



**HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**- 4 NOVEMBER 2021**

**A511 GROWTH CORRIDOR PROPOSALS**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to advise the Highways and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the progress of the A511 Growth Corridor proposals and provide an opportunity for comments prior to seeking Cabinet approval to submit a planning application for the extension of the Bardon Link Road which is an element of the A511 Growth Corridor Scheme.

**Policy Framework and Previous Decisions**

2. In March 2011 the County Council approved the third Leicestershire Local Transport Plan (LTP3). This contains six strategic transport goals, of which Goal 1 is to have a transport system that supports a prosperous economy and provides successfully for population growth. The LTP3 sets out the Council's approach to achieving this, namely to improve the management of the road network and continuing to address congestion issues.
3. In March 2014 the Cabinet approved the principles set out in the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership's (LLEP) Strategic Economic Plan, which prioritises support for the economy of Market Towns and rural Leicestershire.
4. The County Council's Enabling Growth Action Plan (approved in March 2015) supports the development of Market Towns for employment land as a priority and includes a specific action to work with North West Leicestershire District Council to plan for the future growth in the area and in particular Coalville.
5. In November 2015 the Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee was advised that given the significant opposition to making any changes to Hugglescote Crossroads, future highways improvement work in the area would be focused on the A511.
6. In March 2019 the Cabinet agreed to the development of the Strategic Outline Business Case and the OBC for the Major Road Network (MRN) A511 Growth Corridor scheme. It authorised the Director of Environment and Transport to

prepare and submit bids, as appropriate, to secure external funding for delivery of schemes identified in the Highways Capital Programme.

7. In November 2019, following public consultation, the Cabinet agreed to support the proposals comprising proposed improvements to eight junctions along the A511, including a Bardon Link Road extension to south-east Coalville, and dual carriageway between Thornborough Road and Whitwick Road. It authorised the Director of Environment and Transport to use the existing funding allocation of £4m capital funding to develop and submit a planning application for the extension to the Bardon Link Road and undertake all necessary preparations to progress the scheme to Full Business Case (FBC) and, subject to Department for Transport (DfT) approval, deliver the scheme.
8. In March 2021, the Cabinet agreed to continue to progress the A511 Growth Corridor scheme including submission of the Full Business Case to the Department for Transport (DfT); and the Director of Environment and Transport was authorised; following consultation with the Director of Corporate Resources and the Cabinet Lead Member for Highways and Transportation, to undertake a pre-submission consultation exercise to support the submission of a planning application in respect of the route of the extension of the Bardon Link Road aligned to the programme for scheme delivery as required by the DfT.

### **Background**

9. Congestion on the A511 Growth Corridor has been a long-standing issue recognised by both North West Leicestershire District Council and Leicestershire County Council. This dates back to 2008 when the Coalville Transport Strategy (CTS) was developed and officers investigated junctions on the corridor requiring improvement to facilitate housing growth in Coalville and Ashby.
10. An outcome of the CTS was the implementation of the Coalville Contribution Strategy (CCS) to help facilitate the delivery of improvements along the Growth Corridor. However, insufficient funding has currently been received from the CCS to deliver the range of improvements required and issues (such as congestion and pollution) have become increasingly pronounced. This is likely to be exacerbated further by increases in background traffic and the significant levels of growth planned for Coalville as part of the district council's Local Plan.
11. The A511 Growth Corridor is recognised by Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) in its Strategic Economic Plan as one of five Growth Areas. The Strategic Economic Plan states through appropriate investment and improvements along the corridor, there is the potential to deliver at least 5,275 houses and 25 hectares of employment land. Importantly, a significant number of the committed dwellings (3,500) are on sites which are collectively referred to as south-east Coalville.
12. Taking into account the aims of the MRN funding opportunity and the evidence of priorities needed to support growth, a package has been developed for submission to DfT to seek MRN funding. The A511 Growth Corridor proposals consist of a range of measures, including improvements to eight junctions, a dual carriageway

between Thornborough Road and Whitwick Road in Coalville and an extension to the Bardon Link Road. This main part of the Link Road is being provided as part of the South East Coalville development. It is extension of this link which requires planning permission and has been subject to a pre-submission planning consultation. Appendix A shows a plan of the proposed Bardon Link Road.

13. Implementation of A511 MRN Corridor scheme will provide the breathing space to enable a wider transport strategy for Coalville and the surrounding area to address localised traffic issues, public transport improvements and walking and cycling connectivity; building on the work done as part of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund in 2012 and 2013.

### **Bardon Link Road Extension Consultation**

14. An essential step in the development of the scheme is to identify a preferred route for the new section of the Bardon Link Road. The preferred route forms the basis for the planning and Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) processes (minor alterations may be made as part of the later detailed design process).
15. As reported to the Cabinet in March 2021, it was recommended that an informal public consultation exercise should be undertaken in order to support the Cabinet in deciding whether to support the submission of a planning application.
16. The informal consultation commenced on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2021, running until 31 October 2021. The communications strategy for the consultation included a variety of communication methods; such as letters, social media platforms and posters. In summary the communication consisted of the following:
  - Two weeks before consultation launch, hand delivery of 29 consultation letters to the properties immediately adjacent to the proposed link road. This included the opportunity for the property owners to discuss the plans with the Project Team.
  - One week before consultation launch, distribution of 1700 consultation letters to the wider area.
  - Two Public Exhibitions held at Hermitage Park Hotel in Coalville on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2021, and 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021.
  - Detailed consultation material launched via the Leicestershire County Council consultation platform at the A511 website, promoted via the consultation letters, social media and the local press.
  - Posters promoting the consultation and exhibitions were placed around the Coalville area. The locations for the posters were as follows:-
    - Stephenson College
    - McDonalds
    - Aldi
    - Lidl
    - Morrison's
    - Coalville Post Office (located in ASDA on Ashby Road)
    - Costa Coffee (Coalville Precinct)
    - The New Coalville Indoor Market – (Marlborough Square)

- Coalville Library
- North West Leicestershire District Council Offices (Whitwick Road)
- Information shared with both LCC Elected Members and North West Leicestershire District Council Elected Members about the consultation.

17. Attendance at both exhibitions totalled 46, with 26 visitors on Wednesday 29th September and 20 visitors on Friday 1st October. Although the numbers were relatively low, those that did attend were very engaged and stayed to discuss the proposals for on average 45 mins – 1 hour.

18. Outcomes of the consultation will be reported in full to Cabinet but at the time of writing this report (26 October 2021), feedback via the consultation website is as follows:-

How many members of the public have looked at Confers to date?	112 total public visitor sessions, (97 as observer, 15 as contributor)
How many have actually commented?	52 open text comments
How many have added 'thumbs-up'?	22
How many have added 'thumbs-down'?	22
How many have suggested ideas?	3

### **Resource Implications**

19. The current total estimated cost of the A511 Growth Corridor scheme is £48.7m of which £40.4m is expected to be met from DfT funding. This was an early estimate of cost and it is highly likely that there will be a further increase due to the significant rise in supply chain costs.
20. Of the remaining financial commitment of £8.3m, £1.5m has already been received for development of the project from DfT and Midlands Connect. The remaining £6.8m is to be funded from the Coalville Contribution Strategy (the means by which funds are collected from developers via agreements to fund transport infrastructure in North West Leicestershire, as agreed with North West Leicestershire District Council). As some of this £6.8m may need to be financed in advance of receipt of this funding it is proposed that it is forward-funded through the County Council's capital programme, £4m having been allocated in the MTFs.
21. Forward funding involves a risk to the County Council if the developer funding to be used to recoup the forward funding does not fully materialise via developer contributions – noting that decisions on developer contributions will be made by the district council as the local Planning Authority. However, contributions of approximately £3.7m for physical infrastructure works have been received to date through the Contribution Strategy and in discussion with North West Leicestershire District Council it is estimated that a further £6.7m is expected in developer

contributions from signed s106 agreements as the planning permissions attached to the s106 agreements in question are implemented.

22. Given current inflation levels and potential for further construction inflation and supply chain issues, a revised cost estimate for the scheme is currently being prepared. Continuation of the scheme will be kept under review with reference to key decisions and milestones such as the outcome of the planning process and assessment of value for money.

### **Timetable for Decisions and Key Milestones**

Planning application submission	Early 2022
Planning application determined by LCC Planning Committee	Spring/Summer 2022
Land acquisition (CPO process)	Summer 2022 – Winter 2023
Submission of Full Business Case to DfT	Winter 2023/24
Construction commences	Summer 2024
Scheme complete	Spring 2026

### **Conclusions**

23. The A511 Growth Corridor scheme is progressing well and with commencement of statutory processes required prior to submission of FBC to the Department for Transport scheduled for Winter 2023. Whilst it is anticipated that the MRN Fund will enable construction of the A511 Growth Corridor to commence in 2024, the preparatory work will ensure that the project is 'shovel ready' for any other funding opportunities that arise. The financial risk of delivering the scheme and any cost escalation will, in part, be mitigated by secured and expected s106 development contributions and continued working with North West Leicestershire District Council.
24. In the context of planned growth, the A511 Growth Corridor scheme will have considerable benefits for North West Leicestershire, especially Coalville, and for Leicestershire and the wider region. As well as addressing existing traffic delays and congestion in and around Coalville, the scheme will support housing and economic growth in the area.

### **Background Papers**

Report to the Cabinet 23 March 2021. 'A511 Growth Corridor Proposals - Bardon Link Road'.

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/documents/s160568/A511%20MRN%20Proposals>

Report to the Cabinet 29 March 2019. 'Environment and Transport 2019/20 Highways Capital Programme and Highways Transportation Work Programme':

<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=5601&Ver=4>

Report to the Cabinet 16 March 2015. 'Enabling Growth Plan':  
<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=4360&Ver=4>

Report to the Cabinet 5 March 2014. 'Strategic Economic Plan and City Deal':  
<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=135&MId=3988&Ver=4>

Report to the County Council 23 March 2011. 'Final Draft Local Transport Plan (LTP3) Proposals':  
<http://politics.leics.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=134&MId=3057&Ver=4>

Consultation Report  
<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/road-maintenance/A511MRN>

### **Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure**

25. This report has been circulated to members representing the electoral divisions that are affected by the proposals - Mr D. Harrison CC, Mrs D. Taylor CC, Mr C Smith CC, Mr K Merrie CC, Mr T. Gillard CC, Mr P. Bedford CC and Mr N. J. Rushton CC.

### **Equality and Human Rights Implications**

26. An Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) Screening has already been approved by the Cabinet at its meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2019. It was produced in order to understand the potential impacts, both negative and positive, on protected characteristic groups. The full and final report will form part of planning application.
27. The conclusion of this screening is that there are a number of potential impacts that could affect groups with protected characteristics across North West Leicestershire. In particular groups most likely be affected are younger people, older people, people with disabilities and low income/deprived groups. At this stage there is insufficient clear evidence as to the level or direction of these impacts in terms of equalities and therefore it is proposed that the impact assessment is updated as the detail of the scheme progresses, as well as undertaking further consultation with relevant groups and organisations.
28. As further evidence emerges through the design and consultation process on the impact of detailed proposals on those with protected characteristics, mitigation measures will be suggested to minimise or avoid potential negative impacts. This will be in addition to recommendations for advancing equality of opportunity for those with protected characteristics. A monitoring plan will also be developed to ensure that impacts are monitored throughout the design and development of the proposed scheme, as well as through construction and operation stages.

### **Other Relevant Impact Assessments**

29. Currently a small section of the A511 around the Broom Leys junction is designated as an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA). Without intervention to ease the current and future levels of congestion along the A511 there is a likelihood that air quality objectives will not be met at other locations, leading to the need to declare

more AQMAs along the route. The scheme offers the opportunity to reduce exhaust emissions through reducing acceleration/deceleration, thus reducing particulates due to tyre and brake wear that such events cause. The proposed scheme also provides an opportunity to contribute to improving biodiversity through thoughtful landscaping. The table below sets out how the proposed scheme is aligned to the carbon reduction and biodiversity and habitat commitment set out in the County Council's Environment Strategy.

Aim	Objective	Actions taken
A. Reduce our own greenhouse gas emissions and those in the wider county where we have influence	A2. Contribute to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions across the County.	Reduce exhaust emissions through reducing acceleration/deceleration events
F. Reduce the environmental impacts of travel and transport	F4. Work with partners to reduce greenhouse gas and other pollutant emissions from the local transport network.	
G. Have due regard for biodiversity throughout all our activities and seek to improve the biodiversity value of our own land and influence improvements in the wider county	G4. Work with partners to support wider biodiversity improvements across Leicestershire.	As part of the detailed design, opportunities to improve biodiversity within the green areas of highway land will be considered.

30. The potential to promote short journeys by promoting sustainable transport will also contribute to the Council's commitment to tackling climate change.

## **Appendices**

31. Appendix A – Plan of the proposed Bardon Link Road.

## **Officers to Contact**

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