

Appendix E Public Exhibition Boards

Congleton Link Road

Welcome to the Public Consultation



"I am pleased to welcome you to the Congleton Link Road Consultation event.

Congleton Link Road is vital to the town's continued growth and development. It will open up developable land to the north of the town, which will help to create and secure jobs for the people of Congleton, and bring much needed investment to the town.

Furthermore, it will vastly improve the local highway network, alleviating congestion within the town centre and promoting urban regeneration.

Your views are important and, in holding this consultation, you can be sure that your opinions will be carefully collated and seriously considered. If you haven't already done so, I hope that you will find time to respond to the Consultation Questionnaire."

Councillor David Brown
Deputy Leader of the Council
Strategic Communities Portfolio Holder
Cheshire East Council



Congleton currently experiences heavy congestion through key town centre corridors, particularly at peak times. This has hampered town centre regeneration, reduced inward investment and also made it difficult to retain existing businesses.

As the local population grows, more traffic will be generated, putting further strain on the existing highway network. Without future transport infrastructure improvements, Congleton's congestion problems will worsen, restricting the potential for economic growth.

The Congleton Link Road aims to address these issues directly by providing an alternative route for through traffic to the north of the town, promoting economic expansion and attracting business to the area.

Cheshire East Council is considering a number of options on the route of the link road and is keen to hear your views.

Congleton Link Road

Why is it Needed?

What are the problems?

- Congestion within the town centre.
- Poor air quality.
- Reduced attraction to inward investment.
- Retention of existing employers.
- Public transport, cycle lanes and pedestrian walkways could be improved.
- Hampered town centre regeneration aspirations.
- Environment within the town centre.
- Congleton Town Centre used as a through route for strategic traffic.
- Unable to support development outlined in Cheshire East Council's draft Local Plan.



Our Aims

- Reduce existing town centre congestion and help boost the local economy.
- Improve transport links across Cheshire, helping the local economy.
- Support the regeneration of Congleton by creating and securing jobs.
- Improve access to Congleton Business Park and Radnor Park Trading Estate.
- Improved cycle and pedestrian routes on the new link road and town centre roads.
- Improve air quality within the town centre.

The Solution

A number of options were identified that had the potential to help ease the problems experienced in Congleton. These options included a range of transport modes, each with different scales and impacts.

In a review, a single option was considered to successfully meet the scheme's aims; this was a **link road connecting the A534 Sandbach Road to the A536 Macclesfield Road.**



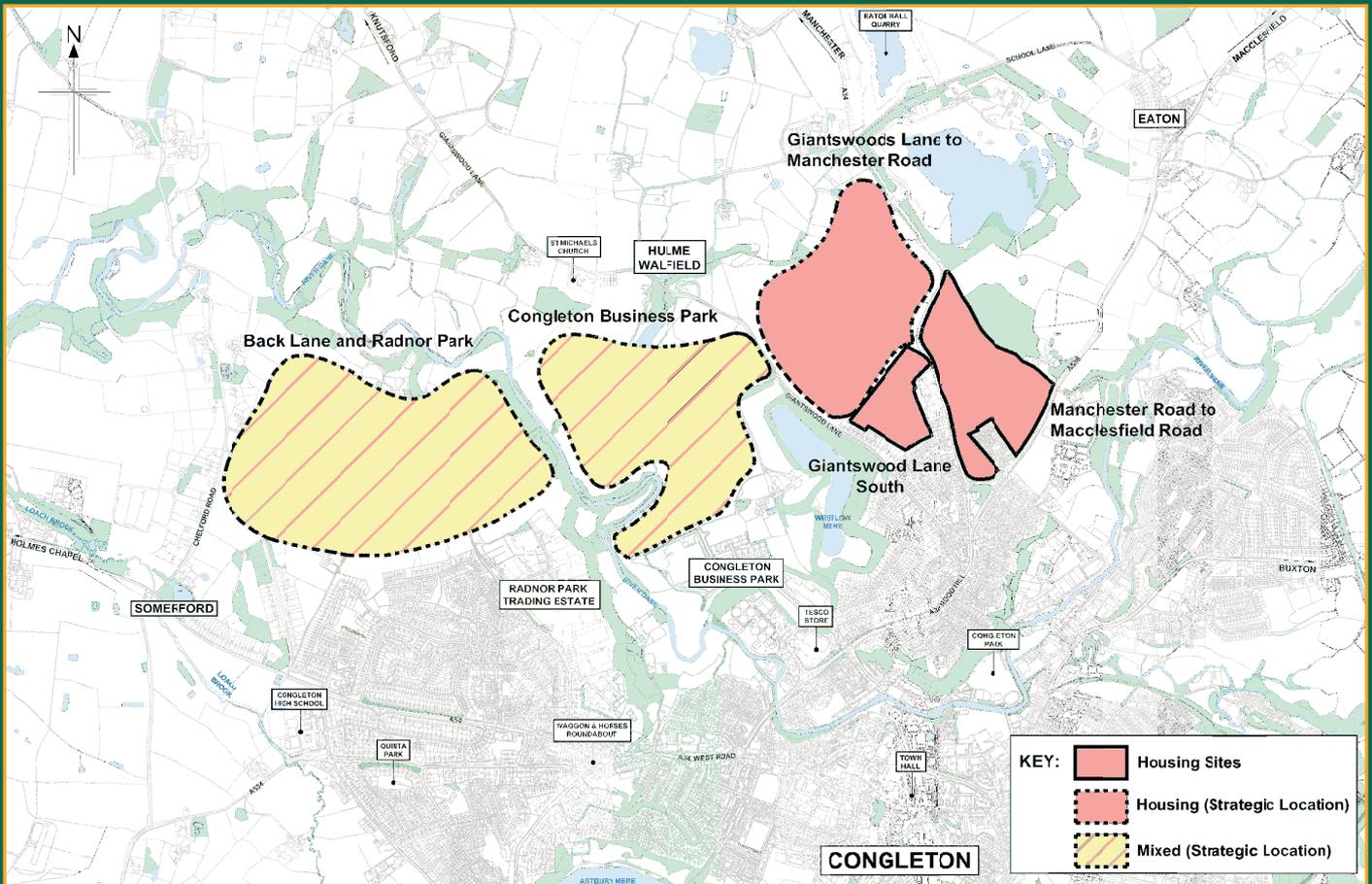
Congleton Link Road

Local Plan

The Cheshire East Council Draft Local Plan has identified a number of locations for development to the north of Congleton.

The focus for Congleton will be to expand existing businesses and attract new investment to the town. New housing is seen as an important part of a balanced development plan, helping to support the town centre and ensuring that the town remains a place where people continue to want to live and work.

It is anticipated that approximately 2000 new houses will be built as part of the development, regardless of whether or not the link road project goes ahead.



Back Lane and Radnor Park

- 500 new homes.
- 10 hectares of employment land.
- Improvements to Back Lane Playing Fields.
- Up to 10 hectares of land for new sport and leisure facilities.
- Local convenience store.
- New primary school.

Congleton Business Park Extension

- 450 new homes.
- 10 hectares of land for employment and commercial use.

Giantswood Lane to Manchester Road

- 550 new homes.
- Local convenience store.
- New primary school.

Giantswood Lane South

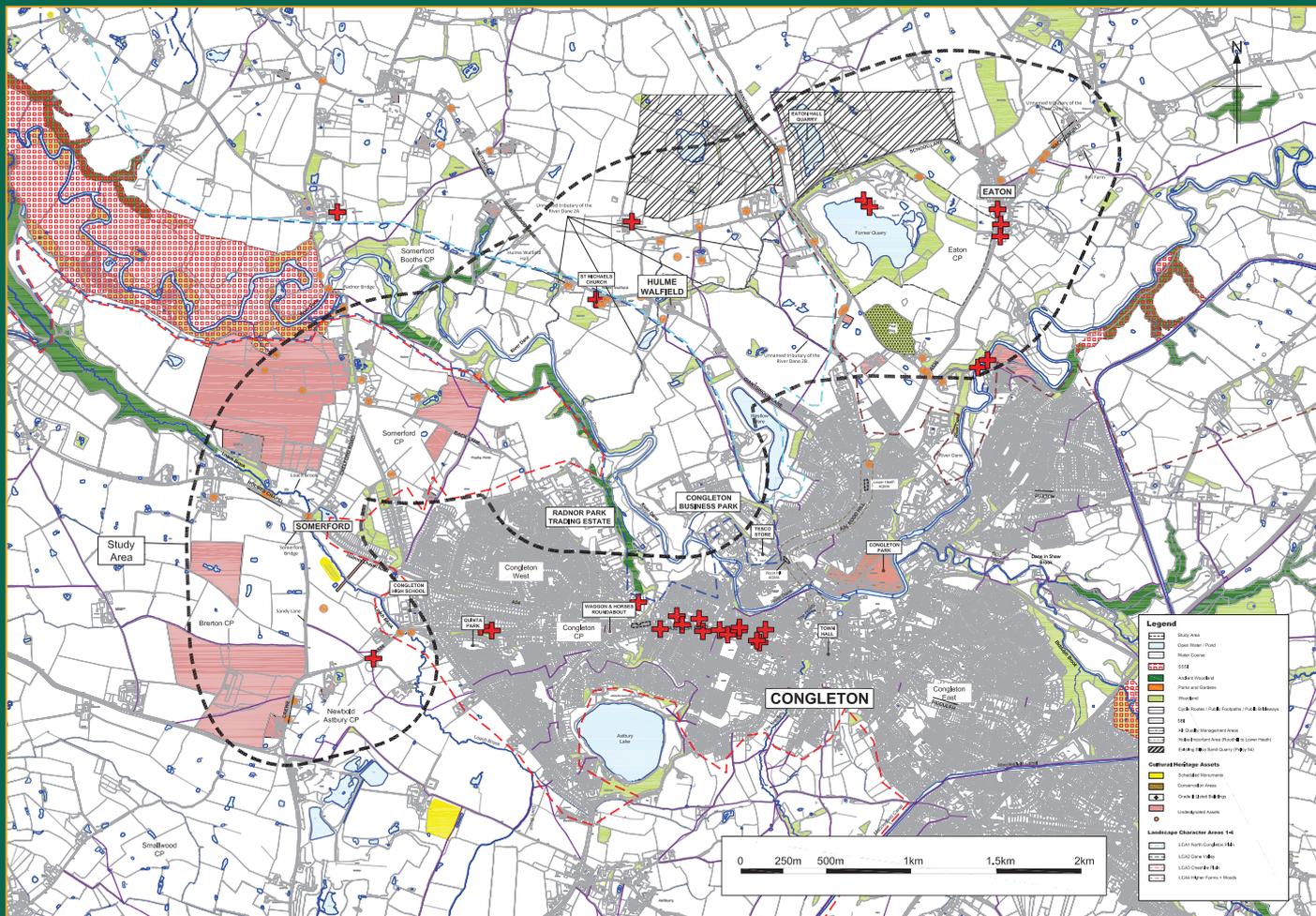
- 150 new homes.

Manchester Road to Macclesfield Road

- 550 new homes.
- Local convenience store.

Congleton Link Road Environmental Considerations

An environmental assessment of the route corridor has been carried out. The main environmental considerations are shown in the plan below.



The main environmental considerations detailed in the plan are as follows:

Ecology

Ancient woodland and other woodland
Ponds and watercourses
Nature conservation areas

Water Environment

Watercourses – River Dane, Loach Brook and un-named tributaries of the River Dane

Cultural Heritage

Scheduled monument, listed buildings and conservation areas

Landscape

Landscape character areas
Visual impact

Air Quality and Noise

Air Quality Management Areas
Noise Important Areas

Effects on All Travellers

Potential to enhance pedestrian and cyclist facilities in Congleton through reduced congestion.

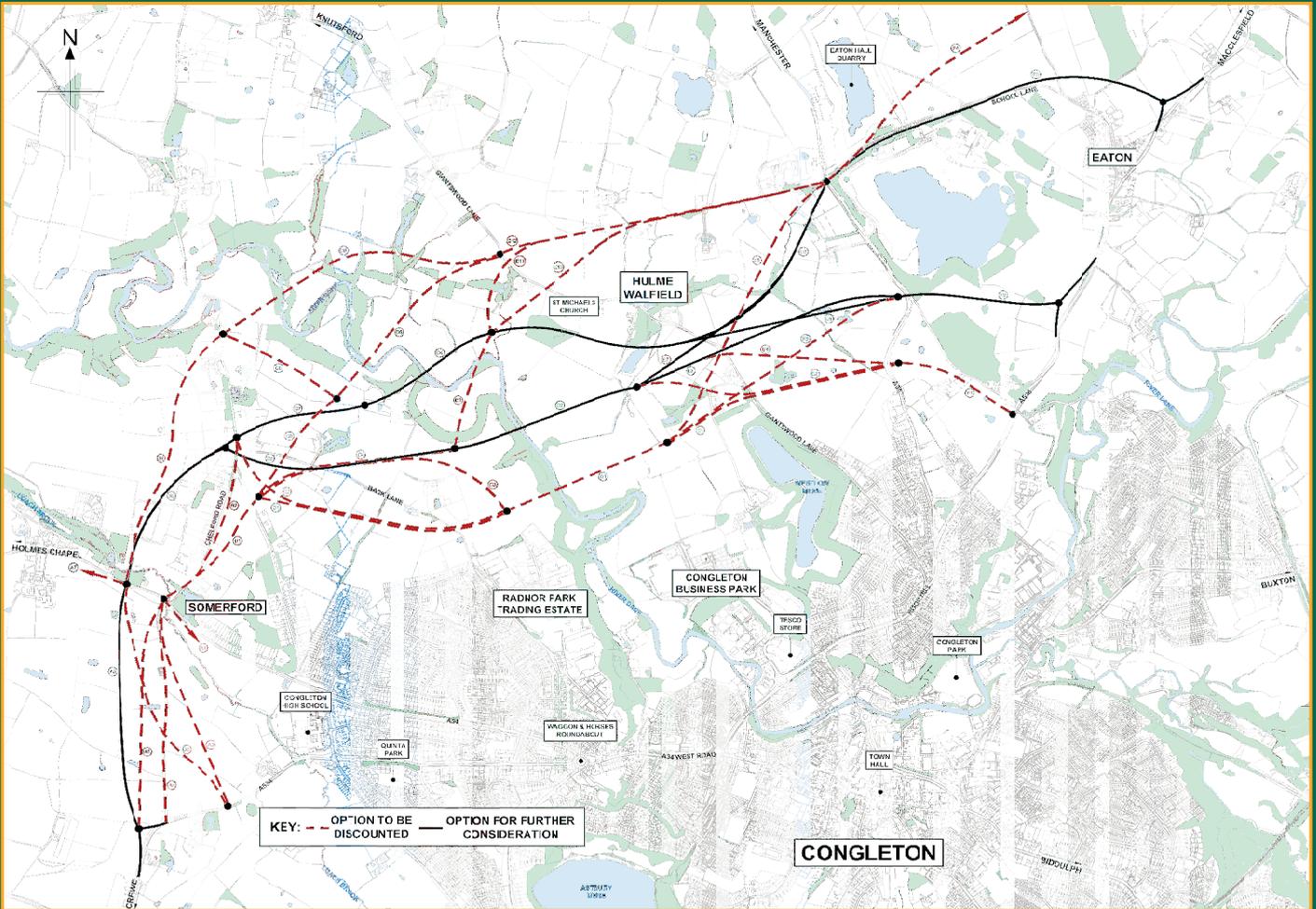
Private and Community Assets

Business Parks (Radnor Park Trading Estate and Congleton Business Park)
Active silica sand quarry

Soil, Geology and Hydrogeology

Active silica sand quarry

Congleton Link Road Route Appraisal



Following the identification of a link road between the A534 Sandbach Road and the A536 Macclesfield Road as being the preferred solution, an exercise was carried out to identify the most suitable link road routes within the scheme's corridor (to the north of Congleton).

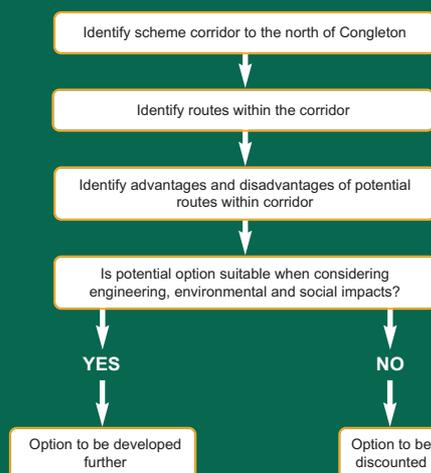
Potential link road options in the corridor were identified and assessed against the scheme objectives. Factors such as engineering constraints, environmental impact and impact on property were also considered.

The advantages and disadvantages of each option were identified and a decision was made as to which options should be considered further.

The potential link road options which were identified are shown on the plan above. Options which were considered suitable are shown in black, while options which were discounted are shown as red dashed lines.

This process resulted in four potential link road options being identified for further consideration.

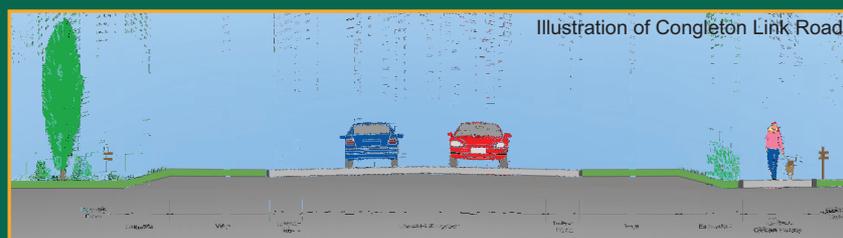
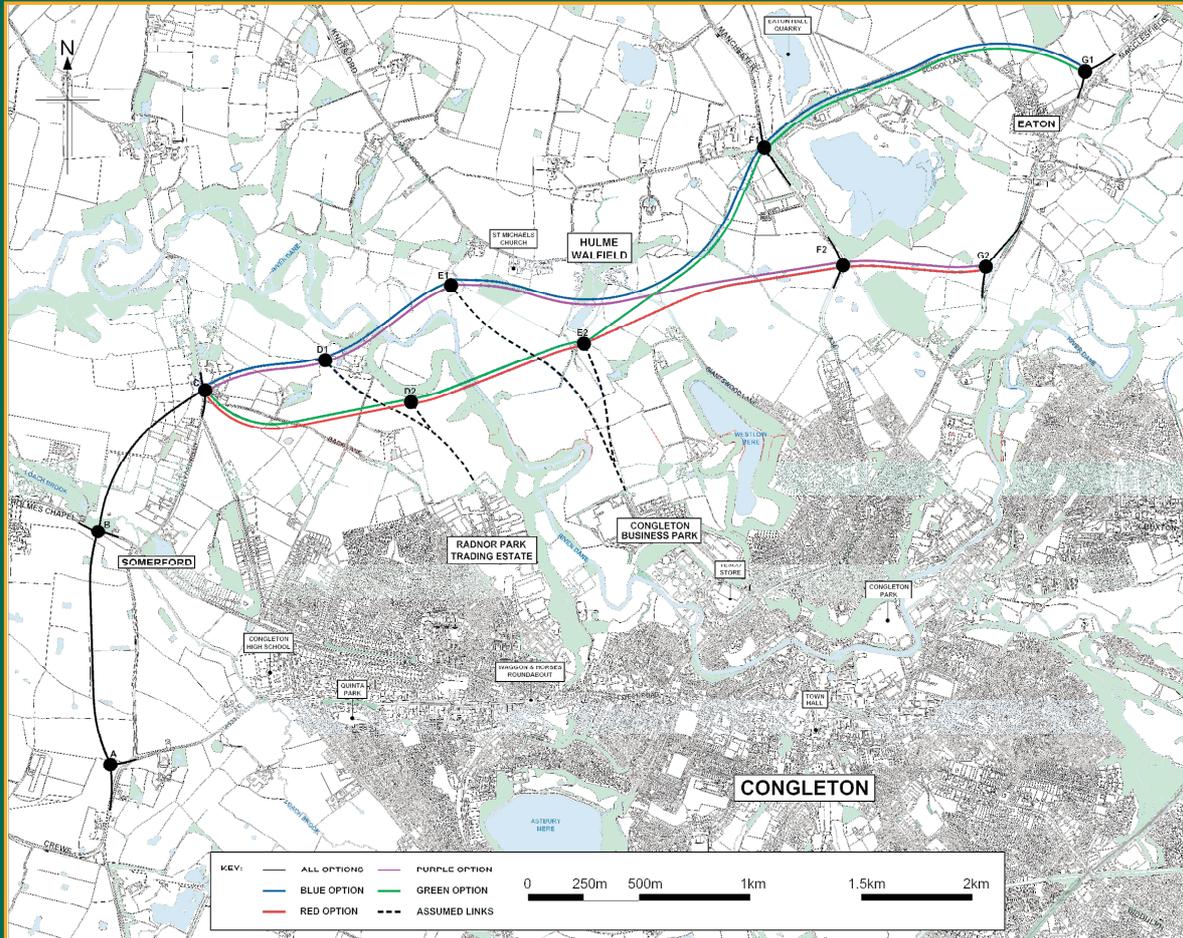
For further information on how a link road was identified as the best solution, please refer to the Stage 1 Scheme Assessment Report, which can be found at www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/congletonlinkroad.



Congleton Link Road

Link Road Options

Four link road options have been identified and developed further. The four link road options are referred to as the Red Option, the Blue Option, the Green Option and the Purple Option. Each option provides a link between the A534 Sandbach Road (to the west of Congleton) and the A536 Macclesfield Road (to the north-east of Congleton).



Link Road Features

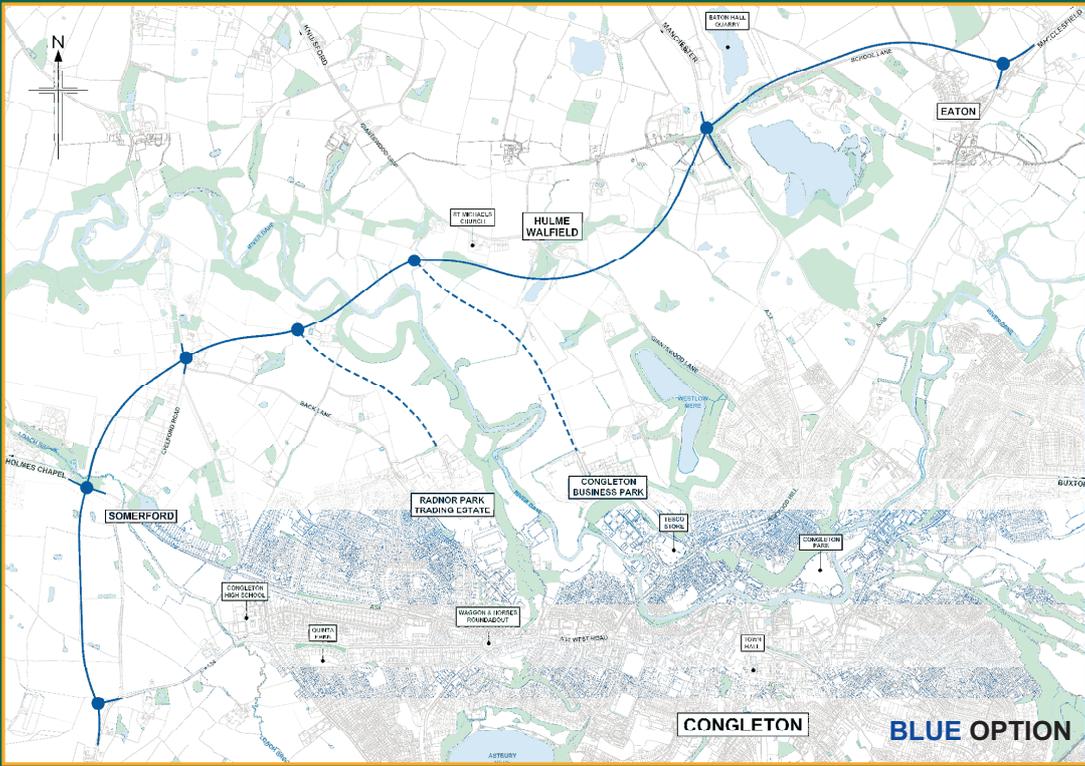
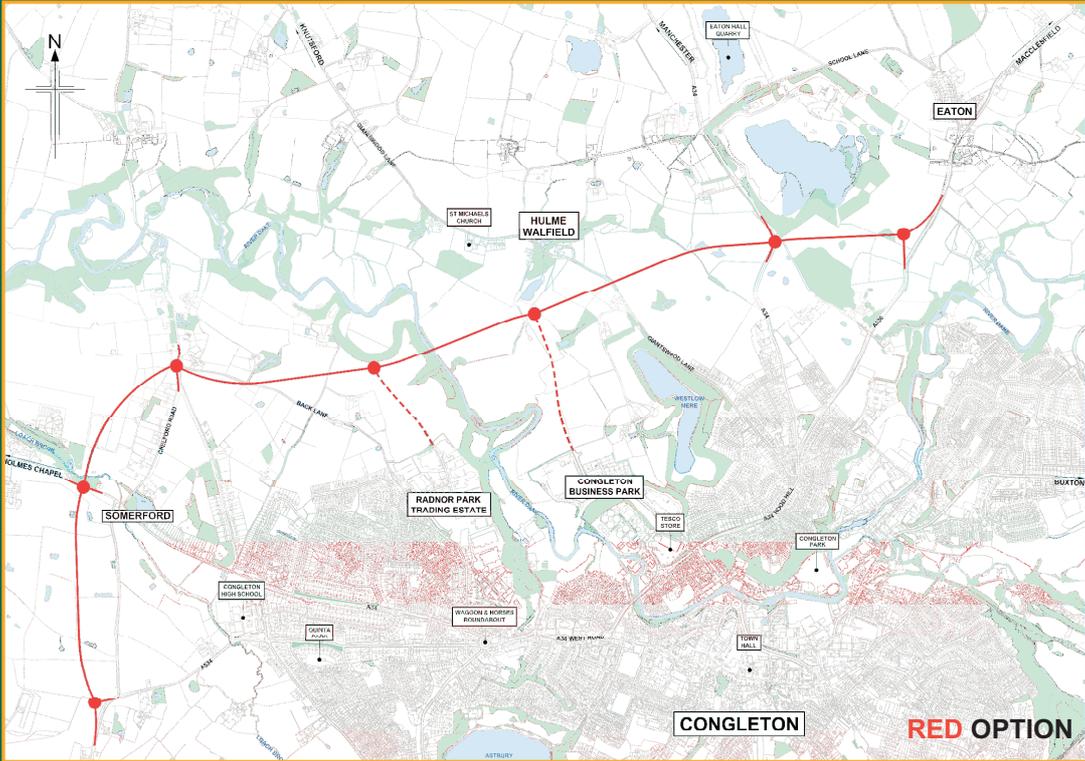
Roundabout junctions would be a feature of all options and provide connections to the existing highway network.

Bridge structures would be required to span both Loach Brook and the River Dane. A bridge would also be provided to take Giantswood Lane over the new link road.

Each of the four options promote growth and economic expansion. It is assumed that connections to Radnor Park Trading Estate and Congleton Business Park would be part of the scheme but would be funded by developer contributions. All four options have been designed in accordance with Department for Transport guidance and will be single carriageway roads.

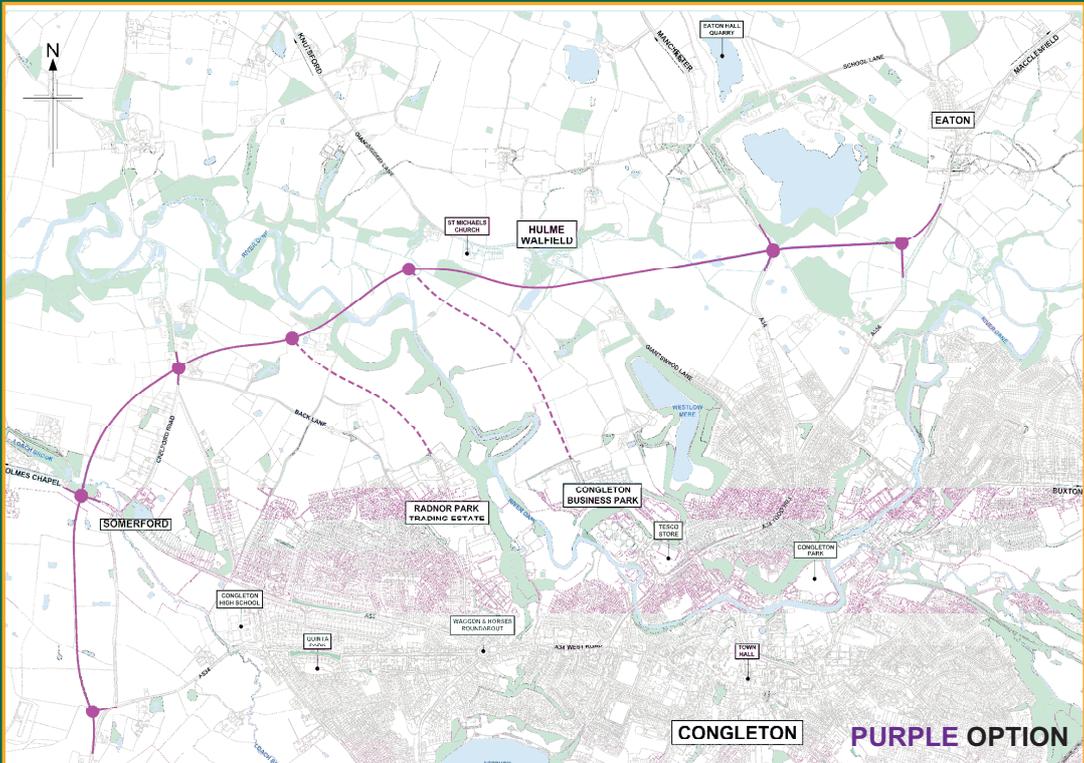
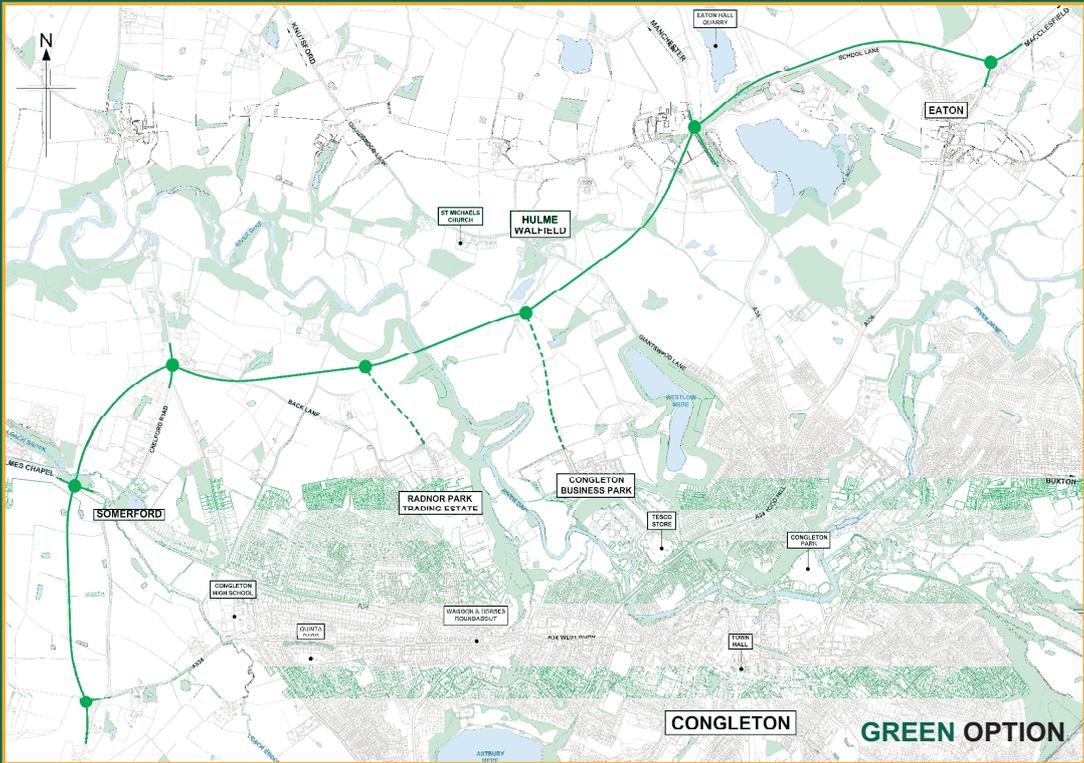
Congleton Link Road

Link Road Options



Congleton Link Road

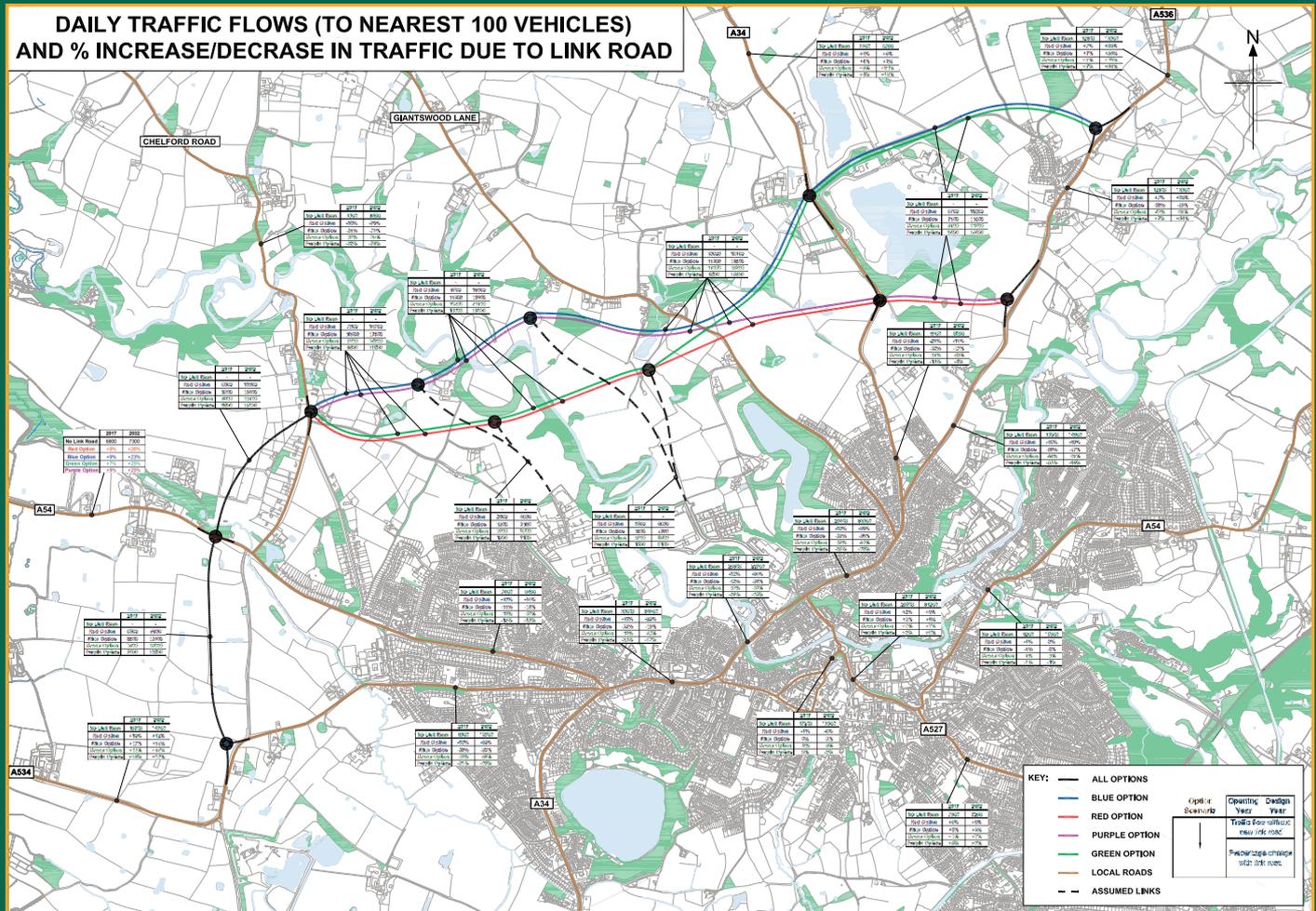
Link Road Options



Congleton Link Road

Traffic Flows

Traffic Modelling has been used to forecast traffic flows on the highway network in and around Congleton, with and without the proposed new link road. These flows have been developed for both the Opening Year (2017) as well as the Design Year (2032). Traffic forecast flows are shown on the plan below.



The traffic forecast flows for both the Opening Year (2017) and the Design Year (2032) show that the introduction of a new link road would generally lead to a reduction in traffic on the existing roads within Congleton Town Centre. Traffic flows on the A34 through the centre of town would reduce significantly, by as much as 30 - 40%, with the introduction of a new link road.

Traffic Modelling also shows that the number of vehicles expected to use the new link road is substantial. In the Opening Year, up to 12,000 vehicles per day are predicted to use the link road. In the Design Year, up to 21,000 vehicles per day are predicted to use the link road.

There is potential for complimentary measures to be adopted (such as improvements to pedestrian and cyclist facilities) where traffic flows are expected to reduce in the centre of Congleton. Mitigation measures will also be developed where traffic flows are expected to increase in order to manage the impact of the scheme. Examples of mitigation measures include screening, traffic calming and noise barriers.

Congleton Link Road

Economic Assessment and Funding

Economic Benefits

The Congleton Link Road will provide economic benefits for Congleton and the surrounding area as a result of the following factors:

Increased Economic Activity – The reduction in congestion and provision of new links to development will allow new employment opportunities to be generated in Congleton.

Journey Time Savings - Reduced delays at key junctions will reduce travel times into and through Congleton, especially at peak times.

Accident Savings – The provision of a new link road designed to modern standards, coupled with a reduction in traffic volumes on existing roads in and around Congleton will result in a reduction in the number and severity of accidents.

Benefit to Cost Ratios

The benefits of the scheme have been compared to the estimated scheme costs in order to generate a Benefit to Cost Ratio (BCR). The Department for Transport considers any scheme that has a BCR value exceeding 2 as being 'high value for money'.

Computer software developed for the Department for Transport has been used to assess the impact of the four link road options on journey times and accidents. All four schemes have a BCR value in excess of 2, which means that they are all classed as 'high value for money'.

Scheme Funding

The Congleton Link Road Scheme will be funded through a combination of Central Government funding, private sector and developer contributions and Cheshire East Council funding. The funding for the link road will be confirmed as the scheme develops.

There is potential for the scheme to be constructed either as a single-phase or multi-phase project. The type of construction selected will be determined once funding has been secured.

Scheme Costs

Scheme costs have been produced for the four options. The scheme costs include allowance for risk and also potential compensation costs. The figures do not include the cost of the links to Radnor Park Trading Estate or Congleton Business Park. It is assumed that these will be funded by developer contributions.

The scheme costs are as follows:



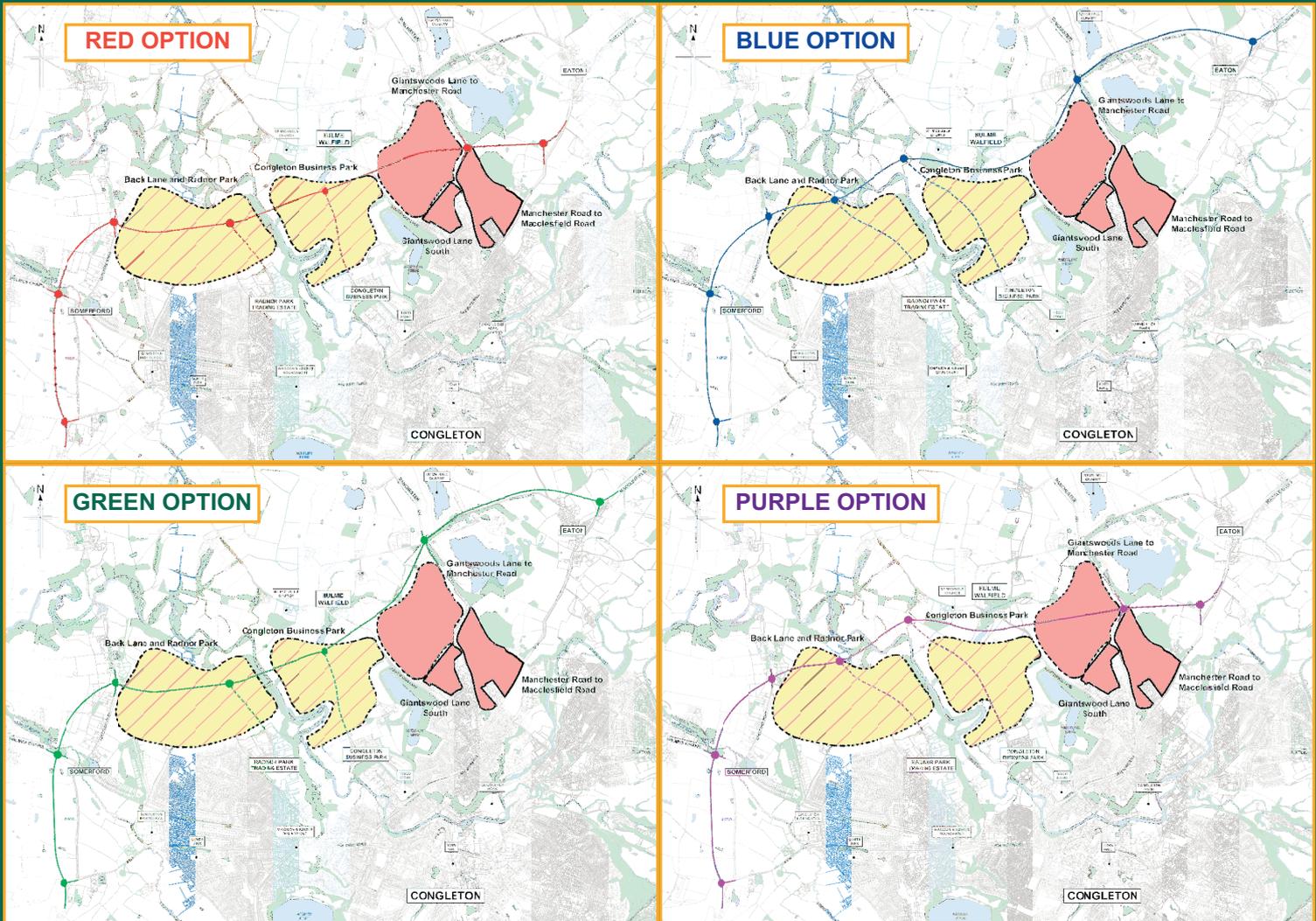
	Red Option	Blue Option	Green Option	Purple Option
Scheme Cost	£70.9M	£87.7M	£81.6M	£79.7M

Congleton Link Road

Quality of Local Plan

Cheshire East Council has identified a number of potential development sites to the north of Congleton in which sites identified in the draft Local Plan could be delivered. The development sites are explained on Board 3. All four of the link road options have the ability to deliver sites identified in the draft Local Plan. However, the quality of future development sites varies depending on the link road option being considered.

The plan below shows how each of the four options could be integrated into the potential development sites, outlined in the Draft Local Plan.



KEY

- Housing Sites
- Housing (Strategic Location)
- Mixed (Strategic Location)

The Red and Green Options will divide many of the development sites outlined in the Local Plan, meaning that development will be required to both the north and south of the new link road. This could lead to community severance/division issues. The Red and Green Options will also lead to less opportunity for recreational and leisure spaces to be created, meaning that the quality of the sites in the draft Local Plan may be compromised when compared to the Blue and Purple Options.

The Blue and Purple Options will provide an outer boundary to the development sites outlined in the Local Plan, meaning that development will be contained to the south of the new link road. The Blue and Purple Options will also provide good opportunities for recreational and leisure spaces to be created, meaning that the quality of the sites in the draft Local Plan will be relatively high when compared to the Red and Green Options.

Congleton Link Road

Option Comparison

Following the identification of the four link road options, an **Engineering, Environmental, Traffic and Economic Assessment** of each option was carried out. These assessments allowed a comparison of the four options to be made.

The **Engineering Assessment** considered the feasibility and deliverability of the scheme purely from an engineering perspective. Potential engineering constraints such as ground conditions, watercourses, topography and existing public utilities were identified. The buildability of each option was then assessed against these constraints.

The **Environmental Assessment** considered the positive and negative effects that the scheme will potentially have on the surrounding area. The assessment includes investigations into specific environmental fields, such as Noise and Air Quality, Landscape and Visual Impact, Cultural Heritage, Biodiversity, Soils and Geology and the Water Environment.

The **Traffic and Economic Assessment** considered the traffic flows around Congleton for the predicted Opening Year (2017) as well as 15 years after the Opening Year. Traffic modelling was used to simulate traffic flows on the new link road, as well as the changes in traffic flow on the existing highway network. The economic performance of each option was also estimated, and together with the preliminary cost estimates, a Benefit to Cost Ratio for each option was determined.

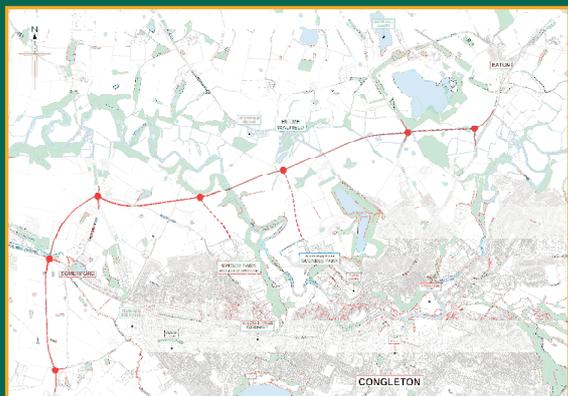
Assessment Criterion	Description	Red Option	Blue Option	Green Option	Purple Option
Length of Scheme	Approximate length of link road, including connections to business parks	6.7km (4.2 miles)	8.6km (5.4 miles)	7.6km (4.8 miles)	7.6km (4.8 miles)
Cost Estimate	Outline cost of the scheme	£70.9 million	£87.7 million	£81.6 million	£79.7 million
Value for Money	A measure of the benefits of the scheme against the scheme cost	High value for money			
Contribution to Local Plan	Ability to contribute to Cheshire East's Local Plan Strategic site allocations	↑	↑	↑	↑
Quality of Local Plan	Quality of Local Plan development Opportunity for recreational and leisure spaces	↑	↑	↑	↑
Journey time saving	Time saving for strategic traffic travelling through Congleton	↑	↑	↑	↑
Relieving Congestion within Congleton	Impact of option of reducing traffic within the centre of Congleton	↑	↑	↑	↑
Constructability	Ability to overcome engineering constraints Is the scheme feasible?	↓	↓	↓	—
Residents and Businesses	Impact on the quality of life of Congleton's residents and effect on the local economy / business	↑	↑	↑	↑
Landscape	Impact on landscape character and visual receptors	↓	↓	↓	↓
Ecology	Impact on the natural environment and existing habitat	↓	↓	↓	↓
Cultural Heritage	Impact on archaeological sites, historic buildings and the historic landscape	—	↓	↓	↓
Air Quality	Impact on the air quality in the Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) within Congleton	↑	↑	↑	↑
Noise and Vibration	Impact on noise within the Noise Important Area within Congleton	↑	↑	↑	↑
Water Environment	Impact on the quality of surface water	↓	↓	↓	↓
Soils, Geology and Hydrogeology	Impact on the mobilisation of historic contaminants and the effect on groundwater quality	—	↓	↓	—
Non-Motorised Users	Effect on pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians	↑	↑	↑	↑

KEY - Impact when compared against no link road

↑ Better
↑ Slightly Better
— Neutral
↓ Slightly Worse
↓ Worse

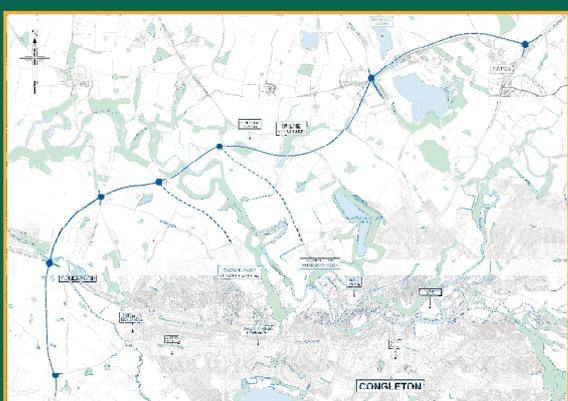
Congleton Link Road

Option Summary



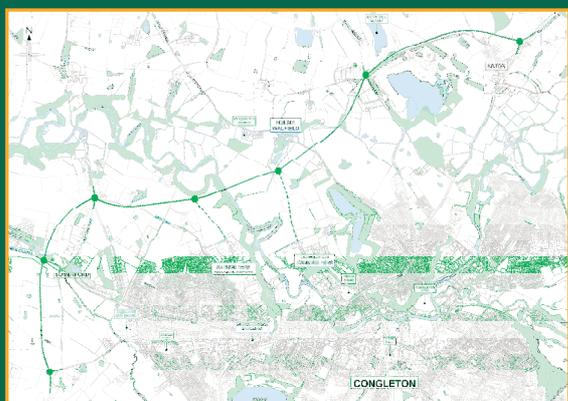
RED OPTION

- Least expensive (cost estimate of £70.9 Million).
- Impacts on the ancient woodland.
- Poor quality of proposed development within Draft Local Plan due to restriction from the link road. Less likely to form the edge of the proposed Local Plan development.
- Engineering challenges – Route crosses River Dane escarpment in an area with known landslips.
- Reduces congestion within Congleton and associated air quality and noise benefits.



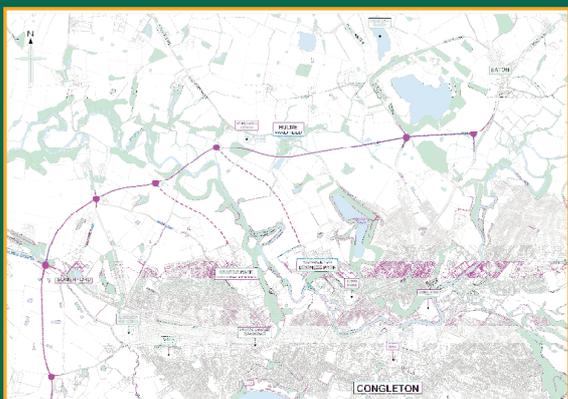
BLUE OPTION

- Most expensive (cost estimate of £87.7 Million).
- Impacts on the nationally significant mineral resource at Eaton Hall Quarry.
- Creates a new road adjacent to Eaton.
- Improved quality of proposed development within Draft Local Plan due to less restriction imposed by the link road. More likely to define the edge of the proposed Local Plan development.
- Reduces congestion within Congleton and associated air quality and noise benefits.



GREEN OPTION

- Second most expensive (cost estimate of £81.6 Million).
- Impacts on the ancient woodland.
- Impacts on the nationally significant mineral resource at Eaton Hall Quarry.
- Creates a new road adjacent to Eaton.
- Moderate quality of proposed development within Draft Local Plan due to less restriction imposed by the link road. Less likely to define the edge of the proposed Local Plan development.
- Engineering challenges – Route crosses River Dane escarpment in an area with known landslips.
- Reduces congestion within Congleton and associated air quality and noise benefits.



PURPLE OPTION

- Second least expensive (cost estimate of £79.7 Million).
- Improved quality of proposed development within Draft Local Plan due to less restriction imposed by the link road. More likely to define the edge of the proposed Local Plan development.
- There are no significant engineering challenges associated with this option.
- Reduces congestion within Congleton and associated air quality and noise benefits.

Congleton Link Road

What Happens Next?

Timeline

A	Identify the Need for Improvement
B	Identify Options
C	Public Consultation WE ARE HERE
D	Assess Public's Comments and Modify Route (February/March 2014)
E	Announce Preferred Route (Spring/Summer 2014)
F	Preliminary Design
G	Detailed Route Consultation
H	Submit Planning Application (Autumn 2014)
I	Compulsory Purchase Processes (Autumn/Winter 2014)
J	Funding Approval
K	Detailed Design
L	Start Construction 2016 (Outline Date)
M	Open Link Road 2018 (Outline Date)

Your Views

We would like to hear your views on the options that have been presented. Please complete one of our questionnaires. Questionnaires can also be completed online at www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/congletonlinkroad. Deadline for responses is 28/02/2014.



The results from the questionnaire will help to inform the Preferred Route Announcement. A summary of responses will be made available online at www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/congletonlinkroad.

For further information, please visit: www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/congletonlinkroad

or email: congletonlinkroad@cheshireeast.gov.uk

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Thank You