

## HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Decision Report

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Executive Member for Highway Operations
<b>Date:</b>	23 September 2021
<b>Title:</b>	Project Appraisal: Whitchurch Accessibility & Traffic Measures
<b>Report From:</b>	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

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#### Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval of, and provide details for the proposed scheme, which seeks to improve accessibility and install traffic measures in Whitchurch.

#### Recommendations

2. That the Executive Member for Highway Operations approve the Project Appraisal for Whitchurch Accessibility & Traffic Measures, as outlined in this report (paragraph 13).
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 to Whitchurch Accessibility & Traffic Measures, as set out in this report (paragraph 13), at an estimated cost of £749,000 to be funded from developer contributions and Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council Contributions.
4. That authority to make the arrangements to implement the scheme, including minor variations to the design or contract, be delegated to the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment.

#### Executive Summary

5. Developer contributions in the Whitchurch area are available for transport improvements to offset the impacts of future developments (South of Blosswood Lane and Caesars Way) as well as to address the transport priorities set out by Whitchurch Town Council and Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council. From May 2017 a series of meetings and workshops were held between Hampshire County Council, Whitchurch Town Council and

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council to discuss transport issues and to identify improvements of the pedestrian/cycle accessibility across Whitchurch Town with an emphasis on better access to local schools. Whitchurch Town Council worked closely with Hampshire County Council and generated a list of priority schemes to be included in a feasibility study.

6. Using the agreed priority schemes, a number of localised pedestrian and traffic management solutions have been proposed. The aim of these schemes is to improve pedestrian/cycle facilities and to provide safer walking routes for school children and encourage them to travel more sustainably.

### **Contextual Information**

7. Since May 2017 Whitchurch's transport and accessibility issues have been discussed between Hampshire County Council, Whitchurch Town Council and Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council. Additionally, potential schemes were reviewed for their feasibility in accordance with the Basingstoke Transport Statement, School Travel Plans and Neighbourhood Development Plan. The following were identified as the main transport issues, with concerns about pedestrians and cycle accessibility highlighted as a priority:
  - pedestrian accessibility across the town (especially access to schools);
  - cycle accessibility across the town;
  - limitations of the A34 junctions and North / South access points requiring improvement;
  - Winchester Road congestion between the Town Square and Micheldever Road – primarily during term-time peak periods and in the morning peak period;
  - junctions of Winchester Road/Micheldever Road, Town Square and Bell Street/Evingar Road – capacity issues and priority/visibility issues around the old rail bridge; and
  - HGV movements particularly those traveling through the town.
8. An initial examination of these transport issues was carried out including accident data analysis, highway boundary checks, and joint traffic management discussions between Hampshire County Council and Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council which led to a review to ensure alignment with transport policy.
9. The final schemes list for the feasibility study was agreed by the Town Council and County Councillor Tom Thacker in December 2017, with available funding to be focused on the Town Council's priority of pedestrian and cycle access. Since then, further work has been carried out to address several concerns and changes requested by local residents, while other preparations have been made, including progressing arrangements for land dedication.
10. The feasibility study and subsequent meetings including with residents, generated a number of localised pedestrian and traffic management solutions, which are listed in Scheme Details (Paragraph 13 below).

## Finance

11.	<u>Estimates</u>	<u>£'000</u>	<u>% of total</u>	<u>Funds Available</u>	<u>£'000</u>
	Design Fee	139	18	BDBC funding	23
	Client Fee	50	7	Developer contribution	726
	Supervision	59	8		
	Construction	495	66		
	Land	6	1		
	Total	<u>749</u>	<u>100</u>	Total	<u>749</u>

12.	<u>Maintenance Implications</u>	<u>£'000</u>	<u>% Variation to Committee's budget</u>
	Net increase in current expenditure	4	0.003%
	Capital Charge	72	0.045%

## Programme

13.

	Gateway stage			
	3 - Project Appraisal	Start on site	End on site	4- Review
Date (mm/yy)	09/21	01/22	08/22	08/23

## Scheme Details

14. The list of locations below detail the proposed improvements. These focus on the main priorities of Whitchurch Town Council and Hampshire County Council.

Site ref	Site location	Proposed improvements
1	Prince Regent	Refurbishment of steps on a footpath
2	Winchester Road	Build out and pedestrian crossing

	Footpath to recreation ground	Resurface and lighting
3	Micheldever Road	Building out & crossing with new footway handrails
4	Alliston Way	Widen and realign existing footway and passing bay
5	Mcfauld Way	Construction of new footway to school and parking bay
6	Evingar Road	Upgrade of pedestrian crossing
7	Newbury Road	Existing crossing to be upgraded with signing and lining
8	B3400/Hillside	Upgrade of existing crossing point with a build out
9	Church Street	Drop kerbs to crossing point
10	Daniel Road	Footway upgrade Footpath and resurface
11	Tufton – Whitchurch cycleway, section 1 and 2	Proposed shared used footway from Tufton
12	A34 Slip Road (subject to agreement with Highways England)	Hatching extensions and construction of islands

Scheme drawings are shown in Appendix A.

### Departures from Standards

- The design principles of the scheme were established during a period of time when LTN 1/20 cycle design guidance did not exist. Subsequently an internal design check was carried out for compliance. It was established that the scheme is compliant as far as practicably possible. Certain design changes were made to ensure this, such as the segregation of cycleway from the carriageway on sites 4,5 and 11 (see Scheme Details table) and use of speed tables on site 4 and 5. Also the length of site 11 was extended to follow the connectivity principle from LTN 1/20.

## **Consultation and Equalities**

16. The public consultation on the scheme took place online between 19 March 2020 and 17 April 2020. It was run mainly by Whitchurch Town Council, which focused on informing local residents, and other interested parties about the proposed improvements.
17. The results show a mixture of support which has informed the recommended programme as outlined in this report. 49 people responded to the online consultation survey in total. 21 people expressed their support for the scheme, whereas 18 people opposed the scheme, leaving 10 participants neither supporting nor objecting to the scheme.
18. It should be noted that a number of the negative responses were opposed only to certain elements of the entire scheme and not the whole package of works.
19. In addition, feedback was received from residents requesting additional measures and design changes. These have been reviewed and included where deemed appropriate.
20. The scheme has the full support of the local member Cllr Tom Thacker, as well as the support of Whitchurch Town Council and Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council.
21. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been conducted and a positive impact identified in relation to age. As the scheme encourages and aids walking and cycling, it should be of particular benefit to groups that are more likely to travel by these means such as older and younger people and women, all of whom are more likely to travel on foot. Any increase in walking and cycling should also result in health benefits, and over time a reduction in car use will improve air quality with particular benefits for individuals with disabilities exacerbated by air pollution.

## **Ecology**

22. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been carried out for the scheme listing site specific recommendations to mitigate the impact of the works which will be included in the tender documentation for the contractor. These include ground clearance outside of the bird nesting season and reptile hibernation period. If this cannot be achieved, an ecologist will be present on site to monitor the works.
23. An arboriculture assessment has also been conducted for the scheme. The site dependant recommendations will be included in the tender documentation for the contractor.

## **Climate Change Impact Assessments**

24. 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 delivers.
25. The adaptation tool has identified the following minor vulnerabilities:
  - sites which have shared used cycle paths will rely on drainage on the adjoining road or natural runoff into the verge and therefore there is minimal risk of some additional surface water during extreme precipitation events, but this is expected to be accommodated within existing drainage systems; and
  - low overall risk of extreme storm and wind events affecting the feasibility and operation of this project.
26. The project is important for meeting Hampshire County Councils' strategic priorities and listed below are the key strategic priority justifications:
  - the scheme will have a positive impact on the economy giving local contractors an opportunity to secure local construction contracts;
  - the scheme will enhance opportunities for local residents to travel by walking or cycling which is likely to have a positive impact on their health; and
  - the scheme will enable better access for pedestrians and cyclists as well as improve access to local amenities and nearby areas.
27. The project will result in carbon emissions at the construction phase. However, it is designed to enable more people to walk and cycle around Whitchurch and therefore this will contribute to a reduction of emissions due to more people using sustainable modes to travel.
28. On locations where ground clearance is required, additional planting will be implemented where possible in consultation with the designer.

## **Statutory Procedures**

29. The affected footways for sites 4, 5 and 11 will require a legal order to convert the footways to shared use cycle/footway under Section 65/66 of the Highways Act 1980.
30. All proposed crossings are uncontrolled and require no statutory consultation. All elements of the scheme will be undertaken as permitted development.

### **Land Requirements**

31. Site 1 (Prince Regent) and 2 (Winchester Road footpath) – the County Council own this land (Countryside Services). The maintenance of the footpaths, after the improvement will remain with Countryside Services.
32. Site 4 (Alliston Way) and 5 (Mcfauld Way) – Part of the land belongs to Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council. The Borough Council supports the scheme and is prepared to enter into a deed of dedication and a licence for access. The overall project will be delivered in phases should the land dedication be delayed.
33. Site 12 (A34 slip road) - falls within Highways England land and no work will be undertaken until a Section 6 agreement is finalised and Highways England have approved the design. Subject to the approval of this report, the S6 agreement will be concluded under delegated powers.

### **Maintenance Implications**

34. The Asset Management team has been consulted on the proposals and has agreed to the materials being used.
35. The improvements will have an impact on future year's maintenance budgets, and this is expected to be approximately £4,000 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
- 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**

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

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been conducted and a positive impact identified in relation to age. As the scheme encourages and aids walking and cycling, it should be of particular benefit to groups that are more likely to travel by these means such as older and younger people and women, all of whom are more likely to travel on foot. Any increase in walking and cycling should also result in health benefits, and over time a reduction in car use will improve air quality with particular benefits for individuals with disabilities exacerbated by air pollution.