



Report to the Leader (Transport portfolio)

Decision Date:	19 March 2021
Reference number:	TR05.21
Title:	Progression of South East Aylesbury Link Road Phase 2
Relevant councillor(s):	Cllr Steve Bowles, Cllr Richard Newcombe, Cllr Peter Strachan, Cllr Bill Chapple, Cllr Michael Collins, Cllr Carole Paternoster, Cllr Brian Roberts, Cllr Jenny Bloom, Cllr Sue Chapple, Cllr Roger King, Cllr Waheed Raja, Cllr Barbara Russel
Author and/or contact officer:	Thomas Fitzpatrick
Ward(s) affected:	Wendover, Halton and Stoke Mandeville; Aylesbury South East
Recommendations:	<p>To provide delegated authority to the Head of Highways Infrastructure Projects, or appropriate officer, to proceed with the South East Aylesbury Link Road Phase 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• prepare and submit a planning application for the dual carriageway and the roundabout link to the South West Aylesbury Link Road,• proceed with the detailed design of the dual carriageway and the roundabout link to the South West Aylesbury Link Road, <p>To provide delegated authority to the Director of Property, or appropriate officer, to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• progress land negotiations for the South East Aylesbury Link Road Phase 2,

To note the main outcomes of the recent public consultation and the project's response to these.

Reason for decision:

These recommendations will allow the project to progress with producing the required planning application documents, progress land negotiations, and proceed with detailed design for the dual carriageway and the roundabout following the SEALR Phase 2 public consultation.

1. Executive summary

1.1 The South East Aylesbury Link Road (SEALR) Phase 2 project team ran an online public consultation from 1st February 2021 to 26th February 2021. This report recommends that the Cabinet Members:

- a) Give delegated authority to the Head of Highways Infrastructure Projects to prepare a planning application for the project, this is only to be submitted following agreement from the Leader of the Council or Cabinet Member for Transport.
- b) Give delegated authority to the Head of Highways Infrastructure Projects to proceed with detailed design of the dual carriageway and roundabout link to the South West Aylesbury Link Road for the project.
- c) Give delegated authority to Director of Property to progress negotiations on land for the project.
- d) Note the main outcomes of the public consultation event and the project's response to these.

2. Content of report

2.1 The South East Aylesbury Link Road (SEALR) Phase 2 project is the proposed construction of approximately 450 metres of dual carriageway and a roundabout. This new road will be constructed off the B4443 Lower Road and will connect to the proposed South West Aylesbury Link Road (SWALR) and the Stoke Mandeville Relief Road (SMRR) via roundabout. At the B4443 Lower Road, it will connect to the South East Aylesbury Link Road (SEALR) Phase 1. This is shown in the plan below.



- 2.2 If this project does not come forward, HS2 will construct the road instead as part of the SMRR. This road would be single carriageway, not dual carriageway, and would not feature a roundabout connection to the SWALR. This access would have to be retrofitted later at significant cost and disruption to the taxpayer and to nearby residents. Therefore, Buckinghamshire Council is designing SEALR Phase 2 to ensure that a roundabout connection to the SWALR is made possible and that the Aylesbury Orbital Link Road can be delivered as a dual carriageway from the outset.
- 2.3 Buckinghamshire Council must complete this work in advance of the opening of the SMRR. Current programmes from HS2 anticipate that the SMRR will be opened in late 2023. The current programme for SEALR Phase 2 shows that it can be delivered in advance of this date.
- 2.4 To date, the project team has commissioned AECOM to produce a preliminary design and a planning application for the SEALR Phase 2 project. The project team has additionally held an online consultation event from 1st February 2021 to 26th February 2021. An initial design has been produced and amendments are expected in advance of submitting the planning application.
- 2.5 The consultation event was held from 1st February 2021 to 26th February 2021 and was held online due to ongoing Covid-19/coronavirus restrictions in the UK. The project team provided information about SEALR Phase 2 on the main project webpage, a consultation webpage and feedback form hosted on Your Voice Bucks. Local residents were made aware of the consultation via a leaflet distributed to the nearby approximately 800 properties. A live presentation and Questions and Answers (Q&A) session was held over Microsoft Teams in the evening of 15th February 2021.

- 2.6 The project team has collated the responses received via the feedback form, the Q&A event, and emails received in the Highways Infrastructure Project Team shared mailbox. The project team will draft a Consultation Response Document addressing common questions and comments that have arisen during the consultation. This is addressed further in Section 7 of this report.
- 2.7 There is one main landowner associated with the SEALR Phase 2 project with whom the project team has been in discussion with throughout the duration of the project. The project team are seeking to negotiate a settlement with this landowner so that the Council has the option to purchase the land required to construct the road, the roundabout and the associated mitigation necessary that the project is required to deliver (such as noise/visual attenuation, drainage features, 10% biodiversity net gain) should the decision be taken that the Council will deliver the scheme from the outset.
- 2.8 This report therefore recommends that the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Resources:
- a) Give delegated authority to the Head of Highways Infrastructure Projects to prepare and submit a planning application for the project, this is only to be submitted following agreement from the Leader of the Council or Cabinet Member for Transport.
 - b) Give delegated authority to the Head of Highways Infrastructure Projects to proceed with detailed design of the dual carriageway and roundabout link to the South West Aylesbury Link Road for the project.
 - c) Give delegated authority to the Director of Property to progress negotiations on land for the project.
 - d) Note the main outcomes of the public consultation event and the project's response.
- 2.9 Appendices have been submitted alongside this report. They are as follows:
- a) Appendix A – Plan of the scheme
 - b) Appendix B – SEALR Phase 2 analysis of consultation results

3. Other options considered

- 3.1 **Do nothing:** If this option is chosen, the project would not have the requisite authority to proceed with preparing a planning application, creating the required elements of detailed design, and negotiating on the land. This would prevent the project from progressing and ultimately cause the project to fail. In this event, HS2

would deliver the full SMRR as a single carriageway with no roundabout provision for the SWALR. The work done to date would become abortive.

- 3.2 **HS2 to deliver all the required works for a dual carriageway and a roundabout, including the planning application:** This option would entail HS2 acquiring planning permission to construct SEALR Phase 2 as a dual carriageway with a roundabout junction for the SWALR. This option is viewed as unlikely to materialise. HS2 already have permission to construct the full SMRR as a single carriageway through the HS2 Hybrid Bill and have no requirement upon them to deliver the road as a dual carriageway with a roundabout.

4. Legal and financial implications

- 4.1 The Council has allowed for the work required to complete this work within the Medium Term Financial Plan.
- 4.2 The project has been allocated funding from the Leader's Capital to begin work on the preliminary design. Two Section 106 contributions were additionally allocated to the project. This funding is sufficient for the project to proceed with work up to the point where a decision will need to be taken to submit a planning application.
- 4.3 The project team are currently exploring delivery mechanisms for the project and funding pots to draw from for any future stages of work.
- 4.4 If the recommendations of this report are agreed, Buckinghamshire Council will negotiate with the landowner on the purchase of the land. The agreement to purchase the land would be subject to approval from the Director of Property.

5. Corporate implications

- 5.1 **Property implications:** Agreeing to the recommendations of this report would entail Buckinghamshire Council negotiating the purchase of the land necessary to construct the project. The agreement to purchase the land would be subject to approval from the Director of Property.
- 5.2 **HR implications:** There are no foreseen HR implications in agreeing to the recommendations of this report.
- 5.3 **Climate change implications:** Agreeing to the recommendations of this report would result in the construction of additional highway. The effects of the new highway would be assessed in the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) which would form part of the planning application package. Significant planting would be required as part of this scheme.

- 5.4 **Sustainability implications:** Agreeing to the recommendations of this report would result in the construction of additional highway. The project will seek to achieve a 10% net gain in biodiversity as part of the delivery of the project. The project will also provide two cycleway/footways, allowing for the provision of sustainable travel links. In addition, this project will investigate opportunities to recycle excavated material from other schemes for construction.
- 5.5 **Equality implications:** In progressing the scheme and carrying out consultations the Council will take into account the needs of persons with protected characteristics as set out in equalities legislation.
- 5.6 **Data implications:** There are no foreseen data implications in agreeing to the recommendations of this report. This project will not require a data protection impact assessment.
- 5.7 **Value for Money (VfM) implications:** The work on the planning application would be completed through the Midlands Highways Alliance Professional Services Framework. This framework meets all required procurement protocols.

6. Consultation with local councillors & community boards

- 6.1 The project team regularly consult with local councillors affected by the SEALR project as well as the Leader and Cabinet Member for Transport. The wards affected (and therefore briefed) are Wendover, Halton, and Stoke Mandeville, and Aylesbury South East. These briefings are held approximately every 2 months and the most recent local councillor briefing was held on 25th February 2021.
- 6.2 During the most recent briefing on 25th February 2021, the project team presented the results of the consultation process. In total 9 members attended this briefing. Local councillors expressed support for the project and, overall, were pleased with the positive results of the consultation exercise. Local Members were supportive of the decision to progress Phase 2 through this Cabinet Member Decision.
- 6.3 Feedback from the Local Member briefings has been very positive with confirmation that it is viewed as a 'very important project for the local area,' and 'vitaly important for the future of the town.'
- 6.4 Information concerning SEALR Phase 2 will additionally be provided to the appropriate Local Community Board. Both of the chairs for the Local Community Boards affected by the scheme (Wendover and Aylesbury) are invited to the Member briefings.

7. Communication, engagement & further consultation

- 7.1 The SEALR Phase 2 project held an online public consultation from 1st February 2021 to 26th February 2021. This was held online due to the ongoing Covid-19/coronavirus restrictions in the UK.
- 7.2 The project team provided the following consultation materials:
- a) An updated main SEALR webpage and an updated animated fly through of SEALR Phase 1 and Phase 2, accessible at www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/sealr.
 - b) A SEALR Phase 2 consultation webpage on Your Voice Bucks and a feedback form, accessible at <https://yourvoicebucks.citizenspace.com/highway-projects/sealr-phase2-feedback/>.
 - c) An email setting out the SEALR Phase 2 proposal was sent to key stakeholders such as the local Member of Parliament and emergency services.
 - d) A consultation leaflet which was distributed to nearby frontages (approximately 800 with a QR code that links to the SEALR webpage).
 - e) A live, online Questions and Answers (Q&A) event on 15th February 2021.
 - f) E-bulletins have been distributed advising the over 300 people on the project mailing list of the updated webpages and consultation materials.
 - g) A press release and social media output.
- 7.3 The project team issues frequent e-bulletins updating the project mailing list on both Phases of the SEALR project. The SEALR webpage is regularly reviewed and updated. The project team additionally published Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) documents on the webpage.
- 7.4 Following the closure of the consultation on 26th February 2021, the project team has collated and analysed the responses that were gathered from the feedback form, the Q&A session, and emails sent directly to the Highways Infrastructure Projects team mailbox.
- 7.5 The feedback form summary has been included as Appendix B to this report. To summarise, 100% of participants responding to the feedback form live in Buckinghamshire. 64% of respondents have agreed that traffic congestion in the area around the SEALR Phase 2, and 51% strongly agreed that an Aylesbury Orbital Link Road would improve the traffic congestion in this part of south Aylesbury. 48.7% 20.5% strongly support and support respectively the construction SEALR Phase 2.

- 7.6 The project team will produce a Consultation Response Document addressing the common queries and comments raised during the consultation. The project will aim to publish this information on the SEALR webpage by the end of March 2021.
- 7.7 Common themes that have arisen through all forms of feedback are the effects on noise and air quality and how the Council will mitigate this, the replacement of green land with highway, and construction traffic. Specifically the Council will:
- Provide a noise and landscape bund between the Mandeville Park Estate and the road
 - Ensure that the scheme includes considerable planting and achieves an ecological benefit net gain of over 10%
 - Provide details of construction impact in the Planning Application
 - Keep residents informed of the progress of the scheme through regular e-bulletins.

8. Next steps and review

- 8.1 If the recommendations of this report are agreed, the project team will:
- a) Instruct AECOM through the Midlands Highways Alliance Professional Services Framework to proceed with producing a detailed design of the dual carriageway and roundabout link to the South West Aylesbury Link Road for the SEALR Phase 2 project.
 - b) Prepare the planning application via AECOM.
 - c) Commence negotiations with the landowner and purchase the land necessary for the scheme, subject to agreement from the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Transport.

9. Background papers

- 9.1 Appendices have been submitted alongside this report.

10. Your questions and views (for key decisions)

- 10.1 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. This can be done by telephone 01296 382343 or email democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk