

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**Decision Report**

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment
Date:	11 July 2014
Title:	Whitehill & Bordon Relief Road
Reference:	5880
Report From:	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

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1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. To support the major re-development of the Bordon Garrison and the regeneration of the wider town, it is essential that improved transport infrastructure is planned and delivered. The Whitehill & Bordon Relief Road and associated A325 integration works are the critical elements of the Emerging Transport Strategy necessary for the strategic re-development and economic regeneration of the area.
- 1.2. The purpose of this paper is to provide an update on the recent work carried out to develop the Whitehill & Bordon Relief Road scheme, and to confirm the County Council's preferred routing option for the road. The paper also reports the findings of the A325 Urban Design and Traffic Management Strategy and outlines the future direction of the project.
- 1.3. This paper seeks to;
 - provide background on the Whitehill & Bordon Relief Road project and summarise the work that has been carried out to this point;
 - report the results of the recent public consultation;
 - confirm the County Council's preferred Relief Road routing option;
 - set out a delivery mechanism for Phase 1 of the Relief Road;
 - report the findings of the A325 Urban Design and Traffic Management Strategy; and
 - outline the next steps in the development of the scheme.

2. Contextual information

- 2.1 The need for a relief road is identified within the Hampshire County Council adopted Emerging Transport Strategy (September 2011), the adopted Development Framework Masterplan (May 2012) and within the adopted East Hampshire District Council and South Downs National Park Authority Joint Core Strategy (May 2014).
- 2.2 The Relief Road is critical infrastructure to the successful regeneration of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) land in Bordon, which will;
- provide access to the MoD development areas to facilitate the delivery of the development for housing, retail and commercial development;
 - reduce congestion on the A325 corridor, reducing existing delays and barriers, making the town attractive to inward investment;
 - reduce severance in the town; and
 - deliver the conditions needed to help deliver a new Town Centre for Whitehill & Bordon.
- 2.3 During 2012 Hampshire County Council (as local highway authority) carried out engineering feasibility assessment of potential road alignment options. These were presented to the Whitehill & Bordon Delivery Board in December 2012.
- 2.4 In January 2013, Hampshire County Council's Executive Member for Environment and Transport considered a report which appraised the route alignment options and decided;
- a) That the scheme be added to the list of major schemes for development and that this work be carried out as funding permits.
 - b) That route Option 1 for the southern section (abandoned railway), and Option B for the northern section (external alignment), be confirmed as the County Council's preferred alignment in transport terms.
 - c) That approval be given to carry out public consultation on the preferred route option.
 - d) That this position be reviewed following the completion of further technical work (including the Environmental Impact Assessment - EIA) and consultation to ensure that the preferred routing option identified remains the best option when considered against national guidance on transport scheme appraisal.
- 2.5 Since the January 2013 Executive Member Decision, the County Council has completed and published further work on the scheme, principally with the preparation of;
- preliminary scheme design for the preferred route option;
 - a draft Environmental Statement (EIA) (included as a [background document](#) to this report); and
 - a draft Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).

3. Public Consultation

- 3.1. During February and March 2014 the County Council carried out formal public consultation on the proposed Relief Road scheme, in accordance with the January 2013 Executive Member Decision.
- 3.2. The consultation was conjoined with proposals relating to the wider regeneration of the town including proposals for the main Bordon Garrison re-development, the Louisburg Barracks proposals and the Quebec Barracks proposals. These four consultations ran as individual but coordinated consultation exercises.
- 3.3. The public consultation exercise comprised;
 - distribution of consultation leaflet (including questionnaire related to the Relief Road project) to 10,000 households in the local area;
 - two manned exhibitions held within the town during March 2014; and
 - three unmanned exhibitions in the town during March 2014.
- 3.4. The exhibitions were well attended, with approximately 300 people visiting over the two manned exhibition days. However, a low response rate was achieved to the questionnaire surveys, with only 274 responses being received from the 10,000 questionnaires distributed (2.7%).
- 3.5. The questionnaire survey asked a number of questions relating to the proposed Relief Road and the potential impacts of the scheme. The summary results were;
 - 54% of respondents '*supported*' the proposed Relief Road route. 31% '*did not support*' the route option, with 15% answering that they were '*unsure*'.
 - The majority of respondents who stated they '*did not support*' the Relief Road route were residents of the residential areas of Whitehill, around Morse Close, Champney Close and Sutton Fields. These residents are geographically close to the southern part of the preferred route alignment. A number of residents from Oakhanger village also responded to say they '*did not support*' the proposed Relief Road route, and comments made within the responses indicate a concern that the relief road route would be likely to promote traffic through Oakhanger.
 - Respondents that expressed dissatisfaction with the preferred route option were asked to expand on reasoning;
 - Concern over the loss of possible rail corridor
 - Impact on residents in Sutton Fields/Morse Close/Champney Close
 - Concern about the impact of additional traffic routing through Oakhanger

- Relief Road is not needed
- Concern about the impact on wildlife/Hogmoor Inclosure
- Concern that the scheme proposed too many traffic lights
- The questionnaire asked for opinions on the Relief Road design features. The results of the responses received identified that the majority of respondents were satisfied/very satisfied with the proposed speed limits (64%), the single carriageway design of the road (55%), the pedestrian and cycle facilities (60%) and the street lighting of the route (61%).
- Of the responses received, the strongest dissatisfaction with design elements related to the use of traffic signals at key junctions (31% dissatisfied). This was echoed within literal comments made in comment boxes, where a number of people raised concern with traffic signals causing delay and frustration along the corridor.
- Respondents were asked to identify key local concerns as a result of the Relief Road proposals. Overall, respondents identified that issues of Landscape, Nature Conservation, Heritage, Hydrology, Air Quality, Noise and Vibration and accessibility were all important issues.
- Respondents also identified other impacts;
 - Concern over the loss of railway corridor
 - Concern over the additional traffic impact in Oakhanger
 - Concern about reduced house prices
 - Concern over the removal of trees
 - Road safety concerns
 - Concern about the impact of the scheme on amenity and properties on the southern section of the route
- A number of possible mitigation measures were identified to address impacts, and these were generally received well, with respondents in favour of the landscaping proposals (58%), wildlife crossing points and sensitive lighting (52%), evaluation and recording of historic buildings (48%), facilities for walking and cycling (55%), drainage proposals (52%), air quality monitoring (48%) and visual barriers (48%).
- A number of respondents also raised a number of general comments in response to the questionnaire and consultation material. These are evaluated in the full report, and can be summarised as;
 - Concern regarding loss of railway corridor
 - Concern about the impact on residential properties at southern section of the route
 - Concerns over the form of junction at the southern A325 connection
 - Negative impact on nature / wildlife
 - Negative impacts of additional traffic in Oakhanger
 - No need for a relief road
 - Too many traffic lights
 - Comments in support of the proposal

- Comments related to issues outside of the Relief Road consultation scope
 - Concern about additional pollution and noise
- 3.6. Overall, whilst the consultation was well attended, the response rate received to the questionnaires distributed was low. There was however general support for the scheme and for the preferred route (Option 2) from the respondents. The full Consultation Report is attached at **Appendix 1** which provides additional detail on the survey method and results.
- 3.7. The public consultation raised a number of points and concerns, which have been fully considered in forming a conclusion on the preferred Relief Road route to be progressed. Whilst some of these comments raise matters of principle which have not been possible to address, other comments relate to matters of design and detail, which are being considered by the County Council and its partners in progressing the scheme design. This includes considering the form of junctions and particularly how ecological and environmental mitigation measures are incorporated into the scheme.
- 3.8. East Hampshire District Council (who are both project promoter and local planning authority) has been fully engaged throughout the development of the Relief Road scheme, and following a recent review, does not object to the preferred route option as proposed as part of the consultation.
- 3.9. In addition, engagement is continuing between the County Council as local highway authority and the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA), who are the local planning authority for the southern part of the route as it re-joins the A325. The County Council and its partners are continuing to work with the SDNPA to ensure that the scheme needed to integrate the A325 and the Relief Road comes forward in an acceptable manner to the SDNPA.
- 3.10. The local member, Councillor Carew, has been briefed on the proposals and consulted, but has yet to submit any comments.

4. Route Option Appraisal

- 4.1. As outlined in the January 2013 report to the Executive Member for Environment and Transport, a full appraisal of route options has been carried out in accordance with the principles of the WEBTAG national guidance on transport schemes.
- 4.2. The assessment considered a total of seven routing options which can be broken down into three categories (a drawing showing the Route Options is included at **Appendix 2**);
- 'Outer' Relief Road (Options 1 and 2). These are options which form a western boundary to the Masterplan development area, using mostly the abandoned railway line (transport corridor);

- 'Inner' Relief Road (Options 3, 4 and 5). These options route through the Masterplan development area; and
- Access through Viking Park (Options 3A and 3B). The options are all within land owned by the MOD or Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) who support the development except for land through Viking Park which is in 3rd party ownership.

4.3. The appraisal considered each route option against a number of criteria including;

- Engineering;
- Environmental;
- Cost;
- Deliverability; and
- Route Character.

4.4. The assessment, which generally follows WEBTAG guidance, concluded that;

- a) **Engineering** - Whilst all options provide significant relief to the existing A325, the outer options (Options 1 and 2) provide more traffic reduction on the A325 than the 'inner' options (Options 3,3A, 3B, 4 and 5). This is fundamental to the objective of the road. In addition, drainage, statutory undertaker impacts and construction impacts favour the 'outer' Relief Road options.

The 'outer' Relief Road options (Options 1 and 2) are therefore strongly preferred due to the enhanced relief provided to the existing A325.

Option 1 however, has a section of sub-standard alignment which does not meet the requirements of national highway design standards. Therefore, in engineering terms, Option 2 is the preferred option.

- b) **Environmental**. Overall, whilst there are environmental impacts associated with all route options, the potential environmental impacts do not vary greatly between the various route options. With design and mitigation measures all options are considered to be likely to be deliverable without unacceptable environmental impact.

However, Options 1 and 2 are marginally preferred in environmental terms when considered at the town scale, as they are most effective at removing traffic from the A325, minimise severance caused by the existing A325 and the Masterplan development, have the least impact on noise and air quality due to having fewer future dwellings close to the road, as well as presenting the lowest flood risk.

These options do however have a greater impact on some residents living adjacent to the southern part of the route, within properties at Champney Close, Sutton Fields and Morse Close. Although this is a former transport corridor, following its disuse, the introduction of a road using the former railway route will result in localised noise impacts, and

the Environmental Statement identifies a series of measures to reduce this impact.

- c) **Capital Costs.** The costs for the road are dependent on the length of the road proposed. Estimates carried out to date indicate that the 'inner' options, and in particular, Options 3A and 3B are cheapest. The 'outer' routes, Options 1 and 2, are the most expensive with Options 3, 4 and 5 marginally less so.

However, the cost estimates undertaken to date are preliminary and based on outline data. When other factors are taken into account (land acquisition, risk, development land used by the road footprint etc.), it is considered that there is little to choose between the options at this stage in cost terms.

- d) **Deliverability.** Options 3A and 3B require land which is in the ownership of a 3rd party (Viking Properties) who has consistently objected to the land being used for the Relief Road. This represents a very high risk to the scheme being able to achieve the land acquisition and ultimate delivery of the scheme.

Options 3, 3A, 3B and 4 also pass through the MoD TTA and require demolition of major buildings which could be put to employment use in the short and medium term.

On this basis, in terms of ability to deliver the Relief Road, Options 1, 2 and 5 are preferred. It is not considered that Options 3a and 3b are realistically deliverable at this time.

- e) **Character of the Relief Road.** In terms of meeting the scheme objectives and practically implementing the policy objectives, Options 1 and 2 are favourable as they relieve congestion on the A325 better than the 'inner' options thereby better enabling the operation and function of the new town centre and reducing severance. Options 1 and 2 are also better suited to the primary function of the Relief Road of diverting through traffic from the town centre. The 'inner' routes would have to balance the conflict between a street with a large amount of non-vehicle movement and the requirements for an effective through route.

- 4.5. A summary of the assessments is shown in the table below. It identifies that Option 2 is assessed as being the route which best achieves the scheme objectives, and when considered against national scheme appraisal guidance. This confirms the findings of the January 2013 EMET Decision as Local Highway Authority.

Criteria	RAG Scores (Red, Amber, Green)						
	1	2	3	3A	3B	4	5
Engineering	A	G	A	A	A	A	A
Environmental	G	G	A	A	A	A	A
Build Costs	G	G	G	G	G	G	G
Delivery	G	G	A	R	R	A	G
Character	G	G	A	A	A	A	A
Overall	G	G	A	R	R	A	A

- 4.6. The Options Review Report is included at **Appendix 3** and a copy of the latest Option 2 scheme drawing is included at **Appendix 4**.
- 4.7. In light of the findings of the Options Review Report, the detailed work done to inform the draft Environmental Statement and Habitats Regulation Assessment, and the results of the public consultation, it is concluded that Option 2 provides the best available route for the Relief Road.

5. A325 Urban Design and Traffic Management Strategy

- 5.1. During 2012 and 2013 the County Council commissioned work to consider a package of possible improvements to the existing A325 corridor, to complement the Relief Road scheme. This accords with the strategy outlined in the County Council's adopted Emerging Transport Strategy with the works seeking to deliver improved conditions and space for the new town centre, to reduce community severance, and to bring environmental enhancement to the centre of the town.
- 5.2. The Strategy contained an assessment of the existing street condition and character and developed options for improving the existing A325 corridor to better meet the future demands of the town. The work used Manual for Streets principles, and appraised possible improvement options.

- 5.3. Public consultation on the Strategy was carried out in two stages;

Stage 1 – A workshop in November 2012 as part of the Whitehill & Bordon Standing Conference.

Stage 2 – Full public consultation exhibition in March 2013. This was attended by 63 members of public, of which 28 completed feedback forms. 61% of respondents agreed the approach outlined in the strategy and 57% supported the proposals set out in the strategy. A number of detailed comments were made on individual proposals which were addressed where feasible to do so.

- 5.4. The Strategy identifies a range of options for each section of the route, ranging from high cost options to lower cost options. Total scheme costs range from £2million to £8million. These options provide a toolkit approach to improvement of the corridor.
- 5.5. The County Council has made an Expression of Interest to the Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership (EM3 LEP) for potential future funding for a package of works to better integrate the A325 and wider town, in association with the Relief Road scheme. A formal bid is expected to be made in early 2015 for scheme funding to deliver the works, and future funding also sought from the wider development.
- 5.6. A copy of the A325 Urban Design and Traffic Management Strategy is included at **Appendix 5**.

6. Future direction

- 6.1. As outlined in 2.5 above, the County Council has completed its preliminary design of Option 2, and has published consultation drafts of the Environmental Statement and HRA reports. These reports will be finalised over the coming months (and supplemented with additional survey data where needed) in order to provide a robust evidence base to support future planning applications for the Relief Road scheme.
- 6.2. It is envisaged that planning permission for the Relief Road will be sought in 2 stages;
- 1) Detailed consent for Phase 1 of the Relief Road (the northern section within Louisburg Barracks) is being sought as part of the HCA's hybrid planning application which is currently submitted to East Hampshire District Council (EHDC) for determination. The application seeks outline consent for residential and commercial development of the wider Louisburg Barracks Site, and detailed consent for the Relief Road section within the site. The County Council has been working closely with HCA and its consultants to supply details to form part of the planning application.

- 2) Detailed consent for Phase 2 of the Relief Road (leading from Louisburg Barracks to the south to Whitehill Cross-roads) will be sought as part of the Bordon Garrison Land Consortium (BGLC) Land Owners Group hybrid planning application which is due to be submitted in late 2014. This application will seek outline consent for the re-development of the garrison site for mixed use development and detailed consent for the Phase 2 Relief Road. This application will be determined in part by East Hampshire District Council, and in part by South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) (the southern junction currently falls within the SDNPA area). The County Council is working closely with BGLC to supply information to support the planning application.

6.3. Delivery of the Relief Road is also to be carried out in two phases, aligned to the planning consents described in 6.2.

- Providing planning consent is granted for Phase 1 of the Relief Road it is expected that the scheme (which provides the principal access to the Louisburg Barracks site), will be constructed from March 2015. The County Council is in discussions with the HCA and its legal advisors with a view to assisting the HCA in delivering the scheme through the South East 7 Framework. The costs of the scheme will be met by the HCA through its Public Land Investment Fund (PLIF) Funding. A Project Appraisal will be brought forward at the appropriate time for formal consideration.
- Delivery of Phase 2 of the Relief Road is subject to securing full scheme funding, described below in 7.3 and planning consent. Providing planning consent is achieved for the Phase 2 scheme, and funding is confirmed, delivery of this section of the road is expected to be completed between 2016 and 2018.

7. Finance

- 7.1. Up to this point, work carried out to develop the scheme has been funded through a grant received from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). Future costs are expected to be funded through a combination of DCLG Grant already secured, and other sources of grant funding including Public Land Investment Fund (PLIF).
- 7.2. Funding for the delivery of the Phase 1 of the Relief Road has been secured by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) as part of the Public Land Investment Fund. The full cost of the delivery of this scheme will be met through this fund, at no cost to the County Council, and works delivered during 2015/16.
- 7.3. At this time there is no secured funding in place for the delivery of Phase 2 of neither the Relief Road nor the A325 Integration works. An Expression of Interest has been made to the Enterprise M3 LEP for Local Growth Fund

monies, which will be followed by a formal bid (supplemented by a Full Business Case) in early 2015. The current expectation is that Local Growth funding would be sought for delivery of Phase 2 in 2016/17 and 2017/18.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1. That the results of the Whitehill & Bordon Relief Road public consultation be noted, along with progress made on the scheme design, Environmental Impact Assessment, and Habitats Regulations Assessment.
- 8.2. That the 'A325 Urban Design and Traffic Management Strategy' be adopted under the County Council's Emerging Transport Strategy (September 2011).
- 8.3. That the Relief Road route Option 2 (shown in Appendix 4) be identified as the local highway authority's preferred route for the Whitehill & Bordon Relief Road and that this route alignment be further developed to form part of future planning applications and funding bids.
- 8.4. That the County Council continue to work with the Homes and Communities Agency with a view to entering into formal arrangements for the delivery of the Phase 1 Relief Road on its behalf.
- 8.5. That the County Council prepares a full business case and submits funding bids to the Enterprise M3 LEP (and other funding sources) for the Phase 2 Relief Road Scheme and the A325 Integration Works.

Appendix 1 – Consultation Results Report

Appendix 2 – Route Options

Appendix 3 – Route Option Appraisal

Appendix 4 – Option 2 Preferred Route Drawing

Appendix 5 – A325 Urban Design and Traffic Management Strategy

Appendix 6 – EM3 LEP Expression of Interest

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>
Whitehill Bordon Inner Relief Road	4636	31/01/2013
Whitehill & Bordon Emerging Transport Strategy	3183	06/11/2011
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives		
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>	
None		

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
Environmental Statement: Whitehill Bordon Relief Road	http://www3.hants.gov.uk/transport-schemes-index/transport-schemes-petersfield-east-hampshire/whitehill-bordon-relief-road/whitehill-bordon-relief-road-technical.htm

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

- 1.1 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. The website contains a summary [assessment of the impacts](#) on "*Developing Hampshire's Highway Network and Transport System*".
- 1.2 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 decision does not itself have any direct impact on crime or disorder.

3. Climate Change:

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

The 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 Relief Road will include facilities for walking and cycling, to link with the wider Masterplan proposals to encourage sustainable travel.

- 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 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.