

Roundswell Phase 2 A39 Pedestrian Cycle Bridge

Report of the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment

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

Recommendations:

- (a) that the scheme design shown in Appendix I as drawing number (B.M.(5074)_1000-P5) be approved for construction at an estimated cost of £2.855m;**
- (b) that the Head of Planning, Transportation and Environment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economy and Growth and relevant local County Council Members, be given delegated authority to make minor amendments to the scheme design.**

1. Summary

This report seeks approval to construct a new cycle/pedestrian bridge crossing over the A39 at Roundswell in Barnstaple.

2. Background

Roundswell is located to the west of Barnstaple with direct access onto the strategic A39/A361 North Devon Link Road corridor. The existing Roundswell area lies to the north of the A39 roundabout junction. To the south lie numerous villages and the main route from Barnstaple to Torrington. Recent developments include the St Johns Garden Centre. North Devon Council's (NDC) Brynsworthy Environment Centre (BEC) where a large number of staff work and where the majority of NDC's public meetings are held. These developments require a safe pedestrian and cycle crossing. It is considered that whilst an at grade signalled crossing is feasible, it would be highly undesirable given the likely impact on traffic on the A39. An at grade crossing would also have a significantly higher casualty rate than a bridge option given the 60mph speed limit.

Land to the south west of the bridge is allocated as a new 6.1 hectare employment site in the draft North Devon and Torridge Local Plan to 2031. This is expected to create over 300 jobs. The plan also supports further expansion of this site to the west if this is required in the Local Plan period. This development south of the A39 requires good walking and cycling connectivity to the rest of Barnstaple and areas to the west. This proposed scheme for a pedestrian and cycle bridge is aimed at providing a safe and attractive link to support economic growth.

The scheme is the second phase of planned infrastructure development in the Roundswell area. The first phase constructed in 2014 enlarged and improved the capacity of the main A39 Roundswell Roundabout. Phase 1 also incorporated the construction of a second compact roundabout on the B3232 to provide access to the southern employment sites. The third phase has been submitted for potential growth deal funding to deliver a Park & Change car park facility within the southern development land and the associated estate highway infrastructure to connect this facility to the B3232 junction. The third phase of bidding also

incorporates a North Devon Council project for an Innovation Centre building within the employment land to the south west of the roundabout offering targeted employment opportunities for the region.

The innovation centre will be at the heart of the business park extension proposals, creating new flexible start-up and innovation workspace. It is aimed at providing direct and intensive business support and creating a focal point for new employment that is targeted at businesses within the Smart Specialisation sectors of Advanced Engineering, Marine, Energy and Business Services. These are identified as having high growth potential in this area.

3. Proposal

The scheme is shown in Appendix I as drawing number (B.M.(5074)_1000-P5).

The scheme provides a bridge crossing between Devon County Council owned employment land located to the north and south of the A39.

The scheme incorporates shared path links from the bridge between the B3232 Torrington Road to the south and Fishleigh Road to the north. The scheme provides cycling and walking facilities linking current employment sites to the north and the approved St Johns development site to the south.

A 10m wide landscaping strip has been specified to the south of the A39 with high level planting to screen the access structure and future Park & Change car park area from the A39 corridor. This will complement the existing mature landscaping found to the north of the A39 that will screen the northern access structure from the western A39 approach into the town.

The scheme incorporates access ramps and steps to access the bridge. These structures are required to achieve the required height of bridge crossing over the A39 and to maintain equality of access for all road users.

The bridge span has been specified to accommodate any future widening opportunities for the A39 corridor to dual carriageway standard.

The bridge provides a direct link for non-motorised users across the heavily trafficked A39. The bridge will directly link to the south with future proposals for a Park & Change site serving the west of the town. To the north the site will link to future proposals for a core east to west cycle corridor across the town between major development sites that are identified in the emerging Local Plan.

4. Consultations, Representations and Technical Data

The crossing is referred to within the Draft Joint North Devon & Torridge Local Plan Policy for BAR10 employment sites. The draft Plan has been subject to extensive local public consultation between 2012 and 2015.

Details of the bridge scheme have been subject to public and stakeholder consultation through a planning application. The landscaping element of the scheme has been slightly amended based on advice from North Devon District Council. A decision on the planning application is expected shortly following a formal re-consultation on the revised plans.

The wider strategy for the A361/A39 corridor including this junction on the A39 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 A39/A361 route including key junction improvements like Roundswell and for improving road capacity between Bideford and Barnstaple.

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

5. Financial Considerations

The estimated scheme cost for the scheme is £2.855m. Growth Deal funding of £2m has been secured. £0.25m will be funded through developer contributions, £0.017m in prior years has been funded from Local Transport Plan grant and £0.588m will be provided from the Growth Deal Infrastructure corporate match funding pot. The contract for construction of the scheme will be subject to a design and build tender process.

6. Environmental Impact Considerations

Ecological studies have been undertaken as part of the feasibility design stages and the environmental impact of the bridge scheme has been considered as part of the Planning Application. The bridge scheme forms part of the key infrastructure for the development of the southern employment site. An Environmental Impact Assessment is being prepared for planning submission for the full site.

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.

This may be achieved, for example, through completing a full Equality Impact Needs Assessment/Impact Assessment or other form of options/project management appraisal that achieves the same objective.

In progressing this particular scheme/proposal, an Impact Assessment has been prepared which has been circulated separately to Cabinet Members and also is available on the Council's website at <https://new.devon.gov.uk/impact/>, which Members will need to consider for the purposes of this item.

8. Legal Considerations

Land for the scheme is under the ownership of Devon County Council. The scheme provides a link between adopted highway to the north and south of the A39. The contract for construction of the scheme will be subject to a design and build tender process. There are no other legal considerations at this time.

9. Risk Management Considerations

This proposal has been assessed and all necessary safeguards or actions have been taken to safeguard the Council's position. Key risks have been identified through a quantified risk assessment. Financial consideration of risk management has been incorporated into the scheme estimate.

10. Public Health Impact

Provision of high quality walking and cycling links to employment and retail developments south of the A39 will contribute to improving public health by encouraging sustainable travel to work.

Providing a bridge crossing over the busy A39/A361 strategic corridor will remove conflict between vulnerable road uses and A39 traffic. This will have a significant long term impact on casualty reduction and public health.

The provision of a bridge crossing will reduce congestion at the key Roundswell junction that the introduction of a signalised crossing would introduce. This will contribute towards minimising the impact of future traffic growth on the historic built environment of the town and have a positive benefit for future air quality and green travel within the town.

11. Options/Alternatives

The scheme replaces previously identified proposals for a signalised crossing facility on the A39. A signalised crossing was linked to development of the approved St Johns site to the south east of the roundabout.

A range of different crossing options and bridge alignments have been considered during the feasibility design for this scheme. Within the constraints of land, funding, and with the need to safeguard future options for widening of the A39/A361 corridor, the proposed scheme offers the best compromise to deliver sustainable transport links between land to the north and south of this road.

12. Reason for Recommendation/Conclusion

The scheme for a bridge takes advantage of external funding opportunities to deliver a higher standard of crossing facility that will provide long term benefits for both road safety and traffic congestion. Forward funding the early delivery of key highway infrastructure will increase the viability of developing new employment sites in the town and help to accelerate growth in the local economy.

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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
1. Impact Assessment	20 May 2016	https://new.devon.gov.uk/impact/

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