

# HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

## Decision Report

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Executive Lead Member for Economy, Transport and Environment
<b>Date:</b>	12 May 2022
<b>Title:</b>	Project Appraisal: Hartford Bridge Flats Junction Improvement Phase 2
<b>Report From:</b>	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

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### Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide details of the scheme to provide a fourth arm at the A30/A327 Hartford Bridge Flats roundabout junction, and seek approval to progress with the necessary procurement, spending and contractual arrangements to deliver the works.

### Recommendations

2. That the Executive Lead Member for Economy, Transport and Environment, approves the Project Appraisal for the Hartford Bridge Flats Junction Improvement Phase 2 scheme, as set out in this report.
3. That approval be given to procure and spend and enter into necessary contractual arrangements, in consultation with the Head of Legal Services, to implement the improvements proposed within the Hartford Bridge Flats Junction Improvement Phase 2 scheme, as set out in this report, at an estimated cost of £2.121 million to be funded from Section 106 Developer Contributions, Local Transport Plan funding and the Highway Tree Removal Compensation budget.
4. That authority to make arrangements to implement the scheme, including minor variations to the design or contract, be delegated to the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment.
5. That authority be delegated to the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment, in consultation with the Head of Legal Services, to progress all appropriate orders, notices or statutory procedures and secure any consents, licences, permissions, rights or easements necessary to enable the Hartford Bridge Flats Junction Improvement scheme to be implemented.

### Executive Summary

6. This paper sets out the full details of the scheme to connect Blackbushes Road to the existing A30/A327 roundabout junction, by realigning the existing Blackbushes Road south of the A30 to create a fourth arm to the roundabout

and thereby complete the construction of an all moves junction. The proposal also includes the planting of approximately one hectare of natural woodland between the existing road alignment and the new road, resulting in a net gain of over 600 trees.

7. A joint funded Hampshire County Council and Department for Transport Pinch Point Programme improvement scheme to replace the original staggered junction arrangement with a three-arm roundabout solution was completed in May 2015. However, the scheme provided only a partial solution and a second phase - the subject of this proposal - is therefore required to complete the scheme to ensure that the full benefits can be realised.
8. The completion of an all-moves junction will reduce journey times for traffic passing through the A30/A327 and Blackbushes Road junctions, and consequently this will reduce emissions to the environment through a reduction in total vehicle miles travelled on the network and a reduction in congestion on the approaches to these junctions. This scheme adds value to the Phase 1 three-arm junction project, by enabling the full realisation of the benefits, particularly road safety benefits and journey time/distance reductions.
9. As detailed in a report to the Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment, titled Hartford Bridge Flats Junction Improvement Scheme: Project Update (March 2021), the proposed development requires planning permission. Approval to progress with detailed design work and subsequently submit a planning application was confirmed at Decision Day on 11 March 2021. The Planning Application was validated on 26 January 2022 and planning consent was granted on 20 April 2022. With planning consent now secured, approval is sought to proceed with the procurement and delivery phases of the project.

### **Contextual information**

10. The A30/A327 Hartford Bridge Flats junction is located centrally within Hart district and is recognised as an important node linking towns in Surrey and Hampshire to Reading, the Thames Valley and beyond. A joint funded Hampshire County Council and Department for Transport Pinch Point Programme improvement scheme to replace the existing staggered priority-junction arrangement with a three-arm roundabout solution was completed in May 2015. However, the original scheme provides only a partial solution, as time constraints linked to the Pinch Point funding window precluded the provision of a fourth arm within Phase 1 of the scheme, due to the requirement for land acquisition. A second phase is required to complete the scheme to ensure that the full benefits can be realised.
11. The addition of a fourth arm on the A30/A327 Hartford Bridge Flats Junction will provide direct access for traffic seeking to travel southbound on Blackbushes Road when approaching from the north or the west. It will also provide direct access for northbound traffic on Blackbushes Road seeking to travel on the A30 eastbound. Significant journey time savings are expected to result from the removal of the need to U-turn at the A30 Blackbushe Roundabout, as there are approximately 240 vehicles making a U-turn in the AM peak hour and 290 in the

PM peak hour alone. This traffic causes significant delay to vehicles on the A30 westbound and the Blackbushe Airport access. In addition, journey time savings are expected for the traffic that currently no longer needs to U-turn, and estimates are that in the AM peak hour this would equate to be approximately 300 vehicle minutes saved, with a corresponding saving of 360 vehicle minutes in the PM peak hour. These manoeuvres currently add pressure along this important secondary link to the M3 in this area.

12. This proposal completes the original scheme and enables the realisation of the full potential benefits. The scheme aims to improve network efficiency and journey times to areas of employment and to accommodate future development, to help promote increased local and regional growth and investment. Locally, the scheme will support employment at Blackbushe Airport adjacent to the junction as well as other enterprises using the Blackbushes Centre, thereby contributing to the economy of the local area and supporting proposed innovation and development in the Hart District Local Plan. Regionally, the measures support spatial focus and place-based growth by improving transport network efficiency, easing congestion, and removing barriers to business growth and investment.

### **Scheme details**

13. The scheme will create a new section of road linking Blackbushes Road directly to the A30/A327 roundabout junction. This will create a fourth arm on the roundabout, which will replace the existing A30/Blackbushes Road priority T-junction that is currently located approximately 35m to the east of the A30/A327 roundabout. Blackbushes Road to the south of the A30 will be realigned over a length of approximately 240m, and to the south this, an additional 60m of resurfacing will be completed, to replace the road surface around the existing traffic signals on Blackbushes Road. Road markings will be revised and refreshed over the full scheme extents. Some utility diversions are required along the south side of the A30 to facilitate the construction of the fourth arm of the roundabout. A general arrangement layout plan is included in Appendix 1.
14. The old section of Blackbushes Road will be closed to traffic, the existing road will be broken up, and topsoiled/replanted with site-won material and low-level planting, which will minimise the impact of the scheme on local biodiversity. Tree clearance is required to prepare the route of the new alignment, requiring the loss of 19 trees. The loss of these trees will be offset through re-planting within the area of land between the existing road alignment and the new road. The proposal is to plant this area (approximately 630 new trees over one hectare) with a mix of species that will initiate the transition of the area to a natural woodland. Further details on the ecological and arboricultural impacts and mitigation are described subsequently within this report.
15. Existing lighting on the old road will be removed and new lighting will be installed on the realigned section of carriageway. The new lighting will be to an improved

standard using LED lamps to provide greater energy efficiency and reduced requirement for routine maintenance.

16. Highway drainage from the new road area will be via a sustainable drainage system, in the form of a swale located along the west side of the new road. The swale will store surface water runoff and dispose of it by infiltration. At the northern end of the new road, the highway drainage connects to the existing drainage system on the south side of the A30. Adjacent to the swale, a steel palisade boundary fence will be erected along the new highway boundary, positioned outside of the publicly maintainable highway and within the adjacent privately owned land to the west of the site.
17. Due to the remote location and the high-speed nature of the roads there are no dedicated facilities for cyclists and pedestrians at present and significant future levels of pedestrian or cycling activity are not expected.

## Finance

18. It is estimated that the total scheme will cost approximately £2.121 million. It is planned that this will be funded by £1.621 million of S106 Developer Contributions, £23,000 from the Highway Tree Removal Compensation budget, with the remainder, approximately £477,000, from Local Transport Plan (LTP) funding.

19. <u>Estimates</u>	<u>£'000</u>	<u>% of total</u>	<u>Funds Available</u>	<u>£'000</u>
Design and Supervision Fee	387	18	LTP	477
Client Fee	69	3	Developer contribution	1,621
Construction	1,601	76	Highway Tree Removal Compensation	23
Land	64	3		
Total	2,121	100	Total	2,121

20.

<u>Maintenance Implications</u>	<u>£'000</u>	<u>% Variation to Committee's budget</u>
Net increase in current expenditure	3	0.003%
Capital Charge	204	0.134%

### Programme

21.

	Gateway Stage			
	3 – Project Appraisal	Start on site	End on site	4 – Review
Date	May 2022	September/October 2022	February 2023	February 2024

### Departures from Standards

22. No departures from standard are proposed.

### Consultation and Equalities

23. The Local County Council Member, Cllr Tim Davies, has been briefed on the scheme proposals.

24. As consultees to the Planning Application for the proposed development, Hart District Council has raised no objection, whilst Eversley Parish Council and Hartley Wintney Parish Council commented in support of the application.

25. A public exhibition was held in 2014 for Phase 1 of the project which was well supported by local businesses and residents. The realignment of Blackbushes Road as a fourth arm onto the roundabout was included in this exhibition and shown as a potential Phase 2. A period of public consultation on the Planning Application for the proposed development was effective from 4 February 2022 to 4 March 2022. During this period, no objections were received from members of the public or local businesses.

26. The completed scheme will deliver road safety benefits to all road users, particularly with the traffic manoeuvre to exiting Blackbushes Road onto the A30 becoming easier via the roundabout when compared to negotiating the current

priority T-junction. The scheme may therefore be of benefit to those with longer perception/reaction times, which may include older drivers. Aside from this, the scheme is considered to have a neutral impact on groups with protected characteristics.

### **Climate Change Impact Assessments**

27. Hampshire County Council utilises two decision-making tools to assess the carbon emissions and resilience of its projects and decisions. These tools provide a clear, robust, and transparent way of assessing how projects, policies and initiatives contribute towards the County Council's climate change targets of being carbon neutral and resilient to the impacts of a 2°C temperature rise by 2050. This process ensures that climate change considerations are built into everything the Authority does.

### Carbon Mitigation

28. In the short-term during construction, carbon emissions from this project arise from the manufacture of the new infrastructure to be constructed. Bitumen and cementitious based materials will be used for the carriageway with concrete kerbing. Traffic signs and lighting materials are mainly aluminium with steel posts and concrete foundations. The provision of all materials will be to industry standard. The replacement of street lighting is estimated to reduce electricity usage through efficient lighting design and low voltage LED lamps. Transporting materials and resources to site will generate CO<sub>2</sub> emissions as will the operation of plant during the works. Carbon emissions will be mitigated using recycled materials where practicable and using manufactures with a focus on efficient low carbon manufacturing methods. The existing road will be broken up, but the material will remain in-situ, which will remove the carbon emissions associated with transporting this material off-site. Additional impacts from this project arise from the site clearance and tree loss. There will be no further carbon emissions generated by the infrastructure upon completion of the works other than for maintenance, replacement of infrastructure as part of general routine maintenance or to address defects.
29. The output from the carbon mitigation tool does not consider the long-term benefits that the scheme will deliver. The scheme will reduce traffic congestion and vehicle miles travelled on the road network, thereby reducing long-term emissions from vehicle traffic. It also does not consider the other mitigation factors such as the proposed significant net increase in tree numbers and canopy cover that will be delivered as part of the project, and the longer-term environmental benefit that this provides.

### Climate Change Adaptation

30. The Adaptation Project Screening Tool has assessed the scheme as somewhat vulnerable to exposure to severe weather and to extreme heat events but no more so than any other highway asset within the County. Vulnerability of the asset is dependent on its performance during exposure. The proposed assets

are widely used on the highway network and installed to Hampshire County Council standard details.

31. The road has been designed to avoid surface water ponding, and the scheme utilises a sustainable drainage system (SuDS) to dispose of surface water runoff. The drainage has been designed to withstand a 1:100-year storm plus a 40% increase in storm intensity to allow for climate change. The surrounding landscape is flat and comprised primarily of forestry land, through which surface water will infiltrate.
32. During prolonged periods of high temperatures and under extreme storm and wind conditions, a medium level of vulnerability is assumed, primarily relating the tree planting associated with the works. During prolonged periods of high temperatures some trees may be susceptible to drought (although any tree loss within the scheme's 5-year establishment period will be replaced). During extreme storm/wind conditions, there is an increased risk of tree loss. The replanting delivers a significant net benefit in terms of canopy cover and tree numbers over the existing situation, therefore whilst new trees may be lost due to wind, the impact of any that are lost is no greater than the current situation.
33. The scheme supports three Hampshire County Council Strategic Priorities:
  - a. 'Maintaining strong and resilient economic growth and prosperity'; by improving network efficiency and journey times on routes to areas of employment and areas of future business growth and investment.
  - b. 'People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives'; by providing significant road safety benefits through the removal of the existing priority T-junction at A30/Blackbushes Road and reducing the high-frequency of U-turning traffic on the existing A30 roundabouts.
  - c. 'People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment'. The scheme seeks to plant approximately 1 hectare of natural woodland in space currently occupied by plantation forestry. The result over the long term is a net environmental and ecological benefit over the existing situation. The scheme will also bring air quality improvements by easing congestion and reducing unnecessary vehicle mileage on the network.

### **Statutory Procedures**

34. Under Schedule 2, Section 3 of the Town and Country Planning Act, the proposed development requires planning permission. On 11 March 2021, the Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment gave authority to progress the necessary planning application. Following completion of detailed design work, a Regulation 3 Planning Application was submitted to Hampshire County Council Strategic Planning, as Local Planning Authority, which was validated on 26 January 2022. Planning consent was granted at Hampshire County Council Regulatory Committee on 20 April 2022.
35. The route of the old road will be subject to a Traffic Regulation Order which will introduce a prohibition of motor traffic and pedal cycles over the full extent. The

necessary TROs will be promoted and processed through established procedures. The route of the old road shall not be stopped up as it does retain a highway purpose, in that it provides necessary space within the highway to deliver the necessary environmental mitigation to offset the impacts of the scheme.

36. The necessary temporary traffic signals approval and Streetworks Permit will be arranged prior to the commencement of the works, noting that this work is taking place on the M3 diversion route.

### **Land requirements**

37. To implement the scheme, Hampshire County Council will need to acquire the freehold interest of approximately 4,500m<sup>2</sup> of land within which the new road will be located. The Elvetham Estate owns the freehold interest in the land, and CEMEX holds a mineral extraction lease. Terms have provisionally been agreed (subject to contract) with both parties to enable the required land to be transferred to the County Council. The land will be transferred from the current landowner to Hampshire County Council and held for highway purposes.
38. To deliver various elements of the works near the new highway boundary, primarily the erection of a new security fence along the highway boundary as an agreed term of the land acquisition, there is a requirement for the County Council to enter into a licence agreement with the landowner. The licence agreement will be temporary for construction purposes only.
39. These agreed terms for acquiring the subject land were approved on 1 December 2020 by the Assistant Director (Property Services) under powers delegated by the Executive Member for Policy and Resources. The land transaction and licence agreement have been on hold until such time as the proposed scheme received planning consent. Following confirmation of planning consent, the land transaction and licence agreement shall be completed prior to the commencement of works.
40. Aside from the land requirements mentioned, the remainder of the land required for implementation of this scheme is within the extents of the existing highway boundary.

### **Ecology and Arboriculture**

41. An Ecological Appraisal prepared in November 2021 identified that the site supports degraded heathland habitat of low to moderate ecological value; and makes recommendations to ensure no overall net loss of biodiversity. The recommendations relate to a) the methods for reinstatement of the existing road to vegetation following completion of new road construction, to ensure that the development will have a net neutral or positive impact on biodiversity, and b) methods for site vegetation clearance to minimise the impact on breeding birds and reptiles. These recommendations will form part of the construction contract.



42. An Arboricultural Impact Assessment completed in April 2021 concluded that delivery of the project necessitated the removal of 19 trees; 13 category 'C' (primarily early-mature pine plantation trees within the private land to the west of the proposed new road) and 5 Category 'B' (mostly mature oaks along the edge of the existing road). The report recommends mitigation planting to achieve at least 900m<sup>2</sup> of canopy cover within the next 10-20 years, equating to approximately 18 medium species trees or 47 small species trees.
43. Replanting proposals have been developed to mitigate the loss of these trees and canopy cover, and in addition, the proposals seek to provide significant further enhancement. The area available for new planting between the existing road alignment and the new road is approximately one hectare (10,000m<sup>2</sup>). The proposal is to plant the area with a mix of species that will initiate a transition of the area to a natural woodland. This includes a total of approximately 630 new trees are to be planted, including species such as silver birch, oak, hazel, and hawthorn. Once the trees are past the initial establishment phase, future intervention will be minimal.
44. In early 2021, prior to completion of the land transaction associated with the scheme, the adjacent landowner/leaseholder completed works to clear-fell the adjacent land to the west of the site, as part of its commercial activities. This resulted in the removal of the 13 Category C trees identified in the Arboricultural report. The other 5 trees requiring removal, those currently within the highway boundary, would be felled during the County Council's construction works.

### **Maintenance Implications**

45. Hampshire County Council Highways Asset Management has been consulted on the proposals and has agreed to the standard of highway materials being used. The proposed scheme will have an impact on the maintenance budget in future years, this is expected to be approximately £3,000 per annum.

### **Conclusions**

46. The scheme aims to improve network efficiency and journey times to areas of employment and to accommodate future development, to help promote increased local and regional growth and investment. The measures support spatial focus and place-based growth by improving transport network efficiency, easing congestion, and removing barriers to business growth and investment.
47. The junction improvement will reduce journey times for traffic in the local area, and reduce congestion around the existing A30 roundabout, thereby delivering air quality benefits. This project adds value to the original 3-arm roundabout scheme in terms of enabling the full realisation of benefits for the completed scheme, particularly road safety benefits and journey time/distance reductions. With planning consent now secured, approval is sought to proceed with the procurement and delivery phases of the project.

**REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:**

**Links to the Strategic Plan**

<b>Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:</b>	yes
<b>People in Hampshire live safe, healthy, and independent lives:</b>	yes
<b>People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:</b>	yes
<b>People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:</b>	no

**Other Significant Links**

<b>Links to previous Member decisions:</b>	
<u>Title</u> Hartford Bridge Flats Junction Improvement Scheme: Project Update to Executive Member for Economy Transport and Environment	<u>Date</u> 11 March 2021
<b>Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives</b>	
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>

**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.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
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:**

The completed scheme will deliver road safety benefits to all road users, particularly with the traffic manoeuvre to exiting Blackbushes Road onto the A30 becoming easier via the roundabout when compared to negotiating the current priority T-junction. The scheme may therefore be of benefit to those with longer perception/reaction times, which may include older drivers.

Aside from this, the scheme is considered to have a neutral impact on groups with protected characteristics.