



TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No: 2.4
08 NOVEMBER 2019	PUBLIC REPORT

A1260 J15 OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1. To provide an update on work undertaken to date and request approval to proceed with the Outline Business Case for the A1260 Junction 15 project.

<u>DECISION REQUIRED</u>	
Lead Member:	James Palmer, Mayor
Lead Officer:	Paul Raynes, Director of Delivery and Strategy
Forward Plan Ref: N/A	Key Decision: No
The Combined Authority Transport and Infrastructure Committee is recommended to: (a) Approve the drawdown of £140,000 from the allocation in the Medium Term Financial Plan to produce the Outline Business Case (b) Agree to proceed with the development of Outline Business Case.	Voting arrangements Simple majority of all Members

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1. Junction 15 is a partially signalised grade separated roundabout (positioned beneath the A47 Trunk Road), which is situated on the western edge of Peterborough's urban area. The junction provides access to the A1260 Nene Parkway, Bretton Way, Thorpe Wood and the A47 Soke Parkway. The project

is not identified as a key project within the Combined Authority's Business Plan 2019-20.

- 2.2. It is heavily used by trips between the west of Peterborough and the City Centre, and a significant proportion of north – south trips as it provides access to one of only three river crossings within Peterborough. The junction also provides direct access to a major employment centre (Thorpe Wood) and accommodates a large number of peak hour commuter trips to / from this location.
- 2.3. A Strategic Outline Business Case has been developed to identify schemes that together will provide the necessary increase in highway capacity to unlock congestion and significantly reduce delay at Junction 15, which is a major pinch-point on the network. This will improve the capacity and operational performance of the Peterborough Parkway system which is crucial to supporting further growth.
- 2.4. Additionally, improvements at Junction 15 are expected to have wider network benefits beyond the Parkway system, particularly to the A605 Oundle Road which experiences congestion as vehicles queue back from the northbound on-slip onto the A1260 Nene Parkway (towards Junction 15) during the PM peak hour.
- 2.5. As part of the development of the Strategic Outline Business Case, the key issues that were identified were:
 - (a) queueing on the A1260 Nene Parkway northbound approach to the junction in excess of 1 mile affected Junction 32 in the PM peak period;
 - (b) queueing on the A47 eastbound off-slip that extends back onto the A47 affecting the mainline flow; and
 - (c) conflicts occurring between the dominant movements at the junction;
- 2.6. The following constraints to the delivery of any solution were also identified:
 - (a) Environmental: Land to the east of Nene Parkway is protected, supporting ancient woodland and rare species;
 - (b) Topographical: There are significant level differences around Junction 15, which is approximately 10m – 15m beneath the level of the surrounding ground;
 - (c) Structural / Highway Boundary: Improvements will need to be achievable within the land available. The site is further constrained by a number of existing bridges.
- 2.7. The following objectives were set:
 - (a) Reduce congestion and improve journey time reliability;
 - (b) Enable growth and encourage the development of homes and jobs
 - (c) Improve Road Safety
 - (d) Improve Air Quality

- 2.8. Through the options development process, fourteen options were identified. These were sifted against Department for Transport (DfT) Early Assessment and Sifting Tool (EAST) criteria which reduced the number to a shortlist of nine. These were then tested in the transport modelling software AIMSUN in order to identify the better performing options in terms of journey times and delay only.
- 2.9. Each option was tested using 2021 and 2026 forecast flows which further reduced the shortlist to 5 better performing options. However, of these 3 options were not recommended for further assessment as they either did not resolve the issues fully or transferred the problem to another junction. Of the remaining two, one option was identified as the better performing and at this stage, preferred option. This consists of the following improvements:
- (a) Widening of A1260 Nene Parkway northbound to three lanes from Junction 33;
 - (b) A new footbridge between Longthorpe and Thorpe Wood as the existing one provides a constraint to the delivery of the third lane; and
 - (c) Associated widening of the Junction 15 circulatory between A1260 Nene Parkway and Bretton Way.

And is the option recommended to proceed to Outline Business Case

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. A funding allocation of £140,000 is being sought to develop the Outline Business Case. There is currently an allocation of £500,000 in the Medium Term Financial Plan, of which, £221,000 is the expected outturn for developing the Strategic Outline Business Case and Options Assessment Report.
- 3.2. Based on the current cost estimate, the Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) is 8, demonstrating very high value for money.

4.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. The Outline Business Case will be procured via the Peterborough Highways Services contract.

5.0 OTHER SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. Implications for nature
- (a) While it is expected that the preferred option can be delivered within the highway boundary, the embankments on either side of the parkway at this location are well-known/regarded for their wild flower populations and the exposed rock on the embankment is of local geological interest. This will be subject to further investigation within the OBC stage.
 - (b) Likewise, on either side of A1260 Nene Parkway there are areas designated as ancient woodland. While it is not currently anticipated that

any of this will need to be removed, the potential impacts of widening nearer to this will be considered as part of the OBC.

5.2. Other resource implications

- (a) The project will be undertaken through the Peterborough Highways Services contract.

5.3. Risks

- (a) Scheme(s) cannot offer sufficient decongestion or other benefits to generate a Benefit Cost Ratio of 2 or more. This is unlikely as the initial assessment has generated a BCR of 8, so even if costs escalate, or benefits decrease, the BCR is likely to remain over 2. If it appears at the end of the OBC there is a potential for poor value for money, the decision could be taken to stop the project.
- (b) Scheme(s) are not found to be feasible. Through this initial stage various options have been identified, therefore if the preferred option is found not to be feasible as design develops, alternatives could be considered, although they may not generate the same expected benefits.
- (c) Scheme(s) are not popular with members of the public. It is expected that public consultation will take place during this stage as part of the development of the Outline Business Case.
- (d) Design finds that ancient woodland is required to be removed as part of the works meaning the scheme could not be delivered unless it is considered that there are wholly exceptional reasons or there's a suitable compensation strategy in place.

<u>Background Papers</u>	<u>Location</u>
i. Draft Strategic Outline Business Case	TBC
ii. Draft Options Assessment Report	TBC