

## Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING:	<b>Cabinet</b>	
MEETING DATE:	<b>13<sup>th</sup> June 2012</b>	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		<b>E 2427</b>
TITLE:	<b>A36 Rossiter Road/Widcombe Parade Scheme</b>	
WARD:	Widcombe	
<b>AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>		
<b>List of attachments to this report:</b>		
<b>Appendix 1:</b> Recommendations of the report on public consultations February 2011: Consultation Response Report (for Consultation of February 2011)		
<b>Appendix 2:</b> Terms of Reference for review of proposal to remove through traffic from Widcombe parade		

### 1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 The Rossiter Road scheme has been provisionally included in the Capital Programme for a number of years and a proposed scheme which removed through traffic from Widcombe Parade (by reversing the direction of Widcombe Parade traffic and introducing 2-way traffic onto Rossiter Road) was subject to public consultation in February 2011. Whilst the scheme received overwhelming public support concern was expressed over some of the detailed design. A Steering Group was established to commission an independent review of the scheme by Halcrow .
- 1.2 The independent review endorsed the original design of the scheme and recommended some changes which will allow for the retention of some mature trees, the provision of an improved drop-off for Bath Spa Railway station on Rossiter Road itself and improved access to Lyncombe Hill. The review also concluded that whilst the replacement of traffic signals at the White Hart junction with mini roundabouts was possible the original scheme managed peak traffic flows more effectively and reduced queuing in Widcombe Parade. The Steering Group accepted the changes but considered that the benefits of removing the signals in favour of mini-roundabouts outweighed the risk of increased congestion. The Steering Group also considered that this risk could be mitigated by installing ducting that would enable signals to be installed at a later date should congestion prove to be a problem.
- 1.3 This report seeks agreement to proceed with the design of the scheme in accordance with the wishes of the Steering Group. It should be noted that the changes proposed above cover the main issues raised during the public consultation in February 2011.

## 2 RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to

2.1 Agree that The Rossiter Road Scheme is progressed in line with the Steering Group's recommendations namely that:

(i) A 4 vehicle "drop off" layby is provided in Rossiter Road to provide improved access to Bath Spa Railway Station.

(ii) Cars and light traffic travelling east should be allowed to access Lyncombe Hill direct from Rossiter Road by a revised junction arrangement.

(iii) The mature tree behind Claverton Buildings could be retained by redesigning the approach to the new signal controlled junction at the western end of Widcombe Parade (subject to detailed design).

2.2 note that the above recommendations accord with the recommendations from the report on public consultation attached as Appendix 1.

2.3 And decide whether it wishes to agree that

EITHER

2.3.1 The proposed traffic signals at the White Hart junction be replaced with mini roundabouts, and note that the risk of increased congestion is mitigated by works that would facilitate the installation of traffic signals at a late date should they prove to be necessary

OR

2.3.2 retain the proposed traffic signals at the White Hart junction as shown in the public consultation

## 3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.3 The Rossiter Road capital budget is included in the Capital Programme at £1.8m. £0.2m of this has been approved in prior years, £1.6m is currently in the programme for Provisional Approval subject to the outcome of current scheme redesign work and the granting of any necessary planning consent. This £1.6m is part funded through capital contingency (£1.3m) and part through corporate headroom (£0.3m), included as part of the revenue budget approved by Council in February 2012.

3.4 The cost of the scheme will be established once the final detailed design has been carried out. It is anticipated that costs will be contained within the £1.8m above (particularly without the need for Traffic Signals at White Hart Junction).

3.5 In the event of these signals being required due to congestion from the scheme additional funds would need to be identified (£167,500) and this funding might be made available from the Capital contingency. In the event of the scheme not being progressed there is a risk of some of the capital costs incurred to date having to revert to a revenue account as explained in paragraph 6.1 below.

## 4 CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

4.3 The objectives of the A36 Rossiter Road/Widcombe Parade Scheme are to:

- Maintain or improve a strategic route for through traffic passing through Bath to/ from Bristol and the A36 South, the A4 East and the A46 North.
- Minimise secondary redistribution of traffic to other sensitive areas beyond the Rossiter road/ Widcombe Parade scheme
- Improve the safety for road users and those wishing to cross the road
- Reduce “through” traffic including HGV’s in Widcombe Parade
- Improve the Widcombe Parade environment

4.4 These objectives support the following Corporate objectives

- *Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone*
- *Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live*

## 5 THE REPORT

5.3 The Rossiter Road Scheme aims to remove through traffic and in particular HGVs from the Widcombe shopping parade without adding to congestion on the A36 and the Churchill Bridge Gyratory. The project has been in the Capital Programme for some years. A scheme which reversed the direction of traffic on Widcombe Parade was subject to public consultation in February 2011. The original scheme included a set of traffic signals at the White Hart junction which were designed to ensure that the scheme does not add to the congestion on the network. The signals would provide the ability to actively manage the network to ensure traffic queues on Rossiter Road do not back up to the Churchill Bridge Gyratory. This element of the scheme was subject to some criticism from the Widcombe Association who saw the introduction of so many traffic signals as detracting from the environmental benefits which the scheme was designed to deliver. The Association is concerned that this number of signals in close proximity would have a detrimental impact on the public realm in this location. It was also suggested that signals would not be necessary as drivers would adapt their travel patterns in the light of any congestion that they might experience. The recommendations of the report on the public consultation are attached in Appendix 1.

5.4 As a result of the public consultation an independent review of the scheme was commissioned reporting to a Steering Group of representatives of the Widcombe Association, local ward members, officer and cabinet members. The terms of reference for this review are attached at Appendix 2.

5.5 The review has concluded that the scheme can be amended to:

- 5.5.1 Provide a 4 vehicle ‘drop off’ layby in Rossiter Road to provide improved access to Bath Spa Railway Station.
- 5.5.2 Cars and Light traffic travelling east should be allowed to access Lyncombe Hill direct from Rossiter Road by a revised junction arrangement.
- 5.5.3 The mature tree behind Claverton Buildings could be retained by redesigning the approach to the new signal controlled junction at the western end of Widcombe Parade (subject to completion of the detail design).

- 5.6 These conclusions accord with those in Appendix 1.
- 5.7 In developing the current proposals the Council asked Halcrow to test the proposal using its traffic model to ensure that traffic on the A36 either side of Widcombe Parade is not adversely affected by the new arrangement. The scheme was originally designed to include a set of traffic signals controlling traffic emerging from Prior Park Road and Widcombe Hill onto Pulteney Road. This was the proposal which was subject to public consultation. These traffic signals would be a significant cost within this scheme.
- 5.8 Halcrow considered whether a set of double mini-roundabouts might be an acceptable alternative. Their conclusion was notwithstanding that the mini-roundabouts could be accepted in terms of visibility etc., that the priority provided to traffic from Prior Park Road and Widcombe Hill could be disruptive to the A36 and local highway network.
- 5.9 Firstly, there is a risk that the inability to actively manage traffic entering Pulteney Road could result in this traffic queuing as it attempts to exit onto the A36. If this traffic builds up queues could extend back blocking the double mini-roundabout causing congestion on the network. Secondly, the lengths of standing traffic in Widcombe parade as traffic waits to get through the mini-roundabouts are longer than if signals were installed. Finally, there is a risk that Prior Park Road and Widcombe Hill will become more attractive to drivers and this could lead to more traffic using these routes potentially causing further delays and queuing in Widcombe Parade.
- 5.10 The Steering Group considered these risks and noted that the traffic flows in the model had been set at current levels plus 10%. The Group considered that it was preferable to construct the mini-roundabouts and establish whether the risk of congestion would actually materialise given the built-in safety margin. In addition allowing traffic direct access into Lyncombe Hill (see 5.3 (2) above) will reduce the amount of traffic having to travel through Widcombe Parade approaching the White Hart Junction. The Steering Group also suggested that the electrical ducting for traffic signals should still be installed when the scheme is taken forward to allow traffic signals to be installed in the event that the potential problems identified by the traffic model did occur.
- 5.11 The cost of the different junctions at the White Hart junction are as follows:
- 5.11.1 Cost for traffic signal option (as per public consultation) = £263,000
  - 5.11.2 Cost for double mini roundabouts no ducting or other "advance" traffic signal requirements = £54,500
  - 5.11.3 Cost for double mini roundabouts with ducting and other "advance" traffic signal requirements (as before) = £90,500
  - 5.11.4 Cost of changing from double mini's with ducting etc to traffic signals = £167,500
  - 5.11.5 Cost of changing from double mini's without ducting etc to traffic signals = £203,500
- 5.12 Timescales are as follows :
- 5.12.1 The time to change from a double mini with ducting etc to a traffic signal junction = 2 months as previously advised.
  - 5.12.2 The time to change from a double mini with no ducting etc to a traffic signal junction = 4 months.

## **6 RISK MANAGEMENT**

6.3 The report author and Lead Cabinet member have fully reviewed the risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance. There is a risk that in the event of the scheme not progressing that the Capital expenditure to date might be subject to reversion to revenue. We estimate that the capital cost of the scheme currently stands at approximately £200,000. How much of this would still be eligible as capital expenditure would have to be determined in the event of the scheme not going ahead.

6.4 The risks of the proposed arrangement for the scheme are set out in the body of the report.

## **7 EQUALITIES**

7.3 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed. Potential adverse impacts for some mobility groups were identified due to the removal of the controlled pedestrian in Claverton Street. This potential impact is mitigated through reductions in expected traffic levels in the parade and will be considered further in the Road Safety Audit.

## **8 RATIONALE**

8.3 The Steering Group have identified a number of amendments to the scheme to reduce costs and improving its impact on the public realm.

## **9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

9.3 None.

## **10 CONSULTATION**

10.3 Ward Councillors; Cabinet members; Local Residents; Community Interest Groups; Stakeholders/Partners; Section 151 Finance Officer; Chief Executive; Monitoring Officer

10.4 Public consultation was undertaken by an exhibition and questionnaire in February 2011.

## **11 ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN REACHING THE DECISION**

11.3 Customer Focus; Sustainability; Health & Safety;

## **12 ADVICE SOUGHT**

12.3 The Council's Monitoring Officer (Divisional Director – Legal and Democratic Services) and Section 151 Officer (Divisional Director - Finance)

have had the opportunity to input to this report and have cleared it for publication.

12.4 Halcrow, the Council's term consultants have provided detailed reports on the design of the proposal and provide verbal advice to the Steering Group at its meetings.

<b>Contact person</b>	Peter Dawson – Group Manager 01225-395181
<b>Sponsoring Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Roger Symonds
<b>Background papers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Reports to Rossiter Road Steering Group</b></li><li>• <b>Consultation Response Report (for Consultation of February 2011)</b></li></ul>
<b>Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format</b>	