

## **Barnstaple: A361 Portmore Roundabout Improvement**

Report of the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment

***Please note that the following recommendations are subject to consideration and determination by Cabinet (and confirmation under the provisions of the Council's Constitution) before taking effect.***

### **Recommendation:**

- (a) that the scheme design shown in Appendix I as drawing number 14600-36-0 be approved for construction at an estimated cost of £1.58m;**
- (b) that the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economy and Growth, be given delegated authority to make minor amendments to the scheme design in consultation with the Local County Council Members;**
- (c) that authority be given to acquire land for the scheme with authority to proceed to Compulsory Purchase Order if required.**

### **1. Summary**

This report seeks approval to construct an improvement scheme at Portmore Roundabout on the A361 North Devon Link Road.

### **2. Background**

Portmore Roundabout is located to the east of Barnstaple at the junction of the A361 North Devon Link Road and the A39. It is the main eastern access for Barnstaple and it is a key junction on the A361/A39 strategic corridor linking the M5 to North Devon and Torridge.

The junction currently carries over 2,000 vehicles in the AM and PM peak hours and experiences increased congestion during the peak holiday periods with capacity exceeded on all three arms. Proposed development in the Barnstaple and Bideford area will require capacity improvements to be made at this junction in order to manage increased traffic demands. In the Local Plan period to 2031 around 10,000 new dwellings and 50ha of new employment land will increase traffic on the A361/A39 corridor.

The Mount Sandford Green development is an allocated residential/employment site located on land to the south west of the junction. Beyond an initial 80 dwellings that will be accessed from a new junction onto Landkey Road, the site will require a second access onto the A361 for additional commercial and residential traffic. The proposed scheme at Portmore Roundabout could incorporate a fourth arm to access this site from the A361 and would help to unlock this development site. The developer will be required to pay for a fourth arm and contribute towards the cost of the junction improvements.

The A361/A39 corridor between Bideford and the M5 forms the principal road connection between Northern Devon, M5 and the strategic rail network at Tiverton Parkway. As a former trunk road route it is one of the few remaining stretches of strategic highway under Devon County Council's direct responsibility. To ensure this route continues to function effectively as a vital strategic link, Devon County Council has identified a strategic need for major highway improvements to increase capacity. Feasibility design work for the route is

underway. The improvement scheme for Portmore Roundabout supports any future options to widen the A361 for additional traffic lanes between the A361 Rumsam and Landkey junctions.

### **3. Proposal**

The scheme shown in Appendix I as drawing number 14600-36-0 increases the size of the current three arm roundabout and introduces a fourth arm to serve Mount Sandford Green.

Increasing the size of the current roundabout enables the approach arms and exits to be widened and provide two dedicated traffic lanes for through the junction. This will increase capacity for the junction, reducing delays and improving journey time reliability along the corridor. Furthermore widened exits from the roundabout onto the A361 makes future provision within the junction layout for widening of the A361 between Landkey and Rumsam junctions.

The fourth arm to the south of the roundabout if provided would directly serve Mount Sandford Green. The fourth arm would provide access to a new link road potentially required as part of this development to access employment land for larger vehicles and provide a second access to the strategic road network for additional residential dwellings within the site. There is an alternative option to the provision of this fourth arm at Portmore, which is a connection to an improved Landkey junction. Accessing the site via the Landkey junction is the preferred option as it would avoid a fourth arm at this important gateway junction to Barnstaple.

Land required to the south of the junction is being negotiated through agreement with the land owners. If this negotiation breaks down then compulsory purchase will be required. The remainder of the scheme will be constructed with existing highway land.

An economic assessment of the junction improvement scheme, compared with the current layout, has shown a Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) of 16, which identifies the scheme as high value for money.

Following tender and final approval through the Local Enterprise Partnership. It is proposed to construct the scheme during 2016/17 if the land can be acquired.

### **4. Consultations, Representations and Technical Data**

This junction improvement is referred to within the Draft Joint North Devon & Torridge Local Plan. The draft Plan has been subject to extensive local public consultation between 2012 and 2015.

Details of the junction improvement scheme have been subject to a public consultation exercise in 2014, undertaken by the developers for Mount Sandford Green. The junction scheme is included in the planning application for this site and will be subject to public consultation through the planning process by the Local Planning Authority North Devon Council. However, if this is not undertaken by the developer the County Council can proceed with the scheme under permitted development rights.

The wider strategy for the A361/A39 corridor including this specific junction has been subject to public consultation by Devon County Council during 2014 titled "A Gateway to Northern Devon". The consultation sought comments from all parishes along the corridor and specific presentations were made to local members and councillors in the Barnstaple and Bideford areas. There was widespread support for improvements to the route including key junction improvements like Portmore.

A business case to match fund the scheme has been supported by the Local Transport Board of the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

## **5. Financial Considerations**

The Medium Term Capital Programme originally included £3m as the estimated scheme cost of the Portmore roundabout improvement, of which £1.5m would be contributed by Growth Deal. Further design work has found a technical solution for a reduced scale roundabout which has saved on the cost of the scheme. The current estimate for the scheme is £1.58m including optimism bias. On the basis of the Mount Sandford Green development progressing (with an access off the Portmore roundabout), the scheme will be funded using Growth Deal funding of £0.788m. Match funding of £0.717m will be secured from the first phase of 80 residential dwellings at Mount Sandford Green. The Section 106 agreement for Mount Sandford Green was completed in December 2014. If the development does not progress then the contribution from the Growth Deal will be renegotiated and LTP funding will be used as match.

Construction of the scheme will be subject to a tender process. The detailed cost estimate for the works excluding land is £1.35m. Land required for the scheme to the south west has an estimated cost of £98,000.

## **6. Environmental Impact Considerations**

The environmental impact of the junction improvement has been considered as part of the Mount Sandford Green planning permission under the Town and Country Planning Act (1990).

The design of the scheme has been considered to minimise the impact on the surrounding land and environment.

Ecology surveys are continuing to establish any environmental impacts from future construction on local habitats.

## **7. Equality Considerations**

Where relevant to the decision, the Equality Act 2010 Public Sector Equality Duty requires decision makers to give due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct;
- advance equality by encouraging participation, removing disadvantage, taking account of disabilities and meeting people's needs; and
- foster good relations between people by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

Taking account of age, disability, race/ethnicity (includes Gypsies and Travellers), gender and gender identity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, pregnant women/new and breastfeeding mothers, marriage/civil partnership status in coming to a decision, a decision maker may also consider other relevant factors such as caring responsibilities, rural isolation or socio-economic disadvantage.

In order to address these requirements and address feedback on the stakeholder consultation, an Impact Assessment has been prepared, a copy of which has been

circulated to Cabinet Members, and is available alongside this report on the Council's website at: [http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/councildemocracy/decision\\_making/cma/index\\_exc.htm](http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/councildemocracy/decision_making/cma/index_exc.htm)

## **8. Legal Considerations**

Land for the scheme to the south of the junction is being negotiated for purchase from the landowner. Reserved matters planning for Mount Sandford Green includes the Portmore Roundabout improvement scheme as the second highway access. Following planning approval which is anticipated in September 2015 land can be transferred to Devon County Council under this agreement.

The land agreement will only come into effect following successful completion of the planning application. Should planning not be granted, then separate land negotiation will be required to deliver the improvement scheme.

## **9. Risk Management Considerations**

This proposal has been assessed and all necessary safeguards or action have been taken/included to safeguard the Council's position.

Where risks have been identified such as a funding gap, the implications of those have been taken into account in preparing this report.

## **10. Public Health Impact**

Improvements to main roads surrounding Barnstaple will contribute towards minimising the impact of future traffic growth on the historic built environment. This will have positive benefits for future air quality and green travel within the town.

## **11. Options/Alternatives**

Devon County Council has considered options for both signalised and alternative roundabout geometries. Developer proposals for a smaller roundabout at Portmore and a new junction to the west have been considered in the appraisal process.

The proposed roundabout scheme offers the best compromise in terms of providing increased capacity, minimising the impact on the surrounding environment and providing convenient access for the adjacent development site.

Retaining the current layout would not meet the needs of planned growth identified within the emerging Local Plan. An alternative junction arrangement meeting the needs of the development would not provide the future capacity benefits needed for the junction and wider A361\A39 corridor.

## **12. Reason for Recommendation/Conclusion**

A junction improvement at this location is essential infrastructure needed for the long term traffic management on the A361. It will deliver immediate benefits for road users. Delivering the scheme in conjunction with adjacent development offers an opportunity for early delivery using match funding from the development and Growth Deal sources. But has the disadvantage of introducing a fourth arm at the junction.

Dave Black  
Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment

**Electoral Divisions: Chulmleigh & Swimbridge, Barnstaple South**

Cabinet Member for Economy and Growth: Councillor Andrew Leadbetter

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Local Government Act 1972: List of Background Papers

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Background Paper	Date	File Reference
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Nil

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**Appendix I  
To PTE/15/48**



Do not scale from this drawing in either hard or electronic format. No responsibility is accepted where this drawing is used in circumstances other than that for which it was originally prepared and issued.

NOTES	
No.	Details

Rev.	Date	Drawn	Revisions	Dis.
0	10/06/2018	PCR	Original Issue	SDM



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**A39/A361 Corridor - Scheme 8  
Portmore Roundabout**

**Committee Plan**

drawing number	14600/36	revision	0
scale	1:500	size	A1

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