



Report for Officer Decision

Date: December 2020

Title: **Crest Road Signalisation Scheme**

Relevant councillor(s): Cabinet Member for Transport Nick Naylor

Author and/or contact officer: Susan Browning – Project Officer Highways Infrastructure Projects

Ward(s) affected: Abbey Ward, High Wycombe

Recommendations:

- 1. To agree to progress the implementation of the scheme and junction modifications including signalisation and shared use cycleway as amended following the Public Consultation.**
- 2. To agree the implementation of the scheme through the Transport for Buckinghamshire Services Contract.**

Reason for decision:

- In accordance with the Scheme of Delegation, Contracts below the value of £5M are authorised by the relevant Service Director.
- The forecast cost for scheme delivery is within the available budget.
- The majority of responses to the Public Consultation are in favour of the scheme proposals.
- To enable the proposed development of the 'Cressex Island' site.

1. Content

Scheme scope:

- 1.1 This junction improvement scheme is the provision of a signalised junction and shared use cycleway.

- 1.2 The scheme location is at the junction of A4010 John Hall Way with Crest Road, High Wycombe in Buckinghamshire. It is sited adjacent to the M40 J4 Handy Cross roundabout which provides access to the Highways England (HE) Strategic Road Network (SRN) and provides links to Oxford to the north and the M25 to the southeast.
- 1.3 The scheme involves the conversion of the existing 3-arm roundabout into a 3-arm traffic signal junction. The existing part time gating signals located on the Crest Road and John Hall Way (Eastern arm) approaches to the roundabout will be removed. A new shared use cycleway/ footway on the southern side of John Hall Way between Holmers Farm Way and the M40 J4 Handy Cross roundabout will also be provided – which will utilise the current footway and verge with localised widening where required. The objective is to provide improved junction capacity and traffic flow whilst providing improved facilities for sustainable transport.
- 1.4 Additional improvements include carriageway widening, reconstruction and road surfacing, new toucan crossings, additional right turn lane from Crest Road into John Hall Way, additional westbound through lane, removal of overcrowded conifer trees to improve sight lines and safety (with ecology survey undertaken and replacement planting plan underway), proposed landscaping, new wayfinding, and utilities diversions.
- 1.5 These junction changes formed part of a public engagement exercise.

Proposed Junction Improvement Plans:



Key Project Objectives and Benefits include:

- 1.6 To mitigate the forecasted increase in traffic movements associated with the development of 'Cressex Island' and improve capacity and traffic flow at the A4010 John Hall Way/Crest Road junction by converting the existing roundabout to a signalised junction
- 1.7 Help address the wider connectivity issues at Cressex Business Park associated with the M40 Handy Cross Junction (J4).
- 1.8 Substantial inward investment anticipated from the development of Cressex Island
- 1.9 Job creation associated with the development estimated at 350
- 1.10 To support the Growth of Wycombe - the Wycombe District Local Plan is proposing a large amount of growth in the former Wycombe District area, this will be key infrastructure to support that growth.

2. Legal implications

- 2.1 The public consultation carried out meets with Buckinghamshire Council's guidance on minimum periods for consulting with the public.
- 2.2 Alongside the wider scheme engagement, a Notice of Intent to convert the existing footway into a shared use cycleway was produced and placed on site.
- 2.3 The consultation followed DfT best practice and guidance, providing the opportunity for residents, businesses, stakeholders and statutory consultees to send in any feedback or comments regarding the scheme.

3. Consultation and communication

- 3.1 The public engagement exercise to consider the junction changes was undertaken in Summer 2020 – via a Public Consultation commencing 24th July and ending 14th August. The twin challenges of the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions combined with strict contractual time limits for the delivery of the junction improvements, were overcome through an innovative solution - Buckinghamshire's first 'virtual' public consultation.
- 3.2 Working with consultant AECOM's technical platform expertise, the Council delivered a virtual exhibition room with all the same features as a traditional face-to-face consultation – along with a Live Chat option where residents and local businesses could ask officers and technical experts questions 24/7.

A 3D computer-generated image of the proposed junction improvement (see Appendix D) and shared use cycleway was provided along with consultation plans, so residents and businesses could see exactly what was being proposed.

- 3.3 The consultation was promoted via a multi-media approach - with press release, social media, 350 letters to residents, emails to local businesses, emails to Cressex Park Businesses and Member briefings.
- 3.4 The Crest Road Virtual Consultation is still available to view at: <https://crestroad.virtualconsultation.co.uk/>



Results:

- 3.5 The consultation generated 800 visitors – and a 10% response rate to the formal feedback form.
- 3.6 The majority of responses were in favour of the scheme proposals and both elements of the scope - to deliver a traffic signal-controlled junction and to deliver a shared use cycleway. The results breakdown as follows:
- a) **Question 1: Do you support the introduction of new traffic signals?**
 - i. **Majority YES** - 57% in favour of the proposals.
 - b) **Question 2: Do you support the introduction of new shared cycleway and footway?**

i. **Majority YES** - 70% in favour of the proposals.

c) **Question 3: Overall, do you support the proposals?**

i. **Majority YES** - 60% in favour of the proposals.

3.7 In total there were 79 responses to the consultation, with a number of comments and suggestions. An analysis of the responses received through the consultation has been undertaken and the key comment themes are detailed below, with the consultation responses summary providing further detail. There were no significant objections to the junction scheme proposals.

3.8 Many of the comments on the proposed junction improvements were positive, including:

- a) Support the traffic light option proposed by the Council as it would reduce peak time congestion for motorists
- b) It looks like a great improvement
- c) Improve landscape of the area and create more jobs
- d) I think this is a good scheme, and I especially like how it will open up redevelopment of the Cressex Island
- e) The road at the junction is definitely in need of resurfacing
- f) Good project – the lights at the Hughenden Avenue /Boulevard are intelligent ones and they work a treat
- g) I've been wanting something to be done with that wasteland that was once the Park and Ride, and I'm glad things are progressing, alongside this junction improvement
- h) It looks much safer, I walk there often and find the footpath too small

3.9 Key comment themes raised in the 79 responses along with the steps taken to investigate and address where appropriate are summarised below:

- a) **Concern 1:** Objections to the proposed development of an Aldi store and McDonalds fast food outlet.
 - i. **Response:** A separate Public Consultation is being held by Aldi/McDonalds (www.aldiconsultation.co.uk/crestroad) providing the opportunity for all concerned parties to give formal feedback on the development proposals

- ii. **Action/Amendments to the Scheme:** A separate Public Consultation carried out by Aldi/McDonalds in August/September is considering the findings and public opinion in relation to their development proposals – this is subject to planning approval as the next stage
- b) **Concern 2:** New Advanced Stop Lines (ASL) for cyclists on John Hall Way could be a safety issue and will slow down motorists.
 - i. **Response:** We have considered this carefully and having undertaken a second stage Road Safety Audit agree with this recommendation to remove the Advanced Stop lines for cyclists
 - ii. **Action/Amendments to the Scheme:** The proposal to remove the Advanced Stop Lines for cyclists has been accepted and the design updated accordingly
- c) **Concern 3:** New junction signalisation will cause further congestion at Handy Cross roundabout.
 - i. **Response:** We have undertaken modelling which indicates no immediate concerns regarding traffic queuing back to the M40 J4 Handy Cross roundabout. The new intelligent signalised junction will control the traffic capacity of the roundabout and reduce congestion, particularly along John Hall Way and the Handy Cross roundabout. MOVA signals control has been applied to the design to improve efficiency - and future proofing has been included in the design to allow linking between the new Crest Road junction signals and the Handy Cross signals to ensure queuing traffic does not interfere with the operation of Handy Cross
 - ii. **Action/Amendments to the Scheme:** Extra attention will be paid during signal validation and testing phase to ensure no impact on Handy Cross roundabout.
- d) **Concern 4:** The junction signalisation will make it more difficult to exit Lansdowne Way onto John Hall Way.
 - i. **Response:** The introduction of signals will provide the residents of Lansdowne Way with ‘gaps’ in the flow of traffic enabling more opportunities to exit/enter onto John Hall Way. Retaining the right hand turn from JHW into Crest Road will support this. In addition, to improve safety a new signalised Toucan crossing approx. 100m from

Lansdowne Way will make crossing John Hall Way much safer for residents - replacing the previous informal crossing

- ii. **Action/Amendments to the Scheme:** Careful consideration is being given to the design to support the residents of Lansdowne Way where possible
- e) **Concern 5:** Conversion of existing roundabout to signalised junction causing further traffic congestion.
- i. **Response:** Modelling indicates the new intelligent signalised junction will control the traffic capacity of the roundabout and reduce congestion, particularly along John Hall Way and the Handy Cross roundabout. Overall traffic flow should improve, particularly at peak times.
 - ii. **Action/Amendments to the Scheme:** Extra attention will be paid during signal validation and testing phase to ensure signal phasing optimises traffic flow
- f) **Concern 6:** Safety of pedestrians on proposed new shared use cycleway.
- i. **Response:** For improved safety the proposed new cyclist and pedestrian shared use cycleway has been designed as wide as possible within the carriageway constraints. The width is 3 metres on the south eastern side of JHW, and although narrower on the south western side of JHW there is very good visibility to see a long way ahead
 - ii. **Action/Amendments to the Scheme:** A Stage 2 Road Safety Audit has been carried out and the design will be updated to take into account any recommendations
- g) **Concern 7:** Disruption to the area during the works.
- i. **Response:** Temporary Traffic Management will be put in place during the works to minimise any disruption to residents and businesses. Works are planned to take place during working hours with road closures only planned during the short road resurfacing phase which is planned to take place during one week of night works.
 - ii. **Action/Amendments to the Scheme:** The Temporary Traffic Management is being planned carefully to minimise any disruption to residents and businesses. In advance of the construction, Notices

will be sent out to surrounding residents and businesses with details of the working hours and traffic management plans

- h) **Concern 8:** Removal of the Conifer trees (leylandii cypress) along the Holiday Inn boundary.
 - i. **Response:** To improve visibility of the signal heads and therefore improve junction safety it is necessary to remove the overcrowded conifer trees. A full ecological survey has been undertaken including surveying nesting birds and protected species including bats. A replacement planting plan is being developed to support the surrounding environment
 - ii. **Action/Amendments to the Scheme:** A replacement planting plan is being developed to support the surrounding environment

Communication priorities:

3.10 The scheme location is surrounded by High Wycombe businesses. It will be important to keep these businesses updated on future plans and progress – and to mitigate the potential for congestion and delays during construction. A communications plan has been developed to ensure that information and e-bulletins are shared in a timely fashion, the project’s website will be regularly updated with relevant information and activities concerning the project as well as the use of social media, press releases and on-site variable message signs.

3.11 Local Members and Stakeholders have been notified of the consultation and invited to respond.

4. Next steps and review

4.1 Subject to agreement, works will continue with Ringway Jacobs and AECOM to deliver the scheme construction by September 2021.

5. Background papers

Appendix A – Consultation Responses Summary

Appendix B - Computer Generated Image (CGI) of Proposed Scheme



6. Your questions and views (for key decisions)

- 6.1 If you have any questions about the matters contained in this report please get in touch with the author of this report. If you have any views that you would like the cabinet member to consider please inform the democratic services team.

APPENDIX B:

Computer Generated Image (CGI) of Proposed A4010 John Hall Way/ Crest Road Junction Improvement Scheme

