

# HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

## Decision Report

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Executive Lead Member for Transport and Environment Strategy
<b>Date:</b>	3 October 2022
<b>Title:</b>	Transport Proposals Supporting Economic Development in Andover
<b>Report From:</b>	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

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### Purpose of this Report

1. This paper outlines the proposal for regeneration of Andover town centre as detailed within the Andover Town Centre Masterplan. Significant changes to the highway are proposed, including the reallocation of road space for alternative placemaking uses to support economic development. The paper therefore proposes a policy position to support the principle of reallocating road space in Andover town centre to support delivery of the masterplan.

### Recommendation

2. That the Executive Lead Member for Transport and Environment Strategy approves a policy position to support the principle of reallocating road space in Andover Town Centre in accordance with the plans set out in the Andover Town Centre Masterplan, subject to the conditions of support outlined in this report.

### Executive Summary

3. Test Valley Borough Council has been working with the local community and development partners to develop a masterplan for Andover town centre that is intended to revitalise the town centre. A town centre which like many is facing the need to reinvent its offer in light of systemic changes and trends in shopping, commuting, leisure and urban densification and liveability.
4. The proposals within the masterplan include reallocating road space to other uses. Particularly significant changes are proposed to the A3057, including reducing the extent of the Western Avenue Gyratory and reconfiguring the Vigo Park roundabout.
5. A report to Hampshire County Council's Cabinet on 15th March 2022 adopted a new model of engagement for local regeneration and growth partnerships with the districts and boroughs of Hampshire. This marks a change in the way the County Council is seeking to engage with and support the regeneration agenda. One of the first and most active partnerships is with Test Valley Borough

Council. In order to support the regeneration ambitions, it is considered necessary to establish if the County Council as Highway Authority is supportive of reallocating road space, predominantly currently available for vehicle capacity, for other uses.

## **Context**

6. Andover town centre, as is prevalent with a lot of similar towns, loses significant amounts of primary and secondary spend from its local catchment to larger centres such as Basingstoke and to historic centres such as Winchester and Salisbury. Clearly there is the national trend for Andover of also losing significant amount of expenditure to the online purchasing with home delivery market.
7. Andover town centre, however, loses significantly more expenditure than most centres to retail parks. There is a clear requirement for Andover to 'compete' with these other centres if the masterplan aspiration for long term economic sustainability is to become effective. The town centre has interesting independent shops and attractive streets but has been over reliant on large national occupiers with bigger premises. With their decline and the demand from national retailers unlikely to return quickly the masterplan is proposing that Andover needs to focus on supporting and growing its local, independent businesses and providing a more mixed-use development approach in the longer term.
8. Andover has a relatively limited evening economy and needs to feel more welcoming for this part of the economy to flourish. The masterplan has an aim to promote more people living and working in the town centre to address this economic downturn. Individual proposals for the Chantry Centre are welcomed to bring life to the town after shops close, as currently its scale and form can make it a barrier to movement across the town centre, particularly in the evening. The Lights and Leisure Centre are excellent facilities but can feel isolated from the other complementary town centre offers of the cafés and restaurants.
9. The connectivity between the various proposals and interventions will be key to ensure that the town centre as a whole feels like one place and not a series of projects. The implementation of the masterplan in coordination with the transport infrastructure changes, aims to give the town centre a greater opportunity to survive and then thrive.
10. The proposal in the masterplan for Andover Town Centre is that the ring road surrounding the town centre needs to change to support the regeneration and economic development ambitions. This means reducing vehicle capacity on some stretches and reallocating road space currently allocated to vehicles for other uses including enhanced public realm and for active travel or other infrastructure. In essence the Borough Council is asking the Highway Authority to change the balance struck between the movement function of the ring road in terms of vehicle capacity in favour of objectives related to placemaking.
11. Test Valley Borough Council considers that a different balance will support its regeneration and economic development objectives and has begun work with the County Council to test alternative highway redesign options for parts of the inner ring road. In supporting, or not, the Borough Council regeneration plans the County Council as Highway Authority has a statutory role to determine if it

agrees that the balance needs to change and if the indicative new highway designs being proposed can be made to work in highway terms. In undertaking its statutory role as Local Highway Authority, the County Council is obliged to look at the technical and policy case for supporting such a request.

12. The County Council will continue to work closely with Test Valley Borough Council to ensure the best outcomes for Andover. The formal establishment of a Regeneration and Growth Partnership for the borough builds on previous successful collaborative working between the two authorities, and is considered to be an effective forum for driving joint working.

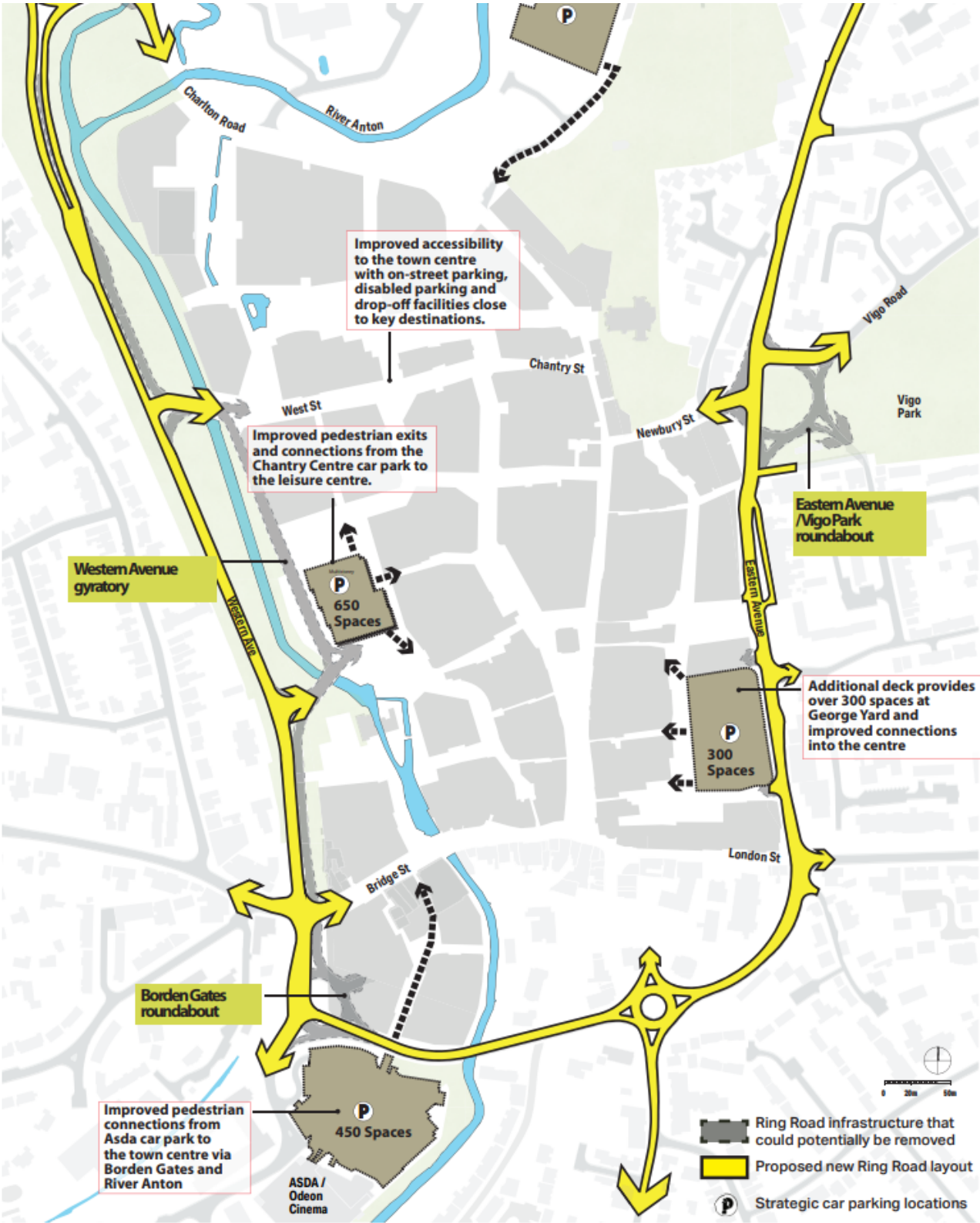
### **Highway Proposals in the Andover Town Centre Regeneration**

13. Andover has a relatively compact town centre with historic and more recent buildings and a mixture of uses including retail, education and employment but little housing. The number of vacant units in Andover town centre has remained high in recent years, worsened by the impact of internet shopping, high street decline and the Covid-19 pandemic. It is in competition with Basingstoke, Winchester and Salisbury retail centres.
14. Test Valley Borough Council identified the need for change in Andover and began working with consultants Hemingway Design and New Masterplanning to prepare a vision and masterplan for the future of Andover town centre. This masterplan has been developed following extensive engagement with local residents and businesses, led by Test Valley Borough Council. The consultation helped to develop a vision for the future of Andover town centre, in which it will be:
  - social and inclusive;
  - green and ethical;
  - creative and enterprising; and
  - unique and independent.
15. It should be noted that none of the highway proposals in the masterplan are currently funded at this time. All work is conceptual for the aid of developing a plan against which to secure funding in due course. In this context no assessment is given in this report to the affordability of the highway proposal or the viability of the masterplan. Such issues will be a matter for Test Valley Borough Council to lead upon.
16. The community engagement identified that the town centre felt disconnected from the River Anton, and that there was poor legibility for pedestrians and cyclists through the town centre and to the nearby railway station. The current layout of the town with The Chantry Centre (shopping centre), Andover College and Andover Leisure Centre located to the north of the town centre, and railway station to the west with the A3057 and associated underpass in between make it difficult for people to access the river and to easily move through the town.

17. As such the masterplan proposal includes the following:

- redevelopment of the Chantry Centre to include shops, services, workplaces and apartments;
- new public spaces complemented by theatre and cultural uses;
- improved pedestrian and cycling links from the railway station to the town centre;
- removal of the A3057 Western Avenue gyratory to open up access to the River Anton, creation of a linear park and provision of a cycle route as per figure 1;
- reconfiguring the Eastern Avenue/ Vigo Park roundabout to provide more space in Vigo Park and provide pedestrian and cycle links as per figure 1; and
- a new 'wellbeing quarter' which will see redevelopment of the Andover College Campus, Simply Health headquarters and former Magistrate's Court to create improved college facilities and leisure centre with links into the linear park.

Figure 1: Plan showing the proposed layout of Andover town centre and the changes that could be made to the A3057 regeneration as identified in the masterplan (TVBC, 2020).



## **Transport Policy Context**

18. The current policy base is the Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3). It is somewhat supportive of the request for road space reallocation but is not necessarily explicit enough in the context of this proposed change and its implications, to the extent that it is felt necessary to seek approval for a policy position from the Executive Lead Member for Transport and Environment Strategy.
19. The inner ring road in Andover has historically been planned to facilitate high volumes of vehicle traffic. The road system was developed prior to LTP3 and under a different policy framework. The policy and practice then was, where possible, to build in extra capacity to accommodate future traffic growth with a view to future expansion of the town. On the face of it this would appear a prudent and sensible policy but in practice this “predict and provide” approach to vehicle capacity results in car dependency and becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. This is especially so where the overprovision of capacity results in infrastructure which some road users perceive as inhospitable or uncomfortable to use as pedestrians or cyclists. Not feeling comfortable they feel it necessary to drive or go elsewhere. The Western Avenue Gyratory, in particular, is typified by this historic approach and as a result presents a barrier to some forms of transport. It also takes up a large spatial footprint.
20. In transport outcomes regeneration has good potential to enhanced self-containment as it embodies a living local focus. This is desirable as it reduces pressures on the transport system by avoiding the need to travel, keeping journey distances shorter and widening the choice of options available to travellers.
21. The emerging LTP4 is currently in draft format and therefore does not yet provide a formal policy basis against which to consider the Borough Council proposed changes. However, one of its core design principles is around supporting proposals which are designed around the needs of “people and place” with a balance of consideration given to vehicle capacity under a “decide and provide” approach to infrastructure as opposed to the historic tendency towards “predict and provide”. Should the emerging LTP4 be adopted then there is a good case for supporting the principles behind the request. However, it is not current policy hence the need for the recommendation in this report.

## **Technical Assessment of the impacts of the proposals on the highway**

22. Hampshire County Council commissioned consultants Atkins to undertake transport modelling to consider the strategic impact of the proposed Andover town centre masterplan on the highway network. Atkins used the North Hampshire Transport Model (NHTM19), which is the strategic-level transport model used to assess transport impacts across the network in north Hampshire, as well as microsimulation modelling to consider individual junctions. This transport modelling tested four scenarios to consider different approaches to changing to the highway layout in Andover town centre to facilitate delivery of the masterplan proposals.
23. These highway proposals and the scenarios tested all lead to a reduction in capacity on the carriageway as space is reallocated for other placemaking uses. This modelling demonstrates that removal of highway capacity for motorised vehicles is not likely to lead to significant issues with congestion as junctions will

still be operating within capacity but there is potential for some localised queuing and redistribution of traffic.

24. The modelling also demonstrates that there are some overall negative impacts for buses due to the signalisation at Western Avenue for buses entering and exiting the bus station, in particular for those buses serving the south and east of Andover. Of the scenarios tested by Atkins, the 'do something 3' scenario demonstrated that some of the disbenefits to bus journey times could be mitigated against by leaving part of the gyratory open to buses. The 'do something 3' scenario also demonstrated the least queuing and delay for general traffic, and therefore is currently considered to be the 'preferred option'. The 'do something 3' scenario (shown in figure 1) includes:

#### Western Avenue (north)

- Western Avenue gyratory to be closed creating a north-south link to the west;
- bus lanes to be added along Western Avenue between Folly Roundabout and West Street junction, with a single lane remaining for general traffic;
- creation of a signalised junction with bus gate;
- two-way traffic along West Street and Chanty Street; and
- buses continue to use West Street but continue north on the remaining section of the gyratory to the signalised junction.

#### Western Avenue (south)

- new T-junction which will be priority controlled to maintain access to the car park.

#### Vigo Road

- a new priority controlled double mini roundabout to be added;
- access provided to Adelaide Road via a priority junction to the south; and
- informal pedestrian and cycle crossing.

#### Bridge Street Junction

- re-alignment of pedestrian crossings over the southern approach; and
- re-alignment of geometry to allow for the east-bound to south-bound right turn movement.

25. In this scenario some disbenefit is shown for bus journey times, therefore the proposals will need to be redesigned to address these issues with the aim of enhancing bus services.

26. In summary the technical assessment suggests that, whilst there are some technical issues of a minor nature, they are not severe. In practice it is likely that such issues can be addressed through detailed design and slight amendment of the proposals.

## **Conditions of Support**

27. The following is a set of high-level conditions for support that sit alongside the decision to adopt a policy to support the principle of road space reallocation. The in principal approval is subject to:
- a. Further discussion and study of the land issues that may need to be resolved if land currently in highway use is subject to a formal declassification from highway status. In due course this may require a formal process that will need to be built into the regeneration programme.
  - b. That the status of in principle approval is not interpreted as approval to implement and is understood to be a high-level acceptance that there is transport merit in the concepts being proposed that give confidence they can be taken to the next level of development. Significantly more detailed technical appraisal and design work is required to achieve formal approval of this, and it may not be forthcoming if at detailed design the proposals cannot be made to work or if they have a severe highways impact.
  - c. Further work will be required to progress the designs to seek to avoid negative highway impacts.
  - d. Further work will be required to ensure that bus services and associated infrastructure are enhanced through the detailed design process.
  - e. That the approval is subject to the Borough Council implementing complementary land use, parking management and other factors within its control. For example, using its local plan making role to facilitate high-density, mixed-use town centre development and operating parking management practices which rationalise the location of parking provision and support sustainable transport and mode shift outcomes, particularly for short local journeys.
  - f. That the project is managed through effective joint Governance mechanisms such as the Local Growth and Regeneration Partnership.

## **Consultation and Equalities**

28. This decision seeks approval for a policy position to support the principles set out in the Andover Town Centre Masterplan and does not have a direct impact on residents at this stage. Therefore, it has been assessed as having a neutral impact on groups with protected characteristics.

## **Other Key Issues**

29. This report has focused on the principle of highway changes only and has not ventured to consider viability issues, affordability or wider matters such as public sector land ownership or services that the County Council may operate in the locality.

## **Climate Change Impact Assessments**

30. 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.

31. As a policy statement with limited planning status, it is not considered necessary to complete the climate change tool and carbon assessment at this stage. A carbon assessment may be required in due course as the Andover Town Centre Masterplan is developed and formal comments are provided by Hampshire County Council as Highways Authority, through the planning process.
32. A carbon neutrality consideration is included in the approach to work on the local road network. It reflects the fact that recent audit work undertaken by the Carbon Trust for the County Council has identified that transport contributes 37% to carbon emissions from all sectors. Transport is also the sector which appears hardest to reduce when compared to other sectors like energy. It therefore places a high level of ambition on developers and the Local Planning Authority not only to look at a traditional approach to transport mitigation but also how that mitigation can support adopted carbon neutrality targets from the transport consequences of development. It also suggests developers look beyond their immediate boundary to offset their carbon impact by retrofitting transport measures in existing urban areas of Andover that reduces existing carbon impacts from transport.

## **Conclusions**

33. The proposals contained within the Andover Town Centre Masterplan would result in regeneration and economic development for the town. As part of these proposals the reallocation of road space towards active modes and public transport would allow the A3057 to continue to provide its strategic function while providing additional space to enable development that is sustainable and inclusive, as set out in the vision for the town.
34. As such it is recommended that, ahead of the adoption of the LTP4, a policy position is taken that supports the re-allocation of road space in Andover to support regeneration, in particular the delivery of the Andover Town Centre Masterplan.

**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**

<b>Links to previous Member decisions:</b>	
<u>Title</u> Local Regeneration and Growth Partnerships with District Local Authorities <a href="#">Place-based Collaboration with District Local Authorities-2022-03-15-Cabinet (hants.gov.uk)</a>	<u>Date</u> 15/03/2022
<b>Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives</b>	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>

<b>Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents</b>	
<p>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.)</p>	
<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:**

This decision seeks approval for a policy position to support the principles set out in the Andover Town Centre Masterplan and does not have a direct impact on residents at this stage. Therefore, it has been assessed as having a neutral impact on groups with protected characteristics.