

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment
Date:	2 July 2020
Title:	Lynchford Road Farnborough Growth Package – Update Report
Report From:	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

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Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval to explore an optional alternative to a preferred Scheme previously approved by the Executive Member for Environment and Transport in January 2019. The report seeks approval to develop and test an option to retain a section of the westbound Lynchford Road carriageway between the A331 and St Alban's roundabout, as a single lane, together with the removal of the dedicated left turn "jet lane" on the westbound approach to St Alban's Roundabout. The changes are intended to retain the project aims and enable improved provision for cycling, walking and vehicle parking to the northern side of Lynchford Road.

Recommendations

1. That the Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment gives approval to explore an optional alternative to the preferred Scheme, including public engagement, as previously approved by the Executive Member for Environment and Transport in January 2019.
2. That authority be delegated to the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment to progress all necessary design and development work for an optional alternative to the preferred Scheme, including the necessary amendments to accommodate responses following a public engagement exercise.
3. That the Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment endorses the development of an environmental mitigation plan including appropriate replanting, to address and balance the environmental impacts of the overall project.

4. That authority be delegated to the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment in consultation with the Head of Legal Services to progress appropriate orders, notices or statutory procedures and secure any consents, permissions, rights or easements necessary to enable the revised scheme to be implemented and completed.

Executive Summary

5. Lynchford Road in Farnborough is a single carriageway road with one lane in each direction, which provides a strategic regional link connecting the A331 with the A325.
6. In March 2018, the Executive Member for Environment and Transport agreed proposals for a Farnborough Growth Package, which prioritised improvements to Lynchford Road with an aim to deliver capacity improvements to address existing congestion, to accommodate the expected future growth in travel demand. The proposals promote healthy lifestyles with improved facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.
7. In January 2019, the Executive Member for Environment and Transport agreed a preferred Scheme to develop a four-lane solution for Lynchford Road to add capacity on the strategic network and to help reduce through-traffic from the adjacent residential areas, as well as providing an enhanced public realm within the North Camp Village centre. Funding has since been secured to deliver the first phase of the improvements between the A331 and St Alban's roundabout ("Phase One").
8. During detailed design of this four-lane option for Phase One, a number of issues have arisen that may mean a partial redesign should be explored. This includes adapting the design to better address local concerns such as those raised by the North Camp Support Group and local retailers, as well as considerations of vehicle parking behaviours. A redesign based on a three-lane option is expected to free up space for active travel modes and allow for a better-quality cycle route, and potentially facilitate easier road maintenance in the future.
9. Capacity assessments of such a three-lane design have been undertaken and used to determine in which direction the two lanes are most beneficial in order to provide a solution that retains the project aims and continues to offer high value for money. This report now seeks authority to develop and test an optional alternative to the preferred Scheme and consider a three-lane design option along the section in front of Lille Barracks, together with removing the left turn "jet lane" on the westbound approach to St Alban's Roundabout. The removal of the Jet Lane could also potentially reduce the number of trees impacted by the project. Initial discussions with the EM3 Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) have indicated they are likely support the revised proposals as the benefits and objectives of the preferred Scheme are retained.

Contextual Information

10. Farnborough has been identified by the EM3 LEP as a Growth Town for economic and housing growth. Farnborough's economy has seen a significant increase in high value jobs in recent years, primarily based around the Airport and nearby Business Parks. Whilst Farnborough Airshow is of huge economic importance to the area, it is a biennial event. The Farnborough International Exhibition and Conference Centre, which opened in Spring 2018, now provides a permanent facility for the Airport and allows other exhibitions and conferences to run throughout the year. It is expected that the number of events held at the Exhibition and Conference Centre will increase over time.
11. In terms of housing, the latest Strategic Housing Market Assessment work has identified a requirement for 436 homes per annum to be provided in Rushmoor Borough Council's area. The committed Aldershot Urban Extension (3,850 homes) will provide over half of Rushmoor's housing need over the period of the Adopted Local Plan to 2032, but other housing will be essential both in and around Farnborough.
12. In November 2017 approval was secured from the Executive Member for Environment and Transport to undertake a detailed public and stakeholder consultation on the Farnborough Growth Package. The consultation explained the need to invest in transport in Farnborough and presented a range of "in principle" transport interventions across Farnborough.
13. On 13 March 2018, the Executive Member for Environment and Transport resolved to identify Lynchford Road and Invincible Road as priority schemes, and in relation to Lynchford Road, that further feasibility design work should be undertaken to identify a deliverable scheme, including engagement with the local community and consideration of the potential to mitigate air quality issues on the Blackwater Valley Relief Road.
14. On 15 January 2019, approval was given to take forward further design and development work for Phase One of the scheme and to submit a business case to the EM3 LEP.
15. The business case was submitted on 5 March 2019 and on 28 November 2019, the EM3 LEP approved the business case and a funding grant of £6.7million.

Finance

16. The total budget currently available for the Farnborough Growth Package is £8.7million. £6.7million is covered by a funding grant from the EM3 LEP and the balance of £2million is being allocated from local contributions.

17. At this stage, the proposed optional alternative to the preferred Scheme is not expected to add additional cost to the project, and much of the design work to date is common to both options. The deadline to spend the funding from the EM3 LEP is currently 31 March 2021. A variation agreement is currently being negotiated with the EM3 LEP to extend this deadline.

Consultation and Equalities

19. A detailed public and stakeholder consultation was undertaken on the preferred option for Lynchford Road in Autumn 2018. Further engagement is planned to take place over the coming months with key stakeholders and local businesses, along with a wider on-line engagement to share the details of the alternative options being explored. Results of this engagement will feed into the final selection of the preferred option, which will be reported to the executive member in due course.

Other Key Project Issues

20. The project related issues outlined in this section relate to both the original scheme and the optional alternative to the scheme recommended in this report.

21. In order to implement the Scheme, there is a requirement to acquire third party land for highway purposes. A key requirement is to obtain a strip of Ministry of Defence land from Lille Barracks in Aldershot Garrison on the section of Lynchford Road between the A331 roundabout and Napier Gardens, at approximately 5 metres in width.

22. The principal to acquire Ministry of Defence (MoD) land for highway improvements was obtained through an understanding between Hampshire County Council and the Ministry of Defence in April 2012 that the Council would adopt Bourley Road, Aldershot. This set out the principal that MoD would offer land required for other highway improvement schemes to partly offset the additional costs to the Council from adopting Bourley Road.

23. In order to demonstrate that it is feasible to acquire this land without creating an unacceptable adverse impact on the Garrison, the County Council commissioned specialist technical work, which the MoD subsequently confirmed is acceptable and agreed the principle that the County Council could acquire the necessary land to deliver the scheme. Detailed negotiations are progressing with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) to formalise the acquisition of the land.

24. MoD land is expected to be acquired at nil cost to the Scheme according to the principles set out in the adoption of Bourley Road. Hampshire County Council would acquire the freehold interest in the land, and this would be the subject of a separate Executive Member for Policy and Resources decision or delegated decision.

25. The Council also requires Rushmoor Borough Council to relinquish part of its lease with the MoD in order to complete the land transfer with the MoD.

26. The County Council has undertaken a number of environmental assessments as part of the EIA screening work to identify the environmental impacts of the

Scheme. These included consideration of air quality, noise, traffic, ecological, arboricultural and landscape issues.

27. An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Request was submitted on 9 May 2019 to the Local Planning Authority (in this case Hampshire County Council, as it is a highway scheme) under regulation 6 of the EIA regulations to determine whether the project required an EIA.

The Screening Opinion (received 2 July 2019) concluded the following:

- It is considered that the proposed development is not an EIA development under the Town & Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 as the site is not within an environmentally sensitive area and the proposed development is not likely by nature of its type, scale and siting to cause any significant environmental effects.

Future Direction

28. Key stakeholders are to be contacted over the next six month period in parallel with the progression of the design options.
29. An environmental mitigation plan, including appropriate replanting, is being developed to address and balance the environmental impacts of the Scheme.
30. A further update report will be presented later in the year, at the completion of the option development and appraisal, to agree a preferred design outcome.

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:	no

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.)

Document

Location

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 proposed improvements to Lynchford Road aim to deliver capacity improvements to address existing congestion and accommodate future growth in travel demand in the area. The proposals also aim to improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists as well as enhancing the public realm within North Camp Village centre.

This decision to approve the exploration of an optional alternative to the preferred scheme will have a neutral impact on residents with protected characteristics, and as the scheme progresses to the detailed design stage, a project appraisal will be brought forward which will include an equalities impact assessment of the implementation of the Scheme.

At this stage, it is considered that the Scheme as currently set out would have a positive impact on people with reduced mobility due to age or disability by providing improved pedestrian crossing facilities at a variety of locations.

A design review of the proposed pedestrian crossing outside Wavell School will be carried out before later improvements on the St Albans Roundabout to Queens Roundabout section of Lynchford Road are implemented, which will also include consideration of equalities impacts.