



Report to the Leader (Transport portfolio)

Decision Date: 19 March 2021

Reference number: TR06.21

Title: **Progression of the A41 Bicester Road Primary Public Transport Corridor (PPTC) Highways Improvement Scheme**

Relevant councillor(s): Cllr P Irwin, Cllr C Adams, Cllr A Waite, Cllr A Huxley, Cllr A Christensen, Cllr G Moore, Cllr T Hussain, Cllr J Brandis, Cllr B Foster, Cllr D Lyons

Author and/or contact officer: Thomas Fitzpatrick

Ward(s) affected: Aylesbury North-West
Stone and Waddesdon

Recommendations:

Delegate to Head of Highways Infrastructure Projects and A41 PPTC Project Board authority to progress the implementation of A41 Bicester Road Primary Public Transport Corridor (PPTC) Highways Improvements and award of a construction contract to Transport for Buckinghamshire, subject to final modifications responding to representations from public engagement, as set out in this report.

Reason for decision: This recommendation will allow the project to progress from Detailed Design to Construction of the A41 PPTC scheme.

1. Executive summary

The A41 Bicester Road PPTC project team ran an online public consultation from 18 January to the 14 February 2021. This report recommends that the Cabinet Member:

- a) Gives delegated authority to the Head of Highways Infrastructure Projects to continue the detailed design incorporating public feedback where possible.
- b) Notes the results of the public consultation event and the proposed amendments to the scheme that are now being explored.
- c) Gives delegated authority to the Head of Highways Infrastructure Projects to proceed with the construction of the A41 Bicester Road PPTC improvements once all the appropriate changes to the design following public feedback have been incorporated.

2. Content of report

2.1 As part of the Berryfields Planning Approval in 2007 the Council secured Section 106 contributions towards improvements to the A41 as a Primary Priority Transport Corridor. Specifically, the S106 stated the contribution was for:

'works along the A41 west of Aylesbury Town Centre to the western boundary of the Site in respect of a Primary Public Transport Corridor including without limitation bus prioritisation measures; and/or provision of a bus service and measures to encourage its use including subsidy'.

This project will deliver improved Passenger Transport journey times along the A41 corridor between the Western edge of the Berryfields development and the Bicester Road/A413 roundabouts.

The objectives of the project are as follows:

- 1) Reduce congestion on the A41 between the western boundary of the Berryfields development and the Bicester Road/A4157 roundabout in Aylesbury.
- 2) Increase the attractiveness of the A41 as a passenger transport corridor. It is assumed that reduced journey times will increase the attractiveness of the corridor for users of the Public Transport system.
- 3) Reduce journey times and journey time reliability for all users along the A41 between the western boundary of the Berryfields development and the Bicester Road/A4157 roundabout in Aylesbury. The S106 agreement states that without limitation these measures could

include bus prioritisation measures; and/or provision of a bus service and measures to encourage its use including subsidy

The proposed works are to be undertaken along the A41 Bicester Road between the Rabans Lane junction and up to and including the Sir Henry Lee Crescent / Paradise Orchard junction. A Scheme Extents Plan can be found within Appendix A.

The consultation event was held from 18 January to 14 February 2021 and was held online due to ongoing Covid-19/coronavirus restrictions in the UK. The project team provided information about the A41 Bicester Road PPTC on the main project webpage, a consultation webpage and feedback form hosted on Your Voice Bucks as well as social media releases and via a leaflet distributed to the approximately 6000 properties in close proximity of the scheme. A live presentation and Questions and Answers (Q&A) session was held over Microsoft Teams on the evening of 28 January 2021.

The project team has collated the responses received from the feedback form. The feedback form generated numerous graphs following the results from the questions asked. These results are summarised in section 7 of this report can be found in detail within Appendix B, the Consultation Results Summary Document.

The project team has also collated the responses received via the free-text sections of the feedback form, the Q&A event and emails received in the Highways Infrastructure Project Team mailbox. The project team has additionally drafted a response document to common questions and comments that have arisen during the consultation. These are summarised in section 7 of this report can be found in detail within Appendix C, the Consultation Response Document.

3. Other options considered

3.1 Two other major options have been considered to progress the project:

3.2 The project team do not progress with the detailed design and instead investigate further options along the corridor following public feedback. It must be noted that multiple scenarios and options have been modelled already, and the proposed design provides good journey time savings for public transport users as well as other road users, whilst also improving facilities for cyclists and pedestrians. Any further work on optioneering would reduce the funds available to deliver improvements and cause significant delay. Under the terms of the s106 agreement, we need to enter into a construction contract by 4 July 2021 and so further delays could put the s106 funding at risk.

3.3 The project team do not progress with any of the proposed measures, this would lead to no improvements along the A41 and the Council returning the S106 monies.

4. Legal and financial implications

- 4.1 As per the s106 agreement, the Council needs to award a construction contract by 04 July 2021, unless this date is renegotiated with the developers.
- 4.2 East West Rail have contributed £600k which is to be spent improving the approach to 3 junctions: Paradise Orchard / Sir Henry Crescent, Jackson Road / Dickens Way and Rabans Lane junctions. East West Rail construction activities are likely to start impacting this road from 2022 and therefore early completion of this project is important.
- 4.3 If the recommendations of this report are agreed, Buckinghamshire Council will look to complete detailed design on the proposed highway improvement measures and enter a contract for the construction contract.
- 4.4 All funding for this project is from either S106 developer contributions or East West Rail mitigation funding. No Council funds are required to complete the scheme.

5. Corporate implications

- a) Property: All land for this project is already within the Highway Boundary.
- b) HR: There are no foreseen HR implications in agreeing to the recommendations of this report.
- c) Climate change: Agreeing to the recommendations of this report would result in some carriageway widening to allow for better flows of traffic. This is expected to result in improved air quality through reduction in congestion.
- d) Sustainability: Agreeing to the recommendations of this report would result in some areas of vegetation loss, such as the Jackson Road roundabout. Any biodiversity lost, will be mitigated with vegetation planted elsewhere in the scheme or in the vicinity.
- e) Equality: In progressing the scheme and carrying out consultations the Council has considered the needs of persons with protected characteristics as set out in equalities legislation.
- f) Data: There are no foreseen data implications in agreeing to the recommendations of this report. This project will not require a data protection impact assessment.

- g) Value for money: The construction contract would be via the term maintenance framework with Ringway Jacobs (Transport for Bucks). This framework meets all required procurement protocols. Ringway Jacobs have submitted high level construction cost estimates which demonstrates to BC that the scheme which has been consulted on, can be delivered within budget of £3.524 million.

6. Consultation with local councillors & community boards

- 6.1 The project team consulted with the Cabinet Member for Transportation and Local Members, on the 11 December 2020 and 08 January 2021 respectively. 4 Local Members attended the Local Member Briefing session. Members were also given the opportunity to comment on consultation material prior to the material being finalised.
- 6.2 Feedback from the Local Member is that they were happy with the proposals and welcome changes that will improve journey times along the corridors, whilst also improving facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 6.3 Local Members have requested that the Project Team further investigate the proposed informal pedestrian crossing opposite Haydon Hill and look into a potential footpath on the southern side of the A41 between the proposed pedestrian crossing and the Pegasus crossing. The Project Team will investigate these additional designs during the Detailed Design phase of the scheme.
- 6.4 Along with the 2 designs mentioned in 6.3, the Project Team will look at other additional design changes raised during public consultation. These proposed design changes are detailed in section 7.4 and have been outlined to Local Members in an email on the 05th March 2021.

7. Communication, engagement & further consultation

- 7.1 The A41 Bicester Road PPTC project held an online public consultation from 18 January to 14 February 2021. This was held online due to the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions in the UK.
- 7.2 The project team provided the following consultation materials:
 - The project webpage was updated and is accessible at www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/a41-bicester-road

- A consultation webpage was set up on Your Voice Bucks and a feedback form, accessible at [A41 Bicester Road Aylesbury highway improvements consultation - Your Voice Bucks - Citizen Space](#)

- An e-bulletin setting out the A41 Bicester Road PPTC proposal was sent to key stakeholders such as the Local Members and the Emergency Services on the 18 January 2021.

- A consultation leaflet was distributed to approximately 6000 local residents and businesses.

-A live, online Questions and Answers (Q&A) event was undertaken on the 28 January 2021. This was recorded and subsequently uploaded to the project website.

- A press release and social media output was sent to inform the public of the consultation.

7.3 Following the closure of the consultation on 14 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.

Members of the public who completed the feedback form (143 in total) were asked a number of questions about the scheme and were asked to respond with how much they supported the proposals, which is expected to improve journey times and how much they supported the proposals which would improve facilities for cyclists and pedestrians.

The specific results were as follows:

- The majority of people (63%) strongly supported / supported the measures to improve facilities for cyclists and pedestrians. These will therefore be taken forward.
- 39% of respondents supported or strongly supported the measures to improve traffic flow, journey times and journey time reliability, whereas 55% opposed or strongly opposed the proposed measures (6% undecided) as they were set out.

7.4 The majority of those who provided negative feedback towards the proposals are those living in the side roads in close proximity to the scheme and many of them were concerned about the effect on their journey times accessing the A41. Side roads were assessed in the consultation where it is acknowledged that some of the journey times from side roads will worsen slightly. However, once road users enter the A41, they will experience journey times savings along the corridor. More details on modelling results can be found at www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/a41-bicester-road, which includes the impacts on the side roads.

In addition, concerns were raised about the introduction of traffic lights at Jackson Road (replacing the existing roundabout), the need for greater pedestrian provision near the entrance to Haydon Hill Park, narrowing of existing footways, carriageway widening between Rabans Lane Junction and Jackson Road Junction and existing parking along the A41 close to Tesco. In response to this the project is investigating the following changes to the scheme:

- The project team are proposing to improve accesses off the side roads which access Jackson Road and Dickens Way, through the provision of “keep clear” markings at key junctions off the A41 (for example at Dicks Way and Lautrec Way).
- The project team are investigating the provision of a new footway from the entrance to Haydon Hill Park along to the bus stop on the southern side of the A41.
- The project team will not be widening the carriageway between Rabans Lane and Jackson Road but reallocating road space via road markings.
- The project team will maintain the existing widths of footways as far as reasonably practicable.
- The Council will monitor the parking outside of Tesco, this issue has been and will continue to be raised with the Council parking team.

7.5 It is recognised that members of the public are concerned about the implementation of traffic lights at Jackson Road, however this implementation is part of the wider strategy for a SCOOT corridor where traffic flows can be controlled, and technology manages congestion. The Council has modelled the implementation of signals and they offer a considerable improvement on the “do nothing” scenario (with a roundabout). Improving journey times for those using the A41 will benefit thousands of roads users on a daily basis, whether they are travelling into Aylesbury or the opposite direction towards Waddesdon and Bicester. Even those who will experience slightly longer journey times entering the A41 from Jackson Road or Dickens Way during certain periods of the day, will benefit from improved journey times along the corridor.

7.6 Within the feedback form, members of the public also had the opportunity to provide free text for some questions. People could also submit letters through the post or provide their thoughts by e-mail. The project team has provided a response to common questions and comments that have arisen from the feedback form, letters and e-mail. These can be found in Appendix C, the Consultation Response Document.

7.7 The project team has and will issue frequent e-bulletins updating those on the project mailing list. The project webpage is regularly reviewed and updated. Following a number of popular questions asked during the consultation period, the

project team has updated the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) documents on the project webpage.

8. Next steps and review

If the recommendations of this report are agreed, the project team will:

- a) proceed with detailed design incorporating public feedback as set out.
- b) proceed with the construction of the A41 Bicester Road PPTC improvements once all the possible changes to the design following public feedback have been incorporated.

9. Background papers

Appendix A: [Scheme Extents Plan](#)

Appendix B: [Consultation Results Summary](#)

Appendix C: [Consultation Responses](#)

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

