

MAJOR ROAD NETWORK

Glastonbury and Pilton MRN Scheme

5 March 2020

Please note that the following recommendation is subject to consideration and determination by the Committee before taking effect.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

- (a) The Peninsula Transport Board removes the Glastonbury and Pilton MRN scheme from its list of agreed Major Road Network investment priorities.

1. Background/Introduction

Somerset County Council has requested withdrawal of the Glastonbury and Pilton Major Road Network (MRN) scheme from the list of schemes prioritised by the Peninsula Transport Sub-National Transport Body. Somerset County Council will withdraw the associated expression of interest and strategic outline business case for scheme funding which has been submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT).

2. Main Text/Proposal

At its Board meeting on 1 March 2019, the Peninsula Transport Shadow STB Board approved a shortlist of MRN and Large Local Major (LLM) schemes including “A361 Glastonbury Bypass and Pilton” as one of the shortlisted schemes arising from the development of a ‘regional evidence base’ required by Government.

At its Board meeting on 3 July 2019 the Shadow STB agreed a prioritised list of schemes which was then submitted to the DfT at the end of July 2019, including the Glastonbury/ Pilton scheme as the 5th priority.

In January 2020 DfT requested that MRN scheme promoters confirm local community and political support for schemes. Recent correspondence with Glastonbury Town Council, the Local MP and other residents regarding the scheme has shown that there is now local community and political concern about the notion of bypass solutions for the pinch points on this route. The Council considers that it is highly unlikely that the scheme can realistically progress any further or be deliverable without a high level of community and political support, and rather than leave any uncertainty or ambiguity about the situation it is recommended that the proposals are formally withdrawn. The Council would wish to avoid a situation where any community, individual or business interest is adversely affected due to uncertainty about whether there will be a scheme and what the potential route alignments may be.

3. Options/Alternatives

The other option would be to await feedback from the DfT on the scheme before deciding on a way forward. It is not guaranteed that any feedback will lead to a definitive position, so withdrawal of the scheme by the promoting authority would remove the chance of any ambiguity about the situation.

4. Consultations/Representations/Technical Data

The original scheme prioritisation emerged from a co-development process between the local authority partners across the Peninsula Transport area. It was not considered appropriate to undertake public consultation on the prioritisation criteria which are broadly aligned with Government business case requirements for road schemes. Public consultation is due to take place on each MRN scheme at an appropriate point in the development of the scheme prior to selecting a preferred option.

5. Financial Considerations

There are no financial implications for the Peninsula Transport budget. Responsibility for financing scheme development currently rests with the Local Authorities promoting individual schemes.

6. Environmental Impact Considerations

Somerset County Council has considered the environmental impact in taking its formal decision to withdraw these proposals. No significant impacts were identified.

7. Equality Considerations

Somerset County Council has undertaken an equality impact assessment in taking its formal decision to withdraw these proposals. No significant impacts were identified.

8. Legal Considerations

No legal implications have been identified. No statutory processes with respect to scheme development had commenced.

9. Risk Management Considerations

There are no financial risks to the Peninsula Transport Budget in withdrawing the scheme. Reputational risk is considered to be neutral since there is apparent local opposition to the scheme but also a history of requests to resolve the problems at this location.

10. Public Health Impact

Somerset County Council has considered the health and wellbeing implications in taking its formal decision to withdraw these proposals. No significant impacts were identified.

11. Summary/Conclusions/Reasons for Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board supports Somerset County Council's view as scheme promoter that it is highly unlikely that the scheme can realistically progress any further or be deliverable without a high level of community and political support.