

## **CABINET DECEMBER 2022**

### **A38 BROMSGROVE ROUTE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME (BREP)**

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#### **Relevant Cabinet Member**

Cllr M. Bayliss

#### **Relevant Chief Officer**

Strategic Director of Economy and Infrastructure

#### **Local Member(s)**

Cllr K. Daisley

Cllr J. Robinson

Cllr K. Taylor

Cllr S. Webb

#### **Recommendation**

1. **The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills recommends that Cabinet:**
  - a) **notes the overall concept of the A38 Bromsgrove Route Enhancement Programme (BREP) and progress made to date;**
  - b) **notes and endorses the changes to the proposals during the development of the Full Business Case;**
  - c) **approves the further development of the Full Business Case (FBC) and submission to the Department of Transport (DfT) during 2022/23;**
  - d) **delegates approval of the final wording of the FBC to the Strategic Director of Economy and Infrastructure in consultation with the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills;**
  - e) **supports the ongoing stakeholder engagement and management exercises with National Highways, DfT and statutory stakeholders as required to finalise the Full Business Case.**

#### **Background**

2. The A38 is one of Worcestershire's most important strategic transport routes connecting Bromsgrove with key destinations both regionally and nationally through its direct connections with motorway network, through junction on the M5 and M42. The route is critical to the economic growth of north Worcestershire, supporting the housing and employment growth in adopted local plans.

3. Midlands Connect (MC) have identified BREP as one of the top 10 West Midlands region major road network priority schemes securing important regional support and funding for the proposals.

4. However, the route is under pressure and suffers with congestion and un-reliable journey times. Worcestershire County Council has been working with partners including National Highways, Bromsgrove District Council (BDC), Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (WLEP) and the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) to relieve congestion and support growth, through a programme of improvement works.

5. The scheme was originally identified in Local Transport Plan 4 to relieve existing traffic congestion and to support the sustainable growth of Bromsgrove identified in the adopted Bromsgrove District Plan. The programme is also critical to assist to support the objectives of the Redditch Local Plan, and both the Worcestershire and Greater Birmingham and Solihull Strategic Economic Plans.

6. The scheme is being delivered in Phases, with Phases 1 and 2 already complete and funded. To continue with the BREP scheme the County submitted an Outline Business Case to the Department for Transport (DfT) as part of the Major Road Network (MRN) funding programme. The MRN programme is for major schemes up to a maximum of £50 million including an essential local contribution of 15%.

7. On this basis the Council developed and submitted a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) to the DfT in summer 2019. Following more detailed development work the Outline Business Case (OBC) was submitted to DfT and approved in August 2022. 85% funding for the scheme was allocated from the MRN programme (DfT) totalling £43.17 million, on the understanding that there would be local contributions of 15%.

8. Work has continued to refine the proposals with the Full Business Case (FBC) timetabled to be submitted to DfT in late 2022/23.

### **Overview of A38 BREP Scheme Proposals**

9. The programme contains a mixture of highway capacity and enhancements aimed at providing additional capacity within the area and improving overall journey time reliability. In addition, a series of active travel enhancements providing opportunities are proposed for walking and cycling as alternatives to car use for short journeys and to link to the active travel provision delivered through the Bromsgrove National Productivity Investment Fund. The location of the BREP schemes is shown in **Appendix 1** and summarised below:

#### **Highway Schemes**

- Scheme A - A38 / Hanbury Turn
- Scheme B – A38 / Buntsford Drive / Stoke Road (including active travel improvements along A38 corridor)
- Scheme C – A38 / Stoke Road / Charford Road (including A38 to South Bromsgrove High School active travel link delivered)
- Scheme D – A38 / New Road (including New Road Toucan crossing)
- Scheme E – A38 / A448 (Oakalls Roundabout)
- Scheme F – A38 / Birmingham Road / M42 J1
- Scheme G – A38 / Golden Cross Lane / Braces Lane

### **Active Travel and Public Transport Schemes**

- Scheme 1 – A38 / A448 junction to Birmingham Road active travel link
- Scheme 2 – Charford Road to Harvington Road active travel link (already delivered)
- Scheme 3 – Bromsgrove Rail station to the town centre active travel corridor (alternative)
- Scheme 4 – A448 (Stratford Road) near Blackwood Road active travel crossing
- Scheme 5 – Fordhouse Road to Carnforth Road upgraded pedestrian / cycle bridge
- Scheme 6 – A38 and A448 (Oakalls) Roundabout to Regents Park Road active travel corridor
- Scheme 7 – Real time information
- Scheme 8 – Public transport select vehicle detection
- Scheme 9 – Fordhouse Road / Bant Mill Road / Harvington Road LTN 1/20 compliance traffic calming scheme

### **Traffic Management Scheme**

- Scheme 10 – Alcester Road traffic management scheme

### **A38 BREP Scheme Delivery**

10. Following receipt of advanced funding through Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership, Highways England and Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP (GBSLEP) a number of the early schemes have been delivered as part of the A38 BREP programme. These schemes have been fully funded, are complete and operational and included here for information only. They do not form part of the decisions within this report. As part of delivering this phase, the Council forward funded c£2.54 million in lieu of the expected MRN grant which will be repaid once the grant has been received.

- A38 / Barley Mow Lane junction
- A38 / M42 junction 1 improvement
- A38 / M5 Junction 4 improvements,
- Charford Road to Harvington Road active travel scheme
- Charford Road active travel route and crossing
- Active travel improvements including toucan crossing on A448 near Blackwood Road

### **Development of the Full Business Case**

11. The Full Business Case (FBC) for the A38 BREP is due to be submitted to DfT during winter 2022/23. Work is well advanced on this. Rising inflation since the submission of the OBC has significantly impacted the costs of the BREP proposals resulting in the cost estimate for delivery of the total package now being in excess of the funding available.

12. Additional funding is not available from the DfT to assist with addressing the impact of inflation and their contribution is fixed at the £43.17 million set out in the agreed OBC. WCC has maximised developer contributions for the scheme and no further funding is currently available from other sources either internally or externally.

13. To address the additional costs of scheme and move to delivery with the secured DfT funding allocation, a phased approach will be taken to the delivery of the A38 BREP proposals aligned to the current availability of funding. As such, the remaining schemes have been prioritised into two further phases – Phase 3 and Phase 4. This approach was taken to ensure that the economic and housing growth proposed in Local Plans could still be supported and that the investment of £50 million in the corridor can be secured.

14. The prioritisation for Phase 3 and 4 was undertaken using a mix of quantitative and qualitative analysis based on factors including relative cost benefit ratio, economic benefit, direct section 106 contribution and deliverability. This provided the scores for the individual schemes, from which the cohesive phases were developed ensuring a mix of highway improvements, active travel and public transport schemes. This approach reflects and develops the approach taken in the approved OBC, within a refined area of focus.

15. Schemes within Phase 3 will be able to be delivered from the funding available (as detailed below) and will be taken forward through the FBC and submitted to DfT. This phase will provide significant additional capacity on the A38 through the inclusion of schemes at key junctions including Oakalls roundabout and key junctions along the southern section of the A38, plus the link to the M42 junction1. Active travel links across the A38 to reduce severance and to connect with employment and retail destinations are also included along with real time bus information and public transport vehicle detection at traffic signals, promoting modal choice.

16. The schemes which will form Phase 3 are:

- Scheme 3 Alternative – Bromsgrove Rail station to the town centre active travel corridor
- Scheme 6 – A38 and A448 (Oakalls) Roundabout to Regents Park Road active travel corridor
- Schemes 7&8 – Real time information and public transport select vehicle detection
- Scheme 9 – Fordhouse Road / Bant Mill Road / Harvington Road LTN 1/20 compliance traffic calming scheme
- Scheme A1 - A38 / Hanbury Turn re-lining
- Scheme B1 – A38 / Buntsford Drive to Sherwood Road Cycle Route
- Scheme B3 – Austin Road to Charford Road Cycle Route
- Scheme B4 - A38 widening between Austin Road
- Scheme C – A38 / Stoke Road / Charford Road junction improvements
- Scheme D – A38 / New Road (including New Road Toucan crossing)
- Scheme E – A38 / A448 (Oakalls) Roundabout improvements
- Scheme F – A38 / Birmingham Road / M42 J1

17. The following schemes would form the basis of phase 4, which will not commence until for future funding is available:

- Scheme 1 – A38 / A448 junction to Birmingham Road active travel link
- Scheme 5 – Fordhouse Road to Carnforth Road upgraded pedestrian / cycle bridge

- Scheme A2 - A38 / Hanbury Turn Traffic signals and new streetlights
- Scheme B2 – A38 widening Buntsford Drive to Austin Road
- Scheme G – A38 / Golden Cross Lane / Braces Lane
- Scheme 10 – Alcester Road traffic management scheme

## **Public Engagement**

18. As part of the development of the OBC a public engagement exercise was carried out in early 2020 on the entirety of the BREP proposals. Further engagement was undertaken in 2021 on the proposals for Schemes 3 and 5 as part of pre-planning engagement and subsequently in 2022 on alternative proposals for Scheme 3.

19. The aim of Scheme 3 was to provide an active travel route between Bromsgrove Rail Station and the town centre reducing the severance created by the A38.

20. Feedback on the 2021 engagement concerning the initial proposal for an active travel bridge across the A38 between the two arms of Old Station Road, along with increasing costs of the bridge to meet LTN 1/20 standards resulted in a review of the proposals. An alternative proposal was developed with public engagement in summer 2022.

21. The alternative proposals have been developed with the same aims as the original of reducing severance and increasing connectivity to Bromsgrove Rail Station, compliance with Active Travel guidance LTN 1/20 and offering value for money.

22. The alternative scheme proposals are for a route which includes improvements for active travel linking the Rail Station via New Road, Rigby Road, passing by Aston Fields Middle School before connecting to the Oakalls estate with improvements to the existing off-road routes to emerge onto Regents Park Road, utilising the already proposed active travel improvements and crossing on the A38 and onward along the Stratford Road (A448) to connect to Bromsgrove centre.

23. A report in response to the points raised through public engagement will be published on the WCC website prior to the submission of the FBC. This will set out the local questions arising from the scheme and our responses to these. Such matters can be addressed through precise amendments to the proposals as the final detail is confirmed.

## **Planning**

24. The sole scheme which required planning permission is the Scheme 5 bridge Fordhouse Road to Carnforth Road with an upgraded pedestrian and cycle bridge.

25. A planning application was submitted to County Council Planning and Regulatory Committee and planning permission was granted in May 2022.

26. Scheme 5 is now a part of the Phase 4 proposals. No schemes within Phase 3 require planning permission.

## Finance

27. The forecast cost of Phase 3 of the A38 BREP programme is £45.42 million. The majority of the scheme is being funded via the DfT's Major Road Network programme, which has been confirmed to be £43.17m in total. The DfT also contributed £0.85 million for the development of the business cases as was agreed in the OBC, this was spent in 2021/22. £2.54 million of the MRN grant is relevant to schemes in previous phases, which was forward funded by the Council, therefore £40.63 million remains for Phase 3.

28. The local contribution of match funding will be secured through section 106 funding from strategic development sites in Bromsgrove and Redditch which will impact on the A38 BREP. The section 106 contributions total is £4.37 million. If the identified section 106 monies are not available in time to meet with the programme delivery requirements, the Council may need to be forward fund these monies to ensure delivery of the project, however it is expected that the risk of this will be minimal. Remaining funding from Highways England and Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP (GBSLEP) also contribute to the total funding.

29. The funding of the scheme is summarised in the following table:

<b>Source</b>	<b>£000</b>
Department for Transport	43,170
Highways England	320
GBS LEP	100
Section 106	4,370
<b>Sub-Total Funding</b>	<b>47,960</b>
Repayment of Forward Funding	(2,540)
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>45,420</b>

30. The current increases in inflation present a significant risk to this project, for which the proposed solution has been to develop a phased approach. Officers will continue to liaise with the DfT through quarterly monitoring reports and direct engagement.

## Contractor Procurement

31. A procurement process has been commenced to secure the contractors for the main works. This, along with existing contracts, will enable delivery of the schemes to commence following the approval of the FBC by the DfT.

## Public Health Impact Assessments

32. In Worcestershire, 65% of adults and one third of year 6 children are overweight and/or obese. Part of the reason for this is physical inactivity with around 21% of adults in Worcestershire do less than 30 minutes of exercise per week. The A38 BREP proposals provide significant enhancements for walking and cycling, providing both new, upgraded and alternative options for active travel, integrated into the proposals and linking different modes of transport.

33. There is a strong evidence base around the benefits of helping people to take up walking or cycling (active travel) which requires an integrated and joined-up approach, including:

- Providing clear information and advice promoting physical activity and active travel;
  - Encouraging families, children and young people to live active lives;
  - Supporting those who have the poorest health outcomes and those who are most inactive to take steps to increase physical activity;
  - Creating health-promoting environments; and
  - Providing appropriate infrastructure.

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

34. An Equality Relevance Screening has been completed for Local Transport Plan 4 which provides the policy context for the proposed A38 BREP Project. The screening is included in the Outline Business Case. Following the completion of a screening exercise (Appendix 2), it has been determined that a Joint Equality and Public Health Impact Assessment will be required prior to the delivery of the Phase 3 schemes.

35. No Human Rights issues have been identified.

### **Risk Implications**

36. The main risks are as follows:

- The impact of inflation on the scheme and the risk of rising costs could have an impact on the delivery of the individual schemes and the programme. Costs are being monitored and fixed price contracts being entered into with the contractors.
- Delay in approving the FBC by DfT resulting in delays to delivery and uncertainty with contractors
- Risk of forward funding monies for some or all of the various s.106 developer contributions to the scheme later in the construction phase if these monies are not forthcoming in a timely manner.

### **Supporting Information**

Available electronically:

- Appendix 1 – Location of schemes [A38 Bromsgrove Route Enhancement Programme \(BREP\) | A38 BREP improvements background | Worcestershire County Council](#)
- Appendix 2 – Joint Impact Assessment screening

### **Contact Points**

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 of Economy and Infrastructure) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

[Browse meetings - Cabinet - Worcestershire County Council \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](http://modern.gov.co.uk)

- Report to Cabinet October 2020
- Report to Cabinet of 12 July 2018
- Council 08 November 2018
- Scheme drawings