

CABINET
22 OCTOBER 2020**REDUCING CONGESTION UPDATE**

Relevant Cabinet Member

Mr A Amos

Relevant Chief Officer

Assistant Director for Economy, Major Projects and Waste

Local Member(s)

Mr P Middleborough

Mr N Desmond

Ms R Dent

Mr L Mallett

Mr R Banks

Recommendation

1. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways recommends that Cabinet:

(a) notes progress on the four named schemes below within the Reducing Congestion Programme and endorses the actions taken to date;

(b) approves the continuation of activities to progress their implementation;

(c) authorises the purchase of land necessary to complete the A38 Upton Roundabout Scheme (shown in red on the plan at Appendix 2) and delegates authority to the Strategic Director of Commercial and Change and Strategic Director of Economy and Infrastructure in consultation with the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways to revise the extent of the land required to deliver the Scheme if necessary;

(d) should it not be possible to acquire all the land by negotiation, authorises the acquisition of necessary land and rights over land through the making of a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) and authorises the Strategic Director of Commercial and Change and Strategic Director of Economy and Infrastructure, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways, to finalise the details and make such a CPO including any compulsory acquisition of rights required, and authorises the Strategic Director of Economy and Infrastructure and the Strategic Director of Commercial and Change to approve any Statement of Reasons in relation to the land, that must accompany any CPO submitted for the confirmation to the Secretary of State for Transport, and notes that this will be approved prior to making of the CPO;

(e) delegates the award of contracts and agreements required for the schemes to the Strategic Director of Economy and Infrastructure in consultation with the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways; and

(f) approves expenditure in line with funds allocated to the Reducing Congestion Programme in the Capital Programme.

Background

2. On 2 February 2017, the Council allocated an initial **£5m** to reduce traffic congestion across the County. This work is ongoing under the Worcestershire Network Efficiency Programme (WNEP) of works.

3. On 8 February 2018, an additional **£5m** was allocated to progress schemes at four named locations across the county. The schemes identified were improvements to the A38/A4104 junction near Upton-upon-Severn (Upton Roundabout Scheme), capacity improvements to the A442/A449 Hoobrook Roundabout in Kidderminster (the Hoobrook Roundabout Scheme), enhancements to the A448 Parkside traffic signals in Bromsgrove (the Parkside Junction Scheme) and junction improvements in Evesham town centre (the Evesham Junctions Scheme).

4. Full Council considered improvements to walking and cycling routes in Bromsgrove and reducing congestion in Worcester City Centre at its meeting on 15 February 2018. Both programmes of work were the result of two successful National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF) awards from the Department for Transport (DfT) in Autumn 2017, where the Council secured a further **£6.6m** to spend across the two areas. The award funded successful improvements to Croft Road zebra crossing (and gateway into The Arches project), the signal and walking enhancements at City Walls Road and Sidbury, as well as the ongoing upgrades in St John's.

5. At its meeting on 14 February 2019, the Council identified £26 million for Open for Business and Regeneration including the allocation of a further **£5m** for the congestion schemes.

6. The congestion programme is in accordance with the Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP 4) which was consulted on extensively and the schemes have been developed in consultation with appropriate Divisional Councillors, statutory and other stakeholders.

7. A further £1.3m has also been allocated from the recently approved Getting Building Fund of £12m for the A442 / A449 Hoobrook, Kidderminster roundabout improvement scheme.

8. A total of £22.9m has therefore been made available for the overall Reducing Congestion Programme and a summary of the schemes and progress to date is set out below:

Upton Roundabout Scheme

9. The current configuration of this staggered major/minor road junction leads to delays at peak times for vehicles travelling east or south away from the town. Other

issues occur with the east-west movements from Pershore towards Upton-upon-Severn. The volume of movements is heightened when large events are taking place like the Jazz or other music festivals within Upton or further afield when the Three Counties Showground carries out its almost weekly, weekend shows throughout the spring and summer months.

10. An options appraisal has been carried out and the preferred option is the construction of a 4-arm roundabout (see **Appendix 1** for concept plan). A preliminary design has been completed and work has begun on detailed design which will be completed later this year.

11. It is proposed that all construction works are carried out via the Infrastructure Engineering Term Contract, the final decision on the award being delegated to the Strategic Director for Economy and Infrastructure in consultation with the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways. Work is due to start on site early in 2021.

12. The current estimated cost of the scheme is £6.5m

Hoobrook Roundabout Scheme

13. The current layout of this roundabout, where 3 major A class roads converge at the southern approach to Kidderminster, experiences congestion throughout the AM and extended PM peak hours on several arms. An options appraisal has been carried out and the preferred option is the signalisation of the three A class approaches, along with the introduction of a third lane to improve capacity on these approach arms. The central roundabout island will also be reduced in size to create wider two and three lane circulatory flow on the roundabout (see **Appendix 3** for concept plan). A preliminary design has been completed and work has begun on detailed design, which is expected to be completed later this year.

14. It is proposed that all construction works are carried out via the Infrastructure Engineering Term Contract, the final decision on the award being delegated to the Strategic Director for Economy and Infrastructure in consultation with the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways. Subject to the successful completion of detailed design and the availability of road space, work will commence on site during Winter 2020/21

15. The current estimated cost of the scheme is £3.6m partly funded by the additional £1.3m from the Getting Building Fund (GBF).

Parkside Junction Scheme

16. The existing signalised junction of Birmingham Road, Market Street, The Strand, and Stourbridge Road is located to the north of Bromsgrove town centre and suffers from out of date technology, tight kerb radii that prevents free flowing movement of traffic and narrow footways that hinder walking as an alternative. Together these issues lead to delays and congestion throughout the day for the major A448 route that runs west to east through the town. An options analysis has been considered and the following benefits could be achieved and incorporated into the scheme (see **Appendix 4** for concept plan). Localised widening to the west of the junction will allow greater stacking capacity for users of the A class network wishing to turn right

and continue travelling east. Removal of three mature trees on the north western corner will allow improvement for turning vehicles, allow provision of a wider two-lane approach from the north and allow the resolution of an existing drainage issues in the area caused by tree roots. Footway and crossing facilities can also be enhanced by this action. Amendment of the existing layout will also permit the construction of a widened footway on the eastern side of the southern arm to encourage walking to out of town retail parks. The preliminary design has been completed following discussion with the Divisional Councillor and Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways and work has commenced on the detailed design.

17. It is proposed that all construction works are carried out via the Infrastructure Engineering Term Contract, the final decision on the award being delegated to the Strategic Director for Economy and Infrastructure in consultation with the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways. Work is scheduled to begin on site early in 2021 with the duration to be confirmed once the design is complete and construction plan established.

18. The current estimated cost of the scheme is £0.8m

Evesham Junctions Scheme

19. Early within the Congestion Programme, improving the High Street corridor through the town of Evesham was recognised as a key objective. Since the start of 2019, the Council has invested in various signalised junctions from the Davies Road junction in the south to Greenhill in the north. Upgraded signal technology has allowed synchronisation of the north-south axis of the area, allowing the individual junctions and crossings to “communicate” with each other to maintain flow along the route. Most recently, in May 2020, a temporary one way system was introduced on Avon Street at the High St/Swan Lane signals to allow the phasing of the traffic lights to be simplified (see **Appendix 5** for location plan), which allows more “green time” to the main road, where congestion issues have been a key area of concern for residents and users of the town. This experiment will run into the new year.

20. There are plans to reduce congestion in the vicinity of the Port Street/Waterside junction, as well as improve crossing facilities for residents using this eastern approach. The current signals are over 20 years old and currently function with a fixed green phase for each manoeuvre. As the traffic flows are variable throughout the day, this leads to delays at peak times. There is an uncontrolled crossing point within this configuration that adds further delays due to pedestrians crossing between moving vehicles. Options are limited due to the site being east of the low-level riverside gardens, and close to the river bridge, meaning that the ability to move the junction/carriageway is limited. However, there are proposals to upgrade signal software to MOVA, which will allow more intelligent traffic phasing at this busy T-junction. This upgrade would also enable the provision of a formal push button-controlled crossing within the phasing that could encourage pedestrian usage. A concept design (**Appendix 6**) has been completed and work has commenced on detailed design.

21. It is proposed that all works are carried out via the Highways Maintenance Service Contract. It is proposed that work will begin on site in early 2021 and will be constructed in conjunction with the Port Street Public Realm scheme which is expected to be completed by the Autumn of 2021.

22. The current estimated cost of the scheme is £0.2m

Legal and Financial Implications

Land acquisition

23. In order to implement the Upton Roundabout Scheme, a 8.416 acre parcel of land (shown coloured red in **Appendix 2**) is required. Negotiations are nearing completion with the owners and it is expected that the land will be acquired later this year, with a view to commencing on site in early 2021. Cabinet is asked to authorise the acquisition of the land necessary to complete the scheme and to delegate any decisions regarding any changes to the extent of the land to the Strategic Director Commercial and Change and the Strategic Director for Economy and Infrastructure in consultation with the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways.

24. Should it not be possible to acquire the land by negotiation, it is recommended that Cabinet authorises the acquisition of necessary land and rights over land through the making of a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) and authorises the Strategic Director of Commercial and Change and Strategic Director of Economy and Infrastructure, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways, to finalise the details and make such a CPO including any compulsory acquisition of rights required, and authorises the Strategic Director of Commercial and Change and Strategic Director for Economy and Infrastructure to approve any Statement of Reasons in relation to the land, that must accompany any CPO submitted for the confirmation to the Secretary of State for Transport, and notes that this will be approved prior to making of the CPO.

25. No third-party land is required for the Hoobrook Roundabout, Parkside Junction or Evesham Junctions Schemes.

Planning

26. It has been identified that, due to the extent of the scheme, in particular the construction of a new section of road (A4104) being divorced from the existing highway, the Upton Roundabout Scheme cannot be carried out under Permitted Development and therefore, planning consent is required. An application was submitted to Worcestershire County Council on 13 August 2020 and is due to be considered by the Planning and Regulatory Committee on 3 December 2020.

27. As the Hoobrook Roundabout Scheme measures approximately 1 hectare and is located adjacent to a Site of Special Scientific Interest, an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Screening Opinion Request was submitted to the County Planning Authority. The County Planning Authority in adopting their formal Screening Opinion considered that the proposed development was unlikely to have a significant environmental effect and, therefore, it can be built under Permitted Development.

28. Planning permission is not required for the Parkside Junction or the Evesham Junctions Schemes due to the size and location of the improvements and can be done under Permitted Development.

Funding

29. A total of £22.9m funding for Reducing Congestion has been made available as part of the overall Council's Capital Programme, including the contribution of £1.3m towards the cost of the Hoobrook Roundabout Scheme from the Getting Building Fund. A summary of the funding and recommended allocations are shown in the table below.

	£
Cut Congestion across the County – Feb 2017	5.0
National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF) awards from the Department for Transport (DfT) – Feb 2018	6.6
Capital allocation for 4 specific schemes – Feb 2018	5.0
Open for Business and Regeneration – Feb 2019	5.0
Getting Building Fund	1.3
Total Funding available	22.9
Upton Roundabout Scheme	6.5
Hoobrook Roundabout Scheme	3.6
Parkside Junction Scheme	0.8
Evesham Junctions Scheme	0.2
Total for the schemes within this report	11.3
Funding spent / committed / available for other schemes including Worcester and Bromsgrove National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF) schemes	11.6

Joint Equality, Public Health, Data Protection and Sustainability Impact Assessments

30. Joint Impact Assessment (JIA) screenings have been completed for the Schemes and are attached as **Appendices 7, 8, 9 and 10**.

Supporting Information

- Appendix 1 – Upton Roundabout concept plan
- Appendix 2 – Upton Roundabout land requirement plan
- Appendix 3 – Hoobrook Roundabout concept plan
- Appendix 4 – Parkside Junction concept plan
- Appendix 5 – Evesham Junction concept plan
- Appendix 6 – Upton Roundabout JIA
- Appendix 7 – Hoobrook Roundabout JIA
- Appendix 8 – Parkside Junction JIA
- Appendix 9 – Evesham Junction JIA

Contact Points

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Specific Contact Points for this report

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Strategic Director for Economy and Infrastructure) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.