

From: [Name redacted – HMT Official]
Sent: 19 March 2012 17:43
To: [Name redacted - DfT Official]
Subject: RE: Bexhill-Hasting

Thanks [name redacted]. Would be good to know when you do.

As for the analysis, I don't think it changes our view from last week; maybe only strengthens the emphasis on getting the development built given your vfm assessment though. I understand that the LA is likely to come back quite quickly for the next approval but we have done deals where we want to see progress on developments in other areas where there is a link.

From: [Name redacted - DfT Official]
Sent: 19 March 2012 16:36
To: [Name redacted – HMT Official]
Subject: RE: Bexhill-Hasting

I now attach the completed analysis (annexes A and B) for the scheme, together with the covering submission we put up today which essentially confirms that the updated information does not materially impact on the advice we previously gave Ministers on the 14th. When I spoke to Private Office earlier this afternoon emphasising the Budget urgency I was advised to expect a response 'this afternoon' so I am still waiting on that.

From: [Name redacted – HMT Official]
Sent: 16 March 2012 17:40
To: [Name redacted - DfT Official]
Subject: RE: Bexhill-Hasting

Thank you. The placeholder text looks like the following – (drafters know this is still subject to the outcome of the decision)

[placeholder text redacted]

From: [Name redacted - DfT Official]
Sent: 16 March 2012 17:27
To: [Name redacted – HMT Official]
Subject: RE: Bexhill-Hasting

Thanks [name redacted]. I am still waiting for formal confirmation of go ahead from our Ministers, though when I spoke to SofS Private Office earlier this afternoon they thought the likely position would be as I relayed it to you earlier on the phone. They were hoping to confirm the formal position at some point today, recognising the timescales you are under. I will have my BlackBerry with me tonight and over the weekend and forward as soon as I receive anything.

I don't think we have any problems with the conditions below. There's already been a public enquiry and, subject to the decision on scheme statutory orders going their way, we expect them to come back for full approval very quickly

(as they have been through procurement etc. at their own risk). So in terms of condition 1, the full approval point may not be far off, which may limit the progress they can reasonably make in the time period on development/regeneration but we can certainly push them on this.

Re your question on GPF helping to 'unlock' the development, maybe in time it could help but at the moment there is not a developer ready to go just waiting for some pump priming. An argument they have made is that developers will come forward once there is certainty about funding approval for the Link Road – given that this scheme has been talked about for some 10 years, developers have been wary about coming forward with concrete proposals whilst there remains so much uncertainty about whether the road will be built.

From: [Name redacted – HMT Official]
Sent: 16 March 2012 16:06
To: [Name redacted - DfT Official]
Subject: Bexhill-Hasting

Thanks for sending through the information on this scheme for our TAP process. We have given an update to Spads following the conversation this morning. ***It would be good to know as soon as you do as to whether this is going ahead so we can confirm in documents etc.***

I know we are awaiting further analysis on Monday but I thought I would send through our initial thoughts so that we can have a conversation as necessary.

We are pleased to see that additional options have been reviewed. We understand that this is a local priority – particularly given the LA had already agreed to a large local contribution – and that they are willing to give more for environmental mitigations.

If a decision to go ahead is made, we agree that we should place certain conditions on the promoter. The first one is based on the issue that the road is supposed to unlock regeneration and development but we cannot be certain of that happening at this point therefore we would like to see the two more clearly linked with LA taking some degree of ownership in facilitating making this happen.

1. That at the next approval point, we want to see progress being made on the development / regeneration.
2. Fixed DfT contribution – any additional environmental mitigation is met by the promoter.
3. If environmental mitigation subsequently significantly changes the scheme they will need to return for our approval.
4. That the LA also delivers the complementary measures that they highlight if they are needed for the development and regeneration.
5. That proceeding with a decision now does not significantly increase the chances of a successful challenge to the scheme.

We have one question: Could growing places fund help unlock the development?

Very happy to discuss.

From: [Name redacted - DfT Official]
Sent: 14 March 2012 18:18
To: [Name redacted – HMT Official]

Subject: RE: Bexhill-Hastings

With thanks to [name redacted], attached powerpoint slides show where we have got to with the evidence review – please note the health warning at the front about some expected updates and gaps which we hope to fill in the next couple of days, particularly on slide 17 and 24. At this stage our best guess is that even with the updated info. we are hoping to receive, the vfm conclusion would not be too dissimilar to where we ended up in December assessment that you already have, but we hope to be able to formally confirm and update that in the next couple of days.

Rather than just wait for the outstanding information, [name redacted] has sent up a submission to our Ministers a short while ago setting out emerging conclusions and a direction of travel involving two options; I'm sharing with you on a restricted basis. We are finding it difficult to recommend on particular option, given that Ministers could plausibly defend either option on vfm and strategic grounds, depending on the weight they may wish to attach to local environmental impacts and the value of the regeneration benefits (these factors continue to lead to a relatively wide range for the vfm rating – low or high – as explained in para 25 of the sub).

We'll relay any feedback we get asap.

From: [Name redacted – DfT Official]
Sent: 12 March 2012 16:22
To: [Name redacted – HMT Official]
Subject: RE: Bexhill-Hastings

Thanks [name redacted]. This text sounds reasonable if Ministers decide to proceed with the scheme. Just came out of a meeting where the Leader of East Sussex made the case to SofS and Norman Baker – our Ministers were in listening mode and did a bit of probing on some of the issues. We are aiming to get up advice on Wednesday with updated assessment and will make sure you have the same updated assessment at that point.

From: [Name redacted – HMT Official]
Sent: 12 March 2012 15:55
To: [Name redacted - DfT Official]
Subject: RE: Bexhill-Hastings

Following my email earlier today, I am proposing the following text – if your Ministers decide to go ahead with the scheme - as a place holder for now. Please let me know if you propose any changes and have any update on progress towards a decision.

[Placeholder text redacted]

From: [Name redacted – HMT Official]
Sent: 12 March 2012 11:45
To: [Name redacted - DfT Official]
Subject: RE: Bexhill-Hastings

Thanks for this. I believe we looked at these last time and has similar issues as you did on the BCR in particular, it would be good to know your latest thinking – when you have it – on which to base our assessment.

Budget timescales this year are tighter than before with most decisions having now been reached by Ministers so we are very much in the stage of drafting docs, briefing etc. I assume from your email that advice is going up tomorrow/Wednesday –it would be good to know so we can brief our spads incase they want to have a conversation.

From: [Name redacted - DfT Official]
Sent: 08 March 2012 12:55
To: [Name redacted – HMT Official]
Subject: RE: Bexhill-Hastings

We've been preparing ourselves for a decision earlier than publicly committed to, subject to completing the analysis (which is to an extent dependent on the promoter providing info.) and not leaving ourselves open to undue legal risk.

I can't remember what we sent you in December about this scheme but attached is the promoter's bid to DfT and the DfT assessment at the time. Since then we've been looking in more detail at:

- 1) the economic/regeneration needs of the area
- 2) environmental issues and whether further mitigation is possible
- 3) updating the assessment of the B-H Link road scheme and considering other local transport alternatives
- 4) looking at the extent to which strategic transport options including A21 Tonbridge to Pembury and Rail could achieve the economic objectives of the B-H area.

We're trying to pull all this together with a view to a submission by mid next week to Ministers, so we'll send you the updated material at the same time.

There may be some loose ends (it is dependent on the quality of material we are still due to receive from promoter) but we are hoping to get to a position where there are two options for Ministers – approve (albeit with some conditions around complementary measures) or don't approve (and what the handling strategy and alternative package might be), and risks of making any approval decision around Budget timescale v spending some more time on this if there remain important gaps in evidence by the time we put up advice to Ministers.

From: [Name redacted – HMT Official]
Sent: 08 March 2012 09:01
To: [Name redacted - DfT Official]
Subject: Bexhill-Hastings

Our SPADS have been in touch and believe you (SofS maybe) promised a decision on Bexhill-Hastings in time for budget. I know we spoke about this when we met and it sounded like you were prepared for making an early decision.

Our timescales are pretty tight as you will know and we are already being asked for budget text, speech material etc. When do you think you will be in a position to give us a firm

conclusion – in the meantime I am tempted to put a place holder in – incase the answer is to go ahead.

Given this is one we will probably need to approve (if you are proceeding with it) – early sight of any updated docs would be really helpful.
Happy to discuss.