

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment
Date:	11 March 2021
Title:	Project Appraisal: Waterside East-West Connectivity (Phase 1)
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 for a Phase 1 of a package of measures to be delivered in 2021/22 to improve East-West connectivity across the southern section of the A326.

Recommendations

2. That the Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment approves the Project Appraisal for Waterside East-West Connectivity (Phase 1) package of schemes, as outlined in this report.
3. That approval be given to procure, spend and enter into necessary contractual arrangements, in consultation with the Head of Legal Services, to implement the proposed improvements for the Waterside East-West Connectivity (Phase 1) package of schemes, as set out in the supporting report, at an estimated cost of £610,000 funded from Section 106 contributions, underwritten by Local Transport Plan (LTP) integrated transport capital funds, subject to Cabinet approval of the addition of the full East-West Connectivity Package of schemes to the 2021/22 Capital Programme at a value of £970,000.
4. That authority to make the arrangements to implement Phase 1 of the East-West Connectivity package, including minor variations to the design or contract, be delegated to the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment.

Executive Summary

5. This report seeks to set out the background to the project and gain approval for the implementation of pedestrian and cycling improvement measures to improve East-West connectivity in the Waterside area.

6. Policies for the Waterside area are being established to provide capacity to enable movement of those already living and working in the area and the forecast increase associated with delivery of the Local Plan and economic growth. The main vehicular route connecting Waterside communities and places of work with other destinations is the A326. This route experiences significant traffic volumes at peak times and is due to have capacity improvements delivered through the A326 South Junction Improvement Works and potentially the A326 Local Major Scheme. In the meantime, the route severs communities from access to the New Forest national park as East-West connections across the A326 make access for recreation difficult and constrained. To address this constraint a package of East-West Connectivity measures is proposed for the 2021/22 Capital Programme. This would allow for their delivery in line with existing programmes of work and provision of enabling infrastructure.

Contextual Information

7. The Waterside area sits between Southampton Water in the east and the New Forest National Park in the west. The area is segregated from the Park by the A326 which runs north south adjacent to the Park boundary. The A326 provides the area's principal arterial route and carries high levels of commuting and service traffic to and from the Waterside's communities and industrial centres. As such the A326 experiences significant peak time congestion and acts to sever the communities to the east from the National Park, making access to recreation difficult and constrained.
8. Ensuring that connectivity is improved is a key objective of the current Waterside Multi Modal Study. The strategy develops the objectives set out in Hampshire County Council's 2017 Interim Waterside Transport Policy. It recommends the need to develop a fully integrated multi-modal Transport Strategy, to include enhanced public transport, cycling and walking routes to improve connectivity between the Waterside and Totton communities, and to provide better access to and from the strategic road network.
9. The Interim Waterside Transport Policy had as one of its recommendations, the need 'to enhance access to the National Park by ensuring the A326 does not present a barrier to movement by non-motorised users'. Addressing the severance created by the A326 is necessary to support this policy.
10. A package of highway capacity improvements is currently being delivered along the southern section of the A326, following the award of grant funding from the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership (SLEP) and a planning permission application for the Fawley Waterside development. These improvements which aim to reduce delays and improve journey times for the A326 incorporate walking and cycling measures, but these are limited in their scope and focus, do not fully adhere to more recent policy guidance for cycling and walking, and as such additional measures are now proposed to further enhance east west connectivity and address current gaps in access from the Waterside to the New Forest. The opportunity will also be taken to

deliver measures included in the emerging Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), to help provide enabling infrastructure for latent travel demand.

11. Consultation is due to take place on Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans for the Waterside and the New Forest in Spring 2021. The LCWIPs will seek to identify a series of routes to enable a legible network to be established which facilitates crossing the A326 in places where people need to gain access in a safe and well-designed way. Provision for cyclists, walkers, and equestrians to move with ease and confidence between the Waterside settlements and the National Park for recreational purposes is the desired outcome and will be achieved by ensuring the Waterside LCWIP and the Forest Wide LCWIP provide strong desire lines to increase permeability and enhance opportunities for active modes. These plans will be supported by early investment in East-West connectivity.
12. The main routes for access from the Waterside to the New Forest for walking and cycling routes are provided at junctions along the A326 corridor. The area being considered for East-West connectivity is shown in the plan below. This extent is included to provide connections from the south of Marchwood, including National Cycle Network route 2 (NCN2) as well as other routes to improve accessibility.



13. Improvements to East-West connectivity will also take account of the proposals being developed as part of the Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) scheme for improvements to North-South routes for cyclists and pedestrians. The TCF measures aim to provide a continuous cycle facility between Eling and Fawley, through the creation of several new sections of shared-use cycleway. The scheme is due for delivery during 2022 and 2023. They will also benefit from a speed limit review and consultation that is being

commenced in February 2021. This will allow measures to be explored that enhance compliance with LTN 1/20.

Finance

14. Estimates	£'000	% of total	Funds Available	£'000
Design Fee	60	10		
Client Fee	80	13		
Supervision	30	5	S106	610
Construction	440	72		
Land	0	0		
Total	610	100	Total	610

The package of measures will be funded by LTP funding, with the expectation that sufficient S106 contributions will be received to cover the cost of this work, though the timing of these contributions remains uncertain at the current time.

15. <u>Maintenance Implications</u>	<u>£'000</u>	<u>% Variation to Committee's budget</u>
Net increase in current expenditure	3.7	0.003%
Capital Charge	59	0.037%

Programme

16. The Phase 1 package of measures is due to be delivered in 2021/22, where possible as part of existing construction activities. Further phases will be brought forward and each will be subject to separate approvals within the limits of the £970,000 set out within the budget allocation.

Scheme Details

17. The final package of measures for East-West connectivity relies upon consultation feedback from the LCWIP programme to confirm all of its details. This Project Appraisal is seeking approval to implement the following elements as the first phase:
- an upgrade to the NCN2 crossing of the A326 at Applemore Roundabout, to include additional cycleway and footpaths relocated from the north to the south of the junction and a new signalised crossing;

- an upgrade to walking and cycling connections at Holbury Roundabout, including a new crossing and improvements to the existing shared used path;
- more general enhancements to East-West crossing facilities typically including improvements/extensions to existing cycle paths and footways to allow connections that are appropriate and accord with LTN 1/20 design guidance; and
- formalising and improving signage for crossings across the A326 in between junctions to improve safety for recreational routes.

Departures from Standards

18. The package of measures will be designed to comply with Department for Transport and Hampshire County Council standards for highway improvement and pedestrian/walking schemes. Any departures from standard that arise will be dealt with in accordance with the scheme of delegation.

Consultation and Equalities

19. A consultation programme is due to commence in Spring 2021 on the Waterside and New Forest LCWIP and for the Waterside Transport Strategy. The results from these exercises will contribute to measures to be included as part of the next phase of this package.
20. During consultation for the A326 Improvement Scheme in March 2020 responses were made on walking and cycling issues by local interest groups. The specific issues that have been raised are related to East-West crossings across the A326, the provision of signal-controlled facilities and the impact of current speed limits on existing facilities. These are being taking into account in development of measures to improve East-West connectivity and will be delivered as part of Phase 1.
21. The proposed package of measures delivers improvements to walking and cycling routes to connect Waterside communities with public open space in the New Forest. At this stage, it is considered that the Scheme as currently set out would have a positive impact for all pedestrians and cyclists, including people with reduced mobility due to age or disability by providing improved pedestrian and cyclist crossing facilities at a variety of locations and improved footways. The improvements therefore have a neutral impact on groups with protected characteristics.

Climate Change Impact Assessments

22. 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.

23. Screening of the package of schemes has identified the following anticipated outcomes:
- the measures are at long term risk of flooding due to their proximity to Southampton Water and issues associated with groundwater flows. These will be mitigated as far as possible in scheme design for significant events;
 - there may be an impact as a result of changes in temperature rises with materials due to be used in construction; and
 - the measures have strategic climate change significance as they support non-vehicular travel and therefore meet the strategic priorities of Improved Wellbeing and Health and Improved Connectivity.

The graph below provides a simple visual representation of the scheme's estimated vulnerability to climate change against the number of strategic priorities that the scheme meets.



24. A carbon mitigation impact assessment has not been undertaken as the set of measures in support of active travel cannot be assessed within the tool.

Statutory Procedures

25. Planning permission is not required to deliver the package of measures as they will be within or adjacent to the highway boundary and therefore be 'permitted development'.
26. The details of any required changes to Traffic Regulation Orders will be confirmed on selection of package measures. Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders (TTROs) will also be confirmed on selection of package measures. Required orders will be promoted and processed through established procedures.

Land Requirements

27. All measures within the package will be delivered from within existing highway land and, where they are part of existing schemes, within the extent of agreed highway works.

Maintenance Implications

28. Maintenance costs have been assumed based on two Toucan crossings being included in the measures and a number of pedestrian/cyclist facilities. The proposed scheme will have an impact on the maintenance budget in future years, which is expected to be approximately £3,700 per annum.

LTP3 Priorities and Policy Objectives

3 Priorities

- To support economic growth by ensuring the safety, soundness and efficiency of the transport network in Hampshire
- Provide a safe, well maintained and more resilient road network in Hampshire
- Manage traffic to maximise the efficiency of existing network capacity, improving journey time reliability and reducing emissions, to support the efficient and sustainable movement of people and goods

14 Policy Objectives

- Improve road safety (through delivery of casualty reduction and speed management)
- Efficient management of parking provision (on and off street, including servicing)
- Support use of new transport technologies (i.e. Smartcards; RTI; electric vehicle charging points)
- Work with operators to grow bus travel and remove barriers to access
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- Support community transport provision to maintain 'safety net' of basic access to services
- Improve access to rail stations, and improve parking and station facilities
- Provide a home to school transport service that meets changing curriculum needs
- Improve co-ordination and integration between travel modes through interchange improvements
- Apply 'Manual for Streets' design principles to support a better balance between traffic and community life
- Improve air quality
- Reduce the need to travel, through technology and Smarter Choices measures

- Promote walking and cycling to provide a healthy alternative to the car for short local journeys to work, local services or school
- Develop Bus Rapid Transit and high quality public transport in South Hampshire, to reduce car dependence and improve journey time reliability
- Outline and implement a long term transport strategy to enable sustainable development in major growth areas

Other

Please list any other targets (i.e. National Indicators, non LTP) to which this scheme will contribute.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	no
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	no
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	yes

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 protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are 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 in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

The proposed package of measures delivers improvements to walking and cycling routes to connect Waterside communities with public open space in the New Forest. At this stage, it is considered that the Scheme as currently set out would have a positive impact for all pedestrians and cyclists, including people with reduced mobility due to age or disability by providing improved pedestrian and cyclist crossing facilities at a variety of locations and improved footways. The improvements therefore have a neutral impact on groups with protected characteristics.