

CABINET

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| DATE | 26 October 2016 |
| REPORT OF | Cllr David Watson, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Energy and Environment Cllr Peter Wheatley, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Skills and Housing |
| RESPONSIBLE OFFICER | Angela Blake, Director of Economy & Growth |
| SUBJECT | Toll Bar, Nuns Corner and Littlecoates Road/Cambridge Road junction improvements |
| STATUS | Open |
| FORWARD PLAN REF NO. | Not included on the Forward Plan therefore, to be considered under the General Exception provisions of the Constitution. |

CONTRIBUTION TO THE COUNCIL PLAN / STRATEGIC AIMS

The proposed programme of improvements to key junctions on the strategic highway network in Grimsby will make a significant contribution to the Council's strategic objective of a 'Stronger Economy'. It will do so by increasing the capacity of the highway network to accommodate both current levels of traffic demand and forecast growth. Improving the highway network is essential if the Council's aspirations for future economic/housing growth, detailed in the Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan, are to be realised.

The programme will also make a significant contribution to the Council's 'Stronger Community' objective by improving provision for both pedestrians and cyclists at all three junctions. A number of accidents involving pedestrians and cyclists have been reported at the junctions that are included in the programme. Improving road safety and encouraging cycling/walking as sustainable travel modes represent important Stronger Community outcomes for the Council.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report seeks approval for a programme of improvements to three major junctions on North East Lincolnshire's strategic highways network – Nuns Corner (A46), Toll Bar (A16) and Littlecoates Road/Cambridge Road (B1444). These junctions have all reached or exceeded their design capacity with the result that traffic congestion occurs during peak periods of operation. There are also road safety issues for both pedestrians and cyclists using all three junctions.

Each junction accommodates medium to high vehicle flows and medium to high demand for pedestrian and cycle crossing. The need to provide increased capacity for traffic to meet current and future demands, and to

improve road safety for pedestrians and cyclists, were identified as critical objectives for the programme.

A range of design options has been considered for each junction. Each option has been appraised on the basis of its fit with highways capacity and road safety objectives; cost and available funding; deliverability' factors including the requirement for additional land assembly or compulsory purchase; and future maintenance liabilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Cabinet considers the options for junction improvement presented in the report, notes Officer recommendations and approves a preferred option for each junction.
2. The Director for Economy and Growth be authorised, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Energy and Environment and the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Skills and Housing and the Section 151 Officer to negotiate with Greater Lincolnshire LEP in respect of the LGF grant to ensure that this continues to be secured for highways investment in North East Lincolnshire.
3. The Director for Economy and Growth be authorised, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Energy and Environment and the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Skills and Housing to instruct the Council's Regeneration Partner, ENGIE to:
 - complete the infrastructure design for each of the approved schemes;
 - commence a procurement exercise for the award of contracts for the construction of each of the approved schemes;
 - manage the risks relating to, and arising from the proposed schemes prior to final tender prices being available for the works;
 - oversee and monitor the construction of each scheme by the appointed contractor.
4. The Chief Legal Officer and Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Energy and Environment and the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Skills and Housing and the Director for Economy and Growth be authorised to negotiate and complete all relevant legal and governance activity required including completing negotiations, agreements and documentation to implement the approved schemes and to award contracts within the budget allocated at the conclusion of the procurement exercise.

REASONS FOR DECISION

Implementing the proposed junction improvement programme will improve the capacity of North East Lincolnshire's strategic highway network to accommodate current traffic levels and forecast traffic growth. Increasing the capacity of the strategic highway network is essential if the Council's aspirations for future economic/housing growth are to be realised. The programme will also improve provision for pedestrians and cyclists at all three junctions, improving road safety and supporting participation in cycling and walking.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Part 2 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 places a statutory duty on local authorities *"to manage their road network with a view to....securing the expeditious movement of traffic on the authority's road network."* The 'Network Management Duty' enables local authorities to undertake actions which lead to more efficient use of the road network or the reduction of congestion.
- 1.2 Section 39 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 places a statutory duty on local authorities to *"take steps both to reduce and prevent accidents."* These can include the provision of road safety advice and *"the construction, improvement, maintenance or repair of roads for which they are the highways authority."*
- 1.3 There is evidence to indicate growing levels of traffic congestion at key junctions across North East Lincolnshire's strategic highway network. The Council's draft Local Transport Plan and Highways identifies a number of specific 'pinch points' across the network where junction design/capacity has not kept pace with growth in traffic.
- 1.4 Ratio of Flow to Capacity (RFC) is a widely used measure of the capacity of roundabout junctions; where roundabouts are operating at 85% or more of their design capacity, Government guidance suggests that intervention should be considered. The draft Highways Strategy indicates that the following junctions in North East Lincolnshire are operating at at least 85% capacity in both the AM/PM peak (shown as an RFC of 0.85 or more):

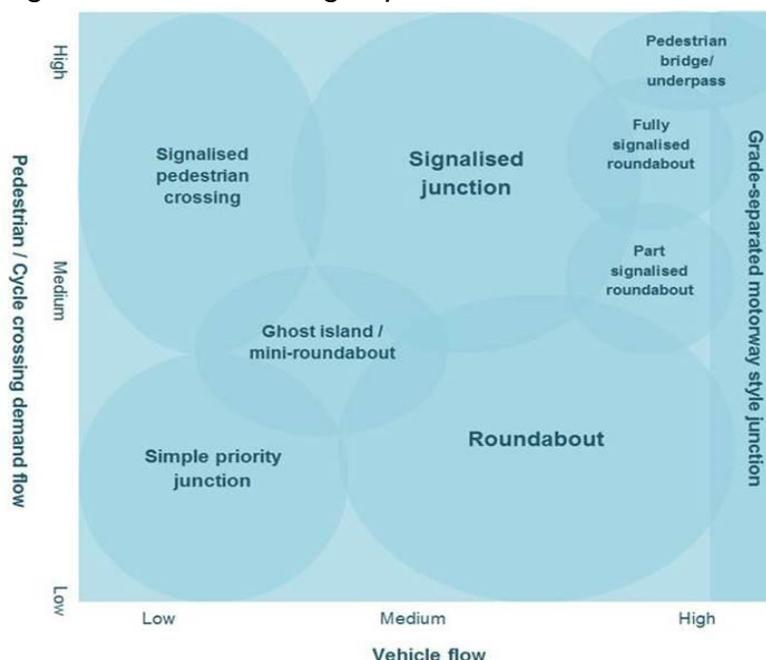
Figure 1: Ratio of Flow to Capacity

| Junction | Assessment year | AM Peak RFC | PM Peak RFC |
|---|-----------------|-------------|-------------|
| A180 Pyewipe | 2014 | 1.72 | 1.43 |
| A180 Westgate | 2014 | 1.65 | 1.91 |
| A180 Lockhill | 2014 | 0.96 | 1.14 |
| <i>Littlecoates Road/ Cambridge Road</i> | <i>2015</i> | <i>1.37</i> | <i>1.35</i> |
| Cambridge Road/Chelmsford Ave/Westward Ho | 2015 | 1.25 | 1.24 |
| <i>Nuns Corner</i> | <i>2014</i> | <i>0.98</i> | <i>0.98</i> |
| Love Lane Corner | 2015 | 0.85 | 1.03 |

| | | | |
|----------------|------|------|------|
| Hewitts Circus | 2014 | 0.87 | 0.93 |
| Toll Bar | 2014 | 1.02 | 1.04 |

- 1.5 In response to this and other evidence, the Council and ENGIE submitted funding bids to the Department for Transport Pinch Point Fund in 2013 and to the Local Growth Fund (LGF), via Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership in 2014, to support a package of improvements for congested junctions on the A180, A46 and A16.
- 1.6 In July 2014, Government approved an LGF grant totalling £4.2m to support a scaled back programme of improvements to the Nuns Corner, Toll Bar and Littlecoates Road/Cambridge Road junctions, as part of the first Growth Deal. Cabinet approved the receipt of external funds for the programme in January 2015, and approved a contribution of £349,000 to the scheme from the Council's capital programme in February 2015. A further contribution of £251,000 has been allocated from the New Homes Bonus. The total funding available for the programme is therefore £4.8m.
- 1.7 The Council continues to explore funding options for some of the other junctions identified in Figure 1 through the Local Growth Fund and the Greater Lincolnshire devolution process.
- 1.8 The Nuns Corner, Toll Bar and Littlecoates Road/Cambridge Road roundabout junctions have significant levels of traffic congestion, and are either operating at, or have exceeded, their design capacity. There are also specific road safety issues at Toll Bar, where the lack of formal pedestrian crossing facilities for children accessing Toll Bar Academy is a significant concern; there have been 4 reported accidents involving pedestrians or cyclists at the junction since 2011. At Nuns Corner, there have been 9 reported accidents involving cyclists using the roundabout since 2011; 2 accidents involving pedestrians/cyclists have been reported at Littlecoates Road during this period.

Figure 2: Junction design options



1.9 All three junctions have medium to high vehicle flows and medium to high demand for pedestrian and cycle crossing. The need to provide both increased capacity for traffic to meet current and future demands, and to improve road safety for pedestrians and cyclists, were identified as critical design objectives for the programme. Figure 2 illustrates the range of junction design options that are suitable to meet these requirements.

1.10 Each of the options has been appraised on the basis of their fit with highways capacity and road safety objectives; cost and available funding; deliverability' factors including the requirement for additional land assembly or compulsory purchase; and future maintenance liabilities.

Toll Bar

1.11 The following design options have been assessed by the highways authority and are deliverable within the available budget for the programme:

- improve existing roundabout and provide offset pedestrian crossings
- retain and signalise existing roundabout
- remove existing roundabout and replace with signalised crossroads junction and pedestrian/cycle safety measures.

1.12 The following options were considered by the Council's regeneration partner, ENGIE, but cannot be delivered within the available budget and would also result in a requirement for the acquisition of third party land currently in use as a playing field. This is unlikely to be achievable within the timeframe that the LGF funding is available to the Council:

- redesign existing roundabout to create 'longabout' and provide signalised junction
- provide underpass and/or footbridge improve existing roundabout
- construct flyover on A16.

1.13 The project has been subject to extensive consultation with Ward Members, the Parish Council, local interest groups and major land users in the vicinity of the junction. Issues including current parking associated with school drop-off/pick up; access to existing residential properties; and driver behaviour at the junction, including u-turning, have been given full consideration. The recent public consultation on the Local Transport Plan and Highways Strategy generated a limited number of consultation responses on the proposed Toll Bar improvements although the following points were raised:

- objection to the introduction of traffic lights as congestion is restricted to school opening/closing times
- traffic lights should be utilised during peak periods only

- improved drop-off facilities should be provided for the school
 - formal pedestrian crossing facilities should be provided
 - a fully signalised roundabout could be a preferable solution for Toll Bar
 - Toll Bar is a bottleneck during peak hours and no stopping zones should be introduced.
- 1.14 Taking all of these factors into account, the preferred option of Officers is to remove the existing roundabout and replace with a signalised crossroads junction with appropriate pedestrian/cycle safety measures. This will meet both highways capacity and road safety objectives.

Nuns Corner

- 1.15 The following design options have been assessed by the Council's regeneration partner, ENGIE, and are deliverable within the available budget for the programme:

- retain existing roundabout and provide offset pedestrian crossings
- remove existing roundabout and replace with signalised crossroads junction with pedestrian/cycle safety measures.

- 1.16 The following option was considered by the Council's regeneration partner, ENGIE, but cannot be delivered within the available budget and would also result in a requirement for the acquisition of third party land currently in use for educational purposes. This is unlikely to be achievable within the timeframe that the LGF funding is available to the Council:

- enlarge roundabout and provide new pedestrian crossings.

- 1.17 The project has been subject to extensive consultation with Ward Members, local interest groups and major land users in the vicinity of the junction. Issues including the visual appearance of the roundabout; potential loss of street trees; accident record for cyclists; access to existing residential properties; and driver behaviour at the junction, including u-turning, have been given full consideration.

- 1.18 The recent public consultation on the Local Transport Plan and Highways Strategy generated a limited number of consultation responses on the proposed Nuns Corner improvements although the following points were raised:

- traffic lights should be utilised during peak periods only
- the roundabout provides an attractive entrance to this part of the town and this would be ruined by installation of traffic lights

- traffic volumes do not warrant installation of traffic lights
- traffic lights would slow traffic flow during non-peak hours.

1.19 Taking all of these factors into account, the preferred option of Officers is to remove the existing roundabout and replace with a signalised crossroads junction with appropriate pedestrian/cycle safety measures. This will meet both highways capacity and road safety objectives.

1.20 In the event that this option is not approved by Cabinet, then the retention of the existing roundabout and provision of offset pedestrian crossings and other pedestrian/cycle safety measures represents Officers second preference. This would meet the programme's road safety objectives.

Littlecoates Road/Cambridge Road

1.21 The following design options have been assessed by the highways authority and are deliverable within the available budget for the programme:

- retain existing roundabout and provide/reopen offset pedestrian crossings
- remove existing roundabout and replace with signalised T- junction.

1.22 The following option was considered by the Council's regeneration partner, ENGIE, but cannot be delivered within the available budget due to the requirement for diversion of a large gas main and would also result in a requirement for the acquisition of third party land. This is unlikely to be achievable within the timeframe that the LGF funding is available to the Council:

- enlarge roundabout and provide offset pedestrian crossings.

1.23 The project has been subject to consultation with Ward Members, local interest groups and major land users in the vicinity of the junction. Issues including the accident record for cyclists; access to existing residential properties; and driver behaviour at the junction, have been given full consideration.

1.24 The recent public consultation on the Local Transport Plan and Highways Strategy generated a limited number of consultation responses on the proposed improvements; the following points were raised:

- support for tackling congestion at the junction but not for the introduction of traffic lights
- the mini-roundabout should be expanded to construct a full roundabout controlled junction.

1.25 Taking all of these factors into account, the preferred option of Officers is to remove the existing roundabout and replace with a signalised

crossroads junction with appropriate pedestrian/cycle safety measures. This will meet both highways capacity and road safety objectives.

2 RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- 2.1 There are a number of risks to the Council should the junction programme not proceed. Failure to address traffic congestion at existing 'pinch points' could generate reputational risks for the Council as the travel patterns of businesses and residents are affected.
- 2.2 Failure to improve existing highway network capacity and reduce congestion could also impact on the adoption and delivery of the Local Plan. The levels of economic and housing growth proposed in the Pre-Submission Draft Local Plan will create significant additional demands on the highways network and are predicated on both investment in improvement of existing junction capacity and the provision of the new Strategic Road Link as part of the Grimsby West development. All three junctions have been identified as priorities for improvement in support of delivery of the Local Plan.
- 2.3 Greater Lincolnshire LEP has advised that LGF funding for the programme may be at risk should it fail to secure Cabinet approval to proceed. Some LGF expenditure has been forecast for the 2016/17 financial year.

3 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1 The Council could have chosen to do nothing in respect of the proposed junction programme. This option has not been pursued because:
 - not improving the capacity of the existing highway network would, if current levels of traffic growth are sustained, lead to unacceptable congestion; impact on the future adoption and delivery of the Local Plan; and place the Council at risk of failing to exercise its statutory duties under the Traffic Management Act 2004
 - not implementing road safety measures could place the Council at risk of failing to exercise its statutory duties under the Road Safety Act 1998
 - failure to deliver the proposed improvement schemes could jeopardise the availability of the Local Growth Fund grant for the programme.

4 REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 Failure to address traffic congestion at existing 'pinch points' could generate reputational risks for the Council as the travel patterns of businesses and residents are affected. This could have a negative effect on business investment in future. There could be further reputational risks should the construction works be delayed, or result in additional congestion across the network.

- 4.2 These risks will be mitigated as part of the ongoing risk management strategy for the project. Two of the three junctions adjoin major educational institutions and in each case the works will be timed to commence at the end of the summer term to minimise disruption.
- 4.3 The proposed programme of works will be staggered to reduce the impact of the programme on congestion levels. The Council/ENGIE communications teams will provide regular, updated information on progress of the works and on alternative routes to avoid congestion whilst they are underway.
- 4.4 Delivering the programme will also have positive reputational/communications impacts on North East Lincolnshire's reputation as a housing and business investment location.

5 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 The budget for the project has been developed in parallel with the design process and project costs reflect the detailed design stage that has been achieved. Full funding for the project has been secured from the Local Growth Fund (via Greater Lincolnshire LEP); the Council's capital programme and the New Homes Bonus.
- 5.2 The LEP Investment Board gave final approval for the programme in January 2016 and a draft funding agreement is in place. However, the LEP has indicated that the LGF allocation could be at risk should Cabinet fail to approve the programme, or any of the individual junction schemes.
- 5.3 The capital project is part of the approved Capital Investment Programme and spend progress against budget will be reported through the normal budget monitoring reports that are provided to Cabinet quarterly. Any related financial risks have been considered in detail by the Council's Capital Projects Group prior to Cabinet approval of the capital programme allocation.
- 5.4 Design, cost planning, procurement and project management support will be delivered through the existing procurement framework arrangements with ENGIE. In addition, some existing Council and ENGIE staff will be assigned to work on delivering specific elements of the project and on monitoring its delivery, funded from existing budgets.

6 CONSULTATION WITH SCRUTINY

The project has been subject to extensive consultation with Ward Members, local interest groups and major land users in the vicinity of the junction. The matters contained within the report form part of the North East Lincolnshire Highways Strategy which was considered by the Regeneration, Environment and Housing Scrutiny Panel on 18 October 2016.

7 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The scheme has been approved and included within the Council's Capital Investment Programme at £4.655m for 2016/17 onwards. The ongoing requirement is now £4.750m, after accounting for costs incurred last year of £0.050m.
- 7.2 This will require a £0.095m increase in the Capital Programme for this scheme, for which funding has been identified and outlined in the report.

8 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The legal implications are covered thoroughly within the content of the report.

9 HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no direct HR implications arising from the contents of this report.

10. WARD IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The programme will have implications for the Humberston and New Waltham, Park and South wards. All ward members have been kept apprised of developments as appropriate. All wards are impacted by measures that improve the capacity of the highway network.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Cabinet Decision Notice 21 January 2015

Cabinet Decision Notice 18 February 2015

Cabinet Decision Notice 5 August 2016.

12. CONTACT OFFICER(S)

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Director of Economy and Growth | Partnership Director |
| Angela Blake | Marcus Asquith |
| Economy & Growth, NELC | ENGIE |
| 01472 324741 | 01472 326676 |

Councillor David Watson
Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Energy and Environment

Councillor Peter Wheatley
Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Skills and Housing