

Comments from West Berkshire Council on the WYG report for the Kings Road Link Road:

West Berkshire Council is pleased that WYG agree that the underlying case for the scheme is positive and will bring about benefits and that the business case is detailed and comprehensive.

The conditional approval proposed by WYG in 1.4.5 is welcomed and the Council are committed to continuing to work with WYG on the modelling and economic queries they have raised.

West Berkshire Council (WBC) has some brief comments on some of the aspects in the WYG report which may help members of the Berkshire Local Transport Body as they consider giving conditional approval for the funding for this scheme:

- i) The issue raised by WYG relating to whether a full or outline business case was submitted is one of interpretation of the DfT's guidance. WSP (consultants for WBC) referred to the case as outline rather than full purely because their understanding is that a full business case is usually only prepared once a contractor is on board for a scheme. All of the details expected in a full business case were submitted to WYG as confirmed in their report at paragraph 1.4.1. Information relating to minor areas that were not included originally (such as 'drivers for change' and 'human resources issues') were subsequently provided to WYG on 30th October but the table at Appendix A does not appear to have been updated.
- ii) Air quality and noise assessments for this scheme were provided to WYG early. These assessments were carried out in 2012 and WBC sought advice from WYG as to whether they needed to be updated given the relatively short amount of time that had passed. It was confirmed that the noise assessment was fine but, due to changes in DEFRA guidance since 2012 the air quality assessment would need to be re-done. Due to the timing of this the business case was submitted on the basis of the previous air quality assessment results with the commitment that a new assessment was underway. These results have now been received and the outcome of the assessment is that the impact of the scheme on air quality is negligible to moderately beneficial overall.
- iii) The three areas of concern for WYG outlined in their report at 1.4.4 were addressed in detail by some additional work undertaken by WSP. WYG did not consider that this additional information completely satisfied their concerns. When further direction is received in relation to the work that will need to be carried out, this will be undertaken in order to satisfy WYG in respect of their modelling and economic queries.
- iv) It is likely that the picture has been complicated by the local impacts and benefits of the highway aspects of the scheme not being well represented by the strategic modelling tool. The Council will find the most appropriate way of addressing this so that the benefits of the scheme and their magnitude can be more easily understood.