

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**Decision Report**

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Environment and Transport
Date:	30 June 2016
Title:	Transport Improvement Scheme: A27 The Avenue / Gudge Heath Lane, Fareham
Reference:	7532
Report From:	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

Contact name: Patrick Bingham

Tel: 01962 845421

Email: patrick.bingham@hants.gov.uk

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out a number of changes and adjustments that have been made to the Highways improvement scheme at A27 The Avenue/Gudge Heath Lane, Fareham (“the Scheme”), as part of the overall Improved Access to Fareham and Gosport project. These changes are presented for the notification of the Executive Member.
- 1.2 The report also seeks authority to monitor the impact of a temporary at-grade crossing due to be installed during the period of works at the head of the A27 between Fareham Railway Station and the opposite bus stop, and to make the crossing permanent if the impact upon traffic flow is deemed to be acceptable and in keeping with the intentions of the Scheme.

2. Background

- 2.1 The current scheme was approved at the County Council's Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment's Decision Days in July and September 2014.
- 2.2 A series of public consultation events were held in summer 2014 and 2015, and the scheme design revised in response to findings and feedback received.
- 2.3 The scheme comprises two distinct elements:
 - Highway improvements, delivered by Hampshire County Council, to A27 The Avenue between Bishopsfield Road and Station Roundabout, to

increase the highway capacity and improve facilities for pedestrians and cyclists.

- Train station improvements, delivered by Stagecoach South West Trains (SSWT), to upgrade the platform facilities, access stairs, highway surfacing, and footways within the station forecourt.

2.4 The scheme aims to:

- Increase the highway capacity to improve the flow of traffic on A27 The Avenue and Station Roundabout, and to reduce congestion and improve access to encourage local investment, growth and retention of existing employment.
- Improve the train station and interchange facilities to better connect travel modes.
- Improve provision for cyclists from the railway station to Fareham College by providing a dedicated connection along and across The Avenue.

2.5 An application has been received to amend the approved design to provide an at-grade crossing facility at the head of the A27 to allow improved access for manually assisted wheel chair users between Fareham railway station, on the northern side of the A27, and the bus stop interchange on the southern side.

3. Design Update

3.1 The following design revisions have been made under delegated powers and in consultation with the Executive Member.

3.2 The changes incorporate constraints and opportunities identified during the progression of the design detail and include measures to support the train station improvements, along with design alterations made in response to public suggestions received during the summer exhibition series in 2014 and 2015. The cost of these changes has been assessed, and can be accommodated within budget.

3.3 The retention of two access lanes from West Street onto Station Roundabout. Public concerns were raised that the original proposal to reduce the West Street approach to a single lane access onto Station Roundabout would reduce capacity and result in additional delay, particularly during the evening peak period. The impacts of the change were further assessed and the design revised to retain the existing two-lane capacity and align with the scheme's project goals to reduce congestion and improve the flow of traffic at Station Roundabout.

3.4 Revision of the proposed stepped access to the station frontage and closure of the existing narrow steps running adjacent to the main station building.

Design work to explore the widening of the existing access steps identified structural risks and construction constraints. An alternative option has been developed by SSWT for an enhanced stepped access through the banked area within the station frontage. The existing steps will be closed and new wider steps constructed within the grassed bank. This revision will help to open up the station frontage, improve visibility and access for pedestrians, and provide a clearer more positive relationship between the train station and The Avenue at this location.

- 3.5 Removal of the proposed subway extension due to headroom and public utility restrictions. The extent and location of utility services within the footway adjacent to the subway required the design to be revised in order to retain the existing subway arrangement.
- 3.6 Revision of the A27 westbound bus stop locations to improve traffic flow. The existing bus stops outside 21 The Avenue and at the western side of the Bishopsfield Road junction have now been integrated to a new off-line facility outside Fareham College. This change also improves the connection for bus travel to the college and links with the new A27 pedestrian route at the revamped college frontage.
- 3.7 Improvements to access and facilities within the train station forecourt and platform area. This work is to be delivered in partnership with Network Rail and SSWT, with SSWT acting as the lead delivery and design organisation.
- 3.8 Station approach public realm enhancements have been developed to improve access for cyclists and pedestrians by paving and widening footways, creating a new northern shared use route, resurfacing the carriageway, and better defining routes and crossing points to and from the station frontage.
- 3.9 Within the station itself there are plans for a new cycle hub with parking for 136 cycles, a refurbished waiting area, a new retail unit and new accessible toilet facilities.

4. Land

- 4.1 All the land necessary to deliver the key ambitions for the scheme is now acquired. Land required for the A27 widening from properties' frontages at 16 to 24 The Avenue was secured by voluntary agreement in September 2015. A CPO process run in tandem with the voluntary negotiations was ceased at this time.
- 4.2 Detailed negotiations to acquire the strip of land required for the construction of a new footway within the train station access to the front of Fareham fire station are underway and expected to conclude within the next 10 - 12 weeks.

- 4.3 Negotiations are underway with Fareham College to dedicate a strip of land to provide an enhanced bus stop arrangement at the College's new A27 pedestrian access. Discussions are at an advanced stage and agreement is expected to be reached within the next 2 - 4 weeks.
- 4.4 Negotiations are underway with Network Rail to dedicate the new area of widened footway at the front of the revised station retaining wall as highway land. Discussions are developed and agreement is expected to be reached within the next 4 - 6 weeks.

5. Programme

- 5.1 23 November 2015 - Preliminary Works Contract for highway clearance. Now complete.

29 February 2016 - Advanced Works Contract. Rocon Construction commenced works to divert in-carriageway utilities. Now complete.

16 May 2016 - Main Works Contract. Mildren Construction commenced the main highway construction works.

Aug 2016 - Train Station Package current forecast construction start date.

Summer 2017 Target scheme completion date.

6. Existing Crossing Provision

- 6.1 A subway crossing is currently provided at the head of the A27 adjacent to the entry to Station Roundabout. The subway provides a direct link between the bus stop location on the southern A27 and Fareham railway station to the north. The subway has dual stepped and ramped accesses, with ramp gradients of 1:10. Whilst compliant with standards when originally constructed and still in accord with "Design Manual for Roads and Bridges: TD 36/93 Subways for Pedestrian and Pedal Cyclists Layout and Dimensions" requirements, the ramps exceed the 1:12 minimum gradient now considered generally acceptable for manual wheel chair access.
- 6.2 An initial assessment of the work required to alter the subway construction to improve the ramp gradients from 1:10 to 1:12 identified significant constraints requiring alteration of the subway structure, the diversion of a large number of utilities, and the potential for third party land acquisition.
- 6.3 Without significantly revising the design and removing other measures which benefit pedestrian, cyclist and disability access, the scale of these changes will considerably exceed the project's financial scope.
- 6.4 In addition to the subway, a staggered Puffin style controlled crossing is provided to the west of the southern bus stop position at the A27/Redlands Lane/Gudge Heath Lane traffic signal junction. Whilst off-set from the immediate desire line, the crossing does provide a viable alternative at-grade

route between the bus stop and the train station, but requires a considerable extension of the distance and journey time.

7. Additional At-Grade Crossing Options

- 7.1 Alternative routing options were considered to enable more direct at-grade access via Western Way and West Street. Initial investigations identified safety concerns related to poor driver visibility and sight stopping distances and as such any solutions via this route were discounted.
- 7.2 Investigations have indicated, however, that an at-grade staggered controlled Puffin crossing can be accommodated across the A27 parallel to the existing subway location. This crossing would offer the most direct at-grade route across the A27 between the southern bus stop and Fareham railway station.
- 7.3 In its [Traffic Management Policy and Guidance](#) (linked here as a background document), the County Council uses well established objective numerical assessments for considering requests for controlled crossings. In this instance the need for the crossing has been assessed based on its PmV^2 value; where 'P' is the number of pedestrians and cyclists, 'V' the number of vehicles and 'm' is a weighting factor applied for vulnerable pedestrians (children, older people and disabled pedestrians/wheelchair users). The value is then used to determine the difficulty pedestrians have in crossing the road.
- 7.4 Analysis of this option shows the forecast crossing demand fails to meet the usual minimum required PmV^2 value of 1.0×10^8 for each carriageway direction. Sites with a value below 1.0×10^8 are not normally recommended for a controlled crossing. With an assumed forecast 50% of users transferring from the subway to the crossing (leaving the other 50% continuing to use the subway out of choice) the PmV^2 values for the westbound carriageway are 0.23×10^8 and for the eastbound carriageway 0.22×10^8 , and well below the required minimums.
- 7.5 Notwithstanding this, works to construct a new bus platform at the railway station entrance will require the temporary closure of the subway for a period of 6 months. During this period, a temporary at-grade signal crossing will be installed to maintain access for pedestrians across the A27. The temporary signal crossing will be located adjacent to the existing subway location and will be in place for a period of approximately 6 months between June and December 2016. This provides a good opportunity for the impact of such a crossing upon traffic flow to be closely monitored. Depending on the outcome of the monitoring after the period of the subway's closure, it may also be necessary to extend the installation of the temporary at-grade crossing in order to assess its use and impact while running concurrently with the reopened subway.
- 7.6 Although the site has been assessed as falling short of the County Council's usual policy requirement for such infrastructure, in the event that the

temporary crossing is found not to affect traffic flows to the overall detriment of the Scheme purpose, there is a combination of exceptional circumstances that would justify making the crossing permanent, namely:

- The unique opportunity presented by the Scheme and the need for a temporary crossing;
- A known requirement from Hampshire residents who would benefit from the installation of the crossing;
- The currently protracted alternative at-grade route for people with disabilities who do not have motorised wheelchairs;
- The site specific constraints and circumstances, necessitating the crossing of four lanes of traffic for pedestrians who cannot use the subway;
- The fact that the location of the crossing would provide a beneficial public transport interchange between the bus stop and Fareham Railway Station.

7.7 It is therefore recommended that, should the outcome of the monitoring be favourable, the temporary crossing is made permanent.

1. Finance

8.1 The value of the original project appraisal approved on 9 September 2014 was £6,611,000. Confirmation of 16/17 Solent LEP funding was received on 31 March 2016.

8.2 In addition to these funds, Network Rail and SSWT are contributing an approximate £500,000 of National Station Improvement Programme funding to support the train station package. The scheme as currently forecast is now fully funded as follows.

8.3	<u>Estimates</u>	<u>£'000</u>	<u>% of total</u>	<u>Funds Available</u>	<u>£000's</u>
	Design	513	7.76	HCC	1,553
	Client Fee	25	0.38	SLEP	4,958
	Supervision	343	5.19	PRIP	100
	Construction & Land	5,730	86.67		
	Total	<u>6,611</u>	<u>100.00</u>	Total	<u>6,611</u>

8.4	<u>Revenue Implications</u>	<u>£'000</u>	<u>% Variation to Committee's budget</u>
	Net increase in current expenditure	4	0.003%
	Capital Charge	438	0.274%

8.5 Whilst making the temporary crossing permanent would have financial implications, the additional cost would be contained within existing approvals through the use of contingencies.

9. Legal context

9.1 The Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') places a duty upon the County Council known as the Equality Duty. This duty requires the County Council, in the exercise of its functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it

9.2 The Equality Duty is pertinent to this decision and an impact assessment which considers this duty is attached to this report.

9.3 The Equality Duty was also considered in the preparation of the County Council's Traffic Management and Guidance Policy. That policy will form the basis of any decision that may be made for the provision of an additional at grade crossing, notwithstanding that in this instance an exception could conceivably be made to reflect the exceptional circumstances.

10. Recommendations

10.1 That the Executive Member for Environment and Transport notes the updates to the design of the Transport Improvement Scheme at A27 The Avenue/Gudge Heath Lane, Fareham (The Scheme), as outlined in the supporting report.

10.2 That traffic monitoring is carried out to measure the impact of the temporary at-grade crossing at the head of the A27 to be installed as part of the works programme for the Scheme.

10.3 That, subject to no significant adverse impacts on traffic flow being observed during the monitoring of the temporary crossing, approval is given to make the temporary crossing permanent.

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

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	yes
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>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Date</u>
http://www3.hants.gov.uk/getdecisiondocumentfile?item_doc_ID=13621&file=2014-07-11-EMETE Decision Day-A27 Station Roundabout and Gudge Heath Lane - Project Appraisal.pdf&type=pdf		
http://www3.hants.gov.uk/councilmeetings/advsearchmeetings/meetingsitemsummary.htm?pref=Y&tab=1&item_ID=6038&cancel=n		
EC CJ008212 - 103 RevC		
EC CJ008212 - 102 Rev B		
EC CJ008212 - 101 Rev B		
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives		
<u>Title</u>	<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.)

Document

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/2014-traffic-management-policy.pdf>

Location

Hampshire County Council's officers, Winchester. Hampshire County Council website.

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equality Duty

1.1 The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- a) The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- c) Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

1.2 Equalities Impact Assessment:

The proposal provides the County Council with an opportunity to capitalise upon approved works in order to improve outcomes for people with disabilities, specifically those who have difficulty in crossing the road at the site in question due to the absence of an at grade crossing. This will have no adverse effects on individuals with other protected characteristics, and so the overall equalities impact is judged to be positive. Should the delivery of the permanent crossing be deemed viable, this positive impact will be advanced. However, should the results of monitoring indicate that making the temporary crossing permanent is unsustainable in the context of the overall Scheme and its intended outcomes, the consequences of this decision will be deemed to be neutral, as it neither improves nor detracts from outcomes for people with protected characteristics.

2 Impact on Crime and Disorder:

2.1 None

3 Climate Change:

- 3.1 How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?
- 3.2 How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

The specific recommendations made in this report have very little impact upon climate change, though the decision not to adjust the scheme could save on works activity and thereby make a minor reduction in the carbon emissions associated with delivery. However, the decision will help enable the successful delivery of the scheme generally, and on that basis the climate change impact assessments included in the original PA documents (linked to this report) are relevant.