

**CABINET – 23 JUNE 2020****COALVILLE TRANSPORT STRATEGY****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 outcomes of recent refreshed transport study work and the implications that this has for:
 - taking forward the ongoing development and delivery of a Coalville Transport Strategy (CTS), of which the A511 Growth Corridor Major Road Network scheme is a significant element; and
 - North West Leicestershire District Council's 'Section 106 policy for the delivery of infrastructure in Coalville', which provides a basis for securing developer contributions towards projects covered by the CTS.

Recommendation

2. It is recommended:
 - (a) That the ongoing work to support North West Leicestershire District Council (NWLDC) to deliver the successful growth and evolution of Coalville and of Ashby-de-la-Zouch (Ashby) be noted;
 - (b) That it be noted the outcomes of the recent transport study work:
 - (i) further evidences the importance of achieving the delivery of the A511 Growth Corridor Major Road Network scheme, without which growth in the area is forecast to have severe residual cumulative highway impacts;
 - (ii) evidences that transport projects in addition to the Major Road Network scheme are still required in and around Coalville and Ashby in order to mitigate forecast severe residual cumulative highway impacts;
 - (c) That the revised list of projects covered by the Coalville Transport Strategy (CTS) as set out in paragraph 51 and in Appendix A to this report be approved;
 - (d) That no changes be sought to the general level of developer contributions requested towards delivery of the CTS through NWLDC's 'Section 106 policy for the delivery of infrastructure in Coalville';

- (e) That the County Council as the Local Highway Authority (LHA) uses the outcome of the recent study work to inform its advice to NWLDC on development proposals and developer contributions in and around Coalville and Ashby;
- (f) That it be noted that there may be circumstances where the County Council as Local Highway Authority (LHA) will advise NWLDC to refuse development proposals on highways grounds regardless of a suggested developer contribution towards delivery of the CTS; and
- (g) That the County Council works with NWLDC to produce a formal CTS document.

Reason for Recommendations

3. To ensure that the County Council as the LHA is using the most up-to-date evidence in seeking developer contributions from proposals in and around Coalville and Ashby and in providing highways advice to NWLDC, and to ensure that it continues to be in a strong position in circumstances where planning appeals are lodged by applicants in the light of the LHA's advice to NWLDC.
4. The total cost of the A511 Major Road Network project and additional junction mitigation measures now identified exceed that on which the level of developer contributions was originally based but in light of the many uncertainties arising from the Covid19 pandemic it is considered that it would be unwise to seek to increase the level of contributions requested.
5. The preparation of a formal CTS document will ensure that this information is available in the public domain in a clear and non-technical format.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

6. At the time of writing, NWLDC has yet to confirm the timetable for reporting this matter to its Members.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

7. The third Leicestershire Local Transport Plan (LTP3), approved by the County Council in March 2011, contains six strategic transport goals. Goal 1 is to have a transport system that supports a prosperous economy and provides successfully for population growth. The LTP3 sets out the County Council's approach to achieving this, namely to improve the management of the road network and continuing to address congestion issues.
8. The Enabling Growth Action Plan, approved by the Cabinet in March 2015, identifies the A511 Coalville Growth Corridor as a priority for the County Council. In September 2015 the Cabinet considered a report on the review of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and Investment Proposals and agreed areas for investment, including £2 million to enable the modelling and advanced design of highways infrastructure schemes, including in and around Coalville. In November

2015 Cabinet prioritised development of a package of infrastructure to deliver growth in Coalville concentrating on the A511 and Bardon Link Road.

9. In November 2018 the Cabinet approved the Strategic Growth Plan (SGP), which provides an agreed local framework for considering the longer term needs of the area. Coalville has been identified as an 'Area of Managed Growth in Local Plans' where it is recognised as being under intense pressure for development and has made substantial provision within and on the edges of the existing town. Much of this has still to be built and is dependent upon new local infrastructure.
10. In March 2019, the Cabinet approved the development of a package of measures along the A511/A50 corridor ('A511 Growth Corridor') and that that package should be the Council's priority for bidding for Major Road Network (MRN) funding in the period 2020 to 2025. In November 2019, the Cabinet approved the commitment of further resources and actions to take forward delivery of the A511 Growth Corridor scheme.
11. In March 2020, the Cabinet approved the 2020/2021 Highways and Transport Capital and Works Programmes.

Resource Implications

12. Since its inception, it has always been envisaged that the CTS would be delivered through a mixture of public and private (developer) funding.
13. The total cost of the A511 Growth Corridor scheme alone is currently £49m including further development costs, of which £42m is expected to be met from MRN funding should the bid to Government be successful. The remaining £7m represents the local contribution requirement, e.g. found from developer contributions.
14. It was always envisaged that as part of the CTS additional interventions would be required to support the growth in the area. Based on the outcomes of the most recent transport study work (as discussed in Part B of this report), the total additional cost of these additional interventions is likely to run to several million pounds (i.e. above and beyond the total cost of the MRN project).
15. Whilst funding is available within the 2020/2021 Highways and Transport Programmes to take forward work to further develop the CTS, no funding is available to contribute towards scheme delivery. Thus, funding will continue to be sought from other sources, including via NWLDC's 'Section 106 policy for the delivery of infrastructure in Coalville'.
16. It is also likely that bids will be made for future Government funding to help to deliver CTS projects; this has already been the case with Growth Deal monies and National Productivity Investment Fund monies previously secured to deliver some improvements along the A511 Growth Corridor, and with the current MRN bid.
17. The Director of Corporate Resources and the Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on the content of this report.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

18. This report has been circulated to members representing divisions in North West Leicestershire: Mr. J. G. Coxon CC, Mr. T. Pendleton CC, Dr. T. Eynon CC, Mr. M. B. Wyatt CC, Mr. S. D. Sheahan CC, Mr. D. Harrison CC, Mr. N. J. Rushton CC, Mr. T. Gillard CC.

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PART B

Background

Strategic Growth Plan (SGP) Context

19. In the medium to longer-term the SGP places an emphasis on delivering growth in the Leicestershire International Gateway to the north of the North West Leicestershire District. In the more immediate term, i.e. around the end of this decade, the adopted North West Leicestershire Local Plan (Local Plan) has a very strong focus of delivering growth in and around Coalville and Ashby. In this respect, the CTS is primarily focused on dealing with that known, planned growth and not the longer-term SGP growth.
20. Under the auspices of the County Council's overall approach to growth delivery, led and managed by the Growth Unit in the Chief Executive's department, additional evidential work and strategies (including transport) will need to be jointly developed to deliver the necessary infrastructure required to delivery growth in the Gateway.
21. This matter has been discussed with the Growth Unit which agrees with the approach being taken.

Rail Considerations

22. The CTS does not as yet embrace rail, so the reopening of the Leicester to Burton railway line to passenger traffic has not been considered as part of the most recent work. However, the Campaign for the Reopening of the Ivanhoe Line (CRIL) has recently been awarded funding by Government to revisit the case for the line's reopening and continues to receive assistance from County Council officers. Short to medium term investment in highway infrastructure that removes potential barriers to housing growth in Coalville and Ashby may help to bolster the case to reopen the line; more houses equates to great levels of population thereby increasing potential levels of demand for a rail service between Leicester and Burton.

Coalville Transport Strategy

23. Congestion on the A511 Growth Corridor has been a longstanding issue recognised by both NWLDC and the County Council. In 2008 studies were commissioned jointly between the County Council and NWLDC to aid understanding of the causes of the traffic problems in and around Coalville and Ashby and identify measures required to enable the area's continued strategic growth.
24. As originally envisaged, the CTS included the following junctions:
 - A42 Junction 13
 - Swannington Road Roundabout ('Hoo Ash Roundabout')
 - Thornborough Road Roundabout
 - Whitwick Road Roundabout
 - Broom Leys Road Cross Roads

- Bardon Road Roundabout (eastern end of Stephenson Way)*
- Reg's Way Roundabout ('Birch Tree Roundabout')
- Beveridge Lane Roundabout
- Stanton Lane Roundabout ('Flying Horse Roundabout')
- M1 Junction 22
- Central Cross Roads ('Hugglescote Crossroads')

*Part of the Bardon Link Road - see paragraph 25

25. The CTS also originally referenced the Bardon Relief Road (BRR), a scheme which, in practice, would have paralleled the A511 between its junctions with Stephenson Way and Reg's Way. However, even before the most recent study work, other evidence had demonstrated that there was no likely business (funding) case for that project. Instead, a Bardon Link Road is being pursued in conjunction with housing development to the south east of Coalville that does provide some benefits in terms of mitigating the impacts of development traffic on Bardon Road (as described in the next section of this report).
26. Since the original CTS was developed, some improvements have been delivered in the A511 corridor, including at M1 J22 and A42 J13 (partly funded by Growth Deal monies). It should be noted that in respect of the latter junction, insufficient funding was available at the time to fund the full scheme necessary to provide for even the then planned levels of growth and only the 'bronze scheme' was delivered. It is also against the list above that developer contributions have hitherto been sought and successfully secured through NWLDC's 'Section 106 policy for the delivery of infrastructure in Coalville'.
27. Additionally, proposals for growth in North West Leicestershire have continued to evolve. For example, the Local Plan identifies the need for the area to provide for a minimum of 9620 dwellings in the period 2011 to 2031, with the bulk of that requirement being met in and around Coalville and Ashby. Likewise, the Local Plan has a focus of continuing to provide for employment land needs in and around these two settlements.
28. Finally, the A511 Growth Corridor MRN project has been developed, which whilst in many ways responding to the changed circumstances set out above, has implications for the CTS. Furthermore, whilst the MRN project overlaps with that list of junctions listed at paragraph 24 (see also appendix A), it is important to stress that:
 - it was developed in accordance with national and regional (Midlands Connect) criteria for MRN projects; and
 - to provide the best value for money / strongest business case when assessed against those criteria and the Government's normal business case requirements for transport projects; and
 - thus, was never meant to - or ever likely to - deliver all of the measures required along the A511 corridor to deal with growth in Coalville and Ashby, let alone embrace the entirety of the junctions listed above.

29. Accordingly, despite previous investments in highway improvements and the proposed MRN scheme, these alone will not be sufficient to address the impacts of planned growth in Coalville and Ashby. Thus, whilst there have been many changes in circumstance, it remains clear that alongside growth proposals, there is still a need to continue to provide a coherent, justified and evidenced transport strategy which links the delivery of new homes, jobs and services within the area to the provision of a package of transport measures.
30. As circumstances evolve, it is important to ensure that the County Council as the LHA continues to review its position to ensure that it is in the most robust position possible to seek developer contributions and to provide advice to NWLDC. Hence, the decision was taken to refresh the evidence base for the CTS and to revisit its content in the light of the key outcomes of the most recent studies are summarised below. Refreshing it now will ensure that the Authority continues to be in a strong position to seek developer contributions, particularly where there may now be greater risks of 'push back' from developers in a post Covid-19 world. (Resistance from some developers was becoming apparent even pre Covid-19.)

Key Outcomes of the Refreshed Traffic Studies

31. The latest work has been undertaken by the County Council using the Pan Regional Transport Model (PRTM). The principal objectives of this study have been to:
- Provide evidence to identify where infrastructure investment is needed to mitigate the cumulative impacts of (now) known growth and regeneration aspirations in the District;
 - Understand what the investment priorities should be in Coalville and Ashby areas to support growth; and
 - Identify opportunities to prepare bids to fund all, or part of, the identified gap between contributions expected and the cost of infrastructure.
32. A copy of the recent study work technical report is attached at Appendix B. Overall, the study provides evidence of the key linkages between planned growth, and the need to increase highway capacity to enable the continued strategic growth of Coalville and Ashby.
33. **Existing traffic conditions:** The A511 Corridor currently experiences notable levels of congestion and peak hour delay at several of its key junctions. This results in journey time delay upwards of forty seconds at each junction and leading to tailbacks that disrupt the flow of traffic along the approaching links, resulting in speeds of less than 10mph on sections of road designed for 60mph.
34. The existing traffic conditions have a number of other consequences, including:
- effects on the efficient performance of businesses along the corridor, including Amazon and Bardon Hill Quarry; and
 - increased fuel usage and greater production of emissions hazardous to human health, as well as the environment. (there is an Air Quality Management Area - AQMA - on a section of the corridor in Coalville).

35. These conditions will only worsen with natural growth in background traffic and additional traffic from planned developments for the area if nothing is done.
36. **Future traffic conditions:** There is a predicted 24% growth in traffic between 2014 and 2036. During an average peak hour this equates to a 42% increase in vehicle delay per Kilometre with the overall amount of traffic experiencing congestion rising from 2.4% to 3.8%. Significantly, the number of junctions in the area exceeding their design capacity is forecast to increase from 5 to 12 during this period. Many of these junctions are on key routes leading to the dispersion of traffic onto less desirable alternatives. This is forecast to increase local area congestion significantly with many minor routes, both urban and rural, being overtly exposed to 'rat-running'.
37. An overall conclusion that can be drawn from the recent study work is that without some form of interventions along and around the corridor, the LHA would consider the residual cumulative impacts of growth to be severe in respect of paragraph 109 of the National Planning Policy Framework. In turn, this could warrant it giving advice to NWLDC to refuse applications. It would also have potentially significant implications for the review of the Local Plan which NWLDC is currently working upon. Decisions about the likely location for future growth have yet to be made but it is not unreasonable to anticipate that some of this growth could be in Coalville and/or Ashby. If growth cannot be supported there it means that it will have to be redirected elsewhere in the District.
38. **Impacts of proposed A511 Growth Corridor MRN scheme:** The capacity improvements of the scheme are forecast to attract traffic away from less suitable roads whilst efficiently dispersing this additional demand. This is characterised by a significant reduction in local 'rat-running' and cross-country routeing. By 2036 its imposition is forecast to reduce the delay per Kilometre by 9% whilst reducing the overall amount of traffic experiencing congestion from 3.8 to 2.8%. Meanwhile, those junctions exceeding their design capacity are forecast to fall from 12 to 7.
39. In addition, the Bardon Link Road is shown to provide traffic relief (in terms of future forecast levels) to the A511, Bardon Road section and to the 'Hugglescote Crossroads'.
40. The outcomes of this recent study work corroborate the work done to develop the business case for the MRN project, demonstrating the scheme's necessity in dealing with the impacts of growth in the area. But, it also demonstrates that it does not deal with all of the impacts. Other measures are needed, as set out in paragraphs 42 to 45.
41. There is no guarantee that the MRN bid will ultimately prove to be successful, for example because nationally the total value of MRN projects being bid for may exceed the funding available. On that basis, the outcomes of the recent study work evidences why it continues to be appropriate for the LHA to seek developer contributions to improvements (mitigation) in the A511 Growth Corridor where the developments' residual cumulative highway impacts would otherwise be severe without such mitigation. Where no contribution / mitigation is forthcoming in such

circumstances, the LHA could advise NWLDC that applications should be refused in accordance with paragraphs 108 and 109 of the NPPF.

42. **Other junctions requiring mitigation to deal with the impacts of growth:** Beyond the A511 Growth Corridor MRN scheme, the CTS originally listed other junctions that would require mitigation, as listed at paragraph 24. As a result of the changed circumstances outlined earlier in this report, the results of the recent study work show a revised list of other, additional junctions where mitigation will be required else otherwise they would be severely congested. These are shown the table below (see also Appendix A).

Junction	Notes
A511 Ashby Bypass/Ashby Road (at Boundary)	Optioneering work for the MRN project led to the focus of that scheme being on Coalville and the A511 corridor to its east – that package of improvements represents the best business case when assessed against the MRN criteria.
A511 Ashby Bypass/Nottingham Road	
M1 J22/minor road from Stanton Under Bardon	These junctions are now identified due to the MRN scheme proposals for the 'Flying Horse' junction; an appropriate, deliverable scheme to mitigate the impacts of growth requires some existing turning movements to be banned, causing some traffic to be displaced onto other routes.
B591/Warren Hills Road, Copt Oak	
B591/Whitwick Road, Copt Oak	
A511/Broom Leys Road	Some improvements to this junction are included as part of the MRN scheme; its identification in the most recent work is marginal but highlights its capacity is likely to be breached at peak times towards the end of the modelled period.
High Street/Belvoir Road, Coalville	Not included in the original CTS list and not part of the MRN scheme.

Note: For the avoidance of doubt, the above list is based on modelling work including the MRN scheme.

43. Additionally, whilst the A42 Junction 13 is not modelled to exceed the severely congested threshold, it does come very close. This is an important junction, and its operation has not just localised impacts but wider regional and national impacts as part of the Strategic Road Network. It should not also be considered in isolation in the context of the performance of the Ashby Bypass. Lastly, improvements to the junctions listed above, particularly at Ashby, are likely to draw additional traffic into the junction. Given that only the 'bronze scheme' was delivered at this junction,

further improvements are likely to be required to satisfactorily accommodate growth.

44. No particular proposals or definitive costings have yet been developed for these locations, albeit a reasonable estimate is that the total additional cost will run to several millions of pounds. Nevertheless, and in the absence of such detail, where the LHA assesses that developments could have a severe residual impact on these junctions without appropriate mitigation, it will seek:
- for the developer to identify and to develop potential mitigation measures based on assessment work that is consistent with the assumptions used in the recent study work;
 - as is reasonable / appropriate, to either seek developers to deliver the mitigation measures themselves (e.g. under Section 278 of the Highways Act) or to make a proportionate contribution, based on costing of the measure agreed by the LHA.
45. Where no such mitigation / contribution is forthcoming, then the LHA could advise NWLDC that applications should be refused.

Implications for NWLDC's 'Section 106 policy for the delivery of infrastructure in Coalville'

46. The 'Section 106 policy for the delivery of infrastructure in Coalville' (the Policy) was established by resolutions of NWLDC's Cabinet in 2013.
47. Essentially, for residential sites of 50 or more dwellings the Policy prioritises developer contributions towards transport infrastructure in (full or partial) lieu of affordable housing provision where there would otherwise be an issue of site viability. The transport projects on which it was based are the junctions and the Bardon Link Road set out in paragraph 24 above.
48. The Policy has generally been successfully implemented over the years, with typical contributions of around £4000 to £5000 per dwelling being secured where it has been applied. Additionally, without the scope of the Policy but underpinned by policies in the Local Plan, contributions have also been secured from employment sites, for example, £1.9m from Amazon and from developments in other settlements, including Ashby. In total around £8m of developer contributions have been secured through Section 106 agreements, with £2.4m paid and not yet spent. Around a further £12m is expected to be secured giving a potential total in the order of £20m.
49. It was recognised that at the time of the Policy's adoption, it would unlikely be capable of funding the entirety of the transport infrastructure required to support growth in the area. That is because:
- considerations of sites' viability, i.e. the general level of contribution to be sought, needed to ensure that sites remained viable to deliver (notwithstanding any reductions in affordable housing)

- it only applied to a residential development or to any element of a mixed-use development of 50 or more dwellings, and therefore did not cover the transport mitigation of the impacts of sites of less than 50 dwellings
- its coverage did not include Ashby, where considerable growth has taken place and is set to do so going forward.

50. Thus, and as referred to elsewhere in this report, monies have been secured through bids to Government for funding to supplement that secured through the Policy and from other sites, including employment, and in other locations.

51. The outcomes of the recent study work have been discussed with NWLDC and the implications for the Policy considered. In the light of this it has been agreed by officers to recommend to their respective executive bodies that:

- a. The list of projects on which the Policy was originally based is replaced with a revised list including:
 - the projects identified as part of the A511 Growth Corridor scheme;
 - the additional junctions set out paragraph 42;
 - A42 Junction 13

(Appendix A provides a comparison table of the original and revised project lists).

- b. That no change be sought to the general level of developer contributions being sought. The total costs of the MRN project and of the additional junction mitigation measures identified by the recent study work are in excess of the total cost of the projects on which the level of Policy contribution was originally based. Thus, it could be suggested that as the total costs have increased, so should the level of contributions. But, the impact of Covid-19 on the development market going forward is unclear at this time and overall it was considered unwise to be suggesting any increases in the level in the current circumstances. Such a position would align with paragraph 108 of the NPPF, which states that “...*In assessing [development proposals], it should be ensured that: ...any significant impacts from the development on the transport network (in terms of capacity and congestion), or on highway safety, can be **cost effectively** mitigated to an acceptable degree.*”

52. Thus, there will likely remain a shortfall in the sums raised through the Policy and the total costs of transport infrastructure required to enable growth. For this reason, going forward the LHA will continue to seek to pursue opportunities for Government funding (where it is able to afford to do so); seek developers to deliver improvements (e.g. through Section 278 Agreements) where it is possible and appropriate to do so under planning law and regulations; and to continue to seek to secure other developer contributions that are beyond the scope of the Policy, based on the evidence from the recent study work and backed by Local Plan policies.

53. The levels of funding secured (from Government or developers) will continue to be monitored and kept under review so that a clear understanding of any funding shortfall is maintained. Likewise, officers will continue to work closely with NWLDC

to understand the viability of development sites going forward post Covid-19. Such variables will inform future reviews of the level of contributions to be sought under the Policy.

Developing a CTS Document

54. Whilst technical reports, such as the one attached, provide a sound evidence base on which the LHA can engage with developers, they are not especially easy to understand for non-transport or non-planning professionals, and certainly do not provide the type of clarity, say, as the Market Harborough Transport Strategy.
55. To address this issue, it is proposed to work jointly with NWLDC to prepare a clear and concise CTS document which, once published, would be reviewed in alignment with the review of the Policy. Its contents will also be considered in the light of the outcomes of work by CRIL to reinvestigate the case for the reopening of the Leicester to Burton railway line to passenger traffic.

Equality and Human Rights Implications

56. Proposals are aimed at tackling congestion both now and in the future and helping to provide more reliable journey times. In turn, this will facilitate strategic growth that should help to meet the social and economic needs of Coalville's current and future residents. No detailed assessment has been done at this early stage but if CTS scheme were to be taken forward an Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment will be completed at an appropriate point.

Environmental Impact

57. There are no environmental implications arising from this report. As CTS projects are taken forward a relevant impact assessment will be completed at an appropriate point.

Background Papers

Local Transport Plan

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/road-maintenance/local-transport-plan>

Report to the Cabinet on 16 March 2015: Enabling Growth Plan

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=4360>

Report to the Cabinet on 29 March 2019: Environment and Transport 2019/20 Highways Capital Programme and Highways Transportation Work Programme

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=5601>

Appendices

- Appendix A - Coalville Transport Strategy Plan and Project List
- Appendix B - Technical Report