



27 September 2022

Agenda Item: 7

REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR – PLACE AND COMMUNITIES

NEWARK AND SHERWOOD DISTRICT REF. NO.: 3/22/00589/CMA

PROPOSAL: HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS TO ROUNDABOUT

**LOCATION: WHITE POST ROUNDABOUT - INTERSECTION OF A614 AND
MANSFIELD ROAD, FARNSFIELD, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE, NG22 8HU**

APPLICANT: NOTTINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL- (PLACE DEPT)

Purpose of Report

1. To consider a planning application for minor improvements/refurbishments to the White Post Farm roundabout. The recommendation is to grant planning permission subject to the conditions set out in Appendix 1.
2. The applicant has elected to undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment for the wider project and an Environmental Statement has been provided. Consequently the works require planning permission and do not benefit from Permitted Development rights that are usually available to the County Highways Authority.

Background to the A614/A6097 project

3. Nottinghamshire County Council along with its partner local authorities and agencies has identified a need to improve the capacity and performance of a number of junctions along the A614 and A6097 corridor which forms part of the Major Road Network (MRN) within the County.
4. The A614 is an important north-south route from Nottingham to Retford and beyond, with the A6097 providing a spur to the A46 trunk road linking Leicester with Newark and Lincoln. Both roads are largely two-way single carriageway, with dual carriageway sections through Lowdham. Running centrally through the County the roads serve as vital commuter and tourist routes linking villages and towns together and with the City of Nottingham, and also providing access to attractions including Rufford Abbey, Sherwood Forest, White Post Farm, and Wheelgate Park. The roads also serve as diversionary routes for the M1 and A1 to the West and East respectively.

5. In recent years the County Highways Authority has undertaken improvements to several junctions along both roads and has also introduced a lower 50mph speed limit (enforced by average speed cameras). The following six junctions have now been identified as requiring intervention to ensure the effective functioning of the road corridor and are shown on the appended 'A614 and A6097 Junction Improvement – Overall Project Location Plan':
- Ollerton Roundabout (A614/ A616/ A6075)
 - A614/Mickledale Lane/Inkersall Lane
 - White Post Roundabout (A614/ Mansfield Road) Farnsfield
 - Warren Hill (A614/ A6097) gyratory junction
 - Lowdham roundabout (A6097/ A612/Southwell Road)
 - Kirk Hill (A6097/ Kirk Hill / East Bridgford Road) East Bridgford
6. A further junction (A614/Deerdale Lane/Eakring Road, Bilsthorpe) has been removed from the wider project due to costs and complexities. Each has been submitted for planning permission and are considered in separate reports.
7. The MRN is a middle tier of the country's busiest and most economically important local authority A roads sitting between the Strategic Road Network (SRN) and the rest of the local road network. The A614 and A6097 routes were designated as such in October 2018. The stated objectives of the MRN and of the A614/A6097 project are closely aligned and include:
- (a) **Improved Journey Times and Reliability-** There are regular delays and queueing at Ollerton, Lowdham and Kirk Hill junctions which are predicted to worsen with traffic and local housing/economic growth. It can also be difficult to access the A614 from Bilsthorpe village.
 - (b) **Network Resilience-** Capacity improvements will support the Strategic Road Network by adding resilience to the highway network which will boost productivity and reduce costs to businesses. Both roads serve as alternative and diversionary routes during incidents or major roadworks.
 - (c) **Economic Growth-** Additional capacity will drive economic growth by facilitating housing and creating jobs. In particular a number of development sites have planning conditions and obligations limiting build out until improvements are made to Ollerton and Lowdham roundabouts. This includes the development at the former Thoresby colliery. Improvements at the junctions would enable 1,330 dwellings and 24,281m² of employment space to be built out, stimulating economic growth.
 - (d) **Connectivity** - Improving journey times and reliability will improve connectivity to Nottingham and improving access to supply chains and labour markets.

The Site and Existing Situation

8. The White Post Roundabout, A614, Farnsfield is situated around 1.5 km to the west of the main village and is at the centre of some popular visitor attractions and other businesses, notably White Post Farm, to the east off Mansfield Road, and Wheelgate Park on the west side off Mansfield Road. Immediately on the roundabout is a large Public House (White Post Inn), a children's day nursery, a plant hire business and a small number of residential properties (see Plan 1).
9. This is a standard four-arm roundabout with the A614 running north-south. Pedestrian footways are present and in particular there is a footway (with safety barrier) and an uncontrolled crossing over the northern arm linking the attractions on either side of the A614. A pair of bus stops are present on Mansfield Road (east arm).
10. There are no conservation constraints to note other than the children's nursery occupies a former farm building which is of local, but non-designated heritage interest. There are no flooding constraints to note, but the ground waters form part of the Principal Aquifer.

Planning history

11. The only relevant planning history to note is this Council's Scoping Opinion issued in 2021. This junction was largely screened out from needing detailed environmental impact assessments, but any impacts needed to be assessed with the five other junction proposals.

Proposed Development

12. Owing to the availability of land with built up development on all corners of the junction which limits any large improvement scheme, it is proposed to undertake in situ refurbishments which could include carriageway maintenance, high friction/anti-skid surfacing, signing, lining and street light upgrades (see Plan 2). This would ensure it continues to perform as effectively and safely as possible as part of the improved standards along the A614/A6097 corridor. No extra junction capacity would however be created and no additional land is required.

Consultations

13. **Newark and Sherwood District Council** - *No objections.*
14. **NCC (Highways)** – *No objection.*
15. *The roundabout is included in improvement works along the A6097-A614 route between East Bridgford and Ollerton.*

16. *It is now understood that this junction requires planning permission due to being included in the EIA for the wider project.*
17. *The proposed works would ordinarily be permitted development, having negligible impact on existing traffic routing and as such, the Highway Authority has no development control related comments in respect of the proposals.*
18. **NCC (Archaeology)** - *No objection and no further action required.*
19. **NCC (Built Heritage)** - *No objection. The proposals are limited to the existing highway and would not impact significantly on the setting of the non-designated heritage asset on the north-east quadrant (White Post Farm (HER ref MNT25098)).*
20. **NCC (Flood Risk)** - *No objection.*
21. **NCC (Nature Conservation)**- *Raises no comments.*
22. **Natural England** - *No objection/standing advice.*
23. **Via Safer Highways** - *The proposed high friction surfacing should be beneficial. Recommends use of a colour differential on the immediate approaches to the roundabout. The type of surfacing also requires future maintenance to preserve the benefits.*
24. **Via (Landscape)** -*Raises no comments on landscape and visual impact.*
25. **Via (Noise Engineer)** - *No objection subject to general construction good practice. The nature of these works is considered minor. There is potential for noise and vibration levels to increase temporarily for up to 4 weeks, but this is considered typical of highway maintenance operations. Thereafter the scheme would not result in any changes to junction layout, and so no discernible changes in noise or vibration levels are anticipated.*
26. **Via (Reclamation)** - *no objections subject to conditions.*
27. *Warren Hill and White Post were scoped out of the Environmental Statements as there are unlikely to be any significant effects with these two schemes.*
28. *The works appear to only comprise surface level works with no intrusive groundworks anticipated. However, if significant intrusive ground works are required, a watching brief (and validation report) is recommended by condition.*
29. **Planning Casework Unit** (*statutory notifications only*).
30. **Farnsfield Parish Council, Via (Countryside Access), Ramblers, Environment Agency, Severn Trent Water Limited, Cadent Gas Limited and Western Power Distribution** have not responded. Any response received will be orally reported.

Publicity

31. The application has been publicised by means of a site notice, press notices (jointly with the 5 other junction proposals) and neighbour notification letters sent to the nearest occupiers in accordance with the County Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement. No representations have been received.
32. In addition, the applicant department have undertaken separate and complementary publicity via the 'Email me' bulletin, the Council's twitter feed and have added links to the individual planning applications from the dedicated A614/A6097 project website:

<https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/transport/roads/a614>.
33. Prior to the submission of the planning applications, the applicant department has undertaken extensive local engagement and consultations to inform the final junction designs. Scoping Opinions have also been previously obtained from the County Planning Authority to inform the Environmental Impact Assessment process.
34. Councillor Bruce Laughton has been notified of the application.

Observations

The requirement for planning permission

35. The County Council, with its responsibilities as the local Highway Authority, has extensive rights to undertake work to maintain and also improve the highway network. These proposals involve routine and minor reconfiguration works wholly within the existing highway boundaries. The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (s55) usually excludes such works from the planning system entirely. However the applicant has elected to undertake and include an EIA for the wider project of which White Post forms part. Section 55 does *not* exclude from the planning system such highways proposals (those which are not exclusively just maintenance), where they may have *significant adverse effects on the environment*. Whilst these proposals are unlikely to reach this threshold of impact, the purpose of this restriction is to link with the separate Town and Country Planning Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations whereby once an Environmental Statement has been provided the development proposal is deemed to be EIA development. This consequently has the effect of removing Permitted Development rights for highways authority works (Town and Country Planning -General Permitted Development Order -England- 2015 as amended- article 3 and Schedule 2, Part 9, Class A). Therefore the proposed works, whilst minor, are 'development' and are excluded from being 'permitted development' and as such require planning permission.

Planning policy assessment

36. This is one of six inter-related planning applications concerning junctions along the A614/A6097 corridor. The works proposed in this case are very minor in nature but the application needs to be considered and determined in the usual way, against the applicable Development Plans and having regard to material considerations.
37. The Development Plan in this instance is the Newark and Sherwood Local Plan comprising of the Amended Core Strategy (CS) (Part 1) (2019) and the Allocations and Development Management Policies document (A&DM) (Part 2) (2013) together with the associated policy map. The Farnsfield Neighbourhood Plan also sits within this framework but is not considered relevant to the proposals. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is a material consideration. Other material considerations may include the Nottinghamshire Local Transport Plan and the D2N2 Strategic Economic Plan. It is also relevant to note that certain design standards apply including the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges and the NCC Highways Design Guide.
38. The importance of public infrastructure for local communities and to support planned/future development is set out through the Local Plan. CS Spatial Policy 6 (Infrastructure for Growth) seeks to ensure that the infrastructure to support local growth and to deliver the outcomes of the Strategy as a whole are provided. An Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) informs this approach. Strategic Infrastructure in this context is defined as including improvements to the strategic highway network and other highway infrastructure as identified within the IDP. Together with A&DM Policy DM3 there is a framework for securing developer contributions and funds including via the Community Infrastructure Levy.
39. Improvements to the highway network therefore form an important aspect of the approach to infrastructure, notwithstanding the wider objectives of CS Spatial Policy 7 (and national policy) in reducing car travel and promoting sustainable patterns of development and travel.
40. Junction improvements at the White Post roundabout are identified in the IDP (and Nottinghamshire LTP) and listed in Appendix D of the Core Strategy as being highway infrastructure works required for the delivery of the Local Plan/Core Strategy itself. Four other junctions – the subject of separate reports – are also listed. There is no clear statement as to what form the junction improvements at White Post Farm should take, although the IDP suggests that it could involve an additional approach lane. That is not part of the proposed works which amount essentially to refurbishment of the existing roundabout without creating any additional capacity. That does not however undermine the policy support for these proposals as submitted, nor do the proposals preclude further upgrades being brought forward in the future.
41. Although there is no direct and obvious link between upgrading this junction and the delivery of new housing or regeneration locally, the improvements at this junction would also serve and benefit the wider MRN/A614 corridor, including local tourist/visitor traffic and assist with the regeneration areas at Bilsthorpe

and Ollerton. The proposals also therefore contribute to Plan objectives in SP1 and SP2.

42. In conclusion, the improvement of White Post junction are fully supported in principle planning policy terms even though these proposals amount to minor refurbishments rather than the creation of new capacity, or other improvements. The plans accord with CS policies SP6, SP7 and support the wider plan and regeneration objectives in CS policies SP1 and SP2. Junction improvements at this location are also identified in the Local Plan and LTP documents.

Environmental and amenity impacts

43. Due to the minor nature of the works, which amount essentially to refurbishments, a site-specific Environmental Impact Assessment has not been required. It is also not considered necessary for the application to demonstrate net gains for biodiversity in this instance. From an assessment of the proposals, and taking into account the responses above, it can be comfortably determined that once the highway works have concluded there would be no unacceptable impacts to local amenity or to the environment.
44. The roundabout would remain in its current size and configuration but would have improved surfacing and LED lighting is also likely to be installed- the latter generally is known to reduce light spillage and focus on the highway areas. This may benefit slightly the immediate residential occupiers. Resurfacing using high friction approaches is likely to assist in junction safety. A review of signage may also be undertaken but is unlikely to alter the overall character of the immediate area around this existing junction. Pedestrian routes and crossings would remain.
45. The proposals are not considered to result in any harm to the adjacent non-designated heritage asset, but at worst there could be a negligible effect- for example resulting from the signage review. Core Policy 14 and A&DM Policy DM9 allows for such impacts to be balanced. There are no archaeological implications. There would be no impacts to notable habitats or to protected species. Upgrades to LED lighting would reduce associated energy use and emissions. No cumulative planning impacts are expected with any of the other associated junction improvements on the A614/A6097.
46. The only matter which requires some attention is the management of the highways/construction works with respect to local amenity (A&DM Policy DM5 applies). Although these works are expected to be short term and straightforward, as a matter of best practice, construction management measures should be required by planning condition to control noise/vibration, dust/mud and to prevent pollution. A watching brief for any unexpected ground contamination should also be required. Subject to these conditions the proposed works are not likely to cause any unacceptable impacts to local amenity.

Other Options Considered

47. As part of developing options at this junction the applicant and their consultants considered widening the entry/approach lanes, however there is insufficient space and this would require acquisition of adjacent properties. Adding traffic signals was found to be detrimental to the A614 traffic flow. A closure of the Mansfield Road (west arm) was also discounted. The remaining option was therefore to undertake a general road safety and refurbishment scheme as proposed. The County Council has a duty to consider this planning application.

Statutory and Policy Implications

48. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, the safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, and sustainability and the environment, and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Crime and Disorder Implications

49. Upgrades to street lighting may be beneficial, but otherwise no implications are identified.

Data Protection and Information Governance

50. Given that no representations have been received from the public, it is considered that no data protection issues have been raised.

Financial Implications

51. There are no direct financial implications arising from a decision on this planning application.

Human Rights Implications

52. Relevant issues arising out of consideration of the Human Rights Act have been assessed. Rights under Article 8 (Right to Respect for Private and Family Life), Article 1 of the First Protocol (Protection of Property) and Article 6 (Right to a Fair Trial) are those to be considered. In this case, however, there are no impacts of any substance on individuals and therefore no interference with rights safeguarded under these articles.

Implications for Service Users /Public Sector Equality Duty Implications

53. Users of the junction, both motorised and non motorised would benefit from the general refurbishments and safety improvements being proposed.

Implications for Sustainability and the Environment

54. There are no notable impacts to report given the minor nature of the proposed works, but this has been considered in the Observations section above, having regard to the information contained within the Environmental Statement that considers this scheme cumulatively with five other junction proposals, as well as the advice received from consultees.
55. There are no human resources or children/adults at risk implications.

Conclusion

56. The proposal in this case amounts to only minor surfacing and refurbishment works to the existing roundabout, including signage review and lighting. Unusually planning permission is required as the junction forms part of the wider A614/A6097 project which is subject to an overarching Environmental Impact Assessment. The effect of this is to remove the Highway Authority's usual permitted development rights.
57. Although of limited scale/effect the proposals can gain support from the Newark and Sherwood Core Strategy (Spatial Policy 6 and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan) as this junction is identified as a necessary strategic infrastructure project needed to ensure the delivery of the Local Plan as a whole. No objections have been raised locally or by any consultees. There are no unacceptable planning or environmental impacts subject to conditioning measures to address highway/construction work impacts. Consequently permission is recommended in line with the Development Plan.

Statement of Positive and Proactive Engagement

58. In determining this application the County Planning Authority has worked positively and proactively with the applicant by entering into pre-application discussion; assessing the proposals against relevant Development Plan policies; all material considerations; consultation responses and any valid representations that may have been received. This approach has been in accordance with the requirement set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

RECOMMENDATIONS

59. It is RECOMMENDED that planning permission be granted for the purposes of Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992 subject to the conditions set out in Appendix 1. Members need to consider the issues set out in the report and resolve accordingly.

DEREK HIGTON

Service Director – Place and Communities

Constitutional Comments [JL 15/09/22]

Planning & Rights of Way Committee is the appropriate body to consider the contents of this report by virtue of its terms of reference.

Financial Comments

To be orally reported

Background Papers Available for Inspection

The application file is available for public inspection by virtue of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 and you can view them at: www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/planningsearch/plandisp.aspx?AppNo=ES/4412

Electoral Divisions and Members Affected

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