

**CABINET – 24 MARCH 2020****HINCKLEY ZONE 4: RUGBY ROAD AND TOWN CENTRE
IMPROVEMENTS****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT****PART A****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to advise the Cabinet of the outcome of recent consultation regarding the Hinckley Zone 4: Rugby Road and Town Centre Improvements scheme and to seek approval to implement the amended scheme.
2. The Cabinet is also asked to authorise the Director to undertake a number of actions to progress the scheme, such as acquiring land, and to make small changes should this prove necessary.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that: -
 - a) The outcome of the public consultation on the proposed Hinckley Zone 4: Rugby Road and Town Centre Improvements and the amendments to the scheme developed in response be noted;
 - b) The amended scheme as detailed in the report and appendices B1-9 and C1-2 be approved;
 - c) The Director of Environment and Transport, following consultation with the Director of Corporate Resources and the Cabinet Lead Members for Highways and Transportation and Corporate Resources, to undertake the necessary processes to deliver the scheme, including, but not limited to, the acquisition of land, entering into a construction contract and introducing appropriate changes to traffic regulation orders (noting that any Compulsory Purchase Orders would need to be the subject of appropriate authorisation);
 - d) The Director of Environment and Transport following consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member for Highways and Transportation to make minor changes to the scheme as appropriate through the delivery process.

Reasons for Recommendation

4. A public consultation was undertaken, the responses to which have been considered by the Environment and Transport Department in proposing the revised scheme. The consultation showed support for the scheme's objectives and several amendments have been made to reflect the main concerns and comments raised.
5. The scheme is part of a package of works designed to support growth and economic performance in Hinckley. It will provide a range of benefits including improving journey times, better air quality, pedestrian and cyclist facilities, along with reducing congestion and delays along the Rugby Road corridor.
6. Authorising the Director of Environment and Transport to take all the necessary action to progress the scheme, and to make minor changes if need be, will help ensure the work is done efficiently and completed within the planned timescales.

Timetable for Decision (including Scrutiny)

7. A report has been considered by the Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 5 March 2020 and its comments are given in Part B of this report.
8. Subject to approval by the Cabinet and completion of the necessary legal agreements, construction is planned to start in Summer 2020. It is estimated work will take 12 to 15 months to complete.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

9. Leicestershire's Strategic Plan 2018-22 sets out five strategic outcomes that will support the Council's vision for Leicestershire. The Hinckley Zone 4 Rugby Road and Town Centre Improvement scheme specifically contributes to the strong economy and affordable and quality homes outcomes by supporting planned growth in the local area.
10. In March 2011, the Council approved the third Leicestershire Local Transport Plan (LTP3). This contains six strategic transport goals, of which 'Goal 1 is to have a transport system that supports a prosperous economy and provides successfully for population growth.' The LTP3 sets out the Council's approach to achieving this, namely to improve the management of the road network and continuing to address congestion issues.
11. In March 2014 the Cabinet approved the principles set out in the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership's (LLEP) Strategic Economic Plan, which prioritises support for the economy of Market Towns and rural Leicestershire.
12. In September 2017 the Cabinet considered a report on 'LTP3 Hinckley Area Project Zone 4 – Proposed Transport Improvements' which included a

commitment to seek appropriate funding sources to deliver Hinckley Zone 4 Improvements.

13. On the 29 March 2019, the Cabinet approved the Highway and Transport Capital Programme which, following the successful award of the National Productivity Investment Fund, included the Hinckley Zone 4 Rugby Road and Highway Improvement scheme.

Resource Implications

14. The estimated total cost of the scheme is £5m, of which £3.5m has been secured through the National Productivity Investment Fund. The Council has committed to forward fund £1.5m of developer contributions to support a coordinated delivery of the scheme. This forward funding will be recouped from developers in the long-term.
15. All staff resources required to deliver the project will be funded from the £5m budget.
16. The Director of Corporate Resources has been consulted on this report.

Legal Implications

17. Wherever possible the acquisition of land and rights will be conducted by negotiation and agreement with landowners, but there is still a possibility that the Compulsory Purchase process pursuant to the Highways Act 1980 and the Acquisition of Land Act 1981 will be required for the procurement of the land and rights at the corner of Rugby Road/Hawley Road.
18. The County Council acting in its capacity as a Highway Authority will use its powers under the Highways and Road Traffic to undertake these works. If compulsory purchase powers are required, the appropriate authorisation process will be arranged.
19. The Director of Law and Governance has been consulted on this report.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

20. This report has been circulated to members representing the electoral divisions in the Hinckley and Bosworth areas - Mr. M. Mullaney CC, Mr. D.C. Bill MBE CC, Ms. A. Wright CC, Mr. S. Bray CC, Mrs. J. Richards CC, Mr. O. O'Shea JP CC, Mr. I. D. Ould OBE CC, Mr. B. Crooks CC, Mr. P. Bedford CC.

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PART B

Background

21. The Council has been working with key stakeholders in the wider Hinckley area for the past 4 years whilst developing and delivering transport improvements. Hinckley is in one of five prioritised Growth Areas (GA5) identified in the LLEP's Strategic Economic Plan, offering the greatest opportunities for economic growth. Hinckley Zone 4 covers the Town Centre and the Rugby Road Corridor. A plan outlining the proposed elements of the scheme is attached as Appendix A.
22. To capitalise on Hinckley's strategic location to maximise its economic potential, a range of schemes have been considered as the fourth phase of works following delivery of Zones 1-3 across Hinckley over preceding years.
23. In 2017 the Council was awarded £3.5m from the National Productivity Investment Fund for improvements to the Hawley Road and Brookside junctions, together with parking, traffic management, signing, cycling and pedestrian improvements.
24. The Rugby Road Corridor, a key link to the Strategic Road Network (M69), suffers from significant peak period congestion and poor journey time reliability, which will worsen with planned growth. Without this phase of work the full benefits of previous investment (Zones 1-3) will not be realised. This in turn would result in the town centre becoming less attractive to employers, employees and future residents.
25. The improvements on the Rugby Road Corridor, at the junctions of Hawley Road and Brookside, are two major elements of the scheme identified in the strategy. The improvements to both these junctions equate to £3.5m of the £5m scheme budget. A localised microsimulation transport model has been developed to assess improvement options at these two junctions.
26. Land acquisition is required for the improvements at the Hawley Road junction. An agreement in principle has been arranged with the landowner (Lidl). However, the progression of a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) cannot be ruled out until contracts are exchanged.
27. By reducing traffic congestion, the scheme can positively affect local air quality.

Hinckley Town Centre Feasibility Study

28. To understand the existing and likely future transport issues on the Hinckley highway network, a large-scale exercise of data collection and modelling was undertaken.
29. This work was combined with design feasibility work to understand both the potential issues and solutions on the network that the Hinckley Area Project could address. The two main north/south corridors through the town (the

Burbage Road/Spa Lane link to the east and the Rugby Road/Lower Bond Street link to the west) were identified as the areas of greatest 'stress' on the network. They suffer the most in terms of; delay, average speed, traffic accidents, link capacity, queue length and connectivity for active travel.

Issues along the Rugby Road Corridor derived from the feasibility study

30. The junction of Rugby Road/Hawley Road/Westfield Road and Rugby Road/Brookside/Dudley Rise are two of the worst performing junctions in the town in terms of accidents with a total of 8 accidents since 2009.
31. Rugby Road is one of the worst performing corridors in the town with regard to delay, journey time, queue lengths, and average speed.
32. There are missing links in the walking/cycling network which prevent the connectivity of Zones 1, 2 and 3 into and across the town centre.
33. Developments around Hinckley are likely to increase travel demand on Rugby Road for all modes of transport.

Network improvements considered for Hinckley Town Centre as part of the feasibility study.

34. The following elements were assessed in relation to addressing the issues identified. The objective of each element of works is outlined below.
 - i. Review existing traffic lights network – To improve journey times, reflect latest traffic flows and patterns. Optimise traffic signal timing to seek capacity improvements along the Burbage Road/London Road corridor to the east of the town, which suffers the most in terms of its capacity and the number of vehicles that use it during the peak times.
 - ii. Review and rationalise Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) in the town centre - To address inconsistencies and the suitability of current traffic and parking management controls to meet changing demand in parking patterns and aspirations of residents and businesses.
 - iii. Residents preferential parking – To mitigate the potential impact of changing parking patterns in the town.
 - iv. Directional Signage - To provide a coherent strategy of routing vehicles and cyclists around Hinckley.
 - v. Improving cycling and walking networks include - Connecting Rugby Road, Granville Road, and Coventry Road through improving facilities for walking and cycling.

Proposals

35. The scheme recommended for delivery is built upon the feasibility study and refined through business case development and public consultation. This ensured that the package satisfies the requirements of the National Productivity Investment Fund and addresses several issues identified in the Hinckley Area Project.
36. Refined proposals were subject to full public consultation from 21 October 2019 to 18 November 2019, details of which are given at paragraphs 41 to 48 below and the outcome of the consultation is attached in Appendix D.
37. A plan indicating the location of all infrastructure improvements in the scheme is attached as Appendix A.
38. The nine consultation plans for each element of the scheme form Appendix B to this report.
39. Appendix C shows the updated design for Brookside junction and an extended residents parking scheme which were developed as a result of the feedback from the consultation.
40. Alongside the works to the main two junctions along the Rugby Road Corridor the refined scheme proposes improvements to pedestrian, cycling and residents parking. In summary, the proposed scheme includes:
 - I. Junction capacity and pedestrian improvements at the Rugby Road/Hawley Road and Rugby Road/Brookside/Dudley Rise junctions.
 - II. The closure of Granville Road at the junction with Coventry Road with a 'turning head' and a shared cycle/footway installed.
 - III. Improvements to pedestrian infrastructure at the junction of Spa Lane/London Road.
 - IV. A review of town centre parking along with the introduction of a residents parking zone.
 - V. Upgrading of directional and cycle signage throughout Hinckley.

Junction Improvements

Rugby Road/Hawley Road/Westfield Road (Appendix B1)

41. Capacity improvements will be made by:
 - Upgrading traffic signals and creating an additional left turn filter lane on Hawley Road and a new right turn filter lane on Westfield Road.
 - Introducing a left-turn ban from Westfield Road.
 - Removing a single tree from Westfield Road as part of road widening.

Rugby Road/Brookside (updated design Appendix C1)

42. Capacity and connectivity improvements will be made by:

- Amending the southbound left turn on Rugby Road to become an ahead and left turn lane.
- Creating a new lane at the southbound exit of the junction on Rugby Road which merges back into a single lane.
- Creating additional pedestrian crossing points.

Other Highway ImprovementsGranville Road (Appendix B3)

43. This proposal will achieve safety benefits by:

- Closing the junction of Granville Road with Coventry Road and introducing a turning point to prevent Granville Road being used as a through road.
- Introduce further safety measures for cyclists and pedestrians.

Pedestrian ImprovementsSpa Lane/London Road (Appendix B4)

44. These measures will improve connectivity for pedestrians by:

- Providing a north/south footway link with crossing points.
- Introducing traffic calming measures on London Road.

Shared Footway and CyclewayRugby Road, Granville Road and Coventry Road (Appendix B5)

45. Improve connectivity for pedestrians and facilitate cycling by:

- Widening the footway where possible to create a shared footway cycleway which links Rugby Road, Coventry Road and Granville Road.
- Adding a pedestrian island outside the entrance of the new development on Coventry Road.

Parking ReviewResidents parking (Appendix B6 original proposal; Appendix C2 revised proposal)

46. Create more on street parking spaces for residents on Hill Street, Orchard Street, Mount Road, The Lawns, Queen's Road, Priesthills Road, Princess Road, Hurst Road, and Springfield Road.

Town Centre Parking (Appendix B7)

47. Increase on-street parking and where appropriate introduce road safety features for pedestrian and cyclists. This is being implemented along Rugby Road, Regent Street, Lancaster Road, Castle Street, Church Walk, Market Place, Station Road, and Trinity Lane.

Direction and Cycling Signage Improvements

48. Examples of the improved signage are shown in Appendices B8 and B9. It is planned to remove and replace 128 outdated road and traffic signs and amend a further 62.

Consultation

49. A four-week public consultation took place between 21 October and 18 November 2019, based on a package of improvements outlined above (shown in Appendix A).
50. The consultation comprised an online questionnaire (also available in paper format) on the Council's website, and an unmanned exhibition showcasing all the plans at the Hinckley Hub (the Borough Council offices).
51. To maximise publicity and encourage the public response the County Council ensured:
- I. Coverage in the Hinckley Times, Leicester Mercury and councillors' newsletters.
 - II. 2800 letters posted to all residents and businesses within a 200-metre radius of any proposed element of the scheme.
 - III. Social media alerts via Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council.
 - IV. A member briefing for local District and County Councillors on the 21 October 2019 and a further presentation on the outcome of the consultation on 12 February 2020.

Overview of consultation responses

52. A full report of the consultation results and recommendations is attached at Appendix D and a summary is given below.
53. The principle opportunity for consultees to comment was through the consultation questionnaire. In total, 181 responses were received, 162 online and 19 by post.
54. The consultation questionnaire gave a choice of six replies to each question:
- Strongly agree
 - Tend to agree
 - Neither agree nor disagree
 - Tend to disagree

- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

55. To assess the support for an individual element of the scheme, the Council aggregated the strongly agree/tend to agree responses into one category (Agree), and those that ticked strongly disagree/tend to disagree into one category (Disagree). Table 1 below shows the level of support for each element.

Table 1

<u>Scheme</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
Hawley Road	58%	37%
Brookside	40%	51%
Granville	44%	25%
Spa Lane	46%	10%
Shared Cycleway	41%	26%
Parking	51%	11%
Signage	47%	12%

Comments and areas of concern

56. 181 questionnaire responses were received, the questionnaire also invited further comments regarding any concerns or support for the scheme. 130 comments were received that were subsequently categorised in 16 topics, which include both positive and negative feedback. The top 5 issues raised were -
- I. Improvements not needed at the Rugby Road/Brookside junction (28%)
 - II. Improvements are needed at the railway bridge over Rugby Road (Hawley Road improvements) (14%)
 - III. Disagree with the Westfield Road left turn ban (Hawley Road) (14%)
 - IV. Returning to a roundabout layout at Hawley Road would provide the best solution (12%).
 - V. Disagree with the removal of trees initially proposed to achieve capacity improvements at the Brookside junction (12%).
57. In response to the comments received during the consultation an [FAQ document](#) was uploaded to the Hinckley Zone 4 webpage, which directly addresses the questions regarding the proposed Westfield Road left turn ban, the improvements at the railway bridge and the reinstatement of the roundabout, in summary:

- II. Various options had been considered for the railway bridge, but it is owned by Network Rail and works would be costly.
- III. A left turn ban on Westfield Road would expand capacity and reduce queues. Only a small number of vehicles currently made a left turn.
- IV. Modelling showed that a roundabout at the Hawley Road junction would have a significant negative affect on traffic flow.

58. The Rugby Road/Brookside junction proposal is considered further below.

Brookside junction

59. Concerns were raised that the improvements at the Brookside junction were not needed or justified. This was due to the public perception that there is no congestion leaving Hinckley (Rugby Road southbound) and the negative impact of the loss of 5/6 trees along Rugby Road; a concern raised by both residents and councillors. In response to this
- I. a new modelling scenario was commissioned which demonstrated that the Hawley Road works could not be implemented as a standalone scheme, as the capacity benefits unlocked at Hawley Road could only be realised in full if the Brookside junction could manage the additional traffic,
 - II. the Brookside junction was redesigned to alleviate the concern around loss of trees. This involves removing the existing footpath, so no trees will have to be removed. A footpath is still available on the adjacent service road, which also has provision for cyclists. The updated Brookside junction design is attached as Appendix C1.

Residents parking and further consultation

60. Another issue raised was regarding the extent of the proposed residents parking scheme, with concerns raised about displacement of commuter parking being likely to affect neighbouring streets.
61. The original residents parking scheme (Appendix B6) was extended to propose the inclusion of Priesthills Road, Princess Road, Hurst Road, Springfield Road, the whole of Mount Road, and Thornfield Way (Appendix C2).
62. The extended zone was the subject of informal consultation with residents and received overall support, with more than 70% in favour. The exception was Thornfield Way, where most residents were opposed to its inclusion. Thornfield Way will therefore be removed from the extended parking scheme proposal and will not be included in the formal consultation, which is to take place in May 2020. The formal consultation needs to take place before the extended scheme can be implemented.

Comments of the Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee

63. The Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report on the proposals at its meeting on 5 March and supported the proposals.
64. Mr D. C. Bill CC has passed district councillors' comments onto the Director of Environment and Transport; these comments have been fed into the consideration process in finalising the scheme.
65. Overall, local members have been supportive of various elements of the scheme.

Conclusion and Next Steps

66. Subject to the Cabinet's approval, work will progress to finalise land acquisition and complete the detailed design to enable construction of the scheme to begin in summer 2020. As indicated above, formal consultation on the extended residents parking scheme will also need to take place, this is programmed for May 2020.
67. The Hinckley Area Project has been developed over several years using transport modelling, collected data and consultation feedback. The scheme is vital in maximising the benefit of previous work completed throughout Hinckley during Zone 1,2 and 3 improvements. It is therefore recommended that the scheme be taken forward for delivery.
68. The designs for each element of the scheme are subject to safety audits to be carried out, with amendments to be applied if required on safety recommendations.
69. Monitoring and post scheme surveys will be conducted 12 months following the completion of the works. Any additional works needed to realise the full benefits of the scheme will be undertaken with the appropriate authorisation.

Equality and Human Rights Implications

70. Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) screening is being completed. The previous EHRIA screening which was completed in 2018 demonstrated that this scheme had no negative impact on Equality or Human Rights. The screening determined that a full EHRIA was not required.

Environmental Implications

71. Despite the scheme not proposing direct environmental benefits, by reducing traffic congestion, the scheme can positively affect local air quality. An Environment Impact Assessment is currently being undertaken.

Background Papers

Cabinet 16 September 2016 'LTP3 Hinckley Area Project Zone 4 – Proposed Transport Improvements':

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=4775&Ver=4>

Cabinet 15 September 2017 'LTP3 Hinckley Area Project Zone 4 – Proposed Transport Improvements':

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=4863&Ver=4>

Appendices

Appendix A – Overview plan showing location of all elements of the scheme

Appendix B1 – Rugby Road/Hawley Road junction

Appendix B2 – Rugby Road/Brookside junction (original proposal)

Appendix B3 – Granville Road

Appendix B4 – Spa Lane/London Road

Appendix B5 – Rugby Road, Granville Road and Coventry Road shared footway and cycleway

Appendix B6 – Residents Parking

Appendix B7 – Town Centre Parking

Appendix B8 – Directional signage examples

Appendix B9 – Cycle route and signage

Appendix C1 – Rugby Road/Brookside junction (updated design)

Appendix C2 – Residents Parking proposed extended area

Appendix D – Consultation outcome summary

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