

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

17 NOVEMBER 2021

HIGHWAYS UPDATE: NEWARK SOUTHERN LINK ROAD; A1 OVERBRIDGE; MAJOR ROAD NETWORKS FUND – OLLERTON ROUNDABOUT, A614 JUNCTIONS

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To provide Members with an update on progress of funding and delivery of major highways schemes across the district, including:

- Newark Southern Link Road
- A1 Overbridge at Fernwood
- Major Road Network Fund – A614 junctions/Ollerton Roundabout
- A46 Newark Northern Bypass

2.0 Background Information

2.1 Members will be aware that addressing issues of: congestion; connectivity; sustainable transport and an ability of employers and residents to access sites; services and move more freely across the highway network is one of the key priorities linked to achieving our Community Plan and Sustainable Growth aspirations.

Newark Southern Link Road (SLR)

2.2 Delivery of the SLR is critical to the Place Making ambitions around the Middlebeck Sustainable Urban Extension. Full SLR delivery will further reduce congestion, accelerate housing delivery, unlock employment land, and advance the delivery of the county parks, sports facilities, and associated community uses. It will also, if delivered in a timely manner, provide a part traffic management solution for Newark as part of the A46 Newark Northern Bypass scheme, which it is hoped will commence in March 2025.

2.3 At the Policy & Finance Committee on 25 June 2020, Members agreed unanimously to commit an overall capital contribution from this Council of £5,000,000 towards the delivery of the SLR, with delegated authority given to the Director – Planning & Growth, in consultation with the Business Manager – Legal Services, to enter into an agreement with master developer Urban & Civic.

2.4 The rationale for doing so was to demonstrate further commitment towards the delivery of the full SLR, offering additional match funding which could be leverage alongside a Newark Levelling Up Fund (LUF) bid to close the remaining funding gap to allow accelerated construction of the road. The LUF bid was submitted jointly with colleagues from Nottinghamshire County Council and Urban & Civic on 18 June 2021.

2.5 In the Autumn Budget on 27 October 2021 we received confirmation that the LUF bid was successful for the full £20m ask. It is now necessary to move at pace to accelerate the final design and delivery of the whole road given the LUF requirement for defrayal of grant to commence in 2022/22 and be fully spent by March 2024. This will involve working closely with National Highways (formerly Highways England), D2N2 (a grant funder alongside NSDC), Homes England (a loan funder), and Nottinghamshire County Council. In the case of the latter additional support and contributions will be sought. It remains the expectation that the SLR will be delivered in c2 years from now.

- 2.6 The table below updates funding sources for the SLR, as set out in the LUF bid (exc. adoption costs and fees):

	Completed Phase 1 SLR (£m)	Remaining SLR (£m)	Combined (£m)
LEP (Public Grant)	1.0	6.0	7.0
NSDC (Public Grant)	-	5.0	5.0
U&C (Private Contribution)	20.7	39.9	60.6
LUF proposal	-	20.0	20.0
Total cost to complete the SLR	21.7	70.9	92.6

- 2.7 In accordance with the resolutions detailed at the June 2021 meeting the Council and Urban & Civic will shortly conclude a grant agreement to complete the remaining technical approval update works for the A1 and A46 junctions.

A1 Overbridge, Fernwood

- 2.8 In 2017 the Council identified the A1 Overbridge between Balderton and Fernwood as its highest priority project to be delivered via Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding. Work undertaken by the Council, through consultants WYG (now Tetra Tech) investigated the scope of the need and potential options for the structure, specifying a cost estimate of c.£5.6 million. As the 2020 Infrastructure Funding Statement showed, this target figure has been reached, meaning that the Council is in a position to explore delivery options. As such, initial steps were taken, directly instructing National Highways (NH) and their consultant engineers at the time (Kier) to produce a task brief for the proposed bridge.
- 2.9 A Task Brief has now been finalised, albeit this has been held in abeyance pending the end of the Kier contract (in November 2021) with National Highways and commencement of a third party contracting period.
- 2.10 Following spend of an initial £6,000 to prepare the task brief, the next stage is expected to cost around £60,000. Although the timescales for the further stages are yet to be confirmed (subject to instruction), for Members' awareness the following section of this report explains the main tasks involved in each stage, notwithstanding any technical engineering or site specific considerations which may arise. Copies of technical guidance documents can be made available should members wish to view them.
- 2.11 **Optioneering (Stage 1):** This stage primarily involves structures/geotechnical design engineers. A designer will compile a structures options report in accordance with the requirements of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) that will briefly summarise the development process of each structure proposal, identify significant influences on the form and reasons for rejection of other structural forms. This will build upon the existing feasibility study report and be put into an appropriate format to be presented to NH for review and comments. Additionally, geotechnical engineers will develop a Preliminary Sources Study Report, based on a desktop study and site reconnaissance to explore geotechnical risk and identify areas for investigation. This will be reviewed by NH. Ground investigation surveys should be carried out once the preferred option has been decided. Each option for the structure that is not rejected will be costed to aid in the decision making on a preferred option to take forward to preliminary design.

- 2.12 **Preliminary Design (Stage 2):** The preferred option will be progressed to preliminary design. Most of the design tasks will commence in this stage, following the relevant consultant's internal design process including but not limited to an Approval in Principle (AIP) to CG 300 Appendix A for NH to review, structural calculations, drawings, road safety audits, environmental assessments, stakeholder collaboration, buildability meeting(s), walking, cycling, horse-riding assessment and review (WCHAR), site visits, technical surveys (including ground investigation), risk assessments, indicative traffic management proposals, draft specification and departures from standard(s) if any. This stage may involve additional design discipline teams, such as the drainage, highways etc. Their level of involvement will depend on the nature of the preferred option. The approval in principle document is the most important task in this stage as this will record the agreed basis and criteria for the detailed design of the highway structure which is to be reviewed by NH's technical approval authority (TAA).
- 2.13 **Detailed Design (Stage 3):** This stage will finalise the design tasks from the preliminary design stage. Stakeholder collaboration and meetings with the contractors will continue. At the end of this stage, the designer will produce and sign a Design and Check Certificate, certifying the design has been carried out with reasonable professional skill and care, signed by qualified engineers.
- 2.14 **Construction:** Once the final design has been approved and costed we will be in a position to push ahead with construction.
- 2.15 In addition to the headline project detailed above, highways works around Fernwood continue in line with trigger points set out in the respective conditions of the associated planning permissions. On 18/10/2021 works commenced to alter the Goldstraw Lane roundabout leading to the Barratt/David Wilson homes site, to the north and east of the existing community. These works are scheduled to take up to four weeks to complete. NSDC Officers are keeping a close eye on progress of highways works in this area through the 'Highways South of Newark Stakeholder Forum'. This meeting is convened quarterly and gives the opportunity for public and private sector stakeholders to share updates and matters of concern. At the last meeting on Monday 18 October, it was agreed that partners would collaborate in producing a public facing timeline to set out what is happening on them local network and when – with a view to supporting effective scheduling and communications, being mindful of the potential for overlap and cumulative effects of work on the SLR and, from 2025+, the A46 Newark Northern Bypass. It will remain the case that whilst needed works to the highway network to accommodate future growth and reduce congestion take place, there will continue to be some disruption, a need for communication, and a way for local representatives to raise concerns and seek mitigation.

A614/A6097 Major Road Network

- 2.16 The A614/A6097 Major Road Network (MRN) transport package is a key element of Nottinghamshire County Council's strategy to support growth and development within the County. It will enable the highway network to operate more efficiently by reducing congestion at key intersections, improving the predictability of journey times and providing more traffic capacity for future growth.

- 2.17 In June 2021, the Department for Transport (DfT) confirmed approval of the outline business case that sees £24.4m of funding allocated to NCC for a major scheme to improve the road network along the A614 and A6097 corridor from Ollerton roundabout to East Bridgford. The total scheme costs are estimated at £28.635m for construction, land, preparation and supervision costs associated with the project. Full details of the proposed alterations to each junction are provided below¹.
- 2.18 NCC's website provides details of the scheme's progress, with ongoing dialogue between counterparts at Officer level. As the project timetable indicates², work is currently underway to prepare the planning process, with NSDC Officers having recently assisted Via EM and consultants AECOM in identifying existing and forthcoming development schemes within a defined 'Zone of Influence', as part of the scoping stage for the Environmental Impact Assessment. The planning application is expected to be submitted in late November. NCC colleagues have advised that a paper is being taken to the County Council's Economic Development and Asset Management Committee on the 2 November, providing an update on progress and key milestone dates will be published in due course.

A46 Newark Northern Bypass

- 2.19 Whilst funding for the A46 RIS2 scheme continues to be reviewed as part of the Government's Spending Review, since the non-statutory period of consultation on the initial route options closed earlier this year, NSDC Officers have continued to work closely with National Highways and other stakeholders, seeking to understand the scope for refining these initial options ahead of a Preferred Route Announcement (PRA), expected late this year or early next year. Although the proposed grade-separation of the Cattlemarket Roundabout is widely supported, some other matters require further work, including for the Farndon end (including the planned new roundabout for the junction with the SLR) and the point at which the new section of road would cross over the A1 and its relationship with both the village of Winthorpe, the Showground and the proposed New Link Business Park (the decision on which was recently deferred by Planning Committee).
- 2.20 The 'Think Again' Winthorpe Residents Group have been very proactive and constructive in their engagement with NH, seeking to identify alternative options that could help reduce/mitigate the perceived impacts on the village. NH have been accommodating of the group's proposals, giving careful consideration to the alternative route and its compatibility with technical design standards. However, until the PRA is published the extent to which it has influenced the process will remain unclear.

3.0 Proposals

- 3.1 Officers will continue to keep Members informed on progress of the above schemes and any options for consideration, subject to forthcoming announcements. With respect to the Newark Southern Link Road (SLR) it is proposed that Members welcome receipt of the £20m LUF grant and recommend to the Policy & Finance Committee that authority to enter into a Grant Agreement with Urban & Civic, subject to any LUF conditions and contingent upon full delivery of the SLR.

¹ <https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/transport/roads/a614/a614-junction-improvements>

² <https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/transport/roads/a614/about-the-a614a6097-major-road-network>

4.0 Equalities Implications

4.1 For both Newark SLR and the A1 Overbridge, design and operational equality considerations are addressed by the approval processes for each of the highway authorities involved.

5.0 Digital Implications

5.1 The digital implications of the above programmes primarily relate to communication announcements and of opportunities to engage in public consultation. Officers will accordingly be steered by the Communications Team in order to maximise engagement at the local level and in communicating the news of potential disruption during the construction phases.

6.0 Financial Implications FIN21-22/704

6.1 Southern Link Road: The capital programme currently has a budget of £12.000m allocated. This is illustrated in the table below.

	Actuals Prior Years	2021-22	2022-23	Total Budgets
Budgets/Actuals	1,000,000	2,000,000	9,000,000	12,000,000
Funding Grants				
LEP	1,000,000		6,000,000	7,000,000
NSDC				
Growth Point			2,114,779	2,114,779
NSDC RCCO		2,000,000	500,000	2,500,000
NSDC Borrowing			385,221	385,221
Total Funding	1,000,000	2,000,000	9,000,000	12,000,000

NSDC has made a funding commitment of £5.000m towards the project. With the other additional funding of £7.000m coming from the LEP. To date £1.000m has been incurred in terms of costs in design works with Urban and Civic.

In addition to this NSDC and NCC had a successful bid of £20m approved for Levelling Up Funding on the 27th October 2021. This will be added to the capital programme at the next P&F following updates on profiling of budget. The grant has to be spent by March 2024.

This means that the project will have a total envelope of £31.0m remaining for the project. Total costs are currently estimated at £70.9m leaving £39.9m to be made up by Urban and Civic (private contribution). Discussions to secure the £39.9m are at an advanced stage, we are currently awaiting confirmation.

6.2 A1 Overbridge: The capital programme currently has an allocation of £5.6m funded 100% from Community Investment levy (CIL). Spend this financial year is estimated at £60k to progress with the design. With the majority of spend now planned with 22/23.

6.3 The A46 Newark Northern Bypass and A614/A6097 Major Road Network works are projects outside of NSDC capital programme led by other organisations. No financial commitment from NSDC. The update is an information item as there potential for outcomes to impact on NSDC project activity.

7.0 Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives

7.1 Delivery of the SLR, Ollerton Roundabout, the A46 and A1 Overbridge are all highlighted within the Community Plan as having important roles to play in improving transport infrastructure to reduce congestion and facilitate growth. Achieving this objective will have multiple knock-on effects for other plan objectives, specifically accelerating the supply of new homes at Land South of Newark and Fernwood.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS that Members:

- a) **note the contents of this report; and**
- b) **recommend to the Policy & Finance Committee that delegated authority be given to the Director – Planning & Growth (in consultation with the Assistant Director – Legal & Democratic Services) to enter into a Grant Agreement with Urban&Civic for up to £20m of LUF Grant and up to £5.019m of NSDC grant (inclusive of any grant already committed), subject to: a) any requirements of the LUF grant being met and b) full delivery of the Newark Southern Link Road.**

Reason for Recommendations

To keep Members informed of the latest position on the reference highways projects.

Background Papers

P&F Committee Report 20.06.2020

<https://democracy.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/documents/s7923/25.06.20%20-%20Southern%20Link%20Road.pdf>

For further information please contact Tim Dawson on Ext 3769

Matt Lamb
Director – Planning & Growth