

Report to Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation

Decision to be taken on or after 20 September 2013

**Decision can normally be implemented at least
3 working days after decision has been signed.**

Cabinet Member Report No. PT11.13

Title:	Daws Hill Area Travel Link, High Wycombe
Date:	11 September 2013
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Local members affected:	List member name(s) and electoral division(s) – Councillor Lesley Clarke, Abbey division

For press enquiries concerning this report, please contact the media office on 01296 382444

Summary

Substantial development is proposed in and around High Wycombe and the County Council responded to this by undertaking transport strategy development work concluding in 2012. The work established a set of transport priorities and schemes to support and inform District Council land use planning and manage the increasing travel demands forecast for the areas based on district plan land-use scenarios. The resultant strategy, known as the Southern Quadrant Transport Strategy (SQTS), was adopted by the County Council in December 2012 (see background papers – Appendix A).

In response to stakeholder feedback, the adopted SQTS stated that further work was required in order to ascertain the preferred option (from two identified in SQTS) to achieve a public transport, cycling and walking link from Daws Hill Lane to the committed Handy Cross Hub development site – the Daws Hill Area Travel Link. The concept of this link is one that has a strong history set out in technical papers and in policy documents, including the Wycombe District Council (WDC) Core Strategy (July 2008), RAF Daws Hill & Abbey Barn South – Transport Evidence Background Paper (June 2010 Update), the WDC and BCC RAF Daws Hill Position Statement (March 2011) and RAF Daws Hill Development Brief (December 2012).

This Cabinet Member report seeks a decision on the preferred option now that further work has been undertaken.



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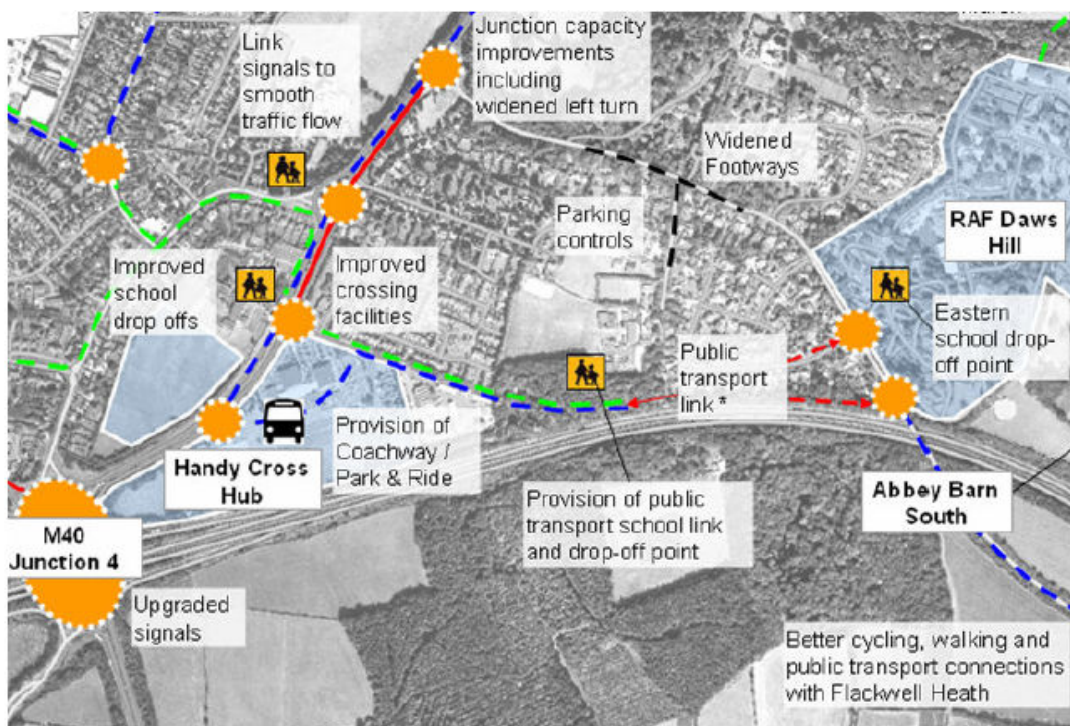


Recommendation

To AGREE that the route via Daws Lea is the preferred option for the Daws Hill Area Travel Link as set out in the Wycombe Southern Quadrant Transport Strategy.

A. Narrative setting out the reasons for the decision

- 1.1 Section 108 of the Transport Act 2000 (subsection 3) makes it a requirement for each Local Transport Authority to prepare a Local Transport Plan (LTP). In Buckinghamshire the Local Transport Authority is the County Council.
- 1.2 The third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) came into effect from April 2011 and sets out a five year transport strategy alongside the longer term vision and objectives for the county. The development and adoption of Transport Strategies covering specific urban areas is an essential step towards realising the vision and objectives set out in LTP3. As such, the adopted SQTS allows the council to secure and implement the optimum package of measures for the area in the context of comprehensively planned growth.
- 1.3 SQTS outlined the need for a public transport, walking and cycling link from Daws Hill Lane to the committed Handy Cross Hub development site. The concept of this link is one that has a strong history set out in technical papers and in policy documents, including the Wycombe District Council (WDC) Core Strategy (July 2008), RAF Daws Hill & Abbey Barn South – Transport Evidence Background Paper (June 2010 Update), the WDC and BCC RAF Daws Hill Position Statement (March 2011) and RAF Daws Hill Development Brief (December 2012). The justification for the link is centred around a strategic issue of long term financial viability of public transport services in the area. Securing the viability of bus services through the delivery of frequent, high quality, reliable and connected services will ensure sustainable transport choices for local residents and mitigate future financial subsidy risk for the council.
- 1.4 When SQTS was adopted it was acknowledged that further work was necessary in order to define a preferred option from the two options being considered for the Daws Hill Area Travel Link. The two options were (option 1) a route via Daws Lea and (option 2) a route to the rear of Daws Lea, adjacent to the M40 motorway.



- 1.5 This further work has been completed and is set out in a number of appendices to this report (see background papers).
- 1.6 Option 1, a route via Daws Lea, has been estimated to cost £2,389,866 (the assumptions and exclusions included in the report at Appendix B should be noted). This estimate does not take account of land and property costs, which have been considered in a separate confidential report at Appendix H. This option requires the demolition of a property at the end of Daws Lea.
- 1.7 A second option was considered, option 2, which took a route to the rear of Daws Lea adjacent to the M40 motorway. It is estimated that this route would cost £4,721,016 (again, the assumptions and exclusions included in the report at Appendix C should be noted). This estimate does not take account of land and property costs associated with this option. As with option 1, they are set out in a confidential report at Appendix H.
- 1.8 Option 1 is the preferred option, both in total cost terms and in operational and effectiveness terms. It is the most direct route and will contribute best to achieving the longer term sustainability of our public transport system. It is also the preferred option in environmental terms. It would require less vegetation clearance and produce fewer ecological issues than option 2. There would also be less noise impact, as option 2 would involve removing the screen of trees between the M40 and the residential properties at Daws Lea. In addition the length of new road for option 1 is significantly less than option 2; therefore it would require fewer raw materials and generate less waste material. Furthermore, for option 2, there is a steep existing slope at the proposed junction with Daws Hill Lane next to the M40 which would require a significant amount of earth to be moved in order to level the site.

B. Other options available, and their pros and cons

- 2.1 All other reasonable alternative solutions have been considered and each represents an inferior solution in terms of securing the long term financial viability of public transport services in this area. Appendix E of the SQTS sets out an appraisal of the alternative options.

C. Resource implications

- 3.1 The construction of the Daws Hill Area Travel Link will be funded through developer contributions. Negotiations are currently ongoing with the developer of the RAF Daws Hill development.
- 3.2 There remains risk associated with both route options, in that any funding not secured from development will mean either a funding requirement from the county council, or the delaying of full implementation until such time as sufficient funding has been secured. However, given that the most efficient route in transport terms is also the cheaper option it is considered that this risk has now been minimised as far as is practicable.

D. Value for Money (VfM) Self Assessment

- 4.1 Economy – The Link will be funded from developer contributions and the construction of the link is currently the subject of negotiation with the developer of RAF Daws Hill.
- 4.2 Efficiency – The recommended option will allow bus services in the area to operate in the most efficient manner possible, thereby improving the longer term sustainability of the public transport system in this area.

- 4.3 Effectiveness - Securing the long term financial viability of bus services through the delivery of frequent, high quality, reliable and connected services will mitigate future financial subsidy risk for the council. The recommended option for the link allows this to be delivered in the most direct way.

E. Legal implications

- 5.1 Negotiations are ongoing with relevant developers and details of any agreement will be made within the final obligations agreed for the site (via s106).

F. Property implications

- 6.1 The preferred option requires land to be purchased, including a private residential property. This can be done either by negotiation or via compulsory purchase.

G. Other implications/issues

- 7.1 The principle of the scheme, as outlined in SQTS, is set within the adopted policies of both BCC and WDC. The consultation process on the Daws Hill Development Brief and SQTS confirmed strong views on this particular scheme.

- 7.2 The Daws Hill Neighbourhood Forum (DHNF) set out their position with regard to the prospect of delivery of the link as part of this consultation process in the document 'Daws Hill, High Wycombe Transport Strategy Review'. They state that the value of a pedestrian / cycle link via Daws Lea is 'quite apparent' but consider the value of the bus route is less clear. A number of mitigation options are suggested on Marlow Hill to assist public transport services which BCC are considering in detail as part of further technical work.

- 7.3 The DHNF do not suggest a different alignment for the link as part of their 'Alternative Transport Strategies', however the concept of a route running behind Daws Lea and north of the M40 was proposed through the regular forums and meetings that took place during 2011 and 2012 (i.e. option 2 as is being considered in this report). BCC responded by agreeing to consider this option in further detail to assess whether it provides a more appropriate and deliverable link that would resolve concerns about the impact of the route upon Daws Lea. This option has now been considered as part of this report.

H. Feedback from consultation, Local Area Forums and Local Member views

- 8.1 Councillor Lesley Clarke, Abbey division, was provided with advance notification of this decision on 25th June 2013. Following an initial briefing with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Transport, the local member requested, and was provided with, a detailed briefing on this matter. Following the briefing further work has been undertaken to inform the decision with regard to environmental and design considerations.

I. Communication issues

- 9.1 Assuming that the Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation approves the decision to proceed with option 1 as the preferable route for the Daws Hill Area Travel Link, Councillors will be informed of this decision by Democratic Services.

9.2 The County Council will update its website to take account of this decision and the District Council will also update their website with the information. This will be found on Wycombe District Council's planning news pages associated with the Daws Hill area.

J. Progress Monitoring

10.1 The Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation will receive regular briefings on SQTS scheme progress, including the Daws Hill Area Travel Link, and the status of any planning applications in the area.

10.2 Local residents will also have further opportunity to comment on the Daws Hill Area Travel Link during the consultation period on the scheme prior to any implementation.

K. Review

11.1 None

Background Papers

Appendix A – Adopted SQTS and supplementary information

<http://www.transportforbucks.net/Strategy/LTP3/Local-Area-Strategies.aspx>

Appendix B – Daws Hill Travel Link, Option 1 - Preliminary Estimate (August 2013)

Appendix C – Daws Hill Bus Link - Option 2, Preliminary Estimate (June 2013)

Appendix D – Daws Hill Travel Link, Daws Hill Travel Link, Preliminary Design Report (August 2013)

Appendix E – Daws Hill Travel Link, Environmental Scoping Report (August 2013)

Appendix F – Daws Hill Travel Link, Phase 1 Habitat Survey (August 2013)

Appendix G – Daws Hill Travel Link, Preliminary Geo-environmental Report (August 2013)

Appendix H – CONFIDENTIAL Valuation Report, Land Cost Estimate, Daws Hill Link Road (August 2013)

Your questions and views

If you have any questions about the matters contained in this paper please get in touch with the Contact Officer whose telephone number is given at the head of the paper.

If you have any views on this paper that you would like the Cabinet Member to consider, or if you wish to object to the proposed decision, please inform the Democratic Services Team by 5.00pm on 19 September 2013. This can be done by telephone (to 01296 383610), Fax (to 01296 382421), or e-mail to cabinet@buckscc.gov.uk