

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

23 MARCH 2022

A46 NEWARK BYPASS PREFERRED ROUTE ANNOUNCEMENT: NEWARK & SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL RESPONSE

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 To make Members aware of the Preferred Route Announcement and accompanying engagement launched on 24 February regarding the proposed A46 Newark Bypass, as part of the Government's second national Road Investment Strategy (RIS2) and seek delegated authority for the Director of Planning & Growth to respond.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 The A46 is identified as part of the national strategic road network and although it is amongst the country's most important trade routes, in its current form it is not fulfilling its potential. This is particularly evident around Newark, where the change of from dual to single carriageway causes a bottleneck effect.

2.2 Spanning over 150 miles across central England from Tewkesbury to Humberside Midlands Connect has identified the A46 as a 'Trans Midland Trade Corridor' (TMTTC), highlighting the strategic importance of the A46 corridor, including the fact that businesses along it earn £115 billion for the UK economy each year, with an export rate that is 50% higher than the national average. Almost half the total comes from industries dependent on an efficient road network, like logistics, advanced manufacturing and agri-food.

2.3 As Members are aware, funding for the A46 Newark Bypass upgrade was announced through RIS2 in March 2020. The scheme seeks to improve journey times along this stretch of the A46, reducing congestion, making journeys safer, improving noise levels (in Noise Important Areas or noise 'hotspots') and enhancing cyclist and pedestrian safety. Also, critically, the scheme has a significant role to play in boosting economic potential, productivity, and growth.

2.4 After extensive lobbying to emphasise the importance of the A46 in its capacity as the Trans Midland Trade Corridor, other RIS2 works planned along the A46 will complement the Newark scheme with improvements to the A46 Coventry junctions at Binley and Walsgrave by 2025. This essential upgrade removes a major bottleneck, helps facilitate current and future planned growth and improves access for freight traffic travelling along the A46, one of the country's most important trade routes. The plans for the A46 corridor could add £7.1 billion to the UK economy. At the local level, the cumulative effect of the A46 scheme, along with delivery of the Newark Southern Link Road and A1 Overbridge will drive increased productivity and unlock huge potential, with much of the District's planned growth and many of the headline projects in the Town Investment Plan predicated on the increased highway network capacity that will be achieved.

2.5 Highways England now National Highways (NH) held a public consultation from 9 December 2020 until 2 February 2021 to seek views on its proposed approach to addressing the problems of the current A46 Newark bypass. Two proposals, Options 1 and 2, were presented for consideration, although NH confirmed that they were happy to consider

'hybrid' responses which mixed and matched elements of the two options. Over 1,500 people responded to the consultation and a report in May 2021 summarising the feedback is available on the NH website (<https://assets.highwaysengland.co.uk/roads/road-projects/A46+Newark+bypass/A46+Newark+Bypass+Public+Consultation+Report.pdf>).

- 2.6 Both of the options consulted upon included a new link and a new bridge over the A1 to the north of the existing bridge, along with improved access to the A1 by removing A46 through-traffic from the Brownhills and Friendly Farmer roundabouts, allowing them to operate better. The critical differences between the options lay in the approach taken to negotiating the existing junctions at Newark Cattlemarket and at Winthorpe. In Option 1 the Cattlemarket Roundabout was not grade separated and the A46 linked into the Friendly Farmer Roundabout with an overbridge. In option 2 the Cattlemarket Roundabout was grade separated and a separate A46 crossed the A1 at Winthorpe and ran parallel to the current A46 but closer to Winthorpe, rejoining the current route at an enlarged Winthorpe Roundabout.
- 2.7 As members will recall the District Council made a detailed responses to the options consultation and it is attached at **Appendix A**. The Council provided "principle support for A46 Newark Bypass scheme, which is of local, regional, and national importance." Three imperatives were highlighted:
1. Grade separation of the Cattlemarket junction is essential facilitate free flow of A46 traffic, delivering the improvements to journey times that lie amongst the headline objectives of the scheme.
 2. The upgrading of the strategic road network should not be done in a manner that compromises future potential to enhance the strategic rail network (i.e. removing the flat crossing at the intersection of the East Coast Main Line and the Nottingham to Lincoln Line).
 3. Recognition of other highways proposals in and around Newark and the need to ensure that traffic impacts are, as far as possible, minimised during construction and therefore urge Highways England to carefully assess modelling work underpinning the A46 proposals in order that traffic management approaches reflect the different scenarios that may arise from different combinations of works occurring at different times.

The Council also sought assurance that proper consideration be given to alternative schemes and proposals in the Winthorpe area given the level of concern about the proposed options in that area.

3.0 Preferred Route Announcement Proposals

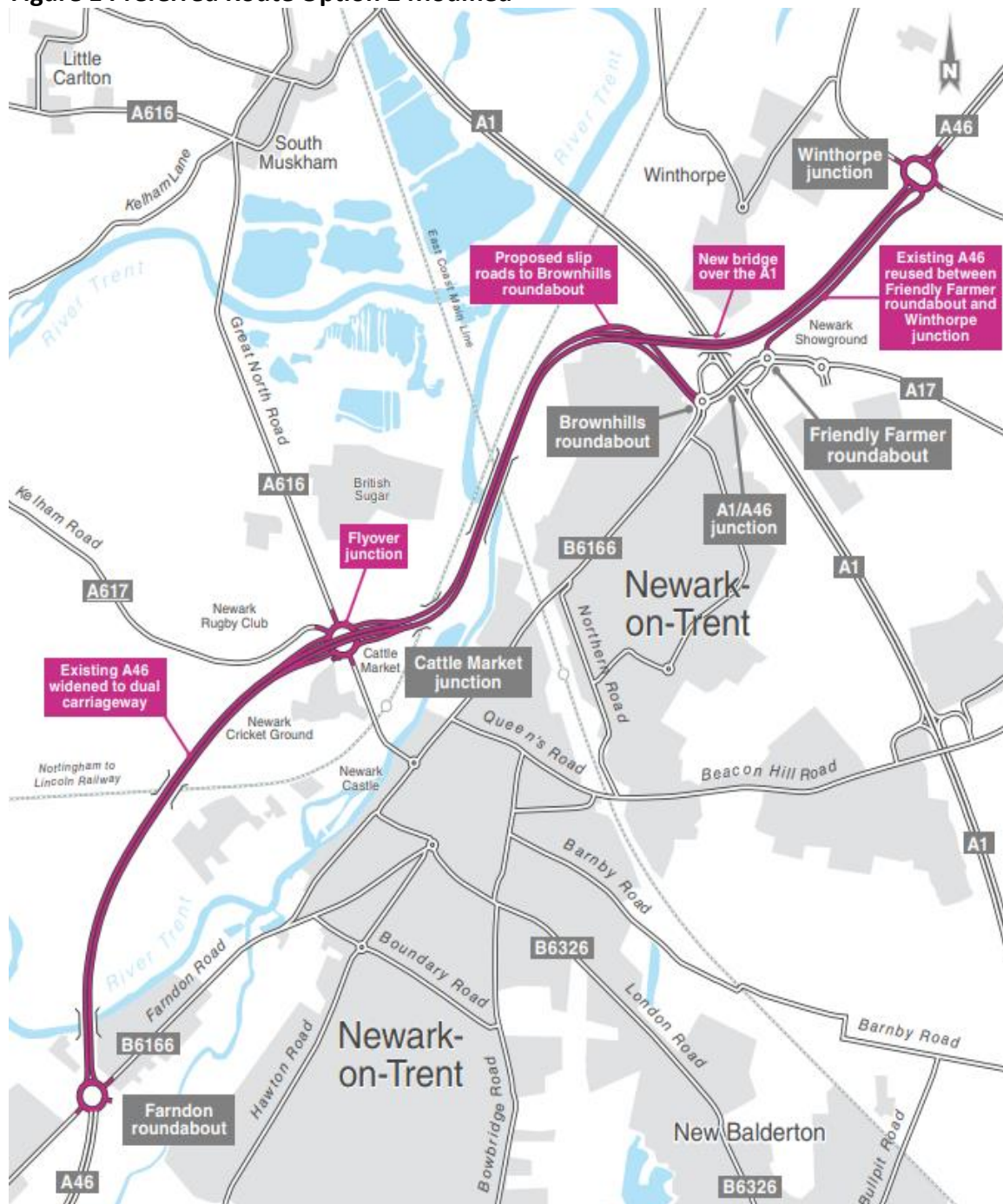
The Preferred Route Option 2 Modified

- 3.1 On 24 February 2022 NH made its announcement on their preferred route for the A46 Newark Bypass and launched an information and engagement exercise. The route and various supporting document are available to view at <https://nationalhighways.co.uk/our-work/east-midlands/a46-newark-bypass/>. The route arrived at is described as Option 2 Modified. The main features of this approach are:
- Widening the A46 to a dual carriageway to provide two lanes in each direction between the Farndon and Winthorpe junctions
 - A new bridge over the A1 to the north of the existing bridge

- A flyover junction at Cattle Market with the A46 elevated to pass over the roundabout
- Traffic lights to Farndon junction to improve traffic flows during peak hours
- A five-arm roundabout at Winthorpe roundabout with traffic lights to connect the new A46 link.

3.2 NH state that “While key features of the scheme remain the same as Option 2, following your feedback and additional assessments, we have modified the route to be further away from Winthorpe, and partially back on to the existing A46, between Friendly Farmer roundabout and Winthorpe junction.” Set out below is a map of the preferred route proposed by NH.

Figure 1 Preferred Route Option 2 Modified



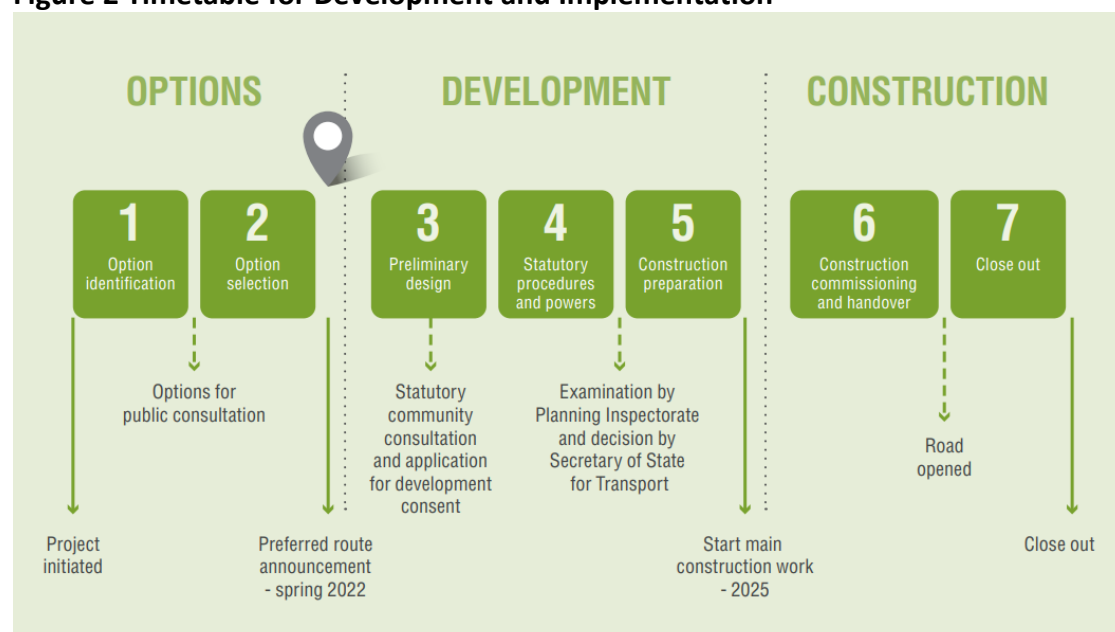
Meeting the Council's Objectives and concerns?

- 3.3 As set out at 2.7 and in Appendix A the Council made a detailed response to the options consultation that was undertaken last year. In terms of the Council's three imperatives it should be noted that the grade separation of the Cattlemarket Roundabout has been proposed. With regard to the other two; discussion between ourselves NH, Network Rail, and Nottinghamshire County Council have led to the conclusion that the proposed approach in the vicinity of the Newark Flat crossing will not prejudice future rail improvements. NH have engaged in ongoing dialogue on the issues of other transport proposals in and around Newark and have been working with the Council, County Council and Urban & Civic (the Middlebeck developers) to ensure that the A46/Southern Link Road junction will work with the A46 Bypass as now proposed. In terms of minimising the impact during initial discussion NH have stated that they believe the nature of the proposed road construction may well lead to limited impact on traffic flows, potentially involving night closures, however the Council will continue to pursue this issue as the scheme advances. It is also important to note that the completion of the SLR before works commence on the A46 Newark Bypass will be an important piece of any mitigation strategy.
- 3.4 Officers are currently reviewing the proposals in detail to consider if it addresses our more detailed concerns and attached at **Appendix B** is an assessment at the time of writing of if they have been met by the preferred route. As the Preferred Approach includes a grade separated junction consideration will need to be given to the impact on the Council's Lorry Park. It would appear that a significant area adjacent to the A46 and fronting onto Great North Road will be taken up with embankments and a balancing pond. Furthermore it will be important to understand that the route could have implications for the location of any replacement lorry park – given one potential location is Newark Showground.

Next Steps and Timetable for Road Delivery

- 3.5 Set out in Figure 2 is the timetable NH has set out that for next steps. It will be working to prepare a preliminary design once this period of engagement is completed. The Preliminary Design stage will include statutory public consultation on the details of the proposed design.

Figure 2 Timetable for Development and Implementation



3.6 Clearly whilst this is not a formal stage of consultation the Council will need to consider a formal response to the proposal to inform further detailed working with NH, partners and communities. We will need to consider any detailed technical points which NH need to be aware of before starting detailed design work. Work is ongoing to reach a conclusion on the detailed impact of the Preferred Route and it is proposed that once this work has concluded the Director of Planning & Growth in consultation with the Leader of the Council, Chairman of the Economic Development Committee and Chairman of the Planning Committee submit the Council's formal comments on the A46 Newark Bypass Preferred Route.

4.0 Equalities Implications

4.1 From the Council's perspective, the A46 is identified as a key piece of infrastructure in the Local Development Framework and in the Community Plan. Preparation of the former (in the form of the Amended Core Strategy) required that all policies were subject to appraisal against the Integrated Impacts Assessment (IIA). The IIA incorporates a Sustainability Appraisal, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) and Health Impact Assessment (HIA). The EqIA is a way of demonstrating the District Council is fulfilling the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty contained in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.

5.0 Digital Implications

5.1 There are no direct digital implications arising from this report.

6.0 Financial Implications FIN21-22/782

6.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. Any consideration of the impact of the proposals on the Lorry Park can only be properly considered when a detailed design is developed.

7.0 Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives

7.1 Delivery of the A46 Newark Bypass is highlighted as a specific aim within the Community Plan objective of delivering inclusive and sustainable economic growth. Achieving this objective will help reduce congestion on the town's roads and, allied to the delivery of the Southern Link Road, has great potential to support the enhancement of the town centre, while increased road capacity will facilitate new jobs in the district that will contribute to increased opportunities for greater social mobility.

8.0 RECOMMENDATION

That Members delegate to the Director – Planning & Growth, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, Chairman of the Economic Development Committee and Chairman of the Planning Committee, authority to formally submit the Council's formal comments on the A46 Newark Bypass Preferred Route.

Reason for Recommendation

To positively influence National Highways decision-making process and to ensure that the Preferred Route delivers optimal local and strategic benefits.

Background Papers

A46 Newark Bypass Public Consultation, Highways England 2020:

For further information please contact Matthew Norton on Ext 5852

Matt Lamb
Director - Planning & Growth