

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Environment and Transport
Date:	14 November 2017
Title:	Farnborough Growth Package and Blackwater Valley “Gold Grid”
Report From:	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this paper is to seek approval for public engagement and consultation on the outline scheme proposals emerging for the Farnborough Growth Package and Blackwater Valley Gold Grid. These schemes have provisionally secured funding through the Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership’s (EM3 LEP) Local Growth Deal in order to support economic growth in Farnborough and the wider Blackwater Valley area, with delivery anticipated over the period to 2021.
- 1.2. Feasibility work has identified scheme proposals for both the Farnborough Growth Package and Blackwater Valley Gold Grid. The feasibility work has not been constrained by the currently available funding, and has identified a comprehensive range of interventions that could be implemented in support of both projects. It is important that in-principle support is secured from the public and key stakeholders for both the overall proposals and how these should be prioritised for implementation within current funding availability. Once this is established, the prioritised scheme proposals will be developed to a greater level of detail and subject to further consultation and engagement with key stakeholders and the general public.
- 1.3. This report outlines the overall scheme proposals that should be taken forward to public consultation, together with the recommended prioritisation for implementation.

2. Contextual information

- 2.1. The EM3 LEP has identified Farnborough as one of its four “Growth Towns”, which are a focus for economic and housing growth. The Farnborough Growth Package will deliver a package of transport interventions that will accommodate increased future travel demands in order to minimise congestion and support the economic growth aspirations for the area. The

EM3 LEP has provisionally allocated £6.7 million of Local Growth Fund, matched by £2 million of local contributions, giving a total package of £8.7 million.

- 2.2. The Blackwater Valley Gold Grid is a package of sustainable transport improvements, which aims to increase connectivity across the wider Blackwater Valley area. The EM3 LEP has provisionally allocated £8 million of Local Growth Fund, matched by £13 million of local contributions. Gold Grid includes a joint project with Surrey County Council to implement infrastructure enhancements to the Stagecoach Gold Route, which runs between Aldershot and Camberley, via Farnborough. The level of funding available for the Hampshire component of this project is yet to be agreed. Match funding has been provided by Stagecoach's investment in new vehicles.
- 2.3. Feasibility work has been undertaken to identify the range of potential interventions that could be delivered for both the Farnborough Growth Package and Gold Grid. The area considered by the work is illustrated in Figure 1 and is focussed on:
 - The A325 corridor running north/south through Farnborough;
 - Farnborough Town Centre; and
 - The A3011 Lynchford Road from Queen's Roundabout to the A331 Blackwater Valley Relief Road. This would build on previous investment to increase capacity at Queen's Roundabout.

3. Finance

- 3.1. The EM3 LEP has provisionally allocated £6.7 million of Local Growth Fund to the Farnborough Growth Package. This is matched by a minimum of £2 million of local contributions, giving a total package of £8.7 million.
- 3.2. The £2 million of local contribution is Section 106 funding that has been secured. In addition, it is expected that a further local contribution will be secured from Rushmoor Borough Council in support of the proposed new access into Invincible Road.
- 3.3. The EM3 LEP has provisionally allocated £8 million of Local Growth Fund to the Blackwater Valley Gold Grid, matched by £13 million of local contributions. The level of funding available for the Hampshire component of the Gold Grid project is yet to be confirmed. However, local contributions have been made through Stagecoach's investment in new vehicles on the Gold Route One.
- 3.4. Local Growth Funding allocations for both schemes are provisional at this stage and are subject to the submission of a detailed Business Case.

4. Consultation and Equalities

- 4.1. Whilst this report seeks approval to undertake a public consultation on the emerging proposals for the Farnborough Growth Package, early engagement has already been undertaken with key stakeholders, including local businesses, schools and colleges. This has identified a number of key issues:
 - Traffic congestion within the study area during the AM and PM peak;
 - Lack of cycle facilities; and
 - Cost/lack of public transport.
- 4.2. The proposed public consultation, which will also include key stakeholders, will seek to secure approval to the principles for both the Farnborough Growth Package and the Gold Grid, including the elements that should be prioritised for implementation with the currently available funding. In advance of this, ongoing consultation is taking place with key stakeholders.
- 4.3. It is proposed that the outcomes of this consultation will be reported back at a subsequent meeting, with recommendations on which components should progress forward to detailed design and implementation. These components would also be subject to further detailed public and stakeholder consultation, once the designs have been developed further.

5. Feasibility Work

- 5.1. Feasibility work has been commissioned from Atkins to develop proposals for both the Farnborough Growth Package and Gold Grid projects, within the Study Area, illustrated in Figure 1. The methodology of the feasibility work was as follows:
 - Collection of relevant data for the study area, including traffic surveys, pedestrian and cycle routes, and activity and road safety data;
 - Develop six concept design packages for high level assessment against a range of project objectives in order to shortlist three packages for more detailed appraisal;
 - Build a calibrated and validated micro-simulation model for the A325 Corridor, to assess the performance of the three shortlisted packages in terms of journey times; and
 - Undertake more detailed appraisal of three shortlisted options, including an assessment of performance using the micro-simulation model.
- 5.2. The initial shortlisting work identified the following three packages for more detailed appraisal work:
 - Town Centre Development;
 - Active Mode Connectivity; and
 - Balanced for all Modes.
- 5.3. Following a more detailed appraisal, including an assessment of journey times using the micro-simulation model, the “Balanced for all Modes” and “Town Centre Development” packages provide the best overall performance.

The latter package is inevitably focussed in the Town Centre, whereas the “Balanced for All Modes” package includes measures within the full study area.

- 5.4. Following a direct request from Rushmoor Borough Council, further feasibility work has been undertaken on providing a new access from the Invincible Road industrial estate onto the A327 Elles Road, east of Sulzer’s Roundabout. This is to address the significant congestion problems in this area, as access is currently only possible via Solartron Road to/from Sulzer’s Roundabout.
- 5.5. In terms of the Gold Grid project, direct engagement with Stagecoach South, which has provided the match funding for the project through investment in new vehicles, would like to prioritise improvements at Farnborough Main Station to increase capacity for buses and improvements to the quality of bus stop facilities along the Gold Route. Further detailed feasibility work is necessary to fully understand costs and deliverability of these schemes.
- 5.6. The total cost of all the proposals (> £40m) significantly exceeds the amount of funding currently available, and it will therefore be necessary to prioritise which interventions should be delivered at this stage.

6. Scheme Prioritisation

- 6.1. The current levels of funding availability mean that only a relatively small proportion of the identified interventions can be implemented in the short term, over the period to 2021. It is therefore important to prioritise which elements should be considered for early implementation, taking account of their relative need and deliverability.
- 6.2. It is recommended that, subject to deliverability, the initial priorities should focus on the following components, with the following justification:

- Targeted capacity improvements in Lynchford Road;

Lynchford Road has been identified as a capacity hotspot, through both the work supporting the Farnborough Growth Package and the transport appraisal work in support of Rushmoor Borough Council’s Local Plan Review. It provides an important access route between the Blackwater Valley Relief Road and key employment areas in Farnborough, including Farnborough Business Park. It will provide the main vehicular access route to/from Farnborough International Limited’s new conference and exhibition centre, which is due to open in 2018.

- Improved access to Invincible Road Industrial Estate;

This scheme will address some significant capacity issues that are affecting the Invincible Road Industrial Estate area and impacting on its attractiveness as a business location.

- Improvements to Farnborough Main Station forecourt and bus stop infrastructure (Gold Grid project).

These schemes are supported by Stagecoach South as the best short term way to improve the attractiveness and reliability of the Route One service between Aldershot and Camberley.

- 6.3. There are still some potential deliverability issues in relation to these prioritised schemes. Some of the improvements in Lynchford Road will require the acquisition of MoD land, and the Gold Grid proposals for Farnborough Main Station will require the full agreement of the new South Western Railway franchise.
- 6.4. It is therefore recommended that work continues to develop other components of the Farnborough Growth Package that have fewer deliverability risks as a contingency option. In parallel with the consultation, work will continue to address the deliverability issues. If there's a requirement to re-prioritise the scheme components for short term delivery, this will be reported to a subsequent meeting.

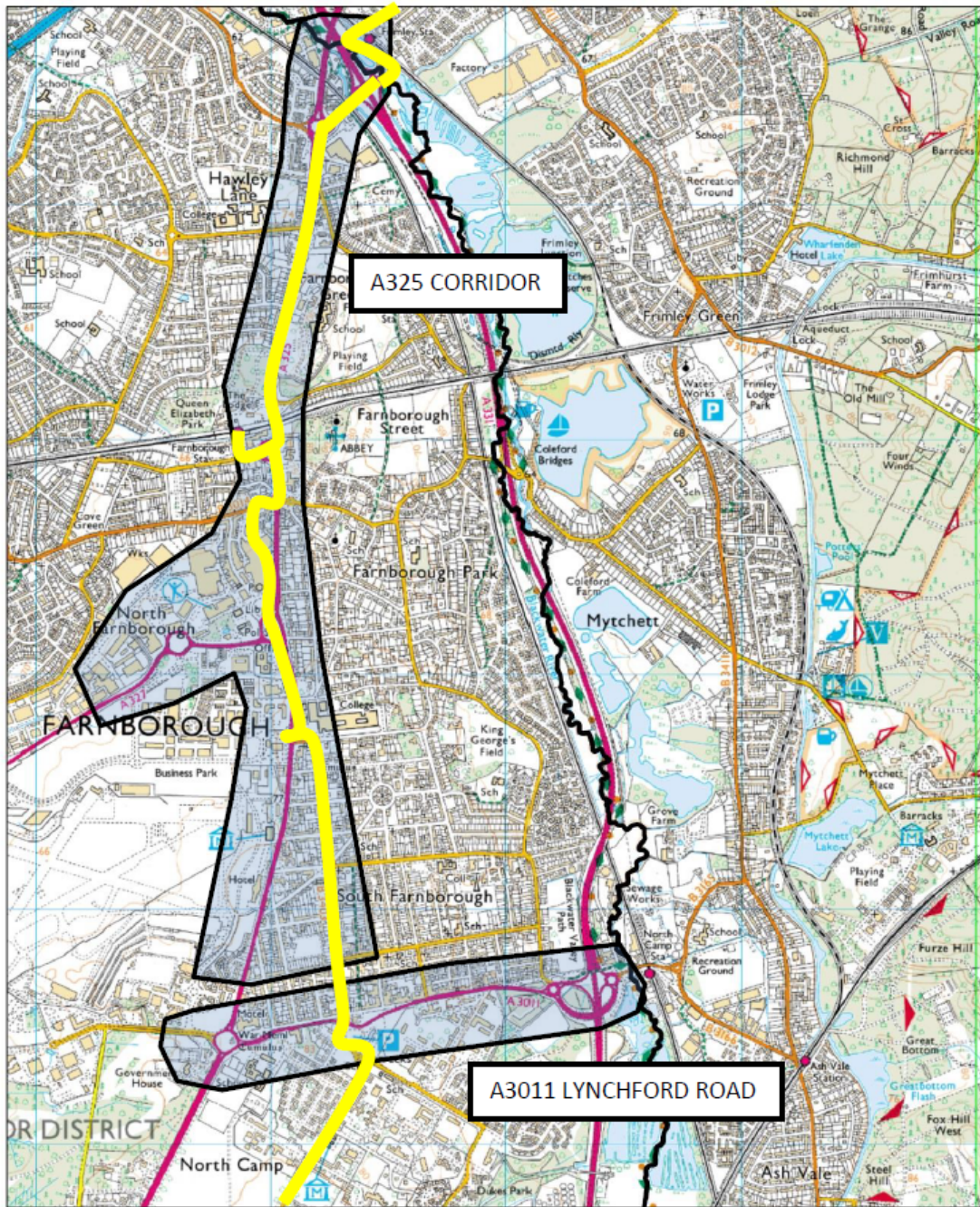
7. Future direction

- 7.1. Following this initial public and stakeholder consultation on the overall scheme principles for the Farnborough Growth Package and Gold Grid projects, it is intended that the prioritised components (together with reserve schemes as appropriate) will be taken forward to more detailed design and implementation. This will include further public and stakeholder consultation.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1. That approval be given for public consultation to be undertaken on the outline scheme proposals for the Farnborough Growth Package and Blackwater Valley Gold Grid.
- 8.2. That the ongoing consultation and liaison with key stakeholders on the outline scheme proposals for the Farnborough Growth Package and Blackwater Valley Gold Grid be noted.

Figure 1 – Study Area



CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Strategic Plan**

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	Yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	Yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	Yes

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

Document

Location

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equality Duty

1.1. The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- a) The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- c) Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

1.2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

The decision relates to a consultation process, which in itself should have no impact upon people with protected characteristics. As proposals develop, further impact assessments will be carried out as appropriate.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

2.1. The projects are expected to have limited impact on crime and disorder.

3. Climate Change:

- a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?
- b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

The decision relates to a consultation process, which in itself should have no impact upon people with protected characteristics. As proposals develop, further impact assessments will be carried out as appropriate.