



meeting **CABINET**

date **25 JULY 2007**

agenda item number

## REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT

### **A453 WIDENING SCHEME, M1 JUNCTION 24 TO A52 (T) NOTTINGHAM PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

#### **Purpose of Report**

1. To seek the approval of Cabinet in reaffirming the County Council's position in response to the latest round of consultation by the Highways Agency on the A453 widening proposals.

#### **Policy/Budget Framework**

2. This scheme is being delivered by the Highways Agency who have appointed Laing O'Rourke as their contractor and White Young Green as their design consultants to manage the project.

#### **Background**

3. The A453 east of the M1 is part of the strategic trunk road network between Nottingham, the M1 and East Midlands Airport. The existing single carriageway road cannot cope with the amount of traffic using it, has a very poor safety record and poses maintenance difficulties. The existing annual average daily two way traffic is 23,000 vehicles per day on the rural section and up to 30,000 vehicles AADT through Clifton. Between 2001 and 2005 there were 165 reported traffic incidents involving 51 serious personal injuries and 5 fatalities.
4. Various scheme options were put forward for consultation as long ago as 1985 and by the mid 1990s detailed improvement proposals for both the rural and urban sections of the route had been developed by the Highways Agency and debated at Public Inquiry. However this scheme was reassessed as part of the Government's Road Review in 1997. This resulted in the 1998 Transport White Paper announcement that the A453 should be subject to further study to ensure solutions to the route's safety and congestion problems were developed in a manner consistent with the Government's integrated transport policy.
5. In 2000, therefore, a Multi Modal Study was initiated to develop a long-term strategy for the total transport needs of the A453 corridor until the year 2021,

taking into account buses, rail, trains, walking and cycling. This strategy recommended the dualling of the A453 from M1 junction 24 to Clifton and the widening of the existing carriageway through Clifton to a four-lane single carriageway. It also recommended substantial investment in public transport including NET, Park and Ride and other measures to influence travel demand and modal choice. This recommendation has been endorsed by the Regional Planning Body and now forms part of the Regional Transport Strategy.

6. In September 2004 Members may recall that the Highways Agency consulted on preliminary widening proposals for the A453. This was reported to Cabinet on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2004 at which support was expressed for the scheme, although a number of concerns and issues were raised. Having considered the responses to the 2004 public consultation and following the appointment of a contractor by the HA in March 2006 the design of the scheme has been reconsidered and it is these revised proposals that are now being consulted upon.
7. The Highway Agency has recently held a public exhibition of the revised preliminary proposals in Kegworth and Clifton and is holding a formal 6-week consultation period. The HA has invited the views of the County Council.

#### **Proposed Scheme – M1 to Clifton**

8. The HA preferred scheme includes widening the A453 to dual two lane carriageway between M1 junction 24 and the Crusader roundabout on the approach to Clifton. The national speed limit (70mph) would apply to this section of the improvement. The proposed scheme details are shown on plan A.
9. It is proposed to have two split-level junctions one at Ratcliffe on Soar to facilitate access to the proposed Midland Mainline Parkway Station and Ratcliffe on Soar village and the other at the Power Station (West Leake Junction). The design of these two junctions have been modified from the 2004 preliminary proposals, incorporating improvements to the earlier designs. It is no longer proposed to have a split level junction at Barton in Fabis instead a new at-grade roundabout will be provided near Mill Hill on the edge of Clifton. This roundabout will become the eastern limit of the new rural dual carriageway.
10. Between Barton in Fabis (Manor Road Junction) and the proposed Mill Hill roundabout the new A453 dual carriageway would be built off-line and to the south of the existing road, rather than on the line of the existing A453 as was previously proposed. The existing road would be retained and would serve as the local access road connecting West Leake Junction and Mill Hill roundabout, giving access to the villages of Barton in Fabis and Thrumpton. A new underpass of the A453 is proposed at Barton Lane which will cater only for non-motorised users wishing to travel between Barton in Fabis and Gotham.
11. It is also proposed to construct a new link road between the Mill Hill roundabout and Clifton Lane. The new road link is necessary to provide an alternative route for traffic using Barton Lane (which is severed by the A453 in the revised proposals) and to improve accessibility for traffic into and out of Clifton. This road could also provide a link to the proposed Nottingham Express Transit (NET) Park and Ride Scheme, the proposed site of which lies alongside the proposed new

link road. The construction of the Mill Hill roundabout and connecting link to Clifton Lane is now an integral part of the A453 Widening Scheme avoiding the need for these facilities to be provided at a later date to serve NET and removing any unnecessary future disruption and expense.

### **Proposed scheme through Clifton**

12. The urban section of the A453 from Mill Hill Roundabout to Farnborough Road runs close to residential property, the Nottingham Trent University (NTU) and residential open space. This length falls wholly within the City of Nottingham area. The A453 would be widened to a four lane single carriageway road (S4) and would generally follow the line and level of the existing road (see plan A).
13. A speed limit of 40mph would be retained through Clifton and extended up to the Mill Hill roundabout. The three main junctions at Crusader Roundabout, Green Lane and Farnborough Road would become signalised. A new junction would be provided at NTU allowing vehicles to turn right into the university campus. To make the road safer all non signalised right turn manoeuvres through the urban section would be prohibited. The HA would also provide signal controlled crossings for pedestrians and cyclists and bus lay-bys and bus stops in suitable locations.
14. The proposed on-line S4 improvement through Clifton is a highway standard not normally used for a core trunk road. However the urban nature of this stretch of the A453 makes this a viable option.

### **Summary of main scheme changes incorporated into the revised proposals**

15. The following list summarises the principal changes incorporated into the revised scheme.
  - Ratcliffe on Soar and West Leake junctions layouts modified and improved
  - Split level junction at Barton Lane removed and replaced with an underpass for non motorised user access only.
  - New roundabout to be constructed at Mill Hill marking the end of the dual carriageway
  - A453 dual carriageway between Barton in Fabis (Manor Road) and Clifton to be constructed to the south of the existing A453 i.e. off-line.
  - A new link road is to be constructed connecting the A453 Mill Hill roundabout to Clifton Lane, Clifton.
  - The A453 improvement between Mill Hill roundabout and the Crusader roundabout to be constructed as a four-lane single carriageway.
  - A new junction is to be provided giving access to Nottingham Trent University.

### **Programme and other scheme details**

16. The Highways Agency will carefully consider any views expressed as part of this consultation and plan to publish an Environmental Statement and draft Orders in Winter 2007. Following this there will be a 12 week period during which the County Council will have another opportunity to support, comment or object to

the draft Orders. A Public Inquiry is expected and time has been set aside in the programme in Autumn 2008. Construction could start in Summer 2009 and the improved road be open to traffic in 2011/12.

17. The approved budget for this project is £90m however the HA are currently reviewing the scheme costs and it is not known whether the revised proposals can be constructed within budget. There is an expectation that the review will show that the revised scheme is likely to be significantly over budget.
18. The traffic predictions for the route show that the traffic over the rural section will rise from the current 23,000 (2006) vehicles per day to 33,000 vehicles in the Design Year 2026 without the scheme. With the scheme however traffic would be attracted to the A453 corridor and so by 2026 the flows are expected to rise to 53,000 vehicles per day. The model predicts that there would be traffic reductions on parallel routes including the A52 and A6005 north of the River Trent and a reduction of traffic through Kingston on Soar and Gotham. On the widened A453 through Clifton traffic volumes are also set to increase as a result of the improvement scheme.
19. The changes that have been made by extending the four-lane single carriageway between Crusader roundabout and Mill Hill roundabout together with re-routing the A453 off-line between Barton in Fabis and Clifton will allow for the inclusion of much improved facilities for cyclists and walkers throughout the length of the scheme (Farnborough Road to Long Lane).
20. Given the poor accident record of this length of road and the safety benefits this project will deliver, and the need for infrastructure improvement to enhance the economic well being of Nottingham the County Council's support for this scheme is reaffirmed.

#### **Areas of Concern/Issues**

21. Although the highway proposals are being delivered as a discrete project, these proposals form part of a closely interrelated package of transport measures, which includes the proposed extension of NET through Clifton. The dualling of the A453 from M1 J24 to Clifton and the four lane single carriageway through Clifton is strongly supported, subject to detailed design considerations (see paragraphs 22 - 26 below) and the successful implementation of the rest of the transport strategy.
22. It is imperative that the full package of measures are funded and implemented in a co-ordinated manner in keeping with the Multi Modal strategy for this important transport corridor. If for any reason other parts of the strategy are delayed or not forthcoming then this could jeopardise the viability of the highway improvement.
23. The County Council is concerned that the revised cost estimate may considerably exceed the approved budget and that this could jeopardise both the delivery of this much needed scheme and other transport projects in Nottinghamshire that are competing for limited funding through the Regional Funding Allocation process. The HA are requested to liaise closely with the Regional Planning Body, and County Council as appropriate, to discuss the likely

implications that any cost overspend could have on the delivery of the approved regional transport programme.

24. Although the decision to re-route the A453 off line between Barton in Fabis and Clifton brings with it a number of positive benefits, particularly with respect to the ease of construction, improved access for local communities and the creation of a parallel and quiet route for non-motorised users there are a number of disadvantages. There are likely to be environmental disadvantages arising from building this section of the dualling scheme in open countryside. It will be necessary for the HA to undertake a detailed environmental impact assessment and incorporate appropriate mitigation measures to minimise any residual adverse impacts. Similar considerations will need to be given to the construction of the new link road between the Mill Hill roundabout and Clifton Lane.
25. Construction activity is scheduled to take place over a two year period and would potentially have significant impacts on road users and the environment. It is felt imperative that there is close liaison between the HA and the County Council to agree and implement a suitable traffic management system across the wider road network during construction. It is important that the local villages lying adjacent to the construction activity, particularly Gotham , Barton in Fabis, Thrumpton and Ratcliffe on Soar are protected as far as is practically possible from the adverse effects of traffic seeking to avoid delays associated with the widening of the A453. At the appropriate time the HA contractor is likely to produce a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) which is a strategy to manage and control disruption and environmental impacts arising from the construction activities. The County Council and other local authorities need to be consulted on and have direct input to the CEMP, for example specifying routes to quarries for sourcing aggregate or to licensed landfill if contaminated material is encountered, advising as to acceptable night-time working hours, scheduling the timing and duration of temporary closures of roads and rights of way etc. The HA is requested to ensure that the County Council is fully consulted in the production of a CEMP.
26. Over the period of works envisaged the HA will inevitably have other on-going work on the trunk road network which may add to the redistribution of traffic onto other less suitable roads. There needs to be close co-ordination with other committed trunk road and local authority road improvements, for example the M1 widening between junctions 21 and 30. Strategic diversions and emergency diversion routes will need to be identified, agreed with the local highway authorities and work programmed to ensure that traffic is not directed to other routes where delays are expected. The HA is requested to ensure that the County Council is fully consulted at all stages and construction proposals developed which will provide for the needs of both local and long distance traffic.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

27. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of Finance, Equal Opportunities, Personnel, Crime and Disorder (Community Safety), the Local Member and those using the service. Where such implications are material, they have been brought out in the text of the report. Attention is, however, drawn to specifics as follows:

## **Equal Opportunities Implications**

28. Appropriate consideration will need to be given in the scheme by the Highways Agency to the requirements / facilities for non- car users and those people with restricted mobility.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

29. It is RECOMMENDED that:
- (a) Cabinet continue to support the general principle of the proposed A453 M1 (J24) to A52 Nottingham Widening Scheme and urge the Highways Agency to implement the scheme at the earliest possible opportunity;
  - (b) the Highways Agency be requested to consider the issues set out in this report and continue to consult the County, District and Parish Councils affected by the improvement throughout the statutory planning process; and
  - (c) the Highways Agency be requested to support the implementation of the wider package of transport measures for the A453 to ensure that the Multi Modal strategy for the corridor is delivered.

COUNCILLOR STELLA SMEDLEY  
Cabinet Member for Environment

## **Financial Comments of the Strategic Director (Resources)**

There are no financial implications arising from the contents of this report. All the costs associated with the construction of the A453 Widening Scheme would be funded at a Regional level. [KRP 19.06.07]

## **Legal Services' Comments**

The decisions recommended fall within the delegation to Cabinet. [HD 9.07.07]

## **Background Papers Available for Inspection**

None.

## **Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

Soar Valley

Cllr Lynn Sykes

ep5043