

**22 September 2016**

**Agenda Item: 5**

## **REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF PLACE DEPARTMENT**

### **REVIEW OF TRANSPORT SCHEMES IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE WITH SAFEGUARDED ROUTES**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of the successful delivery of a number of large-scale transport schemes during the third Local Transport Plan period (since 2011); and to seek Committee approval of the outcomes of the 2016 review of significant and major transport schemes in Nottinghamshire which require safeguarded or protected routes.

#### **Background information**

2. At locations where the County Council may potentially deliver a large-scale transport improvement in the future, the County Council can 'safeguard' the land along the alignment of its potential route to protect the route from future development that may prevent the scheme from progressing. The proposed routes of such schemes must be declared and the County Council could be liable to significant claims for blight, resulting in obligations to purchase land or property along the proposed route or having to pay significant compensation to land/property owners.
3. During the development of the third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) for Nottinghamshire, a review was undertaken of the significant and major transport schemes which historically had land safeguarded along their proposed route, or would require the County Council to safeguard a route. The purpose of this review, undertaken in 2011, was to identify those schemes which would not be deliverable during the LTP3 period (up to 2026) as they were considered to no longer meet LTP3 strategic aims; or would not be deliverable on affordability, value for money, feasibility, or public acceptability grounds. The abandonment of these schemes removed the potential liability to the Council.
4. The 2011 safeguarded transport scheme review resulted in the safeguarding of the proposed routes of 13 transport schemes; and determined that further feasibility work would be required on an additional 20 schemes. The 2011 review also resulted in the abandonment of the safeguarded routes of 21 historical transport schemes. To ensure that the County Council is not liable to unnecessarily risk the review also recommended that the transport schemes with safeguarded routes would be periodically reviewed. A review of the transport schemes that would require a safeguarded route has therefore recently been undertaken and this report

updates Committee on the outcome of the review as well as progress on the delivery of significant and major transport schemes in the last 5 years.

## **Completed transport schemes since 2011**

5. In the last five years ten significant or major transport schemes have been constructed, are currently under construction or have been funded by the County Council, these are listed in Appendix 1 and include:
  - Mansfield public transport interchange – a new bus station linked directly to the rail station via a covered bridge
  - A new purpose built bus station in Worksop
  - The Hucknall town centre improvement scheme including a new link road and pedestrianisation of the high street which is currently under construction
  - The A60 / A57 roundabout improvement scheme in Worksop which is currently under construction.
  - Highway England's A453 improvement from M1 through to Clifton and the ring road.

## **2016 Review of transport schemes which require safeguarded routes**

6. The County Council receives suggestions for large-scale transport schemes from a number of sources including members, local communities, district council etc. and currently a total of 34 transport schemes have been identified that either have a route safeguarded or would require a protected route. These 34 schemes have been reviewed to identify current scheme priorities and funding commitments, to establish whether schemes meet current strategic policy objectives and aims, and to establish whether any schemes could be abandoned. The latter would create a more realistic number of schemes because it will not be possible to deliver all of these schemes within a reasonable time frame. Safeguarding schemes where there is no foreseeable prospect of delivery would of course not only raise false expectation from local communities and stakeholders but could also leave the County Council liable to significant claims for blight resulting in obligations to purchase land or property along the proposed routes or having to pay compensation to land/property owners.
7. The transport schemes reviewed include a range of projects from smaller scale projects (typically £250,000-£500,000), which would normally be funded through the Local Transport Plan integrated transport block monies or other County Council capital funding sources, to more large scale projects (typically over £500,000) which would need to be promoted and funded by individual bids to the D2N2 or SCR Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). The list of schemes under review is shown in Appendix 2, which also identifies potential funding sources for each of the projects and, where funding is approved, the likely timescale for delivery of the scheme. This transport scheme review does not consider schemes being promoted by Highways England on the trunk road network nor does it consider highway improvements being considered to support individual private developments. Schemes that have been previously abandoned by the County Council have not been reconsidered as part of this review with the exception of the new river crossing east of Nottingham due to the renewed interest in this scheme from other local authorities.
8. The 34 schemes were assessed on their likely ability to deliver the County Council's strategic aims, particularly those relating to supporting economic growth, tackling climate change and reducing congestion through promoting modal shift. Given the majority of funding for such

schemes would be sought from the Local Growth Fund an assessment of each scheme's ability to deliver the Strategic Economic Plan objectives of the LEPs was also included in the assessment. Each scheme was also assessed to determine its affordability, its value for money, its feasibility and its likely public acceptability. A summary of the results is given in Appendix 2.

9. As a result of the review it is proposed that five projects that currently have safeguarded routes will be abandoned, namely:
- A6075 Debdale Lane Bridge Improvement, Mansfield Woodhouse
  - A609 Nottingham Road Improvements, Bilborough
  - A617 Pleasley Bypass Extension
  - B684 Woodborough Road / Porchester Road junction Improvement, Mapperley
  - Southwell Bypass.

The abandonment of these schemes will remove the potential liability to the Council and further detail on the reasons why these schemes will no longer require safeguarded routes is detailed in paragraphs 10 to 14 below. 19 schemes (lines 1-19 of Appendix 2) will be retained and their routes safeguarded from otherwise prejudicial development for potential future delivery. Further feasibility work is proposed on an additional seven schemes (lines 26-32 of Appendix 2) before a decision can be made as to whether the County Council should safeguard a protected route for them, although two of which would be expected to be delivered by third parties (lines 31-32 of Appendix 2) so do not require the County Council to safeguard a route.

## **Abandoned safeguarded routes**

### A6075 Debdale Lane Bridge improvement scheme, Mansfield Woodhouse

10. The A6075 Debdale Lane Bridge improvement scheme would involve the replacement of the existing Network Rail bridge arch with a wider structure to allow HGVs easier passage. This would lessen the number of bridge strikes that periodically take place. Having reassessed the scheme it is clear that the scheme would be unaffordable and represent poor value for money. A lot could be done with far less investment to deter HGVs from using the A6075 and make use of more suitable alternative routes on the A60 Woodhouse Road. It is proposed that the safeguarded scheme be abandoned but that an alternative scheme be considered to review the signing of the A6075 to encourage use of more suitable routes for high sided and other HGV through traffic.

### A609 Nottingham Road improvements, Bilborough

11. The A609 Nottingham Road improvements, Bilborough have long been promoted to provide bus priority on the A609 east bound approach to this junction. After careful consideration it is clear that such proposals would require significant land acquisition as the existing A609 is of insufficient width to allow for the reallocation of existing road space in favour of buses and such land would involve the loss of a number of mature trees and hedges. In view of the periodic nature of traffic delays at this junction the economic case and value for money arguments are also not compelling. In terms of likely public acceptability and affordability this scheme is no longer considered appropriate.

#### A617 Pleasley bypass extension

12. The A617 Pleasley bypass extension (PBE) scored low on value for money and affordability assessment criteria. It should also be noted that this scheme had previously been safeguarded by reason that it was complimentary to proposals on the A617 in Derbyshire for a bypass to the village of Glapwell. Officers at Derbyshire County Council have however recommended that the Glapwell bypass is rescinded principally on environmental grounds. The synergies of the two projects have been removed. The case for the retention of the PBE has further been reduced by the recent residential redevelopment alongside the A617 at Pleasleyhill which has removed the frontage housing development and replaced it with realigned housing blocks set back from the existing road. This has lessened the environmental arguments for the retention of the PBE.

#### B684 Woodborough Road Porchester Road improvement scheme

13. The safeguarded B684 Woodborough Road/Porchester Road improvement scheme in Mapperley dates back to the early 1980s and was originally proposed to accompany redevelopment proposals at this junction. The scheme would need to be a cross-boundary scheme involving land and property in the Nottingham City area. The redevelopment proposals have not come to fruition and the City Council has since abandoned plans for this junction improvement scheme. As the scheme would rely on the co-operation of a neighbouring authority, which does not currently view the scheme a priority, this scheme scored low on acceptability and feasibility grounds and it is proposed that this scheme be abandoned.

#### Southwell bypass

14. Since the last scheme review in 2011 a number of significant highway improvements have taken place all of which have lessened the need for a bypass to Southwell; namely the dualling of the A46 between Widmerpool and Newark which has resulted in a general reduction of through traffic in Southwell, which resulted in the removal of the A612 principal road status through the town which has been reduced to a 'C' class road, and the introduction of an environmental weight restriction (limiting and reducing the number of HGVs passing through the town), and . As a result the Southwell Bypass scheme is no longer considered essential and the Southwell bypass scheme consequently no longer scored highly on any criteria and scored low on public acceptability, affordability and value for money, and likely carbon generation.

### **Other Options Considered**

15. Other options considered are to retain all, some, or none of the currently safeguarded transport schemes. To do so may, however, increase the risk of a financial claim against the County Council for blight, resulting in obligations to purchase land or property along the proposed route or having to pay significant compensation to land/property owners; or alternatively prevent a potential scheme from being delivered in the future.

### **Reason/s for Recommendation/s**

16. The safeguarded transport schemes detailed within this report and its appendices have been developed to help ensure delivery of County Council priorities, Local Enterprise Partnership priorities, national priorities and local transport goals and objectives. The schemes to be retained have been assessed to ensure that they reflect the delivery of these priorities along

with evidence of need (including technical analysis), value for money and public acceptability. Abandonment of the proposed schemes removes the potential liability to the Council; whilst retaining the proposed schemes will enable the County Council to deliver such schemes should they be feasible, be considered a priority for future delivery and should funding become available to do so.

## **Statutory and Policy Implications**

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

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that Committee:

- a) note the successful delivery by the County Council of a number of large scale transport projects since 2011, as listed in Appendix 1
- b) approve the outcomes of the safeguarded transport schemes review as contained in this report and detailed in Appendix 2; including the recommendation to abandon five existing safeguarded transport projects and the decision not to safeguard a further two transport projects that will be delivered by third parties
- c) Note that a further review will be undertaken in 12 months.

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**For any enquiries about this report please contact: Kevin Sharman**

### **Constitutional Comments (SLB 17/08/2016)**

18. Transport and Highways Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report.

### **Financial Comments (GB 17/08/16)**

19. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

### **Background Papers and Published Documents**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- D2N2 Growth Fund deals

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

- All