



TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No: 2.5
6 MARCH 2020	PUBLIC REPORT

MARCH AREA TRANSPORT STRATEGY PROGRESS REPORT

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1. This report summarises work on the March Area Transport Strategy (MATS) project to date and outlines next steps for consultation and early delivery of options for 'Quick Wins'.
- 1.2. The report recommends use of existing approved funds of £220,000 for early delivery of a number of 'Quick Win' schemes as a commitment to 'break ground' in the first half of the 2020/21 budget period. It also recommends developing up to six further schemes for short-term delivery.

<u>DECISION REQUIRED</u>	
Lead Member:	James Palmer, Mayor
Lead Officer:	Paul Raynes, Director of Delivery & Strategy
Forward Plan Ref: 2020/xxx	Key Decision: No
The Transport and Infrastructure Committee is recommended to: (a) Note this progress report (b) Approve the study outcomes for consultation with the public (c) Comment on the emerging options and plan for early delivery of "Quick Wins" during the first half of 2020/21 budget period (d) Approve use of £220,000 from the existing approved budget agreed previously by the Combined Authority Board towards Quick Wins delivery.	Voting arrangements Simple majority of all Members

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The March Area Transport Strategy was first approved for inclusion in the Transport Programme at the March 2018 Combined Authority Board meeting. Cambridgeshire County Council took forward the study.
- 2.2. The vision of Fenland District Council is set out within their Local Plan (2014), which aims ‘to maximise the potential of the area and deliver jobs, skills, improved housing and new infrastructure’, making Fenland ‘a better place to live, work and visit’.
- 2.3. The Local Plan includes the delivery of 4,200 new homes in March as well 30 hectares of employment land to provide new jobs.
- 2.4. The 2011 March Area Transport Study [MATS] provided the transport evidence base for the Local Plan and assessed the impact of traffic growth resulting from the Local Plan and proposed measures to improve the towns transport network under current and future traffic demand. The March Area Transport Study (MATS) builds upon this work and assesses potential improvement options to deliver this growth.
- 2.5. The March Options Assessment Report (OAR) sets out the development and assessment of improvements identified within the March Area Transport Study (MATS). The report details the technical work undertaken in relation to traffic modelling and economic assessment and makes recommendations for several packages of schemes to be taken forward for development. The Executive Summary of the Options Assessment Report has been provided as Appendix 1 to this report.

3.0 PROGRESS TO DATE

- 3.1. Cambridgeshire County Council has been funded by the Combined Authority to progress an Option Assessment Report and develop a range of potential options following the general process set out in Figure 1 below.

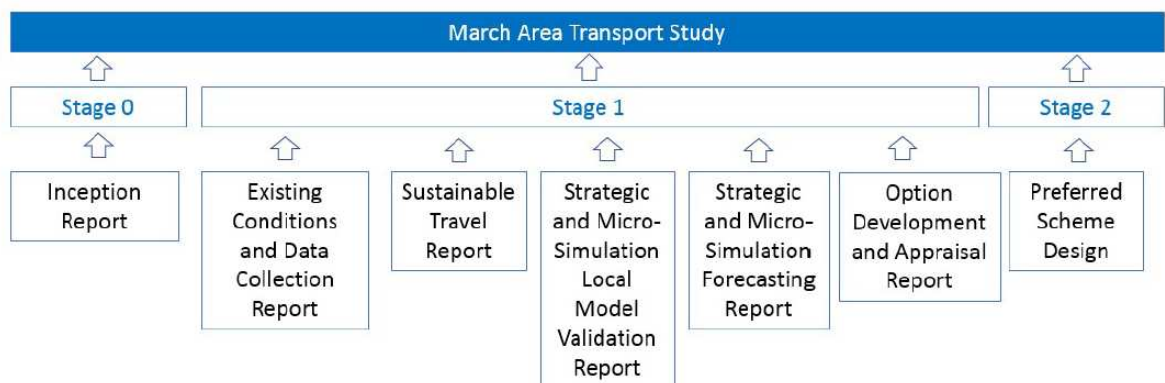


Figure 1: MATS Stages of reporting

- 3.2. The team have developed eight packages of measures with the Member Steering Group (MSG) and other stakeholders that can both be delivered in the short and medium term.

3.3. The packages are inclusive of the following:

- (a) Packages 1 and 1a do not include any changes to Broad St and both offer High value for money (VfM), with Package 1a (incl Northern Industrial Link Road) offering slightly better VfM
- (b) Packages 2 and 2a include the proposed gyratory on Broad St and for reasons outlined in the Option Assessment Report are not considered viable
- (c) Packages 3 and 3a are aligned with the Future High Street Funds proposal for providing public realm on Broad St and both offer high VfM
- (d) Packages 4 and 4a include provision of public realm on Broad St with a new river crossing.

3.4. In addition to the above a variety of smaller scale Quick Win schemes were identified after discussions between officers and Members, and these have progressed separately from the main study. These quick win schemes comprise various small-scale measures such as signal improvements at junctions, better lighting and improvements for pedestrians and cyclists through new and upgraded crossings and pavements. A full list of these Quick Win schemes is included at Appendix 2 to the report.

4.0 EARLY DELIVERABLES: QUICK WINS

4.1. There is a commitment to deliver a proportion of the Quick Win schemes early during the first half of the 2020/21 budget period as identified as part of the March Area Transport study. Local members and officers have requested two schemes to be expedited to delivery within the next couple of months. In addition to these we have also identified for six further schemes to come forward from the Quick Wins list. These are denoted by the Amber rating in Appendix 2.

4.2. Members have already sought funding from the Local Highway Improvement (LHI) Fund and also Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) are also making a contribution. The first two out of the ten are:

1. Norwood Ave – installation of a new footway with associated street lighting. Estimated total cost £37.4k. CCC LHI contribution = £15k, remainder = £17.4k
2. Hundred Rd – installation of new footway in combination with a traffic build out and street lighting. Estimated total cost £30.8k. CCC LHI contribution = £10k, remainder = £20.8k

4.3. The remainder of £38,200 is being sought from the CPCA MATS project.

5.0 NEXT STEPS

5.1. Cambridgeshire County Council will go to public consultation on the package of schemes in early 2020.

- 5.2. In addition, the two Quick Win schemes, Norwood Avenue and Hundred Road are an early deliverable, with a commitment to breaking ground in the first half of the 2020/21 budget period.
- 5.3. Cambridgeshire County Council will also continue engagement with key stakeholders and internal partners such as Road Safety, Traffic Signals, Bus Operator and Fenland District Council Officers any other partners (Future High Street Fund Team) whilst the design options are progressed.
- 5.4. Following consultation:
 - (a) further analysis of the potential options will be carried out;
 - (b) resulting in a final preferred design option which will establish a cost benefit ratio, construction programme and delivery costs;
 - (c) The business case for delivery of a final preferred option will then be submitted to the committee at the earliest opportunity, for approval for the detailed design and construction phase funding.
- 5.5. Public Consultation detailing options assessed in the study and seeking public opinion on the individual schemes is planned for a 6 week period commencing 28 March 2020. Public comments will not be sought on the packaging of schemes. Four public drop-in events are planned, after 20 April to avoid the school Easter holidays. These dates have been guided by the Member Steering Group.
- 5.6. Next steps for MATS are:
 - (a) March 2020 – report study outcomes to Transport and Infrastructure Committee, Fenland District Council Cabinet and March Town Council (MTC)
 - (b) March to April 2020 – public consultation
 - (c) Summer 2020 – report consultation outcome to Cambridgeshire CC Economy & Environment Committee, Transport & Infrastructure Committee, Fenland District Council Cabinet and March Town Council, and seek support for the recommended next phase of work
 - (d) Apply for funding for the next phase of work and develop further list of Quick Win schemes beyond the two that are to be delivered.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. The total budget for this part of the study, as allocated by the Combined Authority, was £1.08m. The study is currently running under budget, with actual spend to date at approximately £660,000. The project is forecasted only to spend approximately £860,000 out of the £1,080,000 total budget. This includes the elements related to the consultation exercise and OAR update following consultation. Table 1 below represents actuals, forecast spend against the approved MFTP budget.

Table 1: Current Spend to Date and Forecast

Budget Period	Spend (£)
Actuals	
Year 2:18/19	£308,000
Total Forecast Expected Spend (incl forecast)	£860,000
Proposed Spend on Quick Wins	£220,000
MFTP Approved Budget	£1,080,000

- 6.2. The remaining existing budget of approximately £220,000 to be used towards delivery of the two Quick Wins and to also accelerate the designs of the remaining Quick Win scheme list for early delivery during the first half of the 2020/21 budget period. Additional scoping of the next stage of the business case and gap analysis to inform the next phase of works.
- 6.3. A value for money assessment has been produced with the following benefit cost ratio data suggesting that one of the proposed schemes offers very high value for money, two of the proposed schemes represent high value for money and one represents medium value for money as detailed below in **Table 2**.

Table 2: Value for Money Assessment of packages

Package	BCR	DfT Value for Money Statement
1	2.3	High
1a	2.5	High
3	4.4	Very High
3a	3.6	High
4	1.1	Low
4a	1.2	Low

7.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. There are no direct legal implications at this stage.

8.0 SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. None

9.0 APPENDICES

- 9.1. Appendix 1 – Executive Summary - March Area Transport Options Assessment Report
- 9.2. Appendix 2 – Quick Win Schemes

<u>Source Documents</u>	<u>Location</u>
1: March 2018 Combined Authority Board Paper	1: CA Board Report March 2018

1 – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - MARCH AREA TRANSPORT OPTIONS ASSESSMENT REPORT

Introduction

The March Options Assessment Report (OAR) sets out the development and assessment of improvement options identified within the March Area Transport Study (MATS). The report details the technical work undertaken in relation to traffic modelling and economic assessment, and identifies several packages of schemes that should be taken forward for development.

Assessment Process

The assessment process used has been broken down into three distinct phases, with each informing the next. The three phases are:

- Strategic Assessment
- Operational Assessment
- Packaging Assessment.

Strategic Assessment

The Strategic Assessment, using a bespoke SATURN model developed for MATS has considered larger infrastructure improvements and has been used for two purposes. Firstly to undertake an economic assessment of the larger options to determine at an early stage if they offer value for money. Secondly, to generate different sets of traffic flows, which account for the rerouting created by larger options, for use in the Operational Assessment. Specifically, the Strategic Assessment has considered options for a:

- New River Crossing, both within March Town, and as part of an Eastern Bypass
- Northern Industrial Link Road
- A141 Re-alignment Options.

Operational Assessment

The Operational Assessment was undertaken using a bespoke VISSIM micro-simulation model developed for MATS, and provides a detailed assessment of how each of the options assessed perform. The options that performed well within the Operational Assessment were then taken forward for use within the Packaging Assessment.

Packaging Assessment

The Packaging Assessment has taken the best performing options from the Strategic and Operational Assessments and combined these into packages of schemes that could be implemented in March. This Packaging Assessment was done using the MATS SATURN model. Multiple different packages have been assessed, representing different levels of impact within March. The Packaging Assessment again used economic assessments to determine whether each package offered value for money, and would stand a reasonable chance to secure funding.

Future High Streets Fund

In parallel to the MATS project, Fenland District Council has developed a proposal for the Future High Street Fund (FHSF) to fundamentally change the way in which March functions as a Town Centre. This includes improvements in Broad Street which will improve pedestrian flow and footfall, changes to densification in use which will support a 24-hour economy and support resilience, and public realm improvements which will open up underused and derelict areas for commercial development.

The purpose of this investment is to arrest the decline in March Town Centre and enable the area to make the most of its untapped potential. This opportunity for funding has presented itself at an opportune time for March as it builds on the recently adopted Growing Fenland Strategy for the development of Fenlands towns and has linked closely with the development of the MATS.

There has been regular dialogue between the two projects to ensure that any proposals considered within this study for the Town Centre, and particularly Broad Street, are consistent with the FHSF aspirations.

Option Development

A series of Option Development workshops were held to devise improvement options to be considered as part of the MATS. The workshops were attended by approximately twenty five stakeholders from various transport, planning and engineering disciplines, with delegates representing:

- Cambridgeshire County Council
- Fenland District Council
- Highways England
- King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council
- Skanska / Capita.

During each workshop, attendees were divided into smaller groups, and each group was tasked with identifying and developing a range of improvement options. These options were then presented to the remaining groups, and were challenged by the rest of the delegates on technical or delivery grounds.

Option Review

Following the workshop, the options were reviewed by the project team and presented to the Member Steering Group for further discussion and approval to assess. Several options were discounted during this stage, with the remaining options taken forward for assessment in either the MATS SATURN model or the VISSIM model.

Further Option Evolution

Many of the options also evolved during the assessment process, with amendments made based on the results of traffic modelling or highway design review. The options that emerged from the Strategic Assessment and the Operational Assessment are taken forward to the Packaging Assessment.

Strategic Assessment Summary

Strategic Assessments have been undertaken on numerous options for a New River Crossing, Northern Industrial Link Road (NILR) and A141 Re-alignment. The assessments have used the MATS SATURN model to measure the impact of each of the options on a localised scheme level and on the wider network as a whole. Network wide model results have then been extracted for the options and these have been entered into the transport user benefit appraisal (TUBA) model, along with high level scheme cost estimates, to allow a value for money assessment to be undertaken, and from this a benefit to cost ratio (BCR) to be calculated.

The secondary purpose of the Strategic Assessment is also to determine a set of traffic flows to be used in the Operational Assessment.

The Strategic Assessment of the New River Crossing options identified Option 10 (a new river crossing to the west of the existing Town Bridge) as the best performing option. Further sensitivity testing was undertaken on Option 10 to determine whether the option could support public realm improvements around the existing Town Centre Bridge, and specifically along Broad Street. The sensitivity testing indicated that there is the potential for public realm improvements to be made along Broad Street, at the expense of highway capacity, and possibly without the new river crossing. This is tested further within the Operational Assessment. All Eastern bypass options were identified in the Strategic Assessment as offering poor value for money and were not progressed further.

The Strategic Assessment of the NILR options identified Option 1 (the alignment running north-south along Hundred Road and east-west along Longhill Road) as the best performing option, which is consistent with the assessment undertaken in the 2011 March Area Transport Study.

The Strategic Assessment of the A141 Re-alignment options has shown that no options performed well within the economic assessment, largely due to the associated infrastructure costs, and therefore none of these options are being progressed further as part of this study. However, online improvements to the A141 have been considered, and these are discussed further within the Operational Assessment chapter.

The next stage of assessment was a detailed Operational assessment of the remaining options to identify a preferred set of options to be considered within the Packaging Assessment.

Operational Assessment Summary

The Operational Assessment has used the March VISSIM model to test the operational performance of options along the A141 corridor and within March Town Centre.

The Operational Assessment has identified that the following options offer operational benefits, serve to mitigate against future year growth, and are compatible with the FHSF aspirations for the Town Centre:

- Peas Hill Roundabout Option 5.2 (60m ICD), in conjunction with the A141 / Hostmoor Avenue roundabout (developer funded scheme)
- Town Centre Package 2 (TC2), consisting of:
 - Broad Street / Dartford Road / Station Road mini roundabout, with Broad Street made one lane in each direction (and the provision of public realm improvements)
 - St Peter's Road Traffic Signal Improvements
- Town Centre Package 3 (TC3), consisting of:
 - Station Road / Creek Road Mini Roundabout
 - Broad Street / Dartford Road / Station Road mini roundabout, with Broad Street made one lane in each direction (and the provision of public realm improvements)
 - A New River Crossing, joining Dartford Road to the north and City Road to the south, with a new roundabout at Burrowmoor Road / City Road and High Street
 - St Peter's Road Traffic Signal Improvements.

These options have been progressed to the Packaging Assessment along with the NILR Option 1 from the Strategic Assessment and the signalisation of the A141 / Twenty Foot Road from the Quick Wins work stream.

Packaging Assessment Summary

The Packaging Assessment has taken the best performing options from the Strategic and Operational Assessments and combined these into packages of schemes that could be implemented in March. Multiple different packages have been assessed, representing different levels of extremity in terms of impact within March.

Each of the options within the packages has been costed using a high level costing tool, the costs provided for each option include:

- Design and Supervision Fees
- Stats, Landscaping and Preliminaries Allowance
- Land and Property Acquisition Allowance
- 20% Risk Allowance
- 44% Optimism Bias Allowance (66% for structures)
- Future year inflation (5% per annum) and Maintenance Costs (1.7% per annum) for use in the Economic Assessment.

The Project Team developed a series packages which included a mix of short term and long term schemes. The packages have been built into the MATS SATURN model and traffic assignments have been run for the future year scenarios 2026 and 2031.

The Transport User Benefits Appraisal (TUBA) program was used to quantify the transport user benefits resulting from all packages, and to calculate a Benefit to Cost Ratio (BCR).

The TUBA assessment uses the output files from the March Area Transport Study (MATS) SATURN model to quantify the change in journey time and distance for each package compared to a Do Minimum Scenario, and hence quantify the journey time and vehicle operating cost benefits (if any). This information is then used to calculate a 60-year whole life Present Value of Benefits (PVB) which when compared to a Present Value of Costs (PVC) is then used to calculate a Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR).

The packages assessed are described beneath:

- **Package 1** – Signalisation of the A141 / Twenty Foot Road, Peas Hill Roundabout improvements (in conjunction with the developer funded roundabout at A141 / Hostmoor Avenue) and the High Street / St Peter’s Road Signal improvements.
- **Package 1a** – Package 1 plus the Northern Industrial Link Road.
- **Package 3** – Package 1 plus reducing Broad Street to one lane in each direction and replacing the signalised junction at Dartford Road / Station Road with a mini roundabout (FHSF Option).
- **Package 3a** – Package 3 plus the Northern Industrial Link Road.
- **Package 4** – Package 3 plus the creation of a New River Crossing between Dartford Road and City Road.
- **Package 4a** – Package 4 plus the Northern Industrial Link Road.

The resultant BCRs for these packages are shown below in Table 1.

Table 1: Package BCR Results

Net Benefit/BCR Impact						
	Package 1	Package 1a	Package 3	Package 3a	Package 4	Package 4a
Present Value of Benefits (PVB)	10225	23019	22711	35091	37163	47094
Present Value of Costs (PVC)	4501	9428	5122	9679	33699	38682
Net Present Value (NPV)	5724	13713	17589	25412	3464	8412
Benefit/Cost Ratio (BCR)	2.3	2.5	4.4	3.6	1.1	1.2
VEM Statement	High	High	High	High	Low	Low

The assessment of the packages has shown that all serve to mitigate the impact of the Local Plan growth to varying degrees, and all are expected to perform well. Packages 1 and 1a do not include any changes to Broad Street, whereas the remaining packages facilitate the creation of a significant public realm along Broad Street which is in line with Fenland District Council’s FHSF aspirations for the regeneration of March Town Centre.

Packages 3 and 3a are closely aligned to the FHSF proposals and have the highest BCRs relative to their counterpart Packages (Package 3 is higher than Package 1 and 4, Package 3a is higher than 1a and 4a). Packages 3, 3a, 4 and 4a all require the repositioning of March Town Fountain, which would be incorporated into wider public realm and landscape design. This study has not considered the detail of that

design, and this would need to be undertaken in consultation with environment, conservation and heritage specialists, as well public engagement in some form.

As a result of the Packaging Assessment, it is recommended that Packages 1, 1a, 3 and 3a are considered for further development.

Packages 4 and 4a provide the best network wide statistics, but involve significant disruption (and cost) within the Town Centre. It is recommended that these packages are not considered any further at this stage, but can be revisited in future should further capacity enhancements be needed in March Town Centre.

Of the packages recommended for further development, Packages 3 and 3a are closest to the FHSF aspirations for March Town Centre, and are considered the preferred Packages at this stage of the study. Package 3a builds upon Package 3 with the addition of the NILR, the cost of which suppresses the BCR in comparison to Package 3, however the addition of the NILR will generate far greater benefit than shown in the Package omitting it. The NILR will attract additional trips away from the residential areas (particularly Norwood Road) and the Town Centre to the south, and so should be investigated further.

2 – QUICK WIN SCHEMES: PROGRAMME OF DELIVERY

RED	FURTHER INVESTIGATION AND DESIGNS REQUIRED
AMBER	PRELIM, DETAILED DESIGN AND COSTS REQUIRED
GREEN	PRELIM DESIGN AND COSTS COMPLETED
GREY	COMPLETED

Quick Win Scheme	Description	Assessment Completion Date; Design and Target Cost
QW1A – Station Rd	Improve safety for pedestrians. Provide a zebra crossing	Feb 20
QW2 – Upwell Rd/Cavalry Drive	Introduce gateway feature at edge of town, introduce 40mph speed limit buffer and revise deflections on Cavalry Dr roundabout	Apr 20
QW11-13 March-wide Walking/Cycling Strategy	March-wide walking and cycling facility audit and produce improvement delivery plan – Potential small scale schemes for delivery following report review	Feb 20
QW15 – St Peter's Rd	Improve safety for school children. Provide a zebra crossing	Apr 20
QW16 – March-wide HGV Signage	Improve signage for HGV drivers to reduce poor route choice	May 20
QW19 – A141 / Burrowmoor Rd and A141/Knights End Rd junctions	Introduce street lighting at two junctions	Aug 20
QW20 – Traffic signals on B1101	Re-validate signal timings on B1101 between St Peters Rd and Station Rd	Completed May 19
QW21 – Norwood Ave	Complete footway on southern side of Norwood Ave	Jan 20
QW22 – Norwood Rd	Introduce traffic calming on three sections of Norwood Rd	Nov 19
QW23 – Hundred Rd	Complete footway on eastern side of Hundred Rd including build out feature	Jan 20