

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Cabinet

Date of Meeting:	22 nd July 2013
Report of:	Head of Environmental Protection & Enhancement
Subject/Title:	Congleton transport Infrastructure – Selection of Preferred Transport Solution (Key Decision Ref CE 13/14-13)
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor David Brown, Strategic Communities

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 This report seeks formal Cabinet approval on the transport options to be taken forward for further appraisal using the Congleton Traffic Model.
- 1.2 In line with best practice DfT guidance, consideration is given to a "Preferred" option, a "Next Best" option and a "Low Cost" option.
- 1.3 The "Preferred" option has been identified based upon the scale of transport benefits it is likely to deliver against the endorsed objectives of the study and its key role in facilitating the successful delivery of the Local Plan housing and employment allocations within the Congleton area.
- 1.4 The need to consider a "Next Best" and a "Low Cost" option is a key component of major scheme development. It ensures that due consideration has been given to a range of solutions to produce evidence sufficiently robust to support the Business Case and decision making for the statutory processes and access to central Government funding allocations.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet
- 2.2 endorse that the Preferred transport solution to be taken forward for further appraisal using the Congleton Traffic Model is a link road connecting the A534 Sandbach Road to the A536 Macclesfield Road;
- 2.3 endorse that the Next Best transport solution to be taken forward for further appraisal using the Congleton Traffic Model is a link road connecting the A54 Holmes Chapel Road to the A34 Manchester Road;
- 2.4 endorse that the Low Cost transport solution to be taken forward for further appraisal using the Congleton Traffic Model is on-line improvements on the A34;

- 2.5 note that to access certain funding streams, alternative options need to be considered; and
- 2.6 note that public consultation on detailed route options is planned for late 2013 / early 2014.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 To provide a detailed and robust evidenced base for the selection of a preferred transport solution that best addresses the study objectives.
- 3.2 To support any future statutory procedures and access to central and local funding allocations by evidencing that the full range of alternatives have been examined.

4.0 Wards Affected

- 4.1 Brereton Rural, Congleton East, Congleton West, Gawsworth, Odd Rode.

5.0 Local Ward Members

- 5.1 Brereton Rural – Cllr John Wray
Congleton East – Cllr David Brown, Cllr Peter Mason and Cllr Andrew Thwaite
Congleton West – Cllr Gordon Baxendale, Cllr Roland Domleo and Cllr David Topping
Gawsworth – Cllr Lesley Smetham
Odd Rode - Cllr Rhoda Bailey and Cllr Andrew Barratt

6.0 Policy Implications

- 6.1 Department for Transport best practice on scheme appraisal has been adopted as part of the decision making process.
- 6.2 The process adopted is also aligned with the statutory requirements of an Environmental Statement to consider alternative solutions.
- 6.3 The next stage of feasibility work will consider in further detail the Policy implications of the remaining solutions.

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 This is an interim product / report of an approved feasibility study with funding in place from the Capital programme and Local Transport plan.
- 7.2 As identified in the June 24th Cabinet Paper, a funding strategy for the delivery of improved transport infrastructure within Congleton is under development.

8.0 Legal Implications

- 8.1 The Council's statutory duties and powers as Highway Authority under the Highways Act 1980 include developing highway policy, new works and scheme design. Section 62 provides a general power to improve highways and makes reference to specific powers and requirements later in the Act to undertake particular types of works. The Portfolio Holder decision on 15 April 2013 commenced the process to select a preferred option for improving the highway network for Congleton. Reference to use of the Department for Transport recommended best practice evidences that the Council's commitment to ensure proper process in the exercise of its powers and duties for this area of the Borough.

9.0 Risk Management Implications

- 9.1 This process, by taking a step by step objective assessment of all possible solutions minimises risk of future challenge to a preferred scheme by local objectors and statutory consultees.
- 9.2 The adopted process will also ensure that the Business Case for infrastructure improvement within Congleton is robust. This will help funding to be secured and minimise risks associated with deliverability.

10.0 Background

- 10.1 In April 2013 the Portfolio Holder approved the revised scheme objectives and the shortlist of 8 potential interventions to be taken forward for further consideration. These are listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Potential interventions approved by the Portfolio Holder in April 2013		
Contribution to objectives	Schemes	
Medium	1	Online improvements and widening of A34 Rood Hill, Clayton By-Pass, West Road and Holmes Chapel Road and junction improvements
	4	Isolated junction improvements to the: - A34 Rood Hill/A54 Rood Hill (sigs) - A34 Clayton Bypass/West Road/West Street (Rbt) - A34 West Road/A54 Holmes Chapel Road/A534 Sandbach Rd / A34 Newcastle Road (rbt)
	5	Network Management measures such as signal optimisation, MOVA, SCOOT
	6	Strategic signing strategy
	7	Traffic Management Strategy / Local signing strategy
	14	'Partial' Link Road connecting A534 Sandbach Road to Viking Way
	15	'Partial' Link Road connecting Viking Way to the A536

		Macclesfield Road
High	13	Link Road connecting A534 Sandbach Road to A536 Macclesfield Road

10.2 As part of the ongoing scheme development process, further analysis has been undertaken on each of the 8 shortlisted interventions to establish the most appropriate solutions to be taken forward for further appraisal using the Congleton Traffic Model. In line with DfT guidance these are generally termed the Preferred, Next Best and Lower Cost options.

10.3 The process adopted is illustrated in Appendix A and discussed in detail below.

10.4 A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis has been undertaken on the 8 shortlisted interventions approved by the Portfolio Holder in April 2013. A SWOT analysis is a strategic planning method which can be used to inform decision making by allowing a clear comparison of each of the shortlisted interventions.

10.5 The SWOT analysis for each of the 8 shortlisted interventions is presented in Tables 2 to 7 in Appendix B.

11.0 SWOT Analysis Recommendations

11.1 The SWOT analysis has been used to clearly compare the shortlisted interventions. The results and recommendations made in respect of the SWOT analysis are presented in Table 8.

Table 8: SWOT Analysis Recommendations		
Intervention	Recommendation	Justification
(5) Network Management measures such as signal optimisation, MOVA, SCOOT	Not pursued any further.	The SWOT analysis clearly demonstrates that these interventions are unlikely to deliver the desired transport benefits within Congleton as set out within the scheme objectives.
(6) Strategic Signing Strategy		
(7) Traffic Management Strategy / Local signing strategy		
(14) 'Partial' Link Road connecting A534 Sandbach Road to Viking Way		
(15) 'Partial' Link Road connecting Viking Way to the A536 Macclesfield Road		
(1) Online improvements and widening of A34 Rood Hill, Clayton By-Pass, West Road and Holmes Chapel Road and junction improvements	It is recommended that these options are taken forward for detailed appraisal using the Congleton	The SWOT analysis shows that online improvements to the A34 corridor

Table 8: SWOT Analysis Recommendations

Intervention	Recommendation	Justification
(4) Isolated junction improvements to the: - A34 Rood Hill/A54 Rood Hill (sigs) - A34 Clayton Bypass/West Road/West Street (Rbt) - A34 West Road/A54 Holmes Chapel Road/A534 Sandbach Rd / A34 Newcastle Road (rbt)	Traffic Model. At this early stage of scheme appraisal it is envisaged that online improvements would constitute a *low cost option	through Congleton do have potential to deliver some transport benefits and (subject to local engineering challenges) could be delivered at comparatively moderate cost and time scale.
(13) Link Road connecting A534 Sandbach Road to A536 Macclesfield Road	Notwithstanding deliverability and funding challenges it is recommended that this options is taken forward for detailed appraisal using the Congleton Traffic Model. At this early stage of scheme appraisal it is envisaged that this option would constitute the *Preferred Option based upon the likely transport benefits it would deliver and the potential to facilitate economic growth to the north of Congleton.	The SWOT analysis shows that the link road connecting the A534 Sandbach Road to A536 Macclesfield Road is likely to have the widest benefit to Congleton given the scheme objectives.
*Subject to detailed scheme appraisal using the Congleton Traffic Model.		

- 11.2 The SWOT analysis has been used to define a Preferred Option and a Low Cost option to be taken forward for further appraisal using the Congleton Traffic Model. It should be noted that these designations have been based upon appropriate and proportionate analysis for the current stage of scheme development and are subject to refinement following detailed appraisal.
- 11.3 It is recommended that the Next Best Option is defined based upon Preferred Option but with a reduced scope whilst still maximising potential transport benefits.

- 11.4 It is currently envisaged that a link road that connects the A54 Holmes Chapel Road to the A34 Congleton Road would provide an alternative route for traffic, whilst maximising future development prospects to the north of Congleton. Traffic relief within Congleton is unlikely to be as significant as a full link road that connects the A534 Sandbach Road to the A536 Macclesfield Road. However, this option would allow best use to be made of Sandy Lane and would not preclude the construction of an A534 Sandbach Road to A54 Holmes Chapel Road and the A34 Congleton Road to A536 Macclesfield Road (i.e. a full link road) at some time in the future.
- 11.5 Based upon the evidence currently available it is therefore recommended that a link road that connects the A54 Holmes Chapel Road to the A34 Congleton Road also be taken forward for further appraisal using the Congleton Traffic Model and be defined as the **Next Best Option**.
- 11.6 A plan showing the routes of the **Preferred, Next Best** and **Low Cost Options** is shown on attached Drawing No B1832001-08-H-016 Rev 0.

12.0 Access to Information

- 12.1 Further details relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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