KEY ISSUES

This report provides an update to Members on delivery of the Fastway improvements in Horley, which form part of the implementation of the Horley – Gatwick – Crawley Fastway quality bus system.

SUMMARY

Fastway is a major scheme commitment in the Local Transport Plan (LTP), currently valued at £35million.

The Fastway scheme is being advanced in partnership by Surrey County Council, Reigate and Banstead Borough Council, West Sussex County Council, Crawley Borough Council, BAA Gatwick, British Airways and the Go Ahead Group.

This report sets out progress to date and the forward programme.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Local Committee in Reigate and Banstead:

(i) Notes the progress of the Fastway scheme.
1 INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

1.1 Fastway is a major scheme commitment in the Local Transport Plan (LTP), supported by the Government Office for the South East (GOSE), and a key element of the Horley Master Plan infrastructure package aiming to secure a 20% modal shift of peak hour traffic.

1.2 In just over a year of operation Fastway has already carried 2 million passengers. Patronage has increased month on month and has seen a 32% rise in service users since it began in September 2003.

1.3 The cost of delivering the full Fastway scheme is currently valued at £35million.

1.4 The Fastway scheme is being advanced in partnership by Surrey County Council, Reigate and Banstead Borough Council, West Sussex County Council, Crawley Borough Council, BAA Gatwick, British Airways and the Go Ahead Group.

1.5 As part of the ‘core route’ from the county boundary with West Sussex at Gatwick to Horley town centre there are major improvements agreed for the junction of the A23 Brighton Road / Massetts Road and also at Longbridge Roundabout on the A23. In addition there are a number of minor improvement measures being completed on the remainder of the non core route to the north east of the town between Horley town Centre and Langshott.

1.6 This report sets out progress to date and the forward programme.

2 CORE ROUTE IMPROVEMENTS

2.1 The ‘core route’ improvements at the junction of the A23 Brighton Road / Massetts Road and at Longbridge Roundabout on the A23 were approved by the Local Committee on 29th May 2002.

2.1.2 The construction of Fastway has been split into three phases, with the works agreed for Surrey to be completed in Phase 3.

2.1.3 Construction of Fastway Phase 1, between Crawley and Gatwick Airport, started in West Sussex, in May 2002 and was completed in August 2003 with the first Fastway services commencing in Crawley during September 2003. Phase 2 works, also in the Crawley/Gatwick area, commenced in June 2003 and are due to be completed in 2005.

2.1.4 Phase 3 works commenced in the Crawley/Gatwick area in February 2004. In September 2004 these extended to Surrey with the commencement of improvement works at the A23 Brighton Road / Massets Road junction. Works are planned to commence at Longbridge Roundabout in January / early February 2005.

2.1.4 The works in Surrey are programmed to be completed by September 2005, when the first Fastway bus services in Surrey will commence, replacing the Gatwick Direct service to the Langshott area of the town.

2.2 A23 Longbridge Roundabout Improvement
2.2.1 The main features of this improvement shown in ANNEX 1 are:

(a) The existing Longbridge roundabout will be retained but modified to provide additional circulating lanes.
(b) The approaches on each arm of the roundabout will be widened and realigned.
(c) Traffic signal control will be provided on the A23(N) and A23(S) approaches and on the conflicting circulatory movements. This provides a control strategy that benefits all traffic.
(d) A separately signalled exclusive left turn express lane will be provided to allow traffic to flow freely from A23(N) to A23(S), when associated pedestrian/cycle crossings are not demanded, and reduces excessive queuing at the roundabout. To minimise the impact on the River Mole flood plain this express lane will be supported on an elevated structure. This is a recent amendment incorporated to satisfy the requirements of the Environment Agency, following the findings of the Area Flooding Study.
(e) Pedestrian/cycle crossing facilities (Toucan crossings) are being provided on each arm of the junction and also on the separately signalled exclusive left turn lane between A23(N) to A23(S).
(f) Intelligent bus priority will be provided at the traffic signals linked to real time passenger information.
(g) Construction of a footway (south side) and provision of street lighting along Povey Cross Road between Longbridge Roundabout and the entrance to the Renaissance Hotel.
(h) Provision of a bus shelter at the south bound stop on Povey Cross Road.
(i) Provision of real time passenger information displays at bus stops.

2.2.2 The main construction works are scheduled to begin in February 2005, however, where possible, some advance utility diversion works will be carried out prior to this. The works are programmed to be substantially complete by September 2005.

2.3 A23/Massetts Road Junction

2.3.1 The main features of this improvement as shown in ANNEX 2 are:

(a) The existing Massetts Road junction to be retained but modified to provide full traffic signal control, with the approaches on each arm of the roundabout will be widened and realigned. Pedestrian crossing facilities will be provided.
(b) The schemes provide for a filter lane for left-turning traffic into Massetts Road. Control of this movement will be via a priority Give Way.
(c) For operational purposes the right-turn out of Massetts Road will be banned. This is not considered to be of major significance, since there is only a limited amount of traffic currently making this turn although measures will be investigated to deter any diverted traffic from taking inappropriate routes.
(d) Intelligent bus priority will be provided at the traffic signals linked to real time passenger information.
(e) The existing bus stops on A23 Brighton Road and Massetts Road will be improved through the provision of real time passenger information displays, boarding and alighting improvements, new stops with better information and bus shelters for the southbound bus stops.

2.3.2 Construction works began on 20 September 2004 with the main construction works commencing on 18th October 2004. Completion of works is scheduled for
September 2005, although the majority of the works are programmed for completion by May 2005.

3 NON – CORE ROUTE IMPROVEMENTS

3.1 Work proposed for the non core route (Horley town centre to Langshott) will ensure that the Fastway buses can physically negotiate the highway in Horley. The improvements will also give priority at traffic signals for Fastway buses and enhance facilities for passengers. The Fastway route in Horley to the North East part of the town is shown in ANNEX 3.

3.2 Three bus route tests have been undertaken, the latest using a Fastway vehicle, although a final route test is likely to be required to which representatives from Horley Town Council will be invited to attend.

3.3 Work completed thus far has confirmed that at four junctions minor changes to the highway to ease the passage of Fastway buses is needed. These junctions are:

- Massetts Road / Victoria Road junction;
- Victoria Road / Balcombe Road junction;
- Balcombe Road / Smallfield Road junction; and
- Ladbrooke Road / Chequers Roundabout junction.

3.4 The design of the minor changes to the highway at these junctions is currently being developed. The extent of the work is likely to be:

- Setting back traffic signal stop lines to allow Fastway buses to corner effectively;
- Minor footway kerb realignment; and
- Intelligent bus priority at traffic signals linked to real time passenger information.

3.5 In addition, other non core route Fastway improvements are to be introduced including:

- New high quality bus stops and better information with good lighting;
- New southbound bus stops in Langshott as the existing service operates in a one way loop at present;
- New bus shelters with seating;
- Raised kerbs for easy boarding and alighting;
- Improved footways to / from bus stops;
- Information boards;
- Real time passenger information; and
- Improved traffic management at town centre bus stops.

3.6 The details of the work will be discussed with representatives of Horley Town Council in early 2005. A report is planned for the Reigate and Banstead Local Committee in March 2005 that will specifically address improving traffic management at town centre bus stops.

3.7 A number of other issues relevant to Fastway are set out below for the information of Members.
3.8  Bus Shelter Agreement

3.8.1 Reigate and Banstead Borough Council and Surrey County Council have been in protracted negotiations with the shelter supplier JCDecaux and this has been the subject of previous reports to the Local Committee. While it is expected that a number of advertising shelters will be sourced through the new bus shelter agreement for the Fastway scheme in Surrey, additional shelters will be required. These will be purchased by the County Council’s Passenger Transport Group.

3.9  Horley Station interchange

3.9.1 The County Council’s Passenger Transport Group has commissioned Halcrow Consultants to undertake further design work and budget estimation at Horley Station to look at the following key issues:

- Provision of a high quality bus/rail interchange within the station car park;
- Highway alterations to enable the Fastway buses to access/exit the car park;
- Accessibility improvements within the station; and
- Bus/rail interchange at the Victoria Road entrance.

This is being completed with the assistance of Southern (the train operating company) and Officers of the Borough Council.

3.10  Fastway Bus Service Procurement

3.10.1 Surrey County Council, West Sussex County Council and BAA Gatwick agreed to jointly fund the Gatwick Direct service (Routes 200/300) between Horley – Gatwick – Crawley, for two years. This provides two buses per hour, and operates through Langshott. The service started in September 2003 and will finish when Fastway is due to start operation in Horley in September 2005.

3.10.2 Metrobus, the company providing the Fastway bus service in Crawley are unable to commit to operate any commercial Fastway service extension to Horley and therefore revenue support funding will be required to maintain a service until such time that the service becomes commercially viable. Bus companies have been invited to tender for the operation of the Fastway bus service in Surrey, linking Langshott and Horley town centre with Gatwick and Manor Royal Industrial Estate. It is anticipated that a contract will be awarded by the County Council’s Passenger Transport Group during late February 2005.
4 STATUTORY PROCEDURES

4.1 Statutory procedures have been used to authorise changes to the public highway and for the compulsory purchase of land for highway purposes. Land required for the improvements to Longbridge Roundabout has been negotiated by agreement, however, compulsory purchase procedures were also put in place as a fallback option. There is no additional land required for improvement works to the A23 Brighton Road / Massets Road junction since they are all contained within the highway boundary, nor for the improvements planned along the non core route.

4.2 Traffic Regulation Orders have been made in respect of all works to be undertaken on the core route. Traffic Regulation Orders for the traffic management improvements in the town centre will be subject to a report to the Local Committee in March 2005.

5 CONSULTATIONS

5.1 As the scheme has progressed, regular consultations have been maintained with County, Borough and District Members, Horley Town Council, Charlwood Parish Council, the residents of Horley, the emergency services, freight organisations and so forth.

5.2 The most recent consultations include:

(a) A briefing to staff of the Help Shops in Reigate & Banstead and Horley, on 8th September at Reigate & Banstead Town Hall.

(b) A Fastway liaison meeting was held at the Holiday Inn in Horley on 6th October 2004. This was attended by County, Borough and District Members, Horley Town Council, Charlwood Parish Council, and the emergency services. The residents of Horley and other interested parties were invited to attend an exhibition at the same venue in the afternoon to meet the Fastway team and discuss any concerns that they may have.

(c) A meeting was held with members of Horley Town Council on 26th October 2004, to inform them of progress on Fastway and address any concerns that they may have.

(d) A special Fastway consultation meeting was organised for residents living near to Longbridge Roundabout and in Povey Cross Road on 7th December 2004, at the Renaissance Hotel in Povey Cross Road, to inform them of progress on Fastway and address any concerns. This meeting was also attended by representatives from Charlwood Parish Council and Horley Town Council.

6 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Fastway seeks to improve integration, particularly between bus and rail services and to make it easier for everyone to travel to everyday facilities, especially people without a car, by widening travel choice.

6.2 Approval from the Environment Agency for the improvements at Longbridge Roundabout has been obtained.
7 ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Fastway seeks to improve travel conditions for public transport users in Horley, Gatwick and Crawley thus aiming to create an efficient transport system, which supports a sustainable economy.

7.2 There are no direct financial implications to the Local Committee arising from this report.

8 CONCLUSION

8.1 The proposed Fastway improvements have been developed in consultation with Members, Horley Town Council and local residents. The project is now well underway, with work commenced on the core route improvements.

8.2 The project team will continue to work with Members, Horley Town Council and local residents to finalise and implement improvements to the non core route, which will lead to the commencement of Fastway services in September 2005.

9 RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 This is a report for information. Members are asked to note the progress of the Fastway scheme.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Fastway Scheme Appraisal Report, July 2000
Reports to Reigate and Banstead Joint Transport Committee on 5 September and 31 October 2001
Reports to Reigate and Banstead Local Committee on 29 May 2002
Report to the Mole Valley Partnership Area Transportation Committee on 3 October 2001
Reports to the Mole Valley Local Committee on 29 May 2002 and 24 July 2002
Report to Surrey County Council’s Executive on 15 October 2001, 14 April 2003 and 9 Dec 03