

Decision maker:	Cabinet Member Infrastructure and Transport
Decision date:	9 October 2020
Title of report:	Hereford Transport & South Wye Packages review
Report by:	Head of Transport and Access Services

Classification

Open

Decision type

Non-key

Wards affected

(All Wards); with particular reference to Stoney Street, Wormside, Belmont Rural, Credenhill, Kings Acre, Queenswood, Holmer and Whitecross

Purpose

This report seeks Cabinet member approval to confirm an extension to the programme for the Hereford transport review for completion to the end of September 2020, and to increase the budget for works to cover this extended period which includes provision for technical support to the subsequent decision making process.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) The review programme for the Hereford Transport and South Wye Transport Package be extended to the end of September 2020.**
- (b) The budget for completing the review of the Hereford Transport and South Wye Transport Package and providing technical support to the subsequent decision making process be increased by £45.5k: and**
- (c) the Acting Assistant Director for Highways and Transport be authorised to take all operational decisions to implement recommendations (a) and (b).**

Alternative options

1. Not to allocate additional budget required to complete the review of the transport packages and wider transport strategy. This is not recommended as it will be contrary to the decision of 22 October 2019 taken by the Cabinet member to progress a review and would not enable an assessment of whether the major road schemes and wider strategy are consistent with emerging policies regarding climate change. The review aims to identify if there are any viable alternative transport options for addressing the city's current and future transport issues to ensure the council does not risk adopting a sub-optimal future strategy.

Key considerations

2. The Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Transport determined to pause and review the new road elements of Hereford and South Wye Transport packages (HTP and SWTP) in his decision of 22 October 2019 so that they could be reviewed to determine next steps.
3. The review is essential to ensure that the Council's decision making is fully informed by the latest information and best practice. We need to ensure any major transport scheme has a positive impact on the county to address travel issues, such as congestion and air quality, as these schemes have a permanent impact upon the environment which last for generations to come.
4. A further decision was taken by the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Transport on 24 January 2020 to confirm the scope, outline programme and timescale for undertaking a review of the Hereford and South Wye Transport packages following his decision made 22 October 2019. The approach and scope of the review was developed with professional transport planning expertise and informed by discussion with the Cabinet member and the wider Cabinet to ensure a robust approach to the review that captured the main aspirations of the administration/executive.
5. The decision report outlined that the review would comprise of 3 key elements:
 - Element 1: Peer Assessment of the HTP and SWTP
 - Element 2: Transport strategy assessment and consideration of alternative options
 - Element 3: Public and stakeholder engagement and consultation

It was anticipated that the review would be completed by 31 July 2020 at which stage Cabinet would consider the results and determine next steps and measures to be taken forward to address the city's transport problems.

6. The Covid 19 pandemic meant that the original approach to securing input from the stakeholder reference panel (SRP) through a face to face interactive workshop was not possible and a revised approach needed to be developed to ensure that the strategy development was properly informed by stakeholders. The revised approach required more work in terms of preparing written information for SRP members than would have been the case in preparing for a face to face session. It also required further time to allow SRP members to review written information and provide written feedback and this was further supported with a number of online briefings and Q&A sessions. Whilst these changes were necessitated by the restrictions resulting from Covid it is considered that the additional work required and time made available to engage with stakeholders has added value to the review. This approach, including providing the SRP with additional time to provide their written response required an extension to the overall programme at the two points of SRP input. This resulted in a three week extension to the programme with an associated cost for this extension.

7. At the end of the assessment of the individual options, the Cabinet took the opportunity to review the findings of the option assessment and consider which options should be taken forward in packages for further assessment. Two briefing sessions were held with Cabinet (25 June and 14 July 2020) to discuss and agree options which would be taken forward or discarded and the combination of options within packages which would be assessed in the final stages of the review.
8. In the review of options to be taken forward for assessment of packages a total of six packages were agreed with Cabinet:
 - Package A (active travel)
 - Package A+B (A+Bus improvements)
 - Package A+B+C (A+B+ Demand management)
 - Package A+C+D (A+C+ Western bypass)
 - Package A+C+E (A+C+Eastern Link, Rotherwas to Ledbury Road)
 - Package A+C+F (A+C+Partial eastern link, Rotherwas to Hampton Park Road)
9. The original commission for the strategy assessment element allowed for taking forward four packages for assessment. The additional two packages and period for briefing and consideration by Cabinet of the packages to take forward will result in a four week extension to the programme, and associated costs for the extension and additional packages.
10. Given the significance of the strategy assessment, and in line with the principle of seeking a peer review of the previous work undertaken on the HTP and SWTP, Cabinet has requested that the support of an independent consultant is engaged as a critical friend to consider the findings of this current work and provide feedback to the Cabinet member. This will be undertaken in parallel with the latter part of the strategy assessment work. This element of works was not included in the original scope of the transport strategy assessment and the estimated additional cost of this activity is included in the resources section of this report.
11. Following the completion of the transport strategy assessment reporting, the Cabinet and General Scrutiny Committee will need to consider the findings of the assessment and consider the next steps. It is anticipated that technical input for these will be required, to support briefings and the consideration of the detailed findings of the assessment. This technical input is additional to the scope of the review itself and hence officers have sought to identify the costs of ongoing technical advice and ensure that these are also included in the additional budget allocation set out in this report. The estimated costs of the ongoing technical support are included in the resources section of this report.

Community impact

12. The refreshed transport strategy for Hereford will recommend how we should invest in the city's transport system to enable delivery of the environmental, economic and social outcomes we seek, as set out in the Corporate Plan. These outcomes will directly affect all communities in Hereford and indirectly affecting neighbouring communities.
13. The objectives that have been employed in the appraisal framework which will identify the preferred option will be selected to reflect the aims set out in our Corporate Plan and other key policy documents.

.Equality duty

14. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

15. Equality impacts will inform the development. An Equality Impact Assessment will be included when the preferred options are identified and will be included in the strategy review.

Resource implications

16. The 24 January 2020 Cabinet Member Infrastructure and Transport decision outlined an overall budget for the Hereford Transport Review of £451,000 to deliver all 3 elements.
17. A budget of £91,000 was outlined for element 1, the independent peer review of the HTP and SWTP. This has been funded from the Local Transport Plan and HTP capital budgets as set out in the decision report.
18. Element 2 and 3 of the transport strategy review and supporting consultation and engagement would be delivered within a budget of £360,000. This cost has been funded from financial resilience reserves which funds this type of transformational activity.
19. This decision report is requesting an increase in budget allocated to deliver the work associated with elements 2 and 3. Additional activities and their associated costs are outlined in the table in paragraph 20 and will be funded from the core strategy review budget which includes for development of a transport evidence base.
20. The table below outlines additional activities and associated costs.

Revenue cost of project	2020/21	Future Years	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000
<i>Current Strategy Assessment Commission Value (BBLP order plus transport seminar third party costs)</i>	332	0	332
<i>Additional Works</i>			
<i>Strategy assessment main works additional costs</i>	40.5	0	40.5
<i>Critical friend review and technical support to cabinet member</i>	10	0	10
<i>Additional technical support post completion</i>	23	0	23
Total Proposed Revised Commission Value	405.5	0	405.5

<i>Current Budget for Elements 2 & 3</i>	360	0	360
Further budget required	45.5	0	45.5

Funding streams	2020/21	Future Years	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000
<i>Core strategy review - including development of transport evidence base</i>	45.5	0	45.5
TOTAL	45.5	0	45.5

21. The additional works associated with the main strategy assessment works will be undertaken under a variation to the existing order for the assessment placed with BBLP under the Public Realm Services Contract.
22. In order to secure the critical friend input from an independent transport consultant in the timescale required for completion of the review, it is proposed to engage Mott MacDonald. They undertook the peer assessment work under element 1 of the review, and were selected following an open competitive tender process using the Council's online tender portal. This additional input is subject to an exemption to the Council's Contract Procedure Rules of which this has been formally agreed by Legal, Commercial and the Director of Economy and Place.. As the previous contract with Mott MacDonald has expired a new contract on the same terms is being offered with support provided from Legal.

Legal implications

23. This is an executive function which is a non-key decision which will be taken by a Cabinet member.
24. The extension of the programme of the review on both the Hereford and South Wye Transport packages and the additional cost, does not result in the Council incurring expenditure which is significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function concerned. A threshold of £500,000 is regarded as significant.
25. This report seeks Cabinet member approval to extend the programme to the additional costs associated with the review following the decision on the scope, budget and timescale for the review of both schemes made by the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Transport on 24 January 2020.
26. As indicated in paragraph 22 new contractual arrangements are being agreed with Mott MacDonald for the additional work with a waiver from the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

Climate and ecological impact

27. Transport and transport infrastructure are currently significant contributors to carbon emissions in both embodied and operational carbon. Both new and existing infrastructure

has the potential to impact the ecological environment in the area surrounding that infrastructure.

28. The review of the Hereford and South Wye Transport packages has, through the transport strategy assessment, provided an opportunity to review the approach to transport in light of the declared climate emergency. The objectives for the review have specifically included climate emergency in addition to the standard WebTag objectives around environment. In this specific carbon calculations have been undertaken on the options considered as well as other qualitative assessments against other climate related outcomes.
29. This decision relates to an extension of the original programme that has allowed for additional time for input from the Stakeholder Reference Panel (SRP) and Cabinet on the assessment work, in particular the outcome of the individual option appraisal. In the feedback from the SRP and Cabinet a review of how the performance of the options against the climate options has been reviewed and as a result in the assessment of packages of options an additional outcome relating to embodied carbon has been included. This will ensure that this aspect of carbon emissions is assessed in addition to the operational carbon that has been assessed to date in the individual option assessment.

Risk management

30. Risks associated with the extension of the review as outlined in this decision and their mitigation have been outlined in the table below:

Risk	Mitigation
Programme There is a risk that in extending the programme for the review, the ability to progress other projects both internal and external to the council may be impacted.	The review being able to provide robust conclusions, including having taken due account of inputs from stakeholders, is key for moving forward with a transport strategy. On this basis it is considered that the additional time taken to date to achieve this is appropriate. To mitigate the impact, stakeholders will be informed of the anticipated revision programme.
Procurement Challenge There is a risk of a procurement challenge being received to the appointing of Mott MacDonald.	A waiver from the Council's Contract Procedure Rules has been drafted to outline the reasons for not re-tendering the critical friend review. This document has been formally agreed with all responsible officers to enable new contractual arrangements to be made.

Consultees

31. Following the Cabinet member decision taken 24 January 2020, residents, landowners and stakeholders included on the Council's database of those potentially affected by that decision or who have previously been identified in having an interest or asked to be kept updated regarding the schemes have been kept informed. This includes key funding bodies of DfT, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Homes England, Highways England, Midlands Connect and the Marches LEP.

32. In progressing the review, the Council has engaged in further public consultation which will enable local stakeholders, ward and parish councils, interest groups and statutory bodies to comment on transport issues and solutions. This has comprised a public engagement exercise in March and April 2020 using the commonplace online platform, together with two input from members and the Stakeholder Reference Panel. This consultation feedback has informed the development of the work to date and will inform final recommendations to assist the Cabinet member in considering next steps.
33. Further correspondence to inform of the revised completion date of the review to the end of September 2020, as outlined in this decision report, has been sent to the residents, landowners and stakeholders as stated above in paragraph 31.

Appendices

None

Background papers

None