

procedures and secure any consents, licences, permissions, rights or easements necessary to enable the updated Access to Aldershot Station scheme to be implemented.

Executive Summary

7. The purpose of this report is to provide the details of the proposed updates to the planned scheme in the area around Aldershot railway station, which seeks to deliver accessibility improvements between the railway station and the surrounding town, and environmental enhancements to the public realm around the station approach and forecourt.
8. The significant development in Aldershot will increase the number of trips to and from the town on a daily basis, compounding current access issues around the railway station. This scheme represents an opportunity to encourage wider shift to more sustainable modes, in accordance with the County Council's current transport priorities, through improvements to the local active travel network. Approval of the recommendations in this report will enable the delivery of access and environmental improvements required around the railway station to create a more welcoming atmosphere and encourage higher footfall.
9. Two schemes have been in development for this area in recent years, which seek to achieve this by a) providing high-quality walking and cycling facilities within the public highway, between the railway station, the town centre and the Wellesley development to the north, to encourage and enable increased levels of active travel and b) delivering all-modes accessibility improvements and public realm enhancements in the area of the town around the station and on the station forecourt itself. Whilst two separate capital schemes, the intention is to deliver as a combined package of works under a single construction contract as they are closely related, both in terms of their objectives and in their physical location.
10. The Executive Lead Member for Economy, Transport and Environment gave approval for the implementation of the 'Access to Aldershot Station Highway Works' scheme on 15 January 2019, at an estimated cost of £335,000. The second scheme, 'Aldershot Station Transport Hub and Public Realm Improvements', was approved by the Executive Lead Member for Economy, Transport and Environment on 8 October 2020 (estimated cost £1.44million). The combined cost estimate for both projects at the time of approval being £1.775million.
11. The delivery phase of the project has been subject to significant delay since the approval of the project appraisals in 2019 and 2020, broadly attributed to the complexities of the various railway industry approval processes required to implement the scheme elements on Network Rail land, and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic delaying necessary site investigation work and temporarily shifting key stakeholder resources away from the project. In late 2022, the necessary railway industry approval to implement the scheme had been secured and the project was to enter the procurement and delivery phase.

However, early in 2023, the County Council made the decision to update the design of the scheme around Aldershot railway station due to budgetary constraints, primarily arising from the impact of inflation across the construction sector, whilst ensuring that the improvements remain focussed on the County Council's transport priorities, are affordable and still provide value for money.

12. Various options have been assessed during the development of the revised scheme, to consider solutions which deliver on the original scheme objectives and local transport priorities, within the current budget and in light of the recent changes to local bus services. Continuing with the full scope of the original scheme proposal is no longer considered feasible due to cost pressures, therefore available options involve reducing the scope of various components of the project. Due to the high cost estimates of the works on the station forecourt and the recent significant reductions in bus services in the area of the railway station, continuing with the full redesign of the railway station forecourt is not deemed an appropriate use of funding. However, removing this element alone is not sufficient to bring scheme costs back in line with available budget. Therefore, a reduction in scope of the "highway works" is also necessary, either the traffic related changes or the active travel improvements. The active travel element of the project is aligned with the County Council's current transport priorities and offers the best long-term sustainable solution within the funding available and is therefore recommended as the priority to progress.
13. The scheme objective remains to improve access to the railway station and support the wider regeneration plans for Aldershot, by creating sustainable transport links to new housing developments and accommodate the associated increase in pedestrian and cycle journeys within the town. The focus of the scheme has shifted away from a significant redevelopment of the railway station forecourt on Network Rail land, to instead prioritise the pedestrian and cycle improvements to the highway network between the railway station, the town centre and Wellesley, whilst also delivering public realm enhancements to the area around the railway station.

Contextual information

14. Hampshire County Council and Rushmoor Borough Council have a long-standing interest in delivering accessibility and public realm improvements around Aldershot Station, to support the redevelopment work that is ongoing around the town and to enhance the area around the railway station which is a key gateway to the town centre. In recent years the County Council, in consultation with Rushmoor Borough Council, Network Rail and South Western Railway (SWR), has been developing two separate but linked schemes, which seek to deliver on these objectives.
15. In January 2019, the Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment approved a project appraisal for the 'Access to Aldershot Station' scheme, which sought to encourage sustainable travel choices alongside the

significant local development work, by making improvements to the local walking and cycling network. This was on the basis that the significant proposed development in Aldershot will increase the number of all trips (pedestrians, cycling, public transport, and private motor vehicles) to and from the town on a daily basis, compounding current access and interchange issues for all modes around the station. Providing improved walking and cycling infrastructure to link the new development areas with the railway station would encourage an increased uptake of active and sustainable transport modes, and thereby enable a shift in transport choices in response to these issues.

16. In October 2020, the Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment approved a second scheme element, the 'Aldershot Station Transport Hub and Public Realm Improvements'. This scheme sought to deliver changes to provide an improved interchange facility for all modes, to lock in high levels of walking, cycling and public transport use. The scheme was developed with consideration of the planned redevelopment of the privately owned bus station site, located adjacent to the railway station forecourt. The planned forecourt scheme sought to provide new bus facilities at the railway station, to offset the loss of the bus station site, whilst also completing the improvements to pedestrian and cycle links through to the railway station.
17. The delivery phase of the project has been subject to significant delay since the approval of the project appraisals in 2019 and 2020, broadly attributed to:
 - a) the complexities of the various railway industry approval processes required to implement the works on the railway station forecourt, (a scheme which is partly on Network Rail land, and which affects the access and operation of the railway station), and the substantial amount time that has been required in order to meet railway industry requirements.
 - b) the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic delaying site investigation work and temporarily shifting key stakeholder priorities, particularly that of the railway industry, away from collaboration and focus on delivery of this project.
18. In early 2023, the necessary railway industry approvals were secured, and the scheme was due to move into the procurement and delivery phase. However, pre-tender cost estimates indicated that the expected construction costs exceeded the available budget and therefore the scheme proposals needed to be reviewed and updated, to ensure that the proposals remained feasible and achieved best value for money. Also in early 2023, the local bus operator (Stagecoach) was required to vacate the privately owned former bus station site, and arrangements were made to create additional bus stop infrastructure on the highway within the town centre, to provide the necessary additional facilities required by Stagecoach to maintain its desired level of bus operations. (The changes were implemented on an experimental basis under separate governance process - a process which is independent of this scheme proposal.) Whilst assessing its operations and routes as part of these changes, Stagecoach made a commercial decision to significantly reduce services to railway station area.

19. On this basis, the detailed design of the scheme proposal was updated during 2023, with focus on Hampshire County Council transport priorities to a) increase the modal share of active and sustainable travel in the area, in accordance with current Hampshire County Council transport priorities and b) to improve accessibility and enhance the public realm in the area around the railway station. Changes to provide significant bus infrastructure within the railway station forecourt - a destination to which the local bus operator has significantly reduced services on commercial grounds, and significant investment in areas of third-party land to achieve this was no longer deemed appropriate.
20. The elements proposed to progress under the redefined project scope are:
 - a) The creation of a high-quality north-south cycle route between Aldershot Railway Station and the Wellesley Development. This would provide the second of two key cycle links between Wellesley and the town centre, with this being the eastern link which connects to the railway station. The design has been significantly updated in accordance with the latest standards for cycle facilities, providing a dedicated cycle facility (part of which is segregated from motor traffic and part is on low-traffic roads). The scheme will also deliver improved facilities for pedestrians along this route. The latest design provides a significant improvement for pedestrians and cycle users when compared to the previous design proposals, as it has been updated in accordance with the latest design guidance, which prioritises high-quality cycle and pedestrian amenities. For example, of particular note and significant benefit to both cycle users and pedestrians, are the changes in the revised design which now include priority crossings for pedestrians and cycle users over the A323 High Street, Victoria Road (town centre) and Arthur Street (near the railway station).
 - b) Improvements to the public space in and around the railway station forecourt to enhance the quality of the public realm. This includes improvements to pedestrian areas and landscaping around the station forecourt. Additional space will be provided for the movement of pedestrians and cycle users in this area, with associated changes to the location of taxi ranks and parking spaces to make best use of the space available. Minor works will also be completed within the station forecourt to address existing accessibility or maintenance issues.
 - c) Alongside the original pedestrian improvements planned for Windsor Way, the revised scheme will also include a significant area of carriageway resurfacing in this location, to address existing defects. There is an opportunity to coordinate the planned works with highway maintenance activities, to provide a high-quality outcome and to minimise the impact of future highway works on the local community and town centre highway network.

- d) To compliment and add value to the cycle route, the County Council is developing proposals to install more cycle parking around the railway station. This would follow as a second phase, after completion of the main works as described above, once it has been confirmed that sufficient funding remains. This element of the scheme is being developed in liaison with SWR (which would take on future maintenance responsibility for the asset) and will be subject to separate governance process once funding availability and support from railway stakeholders is confirmed.

21. The elements of the original project scope that have been removed from the updated scheme are as follows:

- a) Changes to the town centre one-way systems on Windsor Way and Arthur Street, which were originally proposed to reduce vehicle miles travelled around the town centre one-way systems. The primary element of this change was for Windsor Way to become a two-way street, which would deliver reductions in journey time and distance for traffic seeking to exit the railway station area and travel north-east. However, this change to the highway would require modifications to various junctions on the one-way system. When considering the relatively small journey time and distance savings that the changes would deliver for a limited number of road users, and the high construction costs of these changes, this scheme element was removed from the project scope to bring the proposal back in line with available funding.
- b) The significant redesign of the railway station forecourt itself. The original proposal was to redesign the full extent of the railway station forecourt within Network Rail land, to create improved space for pedestrians, cycle users and motor vehicles (including bus access). With Stagecoach making a commercial decision to significantly scale back bus services to the railway station and South Western Railway and Network Rail not committing funds to the project, significant County Council investment in third-party land is no longer considered best use of limited funds. Instead, the updated proposals will deliver improvements for pedestrians and cycle users within the existing general layout of the forecourt area, whilst directing the greater share of the investment into areas of the public highway.

22. Various alternative options have been considered and discounted as follows:

- a) *Continue with delivery of the full scope of the original scheme, both the “highway works” and the “station forecourt works”, as set out in the original Project Appraisal reports.*

This option has been discounted due to 1) pre-tender cost estimates exceeding the approved budget, which affects the value for money offered by the scheme and 2) the change in bus routes and commercial priorities for Stagecoach

meaning that planned future bus activities can be accommodated by a single bus stop on Station Road rather than full redesign of the railway station forecourt.

b) *Defer the scheme until the future route continuity on Gun Hill is secured.*

The scheme seeks to deliver a cycle route between the railway station and the Wellesley development. Much of this route is within the public highway, however the northern extent of the route is within land owned by the Ministry of Defence (MoD). There is some concern locally that Hampshire County Council's investment in delivering the route to the highway boundary is not beneficial unless route continuity along the entire length through to Wellesley is also secured.

The option to defer the scheme until the Gun Hill route continuation is secured has been discounted on the basis that the proposed scheme delivers cycle and pedestrian improvements as a standalone scheme which is deliverable within the highway extents. The proposed scheme delivers significant benefits for cycle users on the route between the railway station and Gun Hill, and also various other improvements for highway users in the wider area. The feasibility of an extension into Gun Hill will be progressed as a separate initiative. Should the scheme be deferred until such time as the continued route on Gun Hill is secured, it is likely that inflationary impacts will result in scheme costs for the updated proposal exceeding available budget.

c) *To not deliver the scheme.*

This option has been discounted as the scheme delivers walking and cycling improvements within Aldershot town centre, to promote active travel and sustainable transport choices in accordance with County Council transport priorities and in line with one of the original scheme objectives. The project will also deliver much needed improvements in the area around the railway station, to the benefit of the public realm. If the scheme did not progress, the opportunity to deliver improvements may be lost, to the detriment of the local area.

The primary funding source for the project is s106 developer contributions, which are conditioned for use for delivery of highway improvements to mitigate the transport impacts of the significant local development. If not used for the proposed scheme, the funding could be reallocated to other transport schemes in the area. Should the scheme be cancelled, the element of funding from Hampshire County Council would be released back as available capital funding for its wider capital programme. However, it should be noted that significant spend against the project has already been incurred, in terms of Hampshire County Council, Rushmoor Borough Council and Network Rail fees, plus site investigation work. Should the scheme not progress, the fee spend to date will be abortive and this will impact on local revenue budgets.

d) *Retain all elements of the original "station forecourt works" scheme and reduce the scope of the "highway works". This option would retain the significant redesign of the railway station forecourt but would reduce the scope of the town centre walking and cycling improvements and also the changes to traffic flows on Windsor Way.*

This option has been discounted due to the high construction costs of the “station forecourt works”, which represent a significant investment into third-party land. The original forecourt scheme was developed during a period where the local bus operator stated an intention to run a high frequency of services via the railway station. During the development of the design, the local bus operator reassessed this position and significantly scaled back services to the railway station on commercial grounds. The level of planned services is now such that it can be accommodated by on-highway bus-stop provision created on Station Road, near to the railway station. In light of the cost pressures, the significant investment in Network Rail land to increase bus-stop facilities on the railway station forecourt itself is no longer considered best use of funds.

- e) *Reduce the scope of the “station forecourt works” and retain the original “highway works” scheme in full.*

This option has been discounted due to budgetary pressures – reducing the scope of the “station forecourt works” alone does not result in a sufficient cost saving to bring the scheme back in line with available funding.

- f) *Reduce the scope of the “station forecourt works” and deliver the “highway works” in part:*

- *Prioritise the traffic flow changes over the active travel improvements.*

The works that are necessary to deliver the changes to traffic flows are significant, requiring junction alterations at Windsor Way junction with Victoria Road, Arthur Street and Station Road/Station Approach. The latest construction cost estimates for these works are significantly higher than the estimates which informed the original project appraisal for this scheme element in 2019. Whilst it is recognised that creating two-way flows on Windsor Way will deliver benefits by easing pressure on some parts of the existing town centre network, the journey time/distance savings are relatively small and would benefit a limited number of road users.

Furthermore, prioritising two-way traffic flow will limit the amount of road space that can be reallocated from motor traffic to create pedestrian and cycle space, thereby making it more complex and expensive to deliver a high quality active travel scheme to the latest design standards. Prioritising two-way traffic flows would therefore affect the affordability of delivering the active travel component of the scheme and would reduce the design standard of the facility that could be delivered.

- *Prioritise the active travel improvements over the traffic changes:*

The pedestrian and cycle improvements between the railway station, the town centre and the Wellesley development form a key objective of the original scheme and are in accordance with current County Council transport priorities to encourage and enable active and sustainable travel choices. Improvements to the pedestrian and cycle facilities in the town centre will support the continued development of an active travel network in the area and encourage a modal shift in transport choices, which will ease traffic pressure on the local road network as well as delivering environmental and health benefits.

It is evident that funding pressure and site constraints prevent both of the above options being delivered in full. The latter is in accordance with the County Council's current transport priorities and offers the best solution within the funding available, therefore it is recommended as the priority to progress.

Finance

23. <u>Estimates</u>	<u>£'000</u>	<u>% of total</u>	<u>Funds Available⁽³⁾</u>	<u>£'000</u>
HES Design Fee ⁽¹⁾	471	23	S106 developer contributions ⁽⁴⁾	1,455
Client Fee	138	7	DfT ATF	150
Network Rail	42	2	PRIP	96
RBC Design Fee ⁽²⁾	87	4	ITB underwrite ⁽⁵⁾	243
Construction	1,314	64	Highways	108
Total	2,052	100	Total	2,052

24. The scheme, at a revised total estimated cost of £2.052million is to be funded from Section 106 Developer Contributions, Department for Transport Active Travel Fund Tranche 2 (DfT ATF), Public Realm Improvement Programme (PRIP), Integrated Transport Block (ITB) and Highways Maintenance funding.

Notes

- (1) *The total fees as a percentage of the total scheme cost are higher than typical due to the following factors:*
- a) *The long duration of the design development of the original railway station forecourt scheme, including multiple design amendments and additional Hampshire Engineering Services (HES) designer input as part of the Network Rail approval processes.*
 - b) *The additional work required to update the original design during 2023.*
 - c) *In July 2022, Rushmoor Borough Council handed back its commission to design and implement the "highway works" scheme. HES was subsequently commissioned to complete the design and contract preparation of this element. Additional work was required to incorporate this element into a combined contract package and update the design in accordance with the latest design standards.*
 - d) *Costs associated with providing additional bus stops with the highway in the town centre to offset the loss of the bus station site are included in the fees detailed above.*

- (2) Fees paid to Rushmoor Borough Council for its commission to design and implement the 'Highway Works' scheme element, until this commission ended in July 2022.
- (3) The 'Aldershot Station Transport Hub and Public Realm Improvements' project appraisal (October 2020) included a funding contribution from Rushmoor Borough Council of £600,000 (comprised of £300,000 internal funds and £300,000 grant funding from EM3 Local Enterprise Partnership). Rushmoor Borough Council subsequently reduced their contribution to £300k. The Borough Council used those funds during early-stage design work, and it is understood that none of this funding remains available for transfer. Therefore, these contributions do not form part of the updated scheme budget.
- (4) The s106 agreements to which these funding contributions relate have been checked to ensure that the funding is appropriate for use on this project.
- (5) This is an underwrite for forecasted indexation on S106 funding and is subject to approval.

25.	<u>Maintenance Implications</u>	<u>£'000</u>	<u>% Variation to Committee's budget</u>
	Net increase in current expenditure	6.5	0.005%
	Capital Charge	171.0	0.104%

Programme

	Gateway Stage			
	3 - Project Appraisal	Start on site	End on site	4 - Review
Date	Nov 2023	April/May 2024	Oct 2024	Oct 2025

Scheme detail

- 26. If approved, the project will deliver a new north-south cycle facility between the highway boundary at Gun Hill (route to Wellesley) at its north end and Aldershot Railway Station at its southern end. Starting from the north end, the route will include:

- a new parallel crossing on the A323 High Street to give pedestrians and cycle users an improved crossing point and priority over motor traffic when crossing this road which has a high volume of traffic;
- a modal filter at the north end of Pickford Street (at its junction with A323), to provide access for pedestrians and cycle users only and prevent the use of Pickford Street as a through-route for motorised traffic, to improve the amenity for pedestrians and cycle users;
- the narrowing of Victoria Road to one lane between its junctions with Pickford Street and Arthur Street, with provision of a parallel crossing over Victoria Road and continuous footways on both sides of Victoria Road when crossing these two side roads. These changes provide better amenity for pedestrians and cycle users in the area, reduce crossing distances and better control the flows of motor traffic;
- a two-way cycle route on the west side of Arthur Street, segregated from motor traffic in an area formerly used for on-street parking;
- a parallel crossing on Arthur Street near the railway station forecourt to provide improved accessibility to the railway station;
- a shared use footway cycleway through the railway station forecourt, with continuous footways over the railway station car park access, which provides the continuous link through to the station building and cycle store for cycle users;
- various minor works and maintenance improvements on and around the railway station forecourt to enhance the public realm and improve the arrangements for pedestrians – for example, block paving repairs, minor footway improvements, signing improvements, removal of redundant street furniture etc;
- tree planting and landscaping improvements around the railway station and on Windsor Way, including the planting of 4 new street trees. (The removal of one existing tree on the railway station forecourt is needed to create space of a pedestrian and cycle facility of suitable width in accordance with design standards);
- improved pedestrian crossing points and footway improvements on Windsor Way and Arthur Street;
- carriageway resurfacing on sections of Windsor Way, Arthur Street, Victoria Road and A323 High Street;
- various changes to on-street parking, to relocate any parking spaces displaced by the new cycleway to new locations nearby, and which seeks to maintain the existing balance of spaces for residents permit holders, disabled users, pay and display parking; and
- various changes on the station forecourt to the location of taxi ranks and pick/up drop off bays.

Departures from standards

27. None.

Consultation and Equalities

28. The local County Council Members, Councillor Alex Crawford and Councillor Bill Withers, have been briefed on the updated proposals together with Councillor Clifford (Leader of Rushmoor Borough Council).

- Councillor Withers has indicated general support of the scheme proposals but has recognised the concerns raised by the Borough Council regarding the impact of this scheme on its long-term aspirations for a two-way carriageway on Windsor Way. However, budgetary pressures have affected the feasibility of delivering both the traffic changes and the active travel improvements, as set out in 22 (f) above;
- Councillor Crawford does not support the proposed investment in this scheme on the basis that it is considered premature, until a continuation of the route up Gun Hill (through land owned by the Ministry of Defence) to Wellesley is secured. However, the option of deferring the scheme until the route continuity along Gun Hill is secured has been considered and rejected, as set out in 22 (b) above. Councillor Crawford has also raised concerns over the impact of the proposed scheme on pedestrian accessibility to the Kingsley Court care home located on Windsor Way. This has been addressed by recent design changes to include a zebra crossing on Windsor Way outside the care home.

29. Rushmoor Borough Council has provided feedback on the updated proposal. It recognises that the scheme delivers on the shared ambition to improve pedestrian and cycle connectivity between the railway station and Wellesley, and to improve the public realm around the railway station. The Borough Council is therefore supportive of the scheme and delivery at this time as set out in the report.

30. The Borough Council has also raised a concern that the conversion of Windsor Way and Arthur Street (south end) to a two-way carriageway has not been retained in the updated scheme. Hampshire County Council considered and rejected the alternative options to retain the changes to traffic flows on Windsor Way, as per reasons set out in 22 (e) and (f) above.

31 The County Council recognises that Rushmoor Borough Council holds an ambition to create two-way traffic on Windsor Way, to reduce traffic volumes on Station Road as part of longer-term strategic town planning. However, the focus of this updated scheme is the delivery of high-quality active travel improvements in this area within the available budget. The proposed scheme does not preclude the delivery of such an arrangement in the future. Furthermore, the design of the proposed scheme has been modified to reduce the impact on any future construction works that would be required to achieve this.

32. Other local stakeholders have been contacted regarding the revised scheme proposal and feedback has been received as follows:
- Aldershot Task Force Steering Group supports the enhanced pedestrian and cycle facilities; and raises concerns over the loss of the Windsor Way traffic changes and the lack of bus facilities around the railway station;
 - Aldershot Civic Society has not made comments;
 - Rushmoor Cycle Forum has made positive comments on the updated scheme, whilst suggesting potential minor alterations to design details. Concerns were raised over the potential lack of route continuity through MoD land through to Wellesley;
 - Rushmoor Accessibility Action Group has provided some feedback on detailed design and construction related matter;
 - Grainger (the lead developer at Wellesley) has not commented on behalf of itself or the MoD; and
 - Stagecoach has not provided a formal response; however it is understood that it has concerns relating to a) the lack of bus facilities at the station; b) the potential reduction in traffic speeds and increase in congestion arising from improved pedestrian and cycle facilities; and c) that retaining the one-way system on Windsor Way may limit future bus route options. Alternative options have been considered, to retain the bus provision within the railway station forecourt, as set out in 22 (d) above; and to retain the changes to traffic flows on Windsor Way, as set out in 22 (e) and (f) above).
33. The scheme includes works within Network Rail land and the South Western Railway leasehold at the railway station. Both parties have been involved in the development of the design and are supportive of the changes, although neither party has committed funds or significant resources to the project.
34. The proposal to improve the area around Aldershot Station has been in development for many years and there have been various communications and engagement on the project between Hampshire County Council, Rushmoor Borough Council and the local community in recent years. The last communication to residents was in April 2022, where a letter was sent by post to all properties within the scheme extents with details on the proposed scheme. Whilst some elements of the works have now been updated or removed, significant factors such as the closure of Pickford Street and the relocation of some on-street parking are unchanged. There is therefore a degree of public awareness of these scheme elements. During the delivery phase, there will be further engagement in terms of consultation on Traffic Order changes and public notifications on road humps and controlled crossings, in accordance with statutory process. Further stakeholder engagement will continue in advance of the works and during the construction period.
35. A consultation exercise was completed as part of the use of Active Travel Fund (ATF) grant funding toward the 'Highway Works' scheme elements. The consultation ran during February and March 2021. The survey letter was

posted to 1233 residents and 191 businesses and in total, 60 responses were received. Key areas of concern from respondents included the existing lack of crossing points and pedestrian space on key routes in the area around the railway station and a lack of cycle facilities to access the area around the railway station. Areas for improvement were seen as providing more space for pedestrians, better pedestrian crossing points and reducing/ restricting through traffic on local residential streets. In general, 58% of respondents indicated that the changes would have a positive impact, 13% indicated no impact and 25% indicated a negative impact. Responses from people who use active travel or have households with children aged under 16 had a higher level of support; those who travel into the town by private car had a lower level of general support. Of the respondents who identified as disabled or with a health problem, 56% indicated that the proposed changes would have a negative impact.

36. The scheme will provide high-quality improvements to the existing pedestrian facilities in the area around the railway station forecourt, which will enable and encourage residents to walk for local journeys. The provision of a new high-quality cycle facility will enable an increase in the use of cycling for local journeys, particularly for those road users who are young or less confident. This will improve access to the railway station and town centre areas, making it more attractive and accessible for all who live, work and shop there. The scheme proposals have gone through an equalities impact assessment, and it is considered that through provision of better footways and crossing points and improved cycle facilities (which particularly benefit users who are less confident or for whom sharing road space with higher volumes of motor traffic presents an elevated risk), there are positive impacts on the protected characteristics of age and disability.

Climate Change Impact Assessments

37. Hampshire County Council utilises two decision-making tools to assess the carbon emissions and resilience of its projects and decisions. These tools provide a clear, robust, and transparent way of assessing how projects, policies and initiatives contribute towards the County Council's climate change targets of being carbon neutral and resilient to the impacts of a 2°C temperature rise by 2050. This process ensures that climate change considerations are built into everything the Authority does.

Carbon Mitigation

38. In the short-term during construction, carbon emissions from this project arise from the manufacture and installation of the new infrastructure or maintenance of the existing. Bitumen and cementitious based materials will be used for the carriageway and footway works. Traffic signs and lighting materials are mainly aluminium with steel posts and concrete foundations. The provision of all materials will be to industry standard. Transporting materials and resources to site will generate CO₂ emissions as will the operation of plant during the works. Carbon emissions will be mitigated using recycled materials where practicable

and using manufactures with a focus on efficient low carbon manufacturing methods. There will be no additional carbon emissions generated by the infrastructure upon completion of the works other than for maintenance, replacement of infrastructure as part of general routine maintenance or to address defects.

39. The output from the carbon mitigation tool does not consider the long-term benefits that the scheme will deliver. By providing facilities to enable active travel, the scheme will reduce motor traffic congestion and vehicle miles travelled on the road network, thereby reducing long-term emissions from vehicle traffic. It also does not consider the other mitigation factors such as the proposed increase in landscaped areas, tree numbers and canopy cover in the area that will be delivered as part of the project, and the longer-term environmental and ecological benefit that this provides.

Climate Change Adaptation

40. The Adaptation Project Screening Tool has assessed the scheme as somewhat vulnerable to exposure to severe weather and to extreme heat events but no more so than any other highway asset within the County. Vulnerability of the asset is dependent on its performance during exposure. The proposed assets are widely used on the highway network and installed to Hampshire County Council standard details.

Statutory Procedures

41. The proposed scheme includes works within land owned by Network Rail and leased to the franchise operator, South Western Railway. A series of formal consents and agreements are required to secure permission to undertake the works in these areas and to meet the requirements of the owner of the land and infrastructure (Network Rail) and the leaseholder and station manager (South Western Railway) and the Rail Regulator (Office for Rail and Road). Agreements and consents were secured for the previous iteration of the scheme; however, these will need to be renewed for the updated scheme proposal.
42. Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders for various carriageway closures and temporary traffic signals applications for the construction works will be required. These are subject to statutory processes and will be progressed prior to commencement of works.
43. The removal of one existing tree within the railway station forecourt (Network Rail land) is required to create sufficient width for the proposed shared-use footway cycleway on the railway station forecourt. The tree is subject to a Tree Preservation Order. An application has been made to Rushmoor Borough Council as Local Planning Authority, seeking consent to remove the tree and providing details of the proposed planting of a total of 4 new street trees as mitigation for this loss.

44. Traffic Order changes covering the various movement restrictions and on-street parking changes associated with the scheme proposal will be required. These have been developed in consultation with the County Council's Traffic Management and Parking Services. These will be advertised prior to commencement of works. Should there be objections to the advertised proposals, these will be managed under statutory process.
45. The intention to introduce continuous footway features on Victoria Road at the Pickford Street and Arthur Street junctions will require public notification under the Highways (Road Humps) Regulations (1999). This notification will be progressed in advance of the start of works.
46. The intention to introduce controlled crossings on Arthur Street, Victoria Road, Windsor Way and A323 High Street will require public notification under Section 23 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. This notification will be progressed in advance of the start of works.
47. Conversion of existing sections of footway into a shared use cycleway/footway will be done under Sections 65/66 of the Highways Act 1980.

Land requirements

48. The proposed scheme is mostly within the existing publicly maintainable highway; however, part is within land owned by Network Rail and currently leased to SWR as franchise operator and station manager. Network Rail and SWR have been engaged during the scheme development process and all parties have agreed in principle to the proposed scheme. Various legal agreements, detailed technical audits and formal consents are required prior to completing the works. These are progressing and will be in place in advance of the start of works.
49. As described above, the scheme seeks to provide a pedestrian and cycle route between the railway station and the Wellesley development. The proposed design would deliver this to the highway boundary at the southern end of Gun Hill. The land to the north of this belongs to the MoD and is outside the control of Hampshire County Council. Discussions are ongoing between the County Council, the MoD and Grainger as to the future of Gun Hill and the opportunities to secure a continuation of the cycle route through to Wellesley in the longer term. A study, funded by Active Travel England and the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), is currently underway looking at preferred routes and schemes to improve walking, cycling and public transport facilities between Farnborough and Aldershot. This includes consideration of the Gun Hill route or alternative routes. There is opportunity for additional funding from the Active Travel Fund to support further improvements between this scheme and the Wellesley development.

Maintenance

50. Hampshire County Council's Highways Asset Management has been consulted on the updated proposals. The proposed scheme will have an impact on the maintenance budget in future years, this is expected to be approximately £6,500 per annum.
51. The scheme will include additional carriageway resurfacing on Windsor Way, to address existing defects within the road. There is an opportunity to coordinate the planned improvement scheme with highway maintenance activities, to make efficiencies in delivery of County Council works in the area to provide a high-quality outcome; and to minimise the impact of these works on the local community and town centre highway network. A funding contribution to the scheme will be made from the highways maintenance budget to cover the cost of the additional resurfacing work.
52. Network Rail and South Western Railway have been involved in the development of the scheme to advise on the suitability of the design and materials proposed within the railway station land. All proposals are in keeping with their design guidance and are agreed in principle. It is therefore expected that the formal consent of Network Rail will be secured without significant changes to the design.
53. The elements of the scheme on Network Rail land are not being specifically created on behalf of Hampshire County Council as Highway Authority. Therefore, these elements remain privately maintainable for the purposes of 36(2)(a) Highways Act 1980. The delivery of the proposed scheme will not alter the terms of the current franchise; therefore, following the contractual maintenance period of the works, the future maintenance of the works on land which is owned by Network Rail will remain with the landowner, with some of these responsibilities continuing to be passed to the leaseholder as Station Manager under the terms of the franchise. During the maintenance period, the County Council will be responsible for remediating defects in the works only; routine maintenance responsibility for the station forecourt area within the Network Rail land will remain with the Station Manager.

Conclusions

54. It is anticipated that the significant development in Aldershot will increase the number of trips to and from the town on a daily basis, compounding current access and interchange issues for all modes around the station. This scheme represents an opportunity to encourage wider shift to more sustainable modes, in accordance with current Hampshire County Council Transport Priorities, through improvements to the local active travel network. Approval of the recommendations in this report will enable the delivery of access and environmental improvements required around the railway station to create a more welcoming atmosphere and encourage higher footfall.
55. There have been various transport related changes across the wider town centre recently, particularly in relation to the recent bus provision following the closure of the former bus station site, and the wider regeneration works that

are ongoing. Whilst it is noted that the removal of the redesign of the railway station forecourt does limit bus access to this area, and the removal of the one-way system changes may limit future bus routing options, the level of services currently proposed by the bus operator are significantly reduced compared to that which was proposed earlier in the scheme development process. Planned bus services to the area have been reduced to a level that can be accommodated by a new bus stop on highway on Station Road under existing traffic/highway arrangements, without need of significant works and investment within Network Rail land.

56. Whilst the value of the proposed scheme has increased beyond the previously approved budget, it should be noted that this is due to the revised scheme delivering a high-quality cycle facility to the latest design standards, improved pedestrian facilities over the previous design proposal, increased landscaping and tree planting elements and an increased areas of carriageway resurfacing in the local area to coordinate the planned improvement scheme with highway maintenance activities.
57. Consideration of the various priorities of other local stakeholders has resulted in a number of alternative options being reviewed, however these have been discounted as either they will not bring the cost estimates back in line with the approved scheme budget, or they are no longer appropriate use of funding due to recent changes in key stakeholder transport priorities. The scheme has therefore been updated to focus on Hampshire County Council's current highway and transport priorities, and to direct the majority of investment into the publicly maintainable highway.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	Yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	Yes

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
Project Appraisal: Access to Aldershot Station	15 January 2019
Project Appraisal: Aldershot Station Transport Hub and Public Realm Improvements	8 October 2020

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

The scheme will provide high-quality improvements to the existing pedestrian facilities in the area around the railway station forecourt, which will enable and encourage residents to walk for local journeys. The provision of a new high-quality cycle facility will enable an increase in the use of cycling for local journeys, particularly for those road users who are young or less confident. This will improve access to the railway station and town centre areas, making it more attractive and accessible for all who live, work and shop there. The scheme proposals have gone through an equalities impact assessment, and it is considered that through provision of better footways and crossing points and improved cycle facilities (which particularly benefit users who are less confident or for whom sharing road space with higher volumes of motor traffic presents an elevated risk), there are positive impacts on the protected characteristics of age and disability.