

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment
Date:	10 March 2020
Title:	Basingstoke Town Centre Transport Study and Mass Rapid Transit
Report From:	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

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Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to prioritise the proposed transport schemes in Basingstoke Town Centre and the proposed Mass Rapid Transit network, in advance of feasibility work starting. This is consistent with the Basingstoke Transport Strategy and its Implementation Plan. This will sustainably support economic growth and regeneration in Basingstoke, as outlined in the Adopted Local Plan and forthcoming Local Plan Update.

Recommendations

2. That the Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment prioritises the following Basingstoke Town Centre transport schemes and agrees that they progress to the next stage of feasibility work:
 - Eastrop Roundabout operational and access improvements;
 - Station Approach access improvements;
 - improved access to Basing View;
 - One Way System operational and access improvements;
 - improved access to Festival Place/The Malls; and
 - comprehensive improvements for walking and cycling.
3. That authority be delegated to the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment to work with the developers of Basingstoke Leisure Park to identify and develop the transport interventions required to support the development proposal, including high quality public transport, walking and cycling links to/from the Town Centre.
4. That the Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment prioritises the development of the Basingstoke Mass Rapid Transit project as a high priority, as identified in the Basingstoke Transport Strategy and authorises working in partnership with key stakeholders, including Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council and bus operators, to determine and develop feasibility and

design work on infrastructure options for the priority corridors for Mass Rapid Transit.

Executive Summary

5. This paper seeks to prioritise transport schemes in Basingstoke Town Centre and the proposed Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) network, consistent with the Basingstoke Transport Strategy and its Implementation Plan. This will sustainably support economic growth and regeneration in Basingstoke, as outlined in the Adopted Local Plan and forthcoming Local Plan Update.
6. The priorities for the Town Centre in the short, medium and longer term have been identified through a recently completed Town Centre Transport Study.
7. In terms of MRT, the initial priority is to determine the overall network ambitions, including identifying any land safeguarding requirements (for priority infrastructure) for inclusion in Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council's Local Plan Update. This will be followed by more detailed feasibility work of priority corridors for potential implementation in the next five to ten years. The priority corridors will be agreed with key stakeholders following the initial work.
8. Following approval, feasibility design work will be undertaken, funded through local resources. In parallel with this, work will be undertaken to identify potential funding for the delivery of prioritised schemes.
9. This report is timely, as the Government is due to undertake a Comprehensive Spending Review in 2020, which will define funding opportunities for the remainder of the current Parliament.

Policy Framework

10. The Basingstoke Transport Strategy, which was adopted in July 2019, provides an overall framework for the sustainable development of transport in Basingstoke, taking account of planned growth in the Local Plan and potential impacts of the forthcoming update, together with the wider policy framework including the Local Transport Plan. The Basingstoke Transport Strategy identified that beyond 2029 (end of the current Local Plan) the continuation of existing policies would not facilitate growth in a sustainable way. It concluded that a "step change" in transport approach was needed. This report and its recommendations reflect this and set out a programme of work that is needed. More recently both the County and Borough Councils have declared a climate emergency and adoption of the Basingstoke Transport Strategy is recognised as an important component of the proposals to address this.
11. The Basingstoke Transport Strategy has identified three priorities for transport in Basingstoke:
 - supporting housing and employment growth and vibrancy;
 - supporting a high quality of life; and
 - supporting inclusive and accessible communities.
12. The growth in housing and employment is defined in the Adopted Local Plan. Within the town centre, the regeneration of Basing View is expected to generate an additional 4,000 jobs and to the west of the town centre, the proposed

redevelopment of the Leisure Park will create a regional leisure and outlet retail facility.

13. Significant levels of new housing are proposed across the Borough and identified in the Adopted Local Plan, with a total of 15,300 homes to be delivered over the 2011 to 2029 18 year period of the Plan, equivalent to 850 per annum. A significant proportion of these will be delivered at the strategic site at Manydown, immediately west of the current built up area, which is proposed to accommodate 3,520 new homes. Around 2,000 homes are also being developed on the A30 Corridor to the south west.
14. In order to sustainably accommodate the growth in travel demand associated with this proposed growth and to meet all three transport priorities, the Basingstoke Transport Strategy has identified a number of proposed transport outcomes:
 - increased use of public transport use, walking and cycling;
 - minimise the overall growth of car traffic;
 - maintain journey times and reliability on key routes; and
 - higher levels of accessibility to local jobs and services.
15. The Basingstoke Transport Strategy has identified seven Themes in order to meet the identified Priorities and Outcomes. A number of these are directly related to the schemes under consideration in this paper:
 - improving access to and within the town centre;
 - integrating new developments with well planned travel choices;
 - providing a step change in the quality of local public transport;
 - developing priority strategic walking and cycling corridors;
 - managing journey time and reliability on key routes;
 - maintaining Basingstoke's strong strategic transport connections; and
 - future proofing of the transport network.

Basingstoke Town Centre

16. In 2017, Atkins was commissioned to undertake a Transport Study of Basingstoke Town Centre, with the following objectives:
 - enabling improved connectivity and integration between the Town Centre and Basing View to the east and Leisure Park to the west;
 - supporting the regeneration of Basing View and other significant development proposals in and around Basingstoke Town Centre;
 - providing an improved Town Centre public transport interchange, with enhanced connectivity to other modes to create a "sense of place"; and
 - improving the operation and accessibility of traffic, public transport, pedestrian and cyclists within the Town Centre.

17. The work included the development of a microsimulation traffic model of the Town Centre, to test the operation of proposed transport schemes and interventions.
18. The report has ultimately pulled together a comprehensive package of schemes at concept level that could be delivered in the short, medium and longer term. In broad terms these equate to delivery in less than five years, within five to seven years and around 10 years+ respectively.
19. Consideration is now given to the specific potential schemes that have been identified through the Transport Study and that this report recommends as a priority for feasibility work. Figure 1 illustrates the area of the study and identifies key locations. It should be noted that there is significant interaction between these schemes, which is noted below.
20. In terms of short-term schemes, the report requests authority to progress these through from feasibility to detailed design.

Eastrop Roundabout

21. Eastrop Roundabout is a six arm traffic signal controlled roundabout. It is a key junction on the eastern side of the Town Centre providing vehicular access to Basing View, the Railway Station, Festival Place, the Top of Town via the one way system and the existing bus station. As a result, all bus services serving the town centre use the junction.
22. Eastrop Roundabout is also a key node for Town centre pedestrian routes and in particular the connection between Basing View and Festival Place. These routes currently use subways, most of which are unattractive to use and do not provide any facilities for cycling. The Study examined a number of improvements that could be implemented at the roundabout or on its approaches.
23. Short term potential improvements include:
 - new “jet lane” from Alençon Link to Basing View to provide improved bus priority;
 - widening the Basing View approach to provide additional capacity; and
 - extending the slip road on the Churchill Way East westbound approach to Eastrop Roundabout.
24. In the medium term, in order to improve pedestrian and cycle accessibility, most of the subways could be replaced by at-grade toucan crossings.
25. A longer-term option examined was to replace the roundabout with two traffic signal controlled crossroads, incorporating pedestrian and cycle facilities. However, modelling work showed that this option would have less traffic capacity than retaining a roundabout and the time taken for pedestrians and cyclists to negotiate the junction using controlled crossings would be significant.
26. It is proposed that feasibility work will consider whether these or other alternative options could be provided, including scope for an attractive grade separated pedestrian and cycle route linking Basing View and the Town Centre.

27. When looking at the traffic capacity of potential scheme options, the feasibility work will consider the future modal shift to MRT, walking and cycling, minimising the increase in car use as per the Basingstoke Transport Strategy.

Station Approach

28. This is another key location within the town centre, which aims to meet a number of key transport outcomes. These include:

- providing a high quality bus interchange for Mass Rapid Transit in the town centre and railway station to replace the existing bus station;
- providing high quality pedestrian and cycle access to and from Basing View to provide seamless linkage from the railway station and bus interchange; and
- providing high quality public realm and access into The Malls.

29. A key constraint in this area is the availability of land to deliver the necessary improvements. This includes sufficient space for the bus interchange facilities and to provide the high quality pedestrian and cycle linkages through to and from Basing View. This would require land outside the existing highway boundary and is constrained by a number of existing buildings at the eastern end of Alençon Link. The Borough Council is currently considering options for this area, as part of its regeneration plans for the wider Basing View area and the County Council will work closely with the Borough Council to determine the schemes that can be developed in this area.

Improved Access to Basing View

30. The issues in relation to improved pedestrian and cycle accessibility to and from the Town Centre and Station Approach area have been considered above. Improvements to Eastrop Roundabout are key to access to Basing View by car and bus.

31. In addition to the Eastrop Roundabout and Station Approach schemes, the Study examined whether a new direct vehicular access could be provided from Churchill Way East. This would reduce the amount of traffic that would need to use Eastrop Roundabout but would potentially only assist east bound traffic exiting Basing View.

One Way System

32. The one way system runs in a clockwise direction around the Top of Town area. This creates extended journeys for bus routes, particularly those using the Winchester Road and Worting Road corridors and for people cycling in the town centre.

33. The Study has examined whether this could be converted to two-way operation to address these issues.

Improved Access to Festival Place and The Malls

34. Improved access into Festival Place and The Malls by all travel modes is important to maintain and enhance the Town Centre. There is significant crossover with other projects, including Eastrop Roundabout and Station Approach, with the latter being a main gateway into The Malls. Issues that will be considered include:
- car park management to ensure that queues do not block back onto the highway at peak shopping periods causing congestion; and
 - improved accessibility by public transport, walking and cycling, including seamless linkages to/from Basing View.

Comprehensive Improvements for Walking and Cycling

35. This component is integral to all projects across the Town Centre, but there's also a requirement to look strategically at the wider walking and cycling networks within and linking to and from the town centre in order to maximise the use of these modes for short journeys within the urban area.
36. There is a need for high quality walking and cycling radial routes linking into the Town Centre and then for a high quality network within the Town Centre that links these radial routes with key destinations. For cycling there's a requirement to link together the radial routes to enable seamless cross town journeys. The Study has considered this issue in some detail and provides a good starting point for identifying priority areas for improvement for both pedestrians and cyclists. This theme also provides a good opportunity to deliver some short term improvements.

Basingstoke Leisure Park

37. The regeneration of the Leisure Park will create a leisure and outlet retail development approximately 1.5km west of the town centre. The Study has considered in detail the improvements that would be required to provide high quality and seamless accessibility between the Leisure park and Town Centre. This includes the provision of dedicated bus lane and priority measures along Churchill Way West as part of the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) scheme and improved cycle and pedestrian routes. The bus measures would form part of a MRT corridor that could extend west of the Leisure Park to serve the strategic housing development at Manydown.
38. A detailed and comprehensive Transport Assessment will need to be produced in support of the planning application for the regeneration and redevelopment of the Leisure Park. This report seeks to give delegated authority to the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment to work with the developers of Basingstoke Leisure Park to identify and develop the transport interventions required to support the development proposal, including high quality public transport, walking and cycling links to and from the Town Centre.

Mass Rapid Transit Project

39. Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) is defined in the Basingstoke Transport Strategy as providing a step change in the quality of local public transport, specifically a high

quality/high volume urban public transport system, using priority highway and technology infrastructure. MRT is a key component in the Basingstoke Transport Strategy to minimise the growth in car traffic. Figure 2 illustrates the proposed network that was included in the Basingstoke Transport Strategy.

40. Some development work was previously undertaken on MRT to support a Large Local Major Scheme bid to the Department for Transport. Although this was unsuccessful, this did raise the profile of the MRT and its subsequent inclusion within the Basingstoke Transport Strategy.
41. There are two key strands of work associated with MRT. The first needs to undertake high level feasibility work to determine the aspirations for the whole network. This will also include the identification of any third party land safeguarding required through the forthcoming Local Plan Update, as well as ensuring permeability into key sites such as Manydown.
42. Following on from this, the other strand is to undertake more detailed feasibility work on prioritised corridors in order to be in a position to bid for capital funding. The Basingstoke Transport Strategy Implementation Plan has initially identified the western corridor (serving the Leisure Park and Manydown) and South West Corridor.
43. The report seeks authority to undertake the necessary feasibility work on MRT and also seeks delegated authority to consult with the Borough Council and local bus companies to determine the priority corridors for feasibility of design work.
44. It should be noted that the Town Centre projects also include important parts of the MRT network, including the provision of a new high quality interchange facility at Station Approach. This will require close co-ordination on all feasibility work.

Other Transport Priorities

45. This report specifically prioritises transport schemes in Basingstoke Town Centre and the Mass Rapid Transit scheme, most of which have been identified by the Basingstoke Transport Strategy Implementation Plan.
46. The Implementation Plan will be subject to regular review and as transport assessment work on the Local Plan Update progresses, other strategic transport schemes could be identified for implementation, potentially including new strategic bypass options.
47. In terms of future Governance arrangements for reviewing the Implementation Plan, it is intended that a Steering Group will be established that will recommend future priorities for the Implementation Plan, which can then be considered by the County Council's established Decision making process, in consultation with Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council. Consideration will also be given to establishing a Joint Members Board to make these decisions.

Finance

48. Funding is available from existing resources for scheme development work on Basingstoke Town Centre and Mass Rapid Transit projects.

49. There is currently uncertainty over Government capital funding for major transport schemes beyond 2021. This includes the level of funding available and the process for obtaining it. However, this report is timely as the Government is undertaking a Comprehensive Spending Review in 2020, which should provide more clarity on funding availability for the remainder of the current parliament and in terms of supporting regeneration and development in Basingstoke.
50. Currently, most Local Major Transport Scheme funding is channelled through the Local Growth Fund, which is controlled by the Local Enterprise Partnerships.
51. The County Council will seek funding opportunities in relation to the prioritised projects considered here.

Consultation and Equalities

52. A presentation was made to the Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council Senior Management Board on 19 February 2020. The feedback is detailed in the attached Appendix.
53. Detailed public and stakeholder consultation will be undertaken on individual projects as feasibility work progresses and this report, if approved, will provide the necessary consent to undertake this. The Basingstoke Transport Strategy, which has set the overall framework for prioritising these projects, was subject to a significant consultation and engagement process prior to adoption. Paragraph 45 above notes specific Stakeholder Consultation in relation to MRT.
54. This decision has been assessed as having a neutral impact on people with protected characteristics, as it is related to prioritisation of schemes. As schemes are brought forward for development, specific equalities impact assessments will be carried out for each scheme.

Conclusions

55. This report prioritises transport schemes in Basingstoke Town Centre and as part of the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) project. This prioritisation is consistent with the Basingstoke Transport Strategy, which provides the overall framework. The feasibility design work will enable these schemes to bid for funding for delivery, which will enable delivery of the Basingstoke Transport Strategy's three key priorities:
 - supporting housing, employment growth and vibrancy;
 - supporting a high quality of life for people who live in, work in and visit Basingstoke; and
 - supporting inclusive and accessible communities.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND 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

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

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 by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

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

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- 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.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

This decision has been assessed as having a neutral impact on people with protected characteristics, as it is related to prioritisation of schemes. As schemes are brought forward for development, specific equalities impact assessments will be carried out for each scheme.