; and deliverability.

The West of England LEP identified the need for a new junction on the M49 as a top priority for growth in the West of England Area. The Highways Agency supports the principle of a new junction on the M49 and has been assessing the feasibility of delivery of a new junction from the Pinch Point Programme. A draft proposal has been formulated for a new junction which is based on use of an existing over bridge at Farm Lane. The level of assessment is appropriate to this stage of the process, but this is not a fully designed, costed or detailed risk assessed scheme.

The proposal is draft and work is underway to seek to finalise the bid by the end of July. There are technical and delivery issues which need to be clarified, and it can not at this time be guaranteed that a final proposal will be submitted which is considered to be sufficiently robust and deliverable within the Pinch Point Programme requirements.

An indicative cost for an outline scheme design for a four slip junction, based at Farm Lane, is approximately £22 million. This includes a significant risk factor. Detailed design and assessment of risks is likely to reduce this cost. This figure exceeds the indicative scheme cost ceiling, but due to the fact that it meets a LEP priority and is demonstrating potential to deliver significant growth benefits it is considered that, subject to meeting other programme requirements, it is worth while seeking to progress this proposal. The fact of proposals submission is not an indication of likely success, as the proposal will be considered and prioritised in relation to other proposals. An indicative potential programme of delivery would be: design 2012/13 and delivery 2014/15.

Certainty about final proposal submission should be clearer around the end of July/Early August 2012. If a bid is submitted then announcement on approved schemes is expected around September 2012.

**Andrew Roberts, Asset Manager**

**RE28**

**Highways Agency  
12 July 2012**