

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Environment and Transport
Date:	22 January 2013
Title:	Whitehill & Bordon Inner Relief Road
Reference:	4636
Report From:	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

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1. Executive Summary

1.1. The purpose of this paper is to update the Executive Member for Environment and Transport on work carried out to develop proposals for the Inner Relief Road in Whitehill & Bordon and to set out the future work needed to develop the project, and to seek authority to proceed with the next steps.

1.2. This paper seeks to

- provide a summary of the engineering work carried out to develop potential road alignment options, and identify the preferred routing option
- identify the likely costs of the Inner Relief Road
- Identify the key constraints to delivery of the Inner Relief Road
- consider the next steps in the development of the project

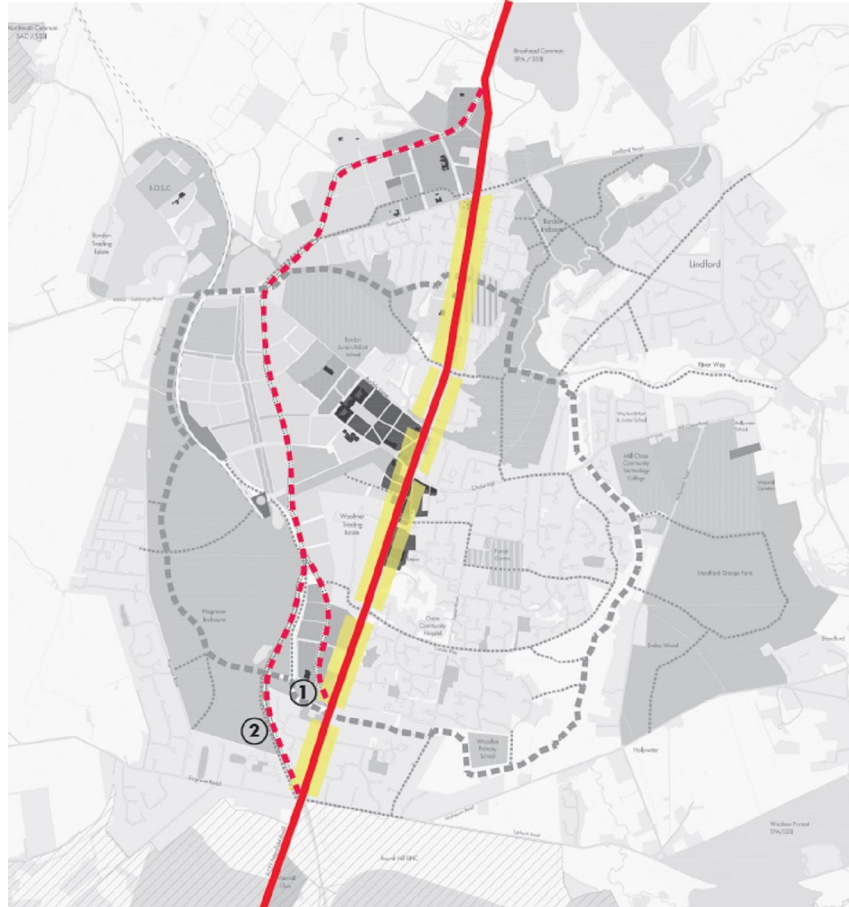
2. Role of the Inner Relief Road

2.1 The Inner Relief Road is critical to the delivery of the Whitehill & Bordon project and the successful regeneration of the town. Hampshire County Council adopted the Emerging Transport Strategy in September 2011, which set out the need for the delivery of the road as an integral part of the Masterplan.

2.2 The Masterplan outlines the development that will be delivered, including 4,000 new dwellings, community facilities, 122,000sqm commercial space and 30,000sqm retail space to create the new town centre, which combined will deliver 5,500 jobs. This will be brought forward between 2015 and 2035.

2.3 Transport assessment work concluded that without the Inner Relief Road there would be significant congestion on the A325 corridor. As such without the Inner Relief Road the Masterplan cannot be realised.

- 2.4 The Inner Relief Road will provide a new road connection for Whitehill & Bordon, providing a link between the A325 to the north of the town, routing through the MoD area confirmed for release and re-development, and re-joining the A325 to the south in Whitehill.



- 2.5 The Inner Relief Road is identified as a key strategic link, required to facilitate the regeneration of Whitehill & Bordon, as outlined in the adopted Masterplan, and proposed in the EHDC / SDNPA Joint Core Strategy. The Inner Relief Road itself will constitute a single 7.3m carriageway link with footways and cycleways on either side.

- 2.6 The Inner Relief Road provides a number of purposes;

Relieve Congestion on the A325 – The A325 currently carries heavy traffic flows, causing local issues within the town (congestion, severance, driver delay and frustration, pollution) and creates a barrier to strategic travel, with the A325 being seen as a constraint to local movement and growth. The Inner Relief Road would address this issue within the town, providing a free-flow alternative to the existing A325, removing non-local traffic from the core of the town.

Enable the new town centre – The delivery of the Inner Relief Road would reduce significantly the levels of traffic on the existing A325 (by

some 40%), which would help deliver the conditions necessary to provide a successful town centre for Whitehill & Bordon.

Provide access to the development – The Inner Relief Road would deliver critical road based access to the new development areas (4,000 dwellings, 122,000sqm commercial space and 30,000sqm retail).

Reduce severance – Due to the heavy flow and dominance of traffic on the A325, there is an issue with community severance. The Inner Relief Road would reduce traffic on the A325, providing conditions to encourage a permeable town that links the new development, the town centre and the existing town areas.

2.7 The Whitehill & Bordon project is a long-term ,complex project, that requires a phased approach to delivery, necessitating the delivery of key infrastructure at appropriate times, to open up the site. The Inner Relief Road is part of this key infrastructure.

2.8 The existing MoD Garrison estate comprises a significant number of large buildings, and in the interim period (short to medium term) the Inner Relief Road would play a key role in opening up the site for potential commercial re-use of existing buildings.

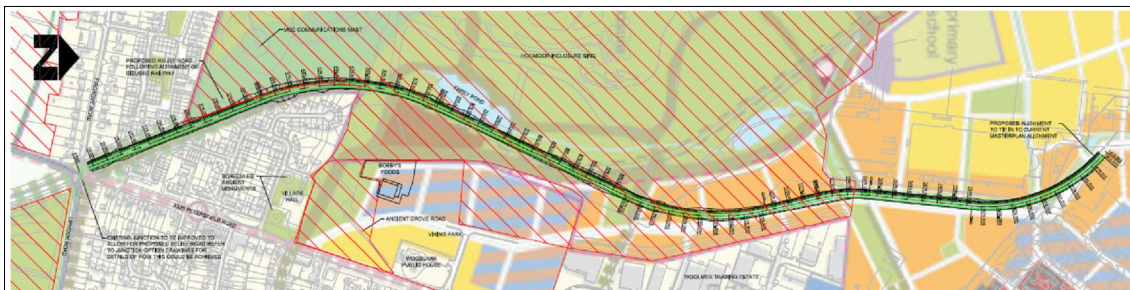
3. Engineering Feasibility

Outline Feasibility work has been carried out to consider the alignment options for the Inner Relief Road.

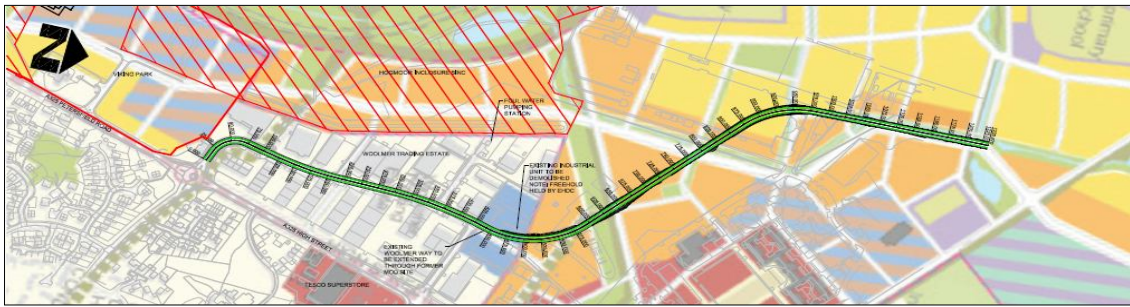
3.1 Southern Section

3.1.1 Three alignment options were considered for the southern section of the Inner Relief Road.

Option 1 - Abandoned Railway



Option 2 - Woolmer Trading Estate



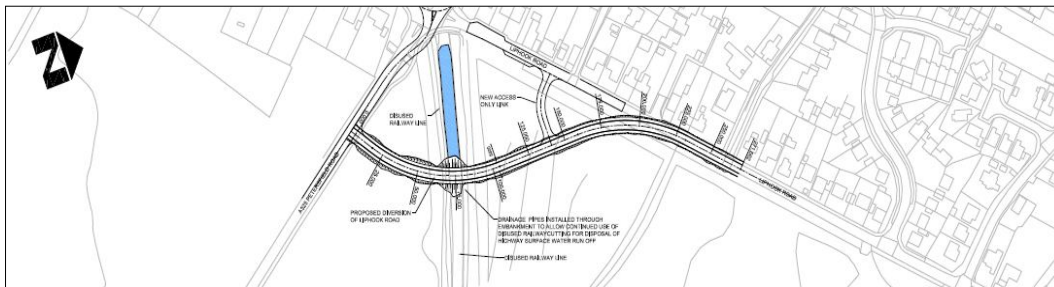
Option 3 - Viking Park



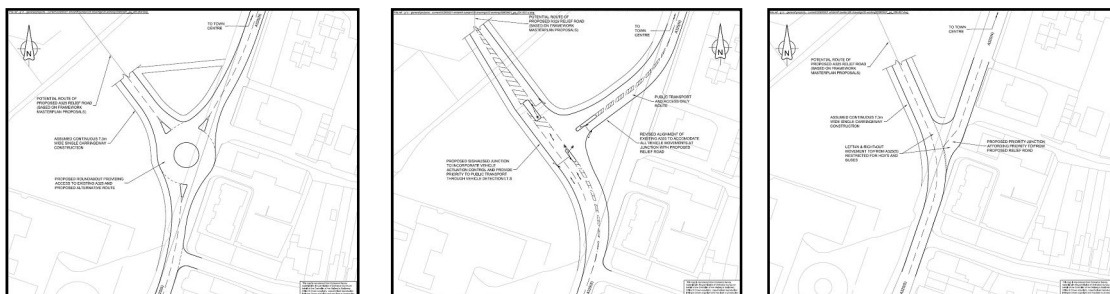
- 3.1.2 In engineering terms, Options 1 (Abandoned Railway) and 3 (Viking Park) offer suitable alignments that are compliant with the relevant design standards (DMRB).
- 3.1.3 Option 2 (Woolmer Trading Estate) provides a difficult alignment with a sharp corner on entry to the land. This, along with the nature of the road, and its position close to the town centre, would make it a less attractive option than Options 1 and 3, and it is not considered that this alignment would deliver the strategic improvement required of the Inner Relief Road.
- 3.1.4 Option 3 (Viking Park) requires land outside of the control of the Landowners, and this would need to be acquired from the third party land-owners (Viking Properties). This option also routes traffic through Whitehill.
- 3.1.5 Option 1 provides the most convenient alignment for strategic movement, offering traffic access to the Inner Relief Road at its most southerly point. This is likely to result in the Inner Relief Road being a more attractive option than the A325. All land required for this option is within MoD ownership. For these reasons, Option 1 is considered to be the preferred southern option in transport terms. A drawing is attached at Appendix 1.

Connecting Junctions

- 3.1.6 Should Option 1 be progressed, the abandoned railway alignment meets the A325 at Whitehill crossroads (a four-arm roundabout junction). This would therefore result in a new 5-arm junction.
- 3.1.7 Whilst in engineering terms this could be feasible, such a junction would raise safety concerns, would be difficult for larger vehicles to manoeuvre and would present capacity difficulties.
- 3.1.8 In order to consider alternatives to this, options for reducing the number of arms to the junction were considered. There is little potential to remove the Firgrove Road arm to the west of the junction, or either of the A325 approaches. It is however feasible in engineering terms to re-align the Liphook Road arm to the junction by re-locating this arm south, to form a new junction with the A325. This is shown on the drawing below.



- 3.1.9 This option would retain access to the properties served from Liphook Road, and retain full moves access to the A325 through a re-aligned link. This would, however, require further land outside of the current Masterplan area, but which is within MoD ownership. This would also enable a 4-arm traffic signal junction to be created (or 4-arm roundabout) at the Whitehill crossroads. This would represent the preferred option in transport terms.
- 3.1.10 Should Option 3 (Viking Park) be progressed, in engineering terms there would be 3 possible alternative junction forms to connect to A325; Three-arm roundabout, Signal junction & Simple priority junction.

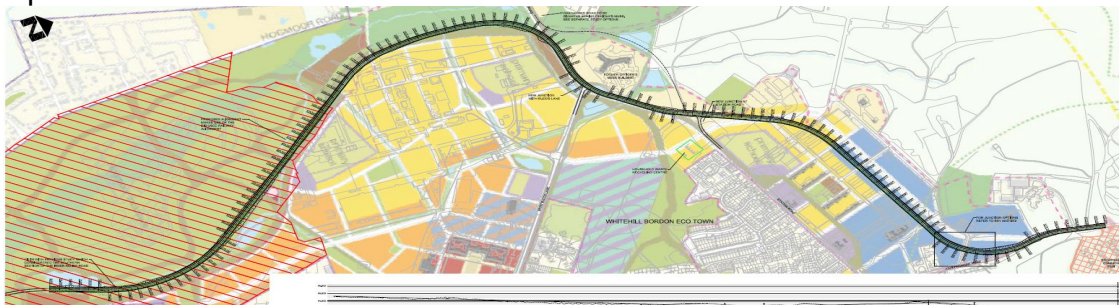


3.1.11 The option to provide a signal junction is likely to be the preferred option, in that it enables priority to be given to traffic using the Inner Relief Road, thereby encouraging strategic traffic to use this routing rather than the existing A325 through the town centre.

3.2 Northern Section

3.2.1 A series of five alternative options have been developed for the northern section of the Inner Relief Road, two of which route outside of the development area (Options A & B), and three route within the development (Options C, D & E).

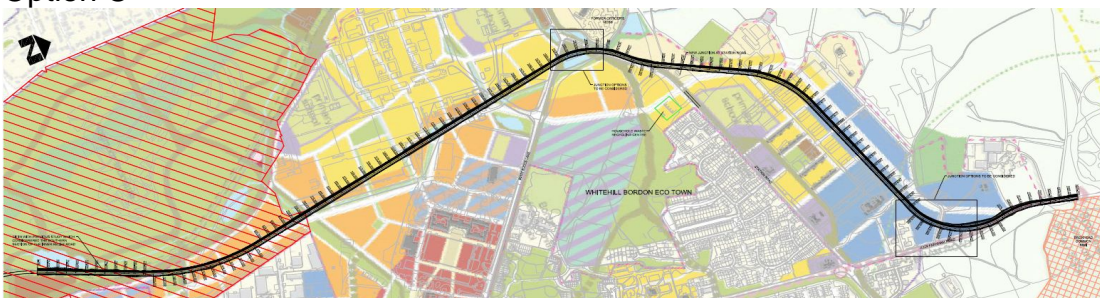
Option A



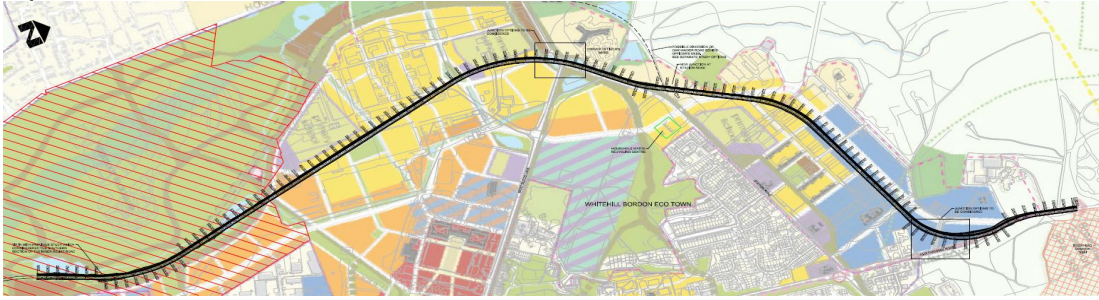
Option B



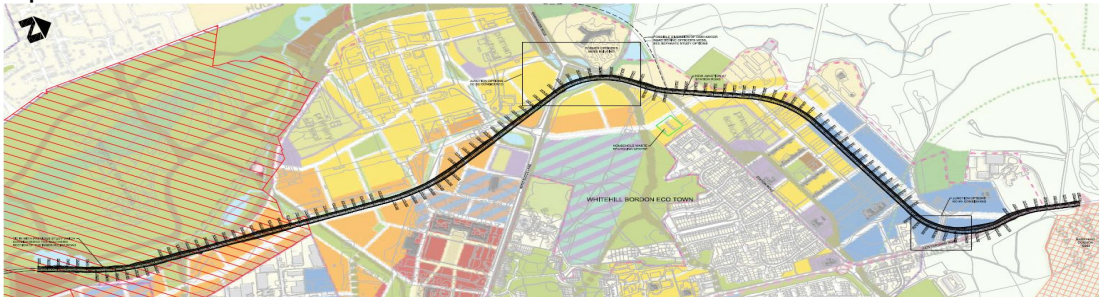
Option C



Option D



Option E



- 3.2.2 All 5 options are feasible in engineering terms, and for each option a new junction with the A325 can be created from Louisburg Barracks to the north. This would be either a traffic signal junction or a priority junction.
- 3.2.3 The key difference between the routing options A to E are whether the road alignment is taken inside or outside the development area.
- 3.2.4 In design terms, routing of a new road through a new development area (Options C, D & E) presents a design challenge. The Inner Relief Road would be expected to carry the majority of 'through traffic' and heavy traffic passing through the town, and as such it is likely to have significant adverse impacts on the quality of design achievable, on residential amenity, and on land values that may be achieved for those properties surrounding the road.
- 3.2.5 The use of Options C and D would require the demolition of a number of the larger buildings on the existing MoD estate, prohibiting their interim occupation for commercial uses. Options A, B and E would avoid the need for demolition of large scale buildings.
- 3.2.6 Discussions with the landowners and their consultants has raised concern with any routing option that travels through the development (Options C, D & E). An internal alignment would also be less likely to provide the strategic relief to the A325, with double-sided development necessitating slower speeds and the creation of a 'street' environment.
- 3.2.7 An external alignment (Options A & B) offers the benefit of providing a more strategic route for traffic seeking to travel through the town, and can

be designed with lesser impact on the proposed built development. These options, whilst creating a defined hard edge to the built area, do however push the alignment closer to the recreational land to the west of the town and so create a more pronounced severance issue, and travel through more of the Hogmoor Inclosure, a site identified as being of local nature conservation interest (SINC).

- 3.2.8 Option B provides the best alignment in terms of road design, that would provide the greatest strategic transport benefit. This option does, however, require land outside of the current Masterplan area, but within MoD ownership. On the basis that the land could be made available, this would be the preferred northern alignment option, and is shown in Appendix 2.

3.3 Environmental Considerations

- 3.3.1 All of the Inner Relief Road alignment options route through and create possible impact on the Hogmoor Inclosure, a locally identified site of importance for nature conservation (SINC) to a greater or lesser extent. A full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) will be required to consider ecological and environmental impact in full, and to develop avoidance and mitigation strategies.
- 3.3.2 The option to divert Liphook Road (linked to Option 1) to enable a four-arm junction to be retained at Whitehill crossroads, would also route through the Round Hill SINC. This would need to be considered within an EIA.
- 3.3.3 The delivery of the Inner Relief Road presents a challenge in the design of the SANG (Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace) area on Hogmoor Inclosure and the Croft, to the west of the town. It is key that these areas are accessible and attractive to the existing and future populations of the town, and as such the Inner Relief Road would need to be carefully designed to ensure that it does not represent a barrier to movement. Appropriately designed crossings would need to be provided along the route at key locations on desire lines.
- 3.3.4 Whilst it is clear that the delivery of any of the alignment options will have some environmental impact, it is considered unlikely that any impact would be so severe that it could not be appropriately managed or mitigated. The EIA will need to consider these impacts in detail and develop appropriate strategies for mitigation and avoidance.

3.4 Alignment Costs

- 3.4.1 At this stage there remain a number of different possible alignment options for the Inner Relief Road, and the exact alignment is not determined.
- 3.4.2 Work carried out has identified that delivery of the Inner relief Road would cost between £10m - £12m at 2012 prices, all of which is capital cost. When costs are rolled forward to a 2015 start date, and other non-

construction costs considered, the total project cost would be between £12.8m and £15m. The table below outlines the estimated costs for each alignment.

Route Section	Cost (£)
Southern Section	
Option 1 - Abandoned Railway	£4,284,588
Option 3 - Viking Park	£3,187,822
Northern Section	
Option A	£7,673,971
Option B	£7,634,763
Option C	£6,911,193
Option D	£7,001,001
Option E	£6,918,237
2012 Prices	
Max total construction cost	£11,958,559
Min total construction cost	£10,099,015
Other Costs	
Professional Fees	£710,000
Utilities	£300,000
Demolition	£150,000
Total Cost Estimate (2015)	
Max total construction cost	£15,003,527
Min total construction cost	£12,850,872

- 3.4.3 There is an interim option to deliver the northern section of the Inner Relief Road, which is a 1.1km section of the road within the Louisburg Barracks, to the north of the town. This would deliver direct road access to the Barracks site which is identified in the Masterplan for the delivery of the Eco-business Park. The provision of the road at an early stage would expedite the delivery of the land, and promote early delivery of jobs and growth.
- 3.4.4 The cost of the delivery of the interim Inner Relief Road within Louisburg Barracks is £3.65m with a 2015 start date.
- 3.4.5 The need for the Inner Relief Road and its associated cost is identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan which supports the Joint Core Strategy, and has been considered in the project viability work. Work on project viability carried out recently by both PWC and GVA has identified that there is a private viability gap, and that without public sector funding, the regeneration of Whitehill & Bordon is unlikely to be viable in a commercial market. Avenues of public sector funding are currently being explored to

improve viability, including potential funding for the delivery of the Inner Relief Road.

4. Other Considerations

- 4.1 ***Need to secure early release of the land*** – All land required for the road alignment options, with the exception of Option 3 of the southern section (Viking Park), is either within the public highway or the MoD ownership. The MoD has announced that they will vacate the Bordon Garrison by 2015, and this would enable the delivery of the road. Should there be a desire for the road to be delivered before this time, early release of land not currently required would be needed. This is likely to be possible in relation to Louisburg Barracks, which is currently vacated.
- 4.2 Option B for the northern section, and the Liphook Road diversion, utilise land outside of the current Masterplan area, but within MoD ownership. The deliverability of these options relies upon the availability of this land. This is currently being explored with the MoD.
- 4.3 ***Planning*** – Planning consent would be required for the delivery of the Inner Relief Road. No consent is currently in place, but would be required before construction started. An Outline Planning Application for the wider development is likely to be submitted in Summer 2014.
- 4.4 ***Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)*** – As outlined above, all viable engineering options run through the SINC at Hogmoor Inclosure, and the Liphook Road diversion also routes through the Round Hill SINC, and South Downs National Park. The external road alignments also route alongside the proposed SANG area. All of these issues will need to be considered, at an early stage, within an EIA.

5. Future direction

- 5.1. In order to give certainty to the project, particularly in relation to the design of the development as part of the Outline Planning Application, direction on the routing of the Inner Relief Road is required. As Local Highway Authority, the view of the County Council is particularly important in determining the route of the road.
- 5.2. In order to maximise opportunities to achieve funding for the project, the feasibility work needs to be advanced and the constraints studied in more detail. The outline feasibility work currently prepared needs to be developed, and the Environmental Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment work carried out, to ensure that the scheme is deliverable and ready to be delivered. This will place the project well to maximise chances of successful future funding bids.
- 5.3. Initial consultation with the local residents and stakeholders (including the landowners and Delivery Board) has been carried out, to inform them of the

options being considered. Further consultation will be needed once the results of the EIA are known and once the alignments have been developed further.

6. Finance

6.1 In order to progress design work towards a planning application for the Inner Relief Road, further study and assessment work is required. Set out below are the key steps that will be required to be carried out.

- Commissioning of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) to consider the impact of the routing options, particularly on the local nature designation areas through which the routings pass.
- Carrying out of an Appropriate Assessment to consider the impact of the proposed road on the 'Natura 2000' sites.
- Carrying out of ground investigations and survey.
- Progressing the feasibility design of the preferred option to detailed highway design stage.
- Carrying out consultation on the preferred route of the road, with both stakeholders and the public.
- Preparing a planning application for submission

6.2 The County Council would seek to utilise its existing scheme development budgets to progress work on the development of the scheme until a point where the costs can be re-charged to capital construction costs.

7. Recommendations

7.1 That the Inner Relief Road be added to the list of major schemes for development and that this work be carried out as funding permits.

7.2 That route Option 1 for the southern section (Abandoned Railway), and Option B for the northern section, be confirmed as the County Council's preferred alignment of the Inner Relief Road in transport terms.

7.3 That approval be given to carry out public consultation on the preferred route option.

7.4 That this position be reviewed following the completion of further technical work (including the EIA) and consultation to ensure that the preferred routing options identified remain the best option when considered against national guidance on transport scheme appraisal.

Rpt/4636/TW

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	No
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	Yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	Yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:		
<u>Title</u> Whitehill & Bordon Emerging Transport Strategy	<u>Reference</u> 3183	<u>Date</u> 6/11/2011
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives		
<u>Title</u> None		<u>Date</u>

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
Whitehill & Bordon Masterplan	www.whitehillbordon.com
Whitehill Bordon Inner Relief Road Northern Section Feasibility Study	Hanstfile
Whitehill Bordon Inner Relief Road Feasibility Study	<u>Hantsfile</u>

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

The proposals in this report have been developed with due regard to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty and the Council's equality objectives. An assessment of the impacts in this service area can be found at <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/equality/equality-impact-assessments/cx-pu-eqimpact-envi.htm>

It is considered that the issues covered by this report will not have impacts requiring further specific actions by the Council above those already established in its existing policies and working procedures.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

- 2.1 This report seeks to provide certainty on the alignment of the Inner Relief Road and to provide approval for future work. This decision does not itself have any direct impact on crime and disorder.

3 Climate Change:

- a) How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

The Inner Relief Road is designed to reduce existing congestion within Whitehill Bordon, particularly on the A325 corridor, providing free-flow conditions through the town. This will reduce pollution issues in the centre of the town.

The design of the Inner Relief Road will include facilities for walking and cycling, to link with the wider Masterplan proposals to encourage sustainable travel. The Inner Relief Road would provide a movement corridor.

- b) How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

The Inner Relief Road is an integral part of a wider strategy to promote the sustainable regeneration of Whitehill & Bordon. Delivering quality road based access is essential to the delivery of the proposed growth, and in encouraging retailers and businesses into the town, to promote sustainable living.