

**CABINET – 12 SEPTEMBER 2025****A5 CONCEPT LINK****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 work being undertaken on a potential road link, to connect the A5 and A47 in Hinckley, and to seek approval to undertake relevant engagement activities to help develop the concept and understand its potential for delivery. A potential route for the A5 Concept Link (which, as explained below, is still in the early stages of development) is appended to this report.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that the Cabinet:
 - a) Notes the key factors that have led to the development of this scheme, as set out in paragraphs 21 to 23 of this report;
 - b) Notes the work undertaken to date to address the issues and constraints that exist along the A5 corridor in respect to transport, economic development and road safety that pose a potential barrier to sustainable development in the future and to develop a potential mitigation measure;
 - c) Authorises the Director of Environment and Transport to:
 - i. Undertake, following consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member, necessary engagement activities with stakeholders, landowners and Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council to support work on the Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan and to address other policy, technical and procedural matters necessary to progress the A5 Concept Link scheme;
 - ii. Continue to develop the proposed scheme, noting that further reports will be made to the Cabinet as necessary.

Reasons for Recommendations

3. The A5 is on the Strategic Road Network (SRN) and is managed by National Highways (NH). There are existing issues and constraints at the Longshoot-Dodwells junction (two junctions between the A5 and the A47 to the west of Hinckley) that cause problems of congestion, road safety and re-routing of vehicle trips on to the local road network that the County Council is responsible for, as the Local Transport Authority.
4. Uncertainty regarding the programme of improvements to be implemented by NH and the possibility of new land use developments nearby has led the Council's officers to develop a potential scheme to address the existing and future issues in this location.
5. It is understood that a further draft of the next Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan is being prepared for consultation in autumn 2025. The A5 Concept Link will be a key transport measure that will help to enable the substantial amount of proposed growth in the Local Plan to be delivered in a sustainable manner in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.
6. Engagement with Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council (HBBC) will enable the A5 Concept Link to be used to support the progress of the Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan and assist in discussions with the developers of the nearby sites.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

7. Subject to the Cabinet's approval, discussions with HBBC on the proposed A5 Concept Link will take place in September 2025.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

8. In September 2024, the Cabinet approved a response to the Hinckley and Bosworth Regulation 18 draft Local Plan consultation. The response aimed to ensure alignment with the outcomes of the County Council's Strategic Plan and the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan (SGP). It also aimed to influence the content of the Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan in the interests of local communities, including to ensure that the Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan provided as robust as possible policy framework for securing the provision of the infrastructure and services required to support its successful delivery. The report noted that the SGP identified the A5 as an Improvement Corridor and the County Council's response was appended to the Cabinet report.
9. The Department for Transport (DfT) announced an Interim Settlement for investment in the SRN in March 2025. The interim settlement covers one year of funding (2025-26) in advance of the DfT's five-year Road Investment Strategy 3 that is being finalised following the 2025 Spending Review.
10. As a result of uncertainty about the NH programme for improvements to the A5, the County Council has been proactive in considering the potential solutions

that would help to resolve the existing issues and provide the additional capacity required to enable new development. Officers will continue to liaise with NH, HBBC and Warwickshire County Council to take account of all of the potential measures and proposed developments along the A5 and they will take the opportunity to work together to achieve an optimum solution.

Resource Implications

11. The County Council has committed significant resources to engaging in and supporting a collaborative approach to strategic planning, which is intended to facilitate the delivery of growth within the county and mitigate the negative impacts of development.
12. Despite increasing challenges, as set out in the report to the Cabinet in September 2024 on the National Planning Policy Framework Proposed Changes Consultation, the County Council continues to seek to provide support for local plans that provide as robust as possible policy platforms for securing the provision of infrastructure and services required to support its successful delivery.
13. The identification of a strategic highway improvement will enable HBBC and the County Council, as the Local Transport Authority, to demonstrate that there is a potential scheme that will mitigate the impacts of new development. It will then be possible to collect financial contributions from multiple land use developments towards a cumulative transport mitigation measure.
14. NH is in the process of assessing the potential improvement options at the Longshoot-Dodwells junction. In parallel, the County Council is allocating resources to support the development of a viable scheme that effectively addresses the existing and future challenges that is both affordable and deliverable within the Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan timescales.
15. 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

16. This report will be circulated to Mr. J. Melen CC and Ms. A. Pendlebury CC.

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PART B

Background

17. The A5 is on the SRN and is managed by NH. The road forms most of the boundary between Leicestershire and Warwickshire. There are existing issues and constraints along the A5 corridor that are causing congestion, and road safety issues. One consequence of this is that vehicle trips are often re-routed on to the local road network which is unable to cope.
18. The lack of available road capacity means that there is less resilience to disruptions caused by incidents on the road network, such as collisions and road works, and large delays can result from relatively minor incidents. These issues adversely affect the local economy and the residents of communities along the A5.
19. There has been a lack of investment on the A5 corridor in recent years. Improvement schemes have been proposed by NH previously, but implementation has been delayed. The programme for improvements along the A5, included in the NH Road Investment Strategy Periods 3 and 4, is still subject to uncertainty due to delays from NH, and a lack of details regarding the future programme, including where any schemes on the A5 corridor may feature in that programme.
20. Over the last 10 years, the A5 corridor has been repeatedly identified as a corridor of concern by the local authorities along its length. These concerns led to the development of the A5 Partnership (16 local authorities along the corridor, with involvement from other agencies such as Midlands Connect and East Midlands Councils) that promotes the need for investment and improvement on the A5 corridor by lobbying stakeholders, including NH, the DfT and the local Members of Parliament.
21. Although NH is exploring the case for making improvements to the Longshoot-Dodwells junction, there is no certainty at this time as to the potential for its work to result in a deliverable scheme and even if it does, when any scheme might be delivered.
22. Accordingly, it has been necessary for the County Council to be proactive in working collaboratively with HBBC to explore a solution that could be deliverable over the lifetime of the Borough Council's Local Plan and that could also help to mitigate the effects of new development that is coming forward in advance of Local Plan adoption.
23. Without such a scheme the progress and adoption of a new Local Plan could be frustrated, and this could potentially increase the risk of speculative, unplanned development coming forward. This type of development can be resource intensive for the County Council, especially with regards to ensuring that the necessary scale of the developer contributions is secured towards

infrastructure and services that are managed by the County Council, including highways and education.

24. Overall, the approach taken is considered by officers to be the most cost-effective approach for the County Council. This work to date has been funded from existing Highways and Transport capital budgets.

Existing and Forecast Issues

25. One of the major constraints on the A5 corridor is at the two junctions between the A5 and the A47 to the west of Hinckley. These are collectively known as the Longshoot-Dodwells junction, which include the following elements:
 - a) A47(N) / A5 junction traffic signal-controlled roundabout (Dodwells Junction).
 - b) A47(S) / A5 junction traffic signal controlled (Longshoot Junction).
 - c) About 550m of single carriageway road between the junctions.
26. The junction experiences significant congestion and delays and drivers often divert off the A5 on to alternative routes using local roads. Rerouting on to unsuitable routes and junctions undermines the safe and efficient operation of the local road network, creating transport, environmental and road safety issues for the local economies and residents along those routes.
27. It is predicted that future economic and housing growth will exacerbate existing conditions by increasing the demand to travel on the road network. Speculative land-use development proposals in the area are adding to the existing pressures, and the lack of highway capacity is a constraint on the development in the A5 corridor.
28. This development includes growth in Hinckley and Bosworth, Harborough and areas south of the A5 in Warwickshire. The County Council considers that the transport impacts of the proposed development are expected to be severe, contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework. This could lead to in future the Council advising Local Planning Authorities that planning applications should be refused on highway grounds and/or being unable to support Local Plans.
29. The evidence produced by the South Leicestershire Joint Transport Evidence work shows that future growth in this area is dependent on having a strategic improvement of these junctions.

Proposed Draft Scheme Concept

30. Uncertainty regarding the programme of improvements to be implemented by NH has led the County Council to develop a potential scheme to address the existing and future issues in this location. Sustainable transport measures will need to be implemented to help reduce the impacts of growth on the road

network, but the lack of capacity will inevitably require some highway capacity solutions as well.

31. Delivering major highway infrastructure is inherently complex, involving many risks and uncertainties. While the County Council's officers have developed the scheme concept, its implementation will depend on effective coordination, shared risk management and collaborative funding arrangements with public and private partners.
32. The proposed link road connects the A5 and A47 to the west of Hinckley. This would remove some traffic from the A5 junctions and provide an additional capacity for new development. It would also feature sustainable transport measures, which would improve transport choice, support active travel modes (walking, cycling and wheeling) and improve connectivity by all modes of travel.
33. In addition to the traffic benefits, a link road has the potential to open up land for development in a location that is more sustainable than other places across the district, such as more readily available access to a range of services and facilities in Hinckley, thereby reducing the need to travel solely by car.
34. The project is at the concept stage of development. The current proposal presents a route corridor rather than a defined road alignment. The concept of a route between the A5 and A47 has been established, but there are many issues relating to land ownership, planning and engineering to be examined in detail before a preferred alignment can be defined.
35. Significant constraints exist along the route corridor, including the Ashby Canal, power lines, a gas main and multiple land ownerships. The appraisal of the alternative road alignments within this corridor will be carried out at a later stage in the design process and it will incorporate these constraints into the option assessment process. Following this work a preferred route option will be selected, which will be presented to a future meeting of the Cabinet for consideration for approval.
36. Experiences from the delivery of the Council's previous capital projects has demonstrated the importance of effective risk management. The risks associated with the proposed transport scheme will be mitigated wherever possible through collaborative arrangements with delivery partners, including the use of developer conditions and engagement with other highway authorities. These early discussions may therefore extend to other stakeholders including relevant landowners, promoters and planning and highway authorities. The County Council's established expertise in delivering similar infrastructure projects will contribute to reducing the delivery risks and ensuring the efficient implementation.
37. A decision of the Cabinet to progress a transport scheme in this location will provide the County Council with a clear framework for securing developer contributions. It will also support the advancement of the Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan and its associated funding mechanisms.

38. If alternative measures are brought forward by NH, the County Council as the Local Transport Authority will continue to work together with NH and the other delivery partners to identify a preferred scheme in this location and the funding sources and the delivery mechanisms.

Next Steps

39. The A5 Concept Link, as set out in this report, will be presented to HBBC's officers for discussion in September 2025 and the plan will then be adapted if necessary to take account of the initial feedback. Discussions will also take place as to how the proposal might best be incorporated into the Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan consultation process.
40. The Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan is currently being prepared for consultation in autumn 2025. As with an earlier draft of the Local Plan, it is understood that it is likely to include proposed site allocations that would assist with the delivery of the scheme and in which there is considerable developer interest. The A5 Concept Link will be a key transport measure that will enable the proposed growth to take place. The identification of a strategic highway improvement will enable HBBC and the Local Transport Authority to demonstrate that there is a potential scheme that will help towards mitigating the impacts of new development. It will then be possible to collect financial contributions from multiple land use developments towards a cumulative transport mitigation measure.
41. At this stage, the draft scheme is being progressed by the County Council, but depending on the result of the discussions with NH, other local authorities and land use developers it is envisaged that the responsibility for the later stages of design, planning and implementation would be shared with other organisations.

Consultation and Engagement

42. Informal early discussions about the A5 Concept Link have taken place with officers from NH, HBBC and Warwickshire County Council. The feedback has been generally positive, recognising that the concept is at a very early stage and there are many steps to go through before the delivery on the ground could be achieved.
43. Subject to the Cabinet's approval, discussions on the draft A5 Concept Link and other technical, and procedural matters necessary to progress the scheme with HBBC will take place later in September 2025. If appropriate the scheme would be submitted as part of the Hinckley and Bosworth Local Plan process.

Equality Implications

44. There are no equality implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

45. Appropriate Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken as and when the scheme that the County Council is responsible for is identified and taken forward.

Human Rights Implications

46. There are no human rights implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

Other Implications and Impact Assessments

47. In February 2022, the County Council rejoined the A5 Partnership, which is a group of local authorities and public agencies/organisations that seeks to promote the improvement of the A5 by lobbying the relevant funding bodies.
48. The existing and forecast highway conditions described in paragraphs 25-29 have health implications and the future design stages of the project will assess the impacts of the proposal on health.
49. The existing highway conditions described in paragraphs 25-29 of this report have environmental implications and the future design stages of the project as described in paragraphs 34-35 will include an assessment the impacts of the proposal on the environment.

Background Papers

Report to the Cabinet on 16 October 2012: A Strategy for the A5 2011-2026A449
Gailey (Staffordshire) to A45 Weedon (Northamptonshire)
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MID=3395#A132599>

Report to the Cabinet on 9 March 2018: A5 Strategy
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MID=5178>

Report to the Cabinet on 6 July 2018: A5 Strategy and Partnership
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MID=5412#A156258>

Report to the Cabinet on 13 September 2024: Proposed Response to consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=7509&Ver=4>

Report to the Cabinet on 13 September 2024: Response to the Hinckley and Bosworth Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan Consultation (July 2024)
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=7509&Ver=4>

Report to the Full Council on 19 February 2025: Medium Term Financial Strategy
<https://democracy.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=134&MId=7391&Ver=4>

Appendix

Draft A5 Concept Link Plan - Potential Route Corridor