

Version 2020.

Assessment of: North Devon Link Road Full Business Case Submission

Service: Transportation

Head of Service: Dave Black

Version / date of sign off by Head of Service: Version 11 / 29/06/2020

Assessment carried out by (job title): Katie Pearce – Assistant Project Manager

1. Description of project / service / activity / policy under review

The proposed NDLR Strategy includes junction improvements and widening of sections of the A361 between Borner's Bridge Junction at South Molton and Buckleigh Road junction on the A39 north of Bideford. In October 2017 Cabinet recognised that the approved Strategy could not be delivered as a single scheme because of affordability constraints. Certain elements of the Strategy were prioritised to select the Scheme for submission in the OBC.

The Scheme to improve the North Devon Link Road comprises:

- 7.5km of widening to upgrade the performance of the NDLR between South Molton and Barnstaple (16km); and
- Junction improvements to support sites identified for housing and employment opportunities in South Molton, Barnstaple and Bideford.

- Improvements to pedestrian and cycling facilities along the route
- Installation of average speed cameras

2. Reason for change / review

The rationale for the main scheme is outlined in the OBC, which can be found online here: <https://www.devon.gov.uk/ndlr/project-documents>

The OBC was approved by cabinet for submission to the DfT, and subsequently by the DfT to progress to the Full Business Case stage.

Subsequently, further changes have been proposed, in particular the inclusion of advance planting (which was a condition of planning following extensive consultation with statutory bodies) and the addition of two segregated pedestrian crossing facilities at Landkey and Bishop's Tawton in line with local requests and the scheme's commitment to, where possible, provide segregated pedestrian crossings along the length of the scheme.

Details of the options appraisal to arrive at the need for the main scheme can be found in the OBC on the scheme website:

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/ndlr/project-documents>

The scheme has now been developed to the point where a Full Business Case (FBC) can be submitted to the Department for Transport to enable works to begin on site. Subject to approval the Head of Planning, Transportation & Environment will then award the tender contracts to the relevant contractors under a delegated cabinet authority.

3. Aims / objectives, limitations and options going forwards (summary)

At this stage of Scheme Development, the two options going forward are to submit the Full Business Case for approval, or to not submit. To not submit would result in the loss of all DCC funding which has thus far been spent on scheme development and advance works. There is limited scope for any other changes to the scheme due to the late stage in the scheme's development and constraints posed by planning applications and land acquisition.

4. People affected and their diversity profile

The scheme will primarily affect road users in Northern Devon, particularly those that use the North Devon Link Road on a regular basis. It will also impact pedestrians and cyclists who wish to cross the existing road, who may receive benefits from the new pedestrian and cycling facilities. The

movement of traffic away from sideroads (particularly when maintenance works, or emergency lane closures are in place) will also impact some local routes particularly in the South Molton - Barnstaple area.

Given the nature of the scheme, it would have no impact on the diversity profile of affected people. Consideration has been given to non-motorised users, rather than focussing on vehicles alone.

The adequacy of the current proposals was tested through public consultation, the results of which influenced the selection of The Scheme and changes to the detailed design of the scheme.

5. Stakeholders, their interest and potential impacts

Stakeholders include statutory bodies, the public, DCC, and local district, parish and town councils. There are been several consultations during the schemes development to incorporate the views of stakeholders. These are outlined in the various consultation reports on the scheme website:

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/ndlr/project-documents>

In addition, two 'Value Management' workshops were held and stakeholders were also consulted during the 3 planning applications that were submitted as part of the scheme's development.

The main impacts for Stakeholders will be changes to journeys in and around northern Devon, economic impacts and changes to the local landscape and environment.

6. Research used to inform this assessment

The scheme takes into account the government design standards Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) <http://www.standardsforhighways.co.uk/ha/standards/dmrp/index.htm> and DfT 'Transport Analysis Guidance (TAG)'

A Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) was submitted to the DfT in October 2016. In response to the SOBC the DfT responded with a letter to confirm the decision of Ministers to provide the remainder of the funding contribution from the DfT totalling £1.5m for development work on the NDLR up to and including the production of an Outline Business Case (OBC), which was submitted to the DfT on December 2017 and approved in May 2018. DCC has now received a further £4 million to develop a Full Business Case (FBC).

National guidance and procedures have been followed to carefully define and assess a wide range of environmental risks, which guided the scheme development and assessment and included the identification of avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures and any monitoring requirements.

7. Description of consultation process and outcomes

Members of the public and organisations were given the opportunity to express their views on the main scheme via an online consultation and at public exhibitions. The results of the public consultation are provided in the Public Consultation Report available on the scheme website:

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/ndlr/project-documents>

A further public consultation was held regarding the Bishop's Tawton proposals to give members of the public the chance to comment on the underpass proposals. The report on the consultation can be found on the scheme website: <https://www.devon.gov.uk/ndlr/project-documents> Members of the public were also given the opportunity to comment during the planning process for the main scheme and during the Landkey and Bishop's Tawton proposals during the relevant planning applications and CPO's.

For the main scheme, online and exhibition events were chosen to enable the widest practical public demographic to be consulted, especially considering the geographic spread of potential road users. Four exhibitions and a week-long unmanned exhibition were held. Alternative formats of documents and assistance for those who needed this was available at exhibitions or on request through the Customer Service Centre channels.

In addition to the above public consultation, letters were sent to the owners / occupiers of land directly affected by the scheme proposals. Key Stakeholders (especially relevant statutory bodies) were also engaged at earlier stages in the process, including attendance at a 'Value Management' workshop.

Details of the process used to develop the preferred Scheme is provided in the Public Consultation Report and Scheme Selection Report available on the scheme website: <https://new.devon.gov.uk/ndlr/project-documents>

8. Equality analysis

Giving Due Regard to Equality and Human Rights

The local authority must consider how people will be affected by the service, policy or practice. In so doing we must give due regard to the need to: eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Where relevant, we must take into account the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, sexual orientation, race, and religion and belief. This means considering how people with different needs get the different services they require and are not disadvantaged, and facilities are available to them on an equal basis in order to meet their needs; advancing equality of opportunity by recognising the disadvantages to which protected groups are subject and considering how they can be overcome.

We also need to ensure that human rights are protected. In particular, that people have:

- A reasonable level of choice in where and how they live their life and interact with others (this is an aspect of the human right to 'private and family life').
- An appropriate level of care which results in dignity and respect (the protection to a private and family life, protection from torture and the freedom of thought, belief and religion within the Human Rights Act and elimination of discrimination and the promotion of good relations under the Equality Act 2010).
- A right to life (ensuring that nothing we do results in unlawful or unnecessary/avoidable death).
- The Equality Act 2010 and other relevant legislation does not prevent the Council from taking difficult decisions which result in service reductions or closures for example, it does however require the Council to ensure that such decisions are:
 - Informed and properly considered with a rigorous, conscious approach and open mind, taking due regard of the effects on the protected characteristics and the general duty to eliminate discrimination, advance equality and foster good relations.
 - Proportionate (negative impacts are proportionate to the aims of the policy decision)
 - Fair
 - Necessary
 - Reasonable, and
 - Those affected have been adequately consulted.

Characteristics	Potential or actual issues for this group. [Please refer to the Diversity Guide and See RED]	In what way have you: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eliminated or reduced the potential for direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or disadvantage, where necessary. • advanced equality (to meet needs/ensure access, encourage participation, make adjustments for disabled people, 'close gaps'), if possible. • fostered good relations between groups (tackled prejudice and promoted understanding), if relevant? <p>Are there any lawful, reasonable and proportionate, unavoidable negative consequences?</p> <p>Are you complying with the DCC Equality Policy?</p>
All residents (include generic equality provisions):	<p>The entire scheme would have adverse impacts on travellers during the construction phase, in particular due to the increase in construction vehicles, traffic management and diversion routes. Some road closures may be required.</p> <p>At Bishop's Tawton particularly, some land owners may see a reduction in their land value due to the increased size and proximity of the road. It is anticipated that any change in value will be small due to the nature of the works and the aspiration to introduce high quality planting to screen properties from the road.</p> <p>Crossing the live carriageway will become more difficult under the proposals due to an increase in road width along the length of the scheme, though the improvements at Landkey and Bishop's Tawton will provide a segregated route, removing the need to cross the live carriageway entirely at these</p>	<p>An online consultation and public exhibitions were chosen to allow the full public demographic to be consulted for the main scheme. All travellers will benefit from improved journey times, perceived reliability, reduced accident severity and Wider Economic Impacts as a result of improved connectivity. Improved alignment, better separation and reduced accidents would reduce driver stress.</p> <p>A strategic aim of the scheme is to improve the economy of northern Devon. The benefits of a more prosperous economy will be felt by all groups. With regards to deprivation and lack of opportunities the area significantly lags behind the rest of the country in terms of Social Mobility. The scheme would have a positive impact on social mobility.</p> <p>The proposed improvements to some of the junctions would be beneficial to the safe movement of all users.</p> <p>The impact of the proposed segregated crossings would be improved access for local residents, who would no longer have to cross a live carriageway.</p>

<p>Characteristics</p>	<p>Potential or actual issues for this group.</p> <p>[Please refer to the Diversity Guide and See RED]</p>	<p>In what way have you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eliminated or reduced the potential for direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or disadvantage, where necessary. • advanced equality (to meet needs/ensure access, encourage participation, make adjustments for disabled people, 'close gaps'), if possible. • fostered good relations between groups (tackled prejudice and promoted understanding), if relevant? <p>Are there any lawful, reasonable and proportionate, unavoidable negative consequences?</p> <p>Are you complying with the DCC Equality Policy?</p>
	<p>locations.</p>	

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Age:	Younger and older age groups who are less likely to drive a car could be more impacted by the severance caused by the increased size of the road along the length of the scheme where segregated crossings have not been proposed.	55% of the public consultation respondents were over 55 which indicates a good level of engagement with this group. At the Bishop's Tawton consultation, a number of responses were provided to an informal consultation held by the local school, which provided information on the behaviour of children locally. Younger and older age groups who are less likely to drive a car will feel a lesser benefit from the road improvement aspects of the main scheme, though they may feel some benefit from improved NMU facilities such as pedestrian crossing facilities. At the additional improvements proposed at Landkey and Bishop's Tawton younger and older residents may feel the benefit of the segregated crossings more highly, as they are more likely to travel on foot. This is particularly true at Bishop's Tawton, where surveys show that a high proportion of pedestrians currently crossing the roundabout at grade are children.
Disability (incl. sensory,	Disabled people who are less likely to drive a car	5% of consultation respondents considered themselves to have

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mobility, mental health, learning disability, neurodiversity, long term ill health) and carers of disabled people:	could face increased severance from road widening. Consultation responses highlighted concerns of parents caring for disabled children in houses near to the proposed scheme, who felt that their children's wellbeing may be disproportionately compromised by an increase in local traffic (due to increases in noise and a reduction in air quality).	a disability. In addition, a number of respondents (who will not be captured in the above 5%) raised concerns on behalf of others with a disability (for example children). Disabled people who are less likely to drive a car will feel a lesser benefit from the scheme, though they may feel some benefit from improved NMU facilities, including those proposed at Landkey and Bishop's Tawton. Air quality and noise assessments have been undertaken and show that the effect of the scheme, once built, will be neutral in the case of air quality and negligible to minor in the case of noise.
Culture and ethnicity: nationality/national origin, skin colour, religion and belief:	Neutral	Neutral
Sex, gender and gender identity (including men, women, non-binary and	Neutral	Neutral

Characteristics	Potential or actual issues for this group. [Please refer to the Diversity Guide and See RED]	In what way have you: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> eliminated or reduced the potential for direct or indirect discrimination, harassment or disadvantage, where necessary. advanced equality (to meet needs/ensure access, encourage participation, make adjustments for disabled people, 'close gaps'), if possible. fostered good relations between groups (tackled prejudice and promoted understanding), if relevant? <p>Are there any lawful, reasonable and proportionate, unavoidable negative consequences?</p> <p>Are you complying with the DCC Equality Policy?</p>
transgender people), and pregnancy and maternity (including women's right to breastfeed).		
Sexual orientation and marriage/civil partnership:	Neutral	Neutral
Other relevant socio-economic factors such as family size/single people/lone parents, income/deprivation, housing, education and skills, literacy, sub-cultures, 'digital exclusion', access to transport options, rural/urban.	Northern Devon has a higher than average level of low-income residents who may be less likely to drive.	<p>Consultation materials were presented using language that was non-technical, with diagrams used to demonstrate more complex technical information, to improve the accessibility of the material to all education levels.</p> <p>Due to proposed NMU facilities that remove the need to cross the live carriageway, the impact on low income residents less likely to own a car across the entire scheme is considered neutral. In the instances of Bishop's Tawton and Landkey the impact of including the additional segregated crossings will be a net positive benefit.</p> <p>The strategic aim of enhancing the local economy in northern Devon could result in a reduction of unemployed and low-</p>

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		income residents as well-paid job opportunities become more available. The 'trickle down' effect of an improved economy could also have a positive impact on other socio-economic factors.

9. Human rights considerations:

No impact.

10. Supporting independence, wellbeing and resilience. Give consideration to the groups listed above and how they may have different needs:

In what way can you support and create opportunities for people and communities (of place and interest) to be independent, empowered and resourceful?

As outlined above, the Scheme improves connectivity for users of both cars and pedestrian and cycling facilities. Improving travel options allows people to access opportunities.

In what way can you help people to be safe, protected from harm, and with good health and wellbeing?

The improvement of the carriageway is expected to reduce the number and severity of accidents on the route, whilst the improvement of pedestrian and cycling facilities provides an opportunity for active travel which is known to have positive health benefits.

In what way can you help people to be connected, and involved in community activities?

As outlined above, the Scheme improves connectivity for users of both cars and pedestrian and cycling facilities. Improving travel options allows people to access community activities.

11. Environmental analysis

An impact assessment should give due regard to the following activities in order to ensure we meet a range of environmental legal duties. The policy or practice does not require the identification of environmental impacts using this Impact Assessment process because it is subject to (please mark X in the relevant box below and proceed to the 4c, otherwise complete the environmental analysis table):

Devon County Council's Environmental Review Process	X
Planning Permission	X
Environmental Impact Assessment	X
Strategic Environmental Assessment	

	Describe any actual or potential negative consequences. (Consider how to mitigate against these).	Describe any actual or potential neutral or positive outcomes. (Consider how to improve as far as possible).
Reduce, reuse, recycle and compost:		
Conserve and enhance wildlife:		
Safeguard the distinctive characteristics, features and special qualities of Devon's landscape:		
Conserve and enhance Devon's cultural and historic heritage:		
Minimise greenhouse gas emissions:		
Minimise pollution (including air, land, water, light and noise):		
Contribute to reducing water consumption:		
Ensure resilience to the future effects of climate change (warmer, wetter winters; drier, hotter summers; more intense storms; and rising sea level):		
Other (please state below):		

12. Economic analysis

	Describe any actual or potential negative consequences. (Consider how to mitigate against these).	Describe any actual or potential neutral or positive outcomes. (Consider how to improve as far as possible).
Impact on knowledge and skills:	No specific impact identified at this stage	<p>The scheme would enhance the economic prosperity and competitiveness of northern Devon, both nationally and in line with other areas of Devon and support housing and employment development opportunities in northern Devon by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Increasing overtaking opportunities from 10% to 50%, reducing journey times, reducing the potential for accidents and increasing resilience •Increasing capacity, reducing congestion and reducing the potential for accidents. The effect of investment aims to reduce peak hour journey times by between 10% and 20% by 2037 compared to a non-intervention scenario. •Opening up key areas for development and accelerate growth in the Local Plan.
Impact on employment levels:	No specific impact identified at this stage	
Impact on local business:	There is the possibility that improving transport connections between northern Devon and the rest of the UK could make commuting to areas outside of northern Devon more attractive to residents in the local area.	

13. Describe and linkages or conflicts between social, environmental and economic impacts (Combined Impacts):

The provision of improved transport amenities offers opportunities for social, environmental and economic betterment in the area by improving connectivity for both business and leisure purposes across a range of modes. No significant conflicts have been identified.

For further information please refer to the Technical Appraisal Report, Environmental Assessment Report and Outline Business Case available on the scheme website: <https://new.devon.gov.uk/ndlr/project-documents>.

14. How will the economic, social and environmental well-being of the relevant area be improved through what is being proposed? And how, in conducting the process of procurement, might that improvement be secured?

The primary objectives of the scheme will all have positive effects on the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area. In preparing the specific scheme designs, the standard County Council procurement rules will be followed.

15. How will impacts and actions be monitored?

A Monitoring, Evaluation & Benefits Realisation plan will be submitted as part of the Full Business Case.

Reduced journey times as a result of increased speed will be monitored through traffic monitoring data. Reduction in peak hour journey times will be considered.

Post construction surveys would be undertaken to measure if the perception of businesses and tourists using the NDLR as a gateway to northern Devon has improved.

Future accident rates and their severity would be measured and compared against existing data to demonstrate that the current accident rates have been reduced.

Accident rates and their severity would be measured and compared against the baseline and information from other similar schemes.

The number of times diversion routes are required and the number of road closures due to maintenance or incidents will be recorded and monitored.

Relevant impacts during the construction period, such as dust emissions, noise impacts and potential impacts on water quality will be monitored by the appointed contractor, and overseen by regulatory agencies, with remedial measures deployed as necessary.

A programme of post construction monitoring and mitigation will form part of the detailed scheme proposals and will be a requirement of the formal planning process.

Housing supply and delivery will be monitored against the Local Plan allocation.

Economic prosperity will be monitored by looking at wages and GVA to determine whether over time they become more in line with the average in the South West and national average figures compared to 2015 levels.