Herefordshire Council

AGENDA

Cabinet

Date: **Thursday 13 November 2014**

Time: **2.00 pm**

Place: **The Shire Hall, St Peters Square, Hereford, HR1 2HX**

Notes: Please note the **time, date** and **venue** of the meeting.

For any further information please contact:

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Agenda for the Meeting of the Cabinet

Chairman	**Councillor AW Johnson**
	Councillor H Bramer
	Councillor JW Millar
	Councillor PM Morgan
	Councillor GJ Powell
	Councillor PD Price
	Councillor P Rone

AGENDA

Pages

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

Notice has been served in accordance with Part 3, Section 9 (Publicity in connection with key decisions) of The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

Item No	Title	Portfolio Responsibility	Scrutiny Committee	28 Day Notice Given
5	Strategic Plan for Education	Young People and Children's Wellbeing	General Overview and Scrutiny	Yes
6	Council acquisition of the Three Elms Trading Estate, Hereford. HR4 9PU	Contracts and Assets	General Overview and Scrutiny	Yes
7	South Wye Transport Package	Transport and Roads	General Overview and Scrutiny	Yes
9	Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2015/16 Effect on Parish Precepts	Corporate Strategy and Finance	General Overview and Scrutiny	Yes
10	Capital support for federation of Aylestone Business and Enterprise College (ABEC) and Broadlands Primary School and Children's Centre	Young People and Children's Wellbeing	General Overview and Scrutiny	No – General Exception
11	Capital Programme	Corporate Strategy and Finance	General Overview and Scrutiny	Yes

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive any declarations of interest by Members in respect of items on the Agenda.

3. MINUTES 7 - 10

To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2014.

4. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2014/15: QUARTER 2 11 - 22

To invite Cabinet Members to consider performance for the second quarter of 2014/15 following the Quarterly Performance Review held on 20 October 2014.

5. STRATEGIC PLAN FOR EDUCATION 23 - 46

To approve the Strategic Plan for Education in Herefordshire.

6. COUNCIL ACQUISITION OF THE THREE ELMS TRADING ESTATE, HEREFORD. HR4 9PU 47 - 54

To approve the council's purchase of the Three Elms Trading Estate from the Homes and Communities Agency at market value, estimated to be in the region of £1.75 to £1.85m, which will enable the council to release value from its adjoining land.

7. SOUTH WYE TRANSPORT PACKAGE 55 - 310

To consider consultation responses and confirm a preferred package for a new link road from the A49 to the A465.

8. LOCAL ACCOUNT 2013/14 311 - 338

To approve publication of the Local Account of Adult Social Care and Support 2013/14.

9. LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2015-2016 EFFECT ON PARISH PRECEPTS 339 - 344

This report explains the recommended approach to the funding changes as a result of the abolition of the council tax benefit scheme and the introduction of the council tax reduction scheme and the recommended funding allocation to parish councils.

10. CAPITAL SUPPORT FOR FEDERATION OF AYLESTONE BUSINESS AND ENTERPRISE COLLEGE (ABEC) AND BROADLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL AND CHILDREN'S CENTRE. 345 - 358

To approve a capital scheme to support the federation of Aylestone Business and Enterprise College and Broadlands Primary school including co-location onto one site thus releasing a council asset for future disposal, avoiding long term maintenance costs and supporting a better use of school revenue funding. To also recommend to Council that provision be made in the capital programme to support this scheme.

11. PROPOSED CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2015/16 TO 2017/18 359 - 366

To agree proposals for additions to the capital investment programme for 2015/16 to 2017/18 inclusive for recommendation to Council on 12 December 2014.

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HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

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HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of Cabinet held at The Hall, Shire Hall, St Peters Square, Hereford, HR1 2HX on Thursday 9 October 2014 at 2.00 pm

Present: **Councillor AW Johnson (Chairman)**
Councillor PM Morgan (Vice Chairman)

Councillors: H Bramer, JW Millar, PM Morgan, GJ Powell, PD Price and P Rone

In attendance: **Councillors CN Attwood, WLS Bowen, J Hardwick, TM James, JG Jarvis, JLV Kenyon, FM Norman, AJW Powers**

Officers: **Jo Davidson, Geoff Hughes, David McCallum, Alistair Neill and Bill Norman, Peter Robinson, Robert Vickers**

29. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillors: RJ Phillips, JA Hyde, RI Matthews

30. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

31. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

32. BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - AUGUST 2014

Cabinet received a report setting out the forecast outturn position for 2014/2015 based on financial information as at the end of August 2014.

The Chief Financial Officer explained that the council is forecast to break even this year. The councils External Auditors have given all areas of financial performance a green rating, an improvement on last year's amber and red ratings.

Revenue contingency budget has been vired to allow extra grass cutting and to contribute to the cost of temporary buildings for Colwall Church of England Primary School.

Capital spending is forecast to be £8.8m higher than budgeted. This is due to being successful in a number of grant applications and the re-profiling of expenditure and will not be a cost to the council.

It was reported the latest forecasts predict overspends of £972k in Adults and Wellbeing, and £484k in Children's Wellbeing with an underspend of £225k in Economy, Communities and Corporate.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing gave Cabinet details of the current and future changes being put into place in Adults and Wellbeing. It was confirmed the changes

implemented so far this year mean there is confidence of being in an ongoing position of stability.

In answer to a members question about possible winter pressures the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing gave details of changes being put into place in the system, which if achieve their aims, should mitigate any winter pressures.

The Chief Executive confirmed the creation of a transformation board bringing together the Wye Valley NHS Trust, 2gether, the Clinical Commissioning Group and Herefordshire Council.

The Cabinet Member for Young People and Children's Wellbeing advised the savings targets for Children's Wellbeing have so far been 70% achieved and plans are on target with every effort being made to break even by the end of the year.

The main issues facing the directorate have been a 12% increase in children in care and staffing costs in safeguarding services.

The Director of Children's Wellbeing went onto confirm an increase in social workers has reduced the caseloads of individual staff and there has been a reduction in the turnover of permanent staff. The current percentage of agency staff at management level is 20% and at front line level 46%. There is a movement of newly qualified social workers into posts which will release some agency staff.

In answer to a members question it was confirmed the cost of using agency staff is an additional £1m. There are plans in place to develop in house social workers, however the team will always require experienced staff which are more difficult to recruit and there is a need to encourage experienced people into the county. Targets are in place to recruit permanent staff and these are currently being met.

Following issues raised by members in attendance concerning next years budget the Chief Financial Officer confirmed this will be worked on over the coming months, with the budget based on anticipated future demands, and future savings being made in a controlled situation, whilst remaining mindful of unforeseen changes and risks.

Assurance was given by the Chief Financial Officer that funding had been identified for the £2m estimated cost of work required at Colwall Church of England Primary School.

Resolved

THAT:

(a) Cabinet notes the council is projected to spend within its budget for this financial year;

(b) Cabinet notes the capital and treasury projected outturns; and

(c) Cabinet agrees the virement of 2014/15 revenue and capital contingency budgets to meet in year pressures within Directorates

33. HEREFORDSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD ANNUAL REPORT AND BUSINESS PLAN

The Independent Chair of Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB), David McCallum, presented members with the annual report for 2013/2014 and the board's business plan for 2014/2015.

It was confirmed the report had been delayed pending the outcome of the Ofsted report of Children's Services and the Ofsted Review of the Safeguarding Children Board.

The key points of the report were highlighted to members along with how these feed into the business plan. It was concluded the board had made improvements in the last 2 – 3 years but there is still a long way to go and ongoing support is needed.

Concerning Appendix 2 of the annual report Mr McCallum confirmed attendance protocol is in place and this has been followed in the past year. He confirmed it is regrettable the Ministry of Defence attendance level was low at strategic board and steering group meetings and this matter would need to be revisited. Concerning lay members of the board it was confirmed there have been real benefits to having a public view bought to their discussions.

The chair of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) confirmed the committee had seen the report at its last meeting, and following the publication of the Jay Report, a specific HOSC meeting will take place to look at the safeguarding issues in Development Area 3 of the action plan.

Concerning the issue of child sexual exploitation, Mr McCallum confirmed the board recognise the issues of vulnerable children and identifying perpetrators, and confirmed there is little doubt that these issues are in Herefordshire. It was added that children who can appear 'streetwise' are also at risk of being vulnerable and exploited. He confirmed previous workshops on this subject have been well attended by third parties and other organisations but the board cannot be complacent and have in development a child sexual exploitation strategy and action plan.

Concerning working with schools, Mr McCallum advised members an education forum takes place once each term with representatives from schools and the board. Approximately 80 – 100 representatives from schools attend; usually the schools dedicated safeguarding leads. It was confirmed the board are looking at how to communicate with schools to encourage more to engage with their work.

Resolved:

THAT CABINET:

(a) Notes the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements for children and young people in Herefordshire as assessed by the HSCB;

(b) Acknowledges the priorities of HSCB in relation to specific safeguarding issues in Herefordshire;

(c) Considers how Herefordshire Council is contributing to service improvement through commissioning within Herefordshire with regard to these safeguarding issues; and

(d) Makes any comments to the board about its future work programme.

34. OUTCOME OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE PEER CHALLENGE AND ACTION PLAN

Members were presented with the outcome of the Adult Social Care Peer Challenge, which took place in June 2014, and the resulting action plan from the areas of improvement identified.

Members were advised of the three areas of scope of the review and the three main outcomes that were identified.

- The clear vision of the leadership with staff, officers and members all engaged.
- Stronger links with service users are needed.
- Areas for further focus were identified.

The Assistant Director, Homes and Community Services, confirmed to members the details from the outcome of the Peer Challenge had now been distilled to create an action plan for each of the issues identified.

It was confirmed there is a monitoring process in place, and updates will be reported through governance structures.

In order to clarify the ‘’clawed back’’ amount of £929k identified in the report the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing confirmed this was a large amount of money which was identified in accounts as unspent as a result of end of year reconciliation work. There are two aims in place to tackle the issue of unspent direct payments. Firstly to work with customers to make sure they understand what they can spend and secondly to make sure the correct amount is allocated.

In answer to a query about point 30 of the action plan the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing clarified that Frameworki is a nationally used IT programme and extra software has been developed so that it can be used to produce reports needed as a result of the Care Act.

Resolved:

THAT:

(a) Note the outcome of the review attached at Appendix 1;
(b) Approve the action plan attached as Appendix 2 as the response to the areas for improvement identified;
(c) Make recommendations for any further actions to be added to the action plans

The meeting ended at 3.58 pm **CHAIRMAN**

Herefordshire Council

MEETING:	**CABINET**
MEETING DATE:	**13 NOVEMBER 2014**
TITLE OF REPORT:	**CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2014/15: QUARTER 2**
REPORT BY:	**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, PLACE BASED COMMISSIONING**

Classification

Open

Key Decision

This is not a key decision.

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To invite Cabinet Members to consider performance for the second quarter of 2014/15 following the Quarterly Performance Review held on 20 October 2014.

Recommendation(s)

THAT:

(a) Performance for the second quarter be considered.

Alternative Options

1 Cabinet may: choose to review performance more or less frequently than quarterly; or request alternative actions to address any identified areas of under-performance, including referral to the relevant scrutiny committee.

Reasons for Recommendations

2 To provide assurance that progress is being made towards achievement of the agreed outcomes and service delivery targets, and that the reasons for important areas of actual or potential under-performance are understood and are being addressed to the Cabinet's satisfaction.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Richard Ball, Assistant Director Place Based Community on Tel (01432) 260965

Key Considerations

3 Council approved the Corporate Plan 2013-15 in November 2012, framed around the key priorities of: enabling residents to be independent and lead fulfilling lives and creating and maintaining a successful economy. The delivery plan for 2014/15 was approved by Cabinet in April 2014.

4 Cabinet receive quarterly in-year reviews of performance, followed by an annual report in June.

5 Formal Quarterly Performance Reviews have been established where directorates present and are challenged on their performance. Two such challenge sessions have now taken place; the most recent having taken place on 20 October 2014. The reports and data that were considered at this session forms the basis of this report.

6 Progress is measured through a number of performance measures. These have been selected because they demonstrate progress towards achievement of the council's priorities and also provide an overview of the council's performance from a resident's perspective. Where monitoring information is available only on an annual basis, these measures will be reported at the point that it becomes available.

7 As regards the council's forecast outturn for the year, based on up until the end of August, a small underspend is predicted across the council.

Adults and Wellbeing

Impact that has been made during the last quarter

8 Progress continues towards the implementation of the Care Act for April 2015. Work streams have been initiated to ensure we meet the required standards for Information, Advice and Guidance and the Customer Journey. More detailed guidance is due to be issued by the Department of Health in October; following this release, required changes should become clearer.

9 An action plan has been developed and signed off by Cabinet in September, which will help the directorate respond to the recommendations of the Peer Review. As part of this we have now appointed a Personalisation Lead, part of the original peer review team, who is currently revising our direct payments policy.

10 During the last quarter, we have finalised the remaining elements of the Next Stage Integration programme, following the externalisation of learning disabilities day opportunities to Brandon Trust, and the implementation of Reablement, focussing on short term intense interventions of no more than 6 weeks with clients to maximise independence

11 Public Health have received Cabinet Member approval for the re-tendering of the Sexual Health, Drug and Alcohol, Health Checks and Stop Smoking services and specifications are being developed to commence the tendering process. Provider engagement events were delivered during September at the Kindle Centre to support the re-tendering.

12 Cabinet Member approval has been given for the Council sign up to the Local Government Declaration on Tobacco Control. Plans are also being developed for the implementation of a peer led programme in schools for reducing and preventing smoking amongst school children, particularly focusing on year 8 pupils.

13 The Healthy Start Vitamin programme is now ready to be implemented and the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment has commenced which now falls under local authority responsibility to undertake.

What is going well?

14 There have been reductions in the last quarter in the number of delayed transfers of care for social care reasons; this is despite rises in the number of delays attributed to health reasons. As part of the Better Care Fund, the Integrated Urgent Care Service (IUCS) pathway has been developed; this is having a soft launch during October and this will help to reduce the numbers of admissions to hospital and reduce the numbers of delayed discharges from hospital. The Rapid Access to Assessment and Care (RAAC) bed based provision service specification has been developed and procurement has begun. These beds offer both step up placements, with the goal of reducing admissions to hospital, and step down provision, helping people out of hospital quicker and reducing the number of cases going on to either long term residential or nursing care.

15 The number of admissions to residential and nursing care for clients under the age of 65 continues to meet targets. Further work is being done to understand our rates of clients being admitted into residential and nursing care homes, during this year and in previous years, in order to better understand trends, particularly for admissions for over 65 year old clients.

16 The number of carers provided with a service during the last quarter has increased from 32.6% to 44.8%. This measure is now performing well over our current targets. In order to support the number of carers provided with a service, early work has started on the re-procurement of the Carer Related Support Service. This will deliver carers services post April 2015, linking in with the changes to the Care Act implementation

17 Since November 2012 the Housing Solutions Team has not used Bed & Breakfast as a provision of Temporary Accommodation for any applicant who has approached the team as homeless, and is owed a statutory duty. This has been achieved by forward planning, mediation with landlords etc. and close management of the Temporary Accommodation that is used by the team. This has been achieved despite the increase in homeless presentations made to the Housing Solutions Team.

What needs improving further?

18 The number of admissions for residential and nursing care in the over 65's has continued to grow in quarter 2 to 306.6 (187 new admissions), but growth is not quite at the same rate as quarter 1. This could in part be due to leave patterns of the work force and expected seasonal variances. In the last month, the Better Care Fund submission was completed within revised timescales and has been through external validation, identifying the submission as assured with support (level 2). As part of this submission, a number of schemes have been identified to reduce admissions to and reduce delayed transfers from hospitals and also reduce the number of residential and nursing admissions.

19 Performance for safeguarding referrals closed within 28 days has dropped in the last month and quite significantly in the last quarter to 36.2% meeting timescales. During this time there has been a push for operational teams to ensure that old cases which have been sat open on the system for an extended period are closed down and this is having an expected negative impact on performance. In the last quarter, an additional

35% of referrals have been closed down compared to last quarter, which is helping to make inroads into existing backlogs. During the past quarter there has been the introduction of a Safeguarding Improvement Programme initiated to improve the safeguarding process for vulnerable adults who have been subject to abuse. This group is looking to embed the principles of Making Safeguarding Personal, in order to improve the experience of people subject to abuse, to improve the process and identify and meet individuals' outcomes following investigation and clear up old Frameworki data. In addition, a new independent chair of the Herefordshire Safeguarding Adults Board has been appointed. This appointment will help the Board to have a more strategic overview and challenge all partners on their performance.

20 Despite the currently lower number of affordable housing units provided during the last quarter, this is as anticipated and shows a similar trend to previous years, where the majority of completions fall later in the year. If current development completions continue as planned, there is an expectation that a further 122 units will be delivered, exceeding the target by 21 units. As a result the overall delivery will see units delivered to meet housing need within Ross on Wye and Hereford City, including the regeneration of the Oval, accommodation for those with Learning Disabilities. Schemes where residents have been involved in the development from inception to completion include Orlelton, Mordiford, Lyonshall and Weobley.

21 There has been a steady increase in the numbers taking up a health check during the last quarter. A health check campaign is being launched during October to encourage further uptake. The campaign is specifically targeting those of working age who are eligible for a health check and materials/packs have been issued to local businesses, libraries, GPs and pharmacies to promote health checks. Cabinet member approval has been given for the re-tendering of the Health checks service moving forward into 2015/16

22 The estimated level of successful completion of drug treatment opiate and non-opiate users is worse than the England and the West Midlands average and is a key priority for public health to improve substance misuse services. Cabinet Member approval for the re-tendering of the Drug and Alcohol service has been given and commissioning plans have been developed for the system wide procurement of future drug and alcohol services

23 The results of the first national survey of the dental health of 3 year old children were published on 30 September by Public Health England (PHE). This is the first time a survey of this age group has been carried out nationally so the findings form a baseline from which PHE can continue to collect data. In Herefordshire the survey found that 22% of 3 year olds have signs of tooth decay (higher than the England average) and that those children with decay had an average of 3 decayed teeth each (similar to the England average).

24 The National target for childhood immunisation uptake is 95% both at 1st birthday (12months) and 2nd birthday (24months) as well as at 5th birthday. 2013-14 Q4 data shows that Herefordshire exceeded the 1st birthday uptake targets for all vaccines, but missed the uptake targets for most vaccines at 2nd and 5th birthday, though uptake rates are comparable with national averages but lower than the West Midlands averages. Herefordshire Council will continue to closely monitor the uptake and will be working with NHS England Area Team to ensure that NHSE puts in place measures to improve uptake

Priorities for the next quarter?

25 Priorities for the next quarter in Adults are:

- Care Act Implementation
- Operational performance management and quality improvement
- Commissioning mental health social care, Carers, Information Advice and Guidance

26 Priorities for the next quarter in Housing are:

- Housing and Growth Programme, Extra Care, Affordable Housing etc
- Review HomePoint and Homelessness strategy

27 Priorities for the next quarter in Public Health are:

- Delivering Health and Well Being Strategy
- Delivering the Commissioning Programme

Childrens Wellbeing

Impact that has been made during the last quarter

Learning and Achievement

28 This quarter focussed on the range of key national educational assessments and indicators. The report is based on headline performance and reflects the progress the education system is making in Herefordshire. Underpinning these results is some outstanding performances by children, young people, settings and schools/colleges.

The Early Years Foundation Stage

29 The profile assesses children against a range of developmental measures and the national benchmark is one for good level of development. In Herefordshire there has been year-on-year improvement against the national benchmark so that in 2014 we are at the national average; have the second best performance in the West Midlands; and perform well against statistical neighbours.

Phonics

30 The screening test was introduced in 2012. The phonics screening check was undertaken by all children in year 1 for the first time. Children were assessed as working at (WA) the expected standard or working towards (WT) the expected standard. Children who are either considered 'working towards' the expected standard or did not take a Phonics Screening check in Year 1 are required to re-take the Phonics Screening Check in Year 2. The overall result for schools has shown year-on–year progress, though in 2012 and 2014 other local authorities have progressed at a faster rate.

Key Stage 1

31 Children were assessed in reading, writing and mathematics. Overall results are at national and regional averages, though the performance of children in writing is an area for schools to address (this is also a national issue).

Key Stage 2

32 Children were assessed in reading, writing and mathematics. There is a national benchmark for each of these plus a combined assessment for all three, with a focus on progress as well as actual attainment. Children are expected to make two levels of progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 though Ofsted is now looking at three levels of progress. Overall attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has remained relatively constant. However Herefordshire had fallen behind the progress in other local authorities and was in the bottom quartile. In 2014, however, schools and children have made progress and overall Herefordshire is now in the third quartile and according to Ofsted has made the most progress in the West Midlands. The percentage of children making three levels of progress is also comparable (just below) the national average.

33 The percentage of boys in Herefordshire attaining level 4 reading, writing and maths in 2014 was below both the regional and national averages. The percentage of girls in Herefordshire attaining level 4 reading, writing and maths in 2014 was in line with the regional average but slightly below the national average. The gender gap of seven percentage points in favour of girls in Herefordshire compares with 6 percentage points nationally.

34 There is still only indicative data for Key Stage 4 in 2014, so this will be reported in the next quarter. Indications are that overall there will have been good improvement on 2013, starting to reverse the trend from 2008 where performance had been relatively constant but reducing against faster improvement nationally.

The attainment and progress of vulnerable children

35 For the three years up to 2013, Herefordshire has remained in the bottom performing quartile in the country for this indicator, despite a year-on-year increase in the percentage of free school meal (FSM) pupils 'working at' the expected standard. Herefordshire is ten percentage points behind the West Midlands average for FSM pupils 'working at' the expected standard and eight percentage points below the national average.

36 The percentage of English as an Additional Language (EAL) pupils 'working at' the expected level in Herefordshire has increased year on year since 2012. However, Herefordshire has remained in the bottom two performing quartiles in the country in the last three years. Herefordshire would require a minimum of nineteen additional pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL) 'working at' the expected standard in order to enter into the top performing quartile in the country for this characteristic.

Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

37 There has been a further reduction this quarter in the number of young people NEET. The number who destination is not known has reduced with Herefordshire performing best in the region at 1.9%; 100% of Year 12 Looked After Children are all in Education, Employment or Training.

38 Over the last year the local authority has worked with schools to reverse the declining trend and improve attainment and progress for all children and young people, with a sharp focus on those in vulnerable and under-performing groups.

39 While it is important not to be complacent and the local authority needs to continue to work closely with schools to maintain the momentum, the overall performance of schools is now in the right direction and recognition of this with school leaders and staff is important.

Specific support for vulnerable children/young people

40 The Multi Agency & Safeguarding Hub (MASH) has delivered significant improvements in timeliness of screening of contacts, response to referrals and initial assessments. This is being monitored through weekly performance reporting arrangements to ensure that these improvements are sustained, even during periods of holiday or sickness absence.

41 We are ensuring that that there is effective leadership, practice, quality assurance and capacity within the Independent Reviewing Officer Service. IRO caseloads are reducing through recruitment and secondment of additional capacity. In addition new Child Protection business processes have assisted to streamline the system.

42 There has been a continued focus in the last quarter to ensure that child protection plans are appropriately in place, this has led to a reduction of 26% of child protection plans. In addition to the reduction in child protection plans there has been significant improvement in practice, with Child Protection visits currently reporting at 94.1% (September 2014) as being completed within the timescales specified within the child protection plans.

43 Significant investment in advocacy services has taken place and performance monitoring of statutory visiting of looked after children (LAC) has been established. Ofsted found good practice examples of the voice of the child reflected in their care plans in their May 2014 inspection. LAC core assessments have been targeted with additional resources to ensure that they are up to date and have a performance framework in place to monitor statutory visiting which has seen significant improvement. In addition, within the last quarter a members' seminar has taken place in respect of Corporate Parenting and the Pledge for Looked after Children has been adopted and published which outlines the commitment of the Corporate Parent to our Looked after Children.

What is going well?

44 The Childrens & Families Act 2014 is being successfully implemented across the organisation and the directorate, with the information in respect of the Local Offer being available on the Herefordshire Council website which outlines the services that residents of the county can expect from Children's Wellbeing.

45 There have been improvements made to the back office systems to support the business and further work is planned to ensure the continued improvement of the systems and the continued development of performance reporting information.

What needs improving further?

46 The Families First Programme in Herefordshire is a significant local programme with the ambition to make lasting positive changes to the lives of some of the most vulnerable families and communities across Herefordshire. The national Troubled Families Programme has been extended for an additional five years from 2015/16. Work is underway to complete the 3 year programme and some 46 families have already been identified. A further 90 families are to be identified so as to ensure that the authority meets its targets and secures grant funding of approximately £200k that is available. Three claim periods remain in which to do this; Oct 2014, Jan/Feb 2015 and April/May 2015.

47 There has been an increase in the number of emergency placements of children in care and with this comes the significant cost of these placements. As the growth of

the number of children in care continues there will continue to be a current and future cost pressure. In 2013/2014 Herefordshire Council spent £8.6m on fostering, residential and complex needs accommodation placements. The looked after children population is significantly higher than statistical neighbours and is expected to rise further. A Sufficiency Strategy seeks to reduce placement costs and to reinvest the resources in a whole system approach.

48 There are high caseloads within the Children with Disabilities team. Work is underway to change the approach to service delivery and will be completed within the next quarter.

49 As far as the recruitment of permanent social work staff and reducing the agency turnover and cost is concerned, there have been 7 experienced social workers start in 2014. 8 newly qualified social workers (NQSW's) started in Sept / Oct 2013; they are now 1 year qualified and are being slotted into open vacancies, mitigating the need to hire interim social workers. A further 8 NQSWs are joining in Sept / Nov 2014. In addition a further 4 NQSWs are planned to start in April 2015 and another 4 NQSWs in September 2015.

50 Priorities for the next quarter are:

- Provide evidence to the Department for Education to lift the current intervention notice following our Ofsted Inspection in May 2014.
- Local Government Association peer diagnostic of the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children's Board.
- Delivery of the actions identified during the Ofsted inspection, and continue our improvement work.
- Refresh the recruitment and retention strategy to outline our approach to the recruitment and retention of social work staff.
- Implementing HIPSS to reduce the placement costs for some children in care.
- Secure the appropriate level of grant funding for Herefordshire Families First programme in conjunction with our partner agencies and council directorates.
- Drive down the number of young people who are NEET, reducing this by 100 for the next year, to 250.
- Complete all data protection and information security audits.

Economy, Communities and Corporate

Impact that has been made during the last quarter

51 Delivery of the highway maintenance programme and revised grounds maintenance schedules has improved the service. More than 148 miles of roads have been treated/fixed (combined total of resurfacing and surface dressing), and 40,907 potholes repaired since April 2014.

52 The Core Strategy was submitted to the Secretary of State on 23 September. When adopted the Plan will provide a strategy for sustainable growth and new development in the County up to 2031. The Core Strategy will now be subject to an Examination in Public, chaired by an Independent Inspector before it can be adopted by the Council.

53 The Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) for Edgar Street to Commercial Road Link scheme has been confirmed. Funding is in place, and work due to commence in 2015. The confirmation of the CPO will allow the Council to make a General Vesting Declaration in December 2014 which will enable us to complete the acquisition of the land needed by the end of January 2015. With the completion of the conveyancing of the land in these timescales and with funding secured from LEP Growth Deal, works are anticipated to start in spring 2015. Once completed, this will open up further development land and deliver much needed jobs and new homes.

54 The accommodation programme has progressed, with Brockington vacated and on the market, Shire Hall works completed, and Plough Lane works complete. Integration of services into fewer buildings will not only lead to greater efficiency and reduced costs, but will also allow for buildings and land which are surplus to our requirements to be used for additional purposes.

55 Broadband coverage continues to expand across the county, with more than 6,300 homes and businesses now able to access fibre services. This will continue to increase over the next couple of years.

What is going well?

56 Positive progress has been made with the integration of Job Centre Plus into the Library in Ross and CAB in Leominster, benefitting the communities of both areas and providing more efficient services.

57 67,000 new waste bins have been delivered across the county in preparation for the introduction of alternate weekly collections commencing in November. The introduction of the alternative weekly collection will achieve cost savings on both the collection and disposal of waste, and increase the rate of recycling across the county.

58 European funding (LEADER) bids submitted with an indicative allocation from Defra of circa £2.3m to be confirmed by December. If approved, there will be small-scale funding to create jobs and support sustainable economic growth of micro and small enterprises in rural Herefordshire. The priorities include farm productivity, farm diversification, forestry, rural tourism, rural services (including village shops), creative industries and heritage.

59 The LED street lighting business case approval is a major milestone. In partnership with Balfour Beatty Living Places (BBLP) the county's 9,000 existing streetlights will be replaced with LED lighting over the next 12 months, resulting in a financial saving of £13.3m over the next 20 years and reduction of 17,217 tonnes of Co2.

60 Commercial Services continues to develop and provide specialist, professional procurement expertise across the organisation including the delivery of a programme of procurement projects with Adults Wellbeing, Children's Wellbeing and Economy, Communities and Corporate directorates, equating to 10+ contracts with a combined value in excess of £20m per annum.

What needs improving further?

61 The number of people killed and seriously injured in road traffic collisions has increased, with 51 year to date (Jan to Aug), compared with 35 for the same period in 2013. Of note are a larger casualty per collision ratio, and a general increase in the numbers of KSI incidents involving the younger 16 – 25 age group.

62 Continued high levels of calls to Customer Services (20,292 during August) are leading to lengthy response times and a high proportion of abandoned calls. A number of mitigating actions are planned which include:

- Working with the Council Tax service to understand demand and develop a responsive service based around the customer. Objectives include the understanding and elimination of waste and service failure demand, and the creating of 'flex' in the capacity to enable greater capacity at known peaks of demand.

- A planned communications exercise supporting the Channel Shift Strategy, promoting the uptake of web based services.

- Development of a Telephone Strategy, to include reviewing the messaging information and routeing on phone lines. A review of the switchboard (260000) and general information numbers (265000) will also be included to ensure callers are in the correct queue.

- The transfer of Public Realm calls to Balfour Beatty Living Places.

63 The speed in which we process minor planning applications needs improving further. The addition of new planning officers has made an impact, but the increase in applications means that there is a continued challenge between balancing resource and workload.

64 Investment is being made to modernise and improve the facilities at four of Halo Leisure's sites. It is intended that this will enable Halo to support local people to be more physically active, resulting in income which will support its long term sustainability. This has come about by the council agreeing to make up to £9m of prudential borrowing available to Halo.

Priorities for the next quarter?

65 Our priorities for the next quarter are:

- Delivery of new road infrastructure
- Development of Economic Masterplan
- Roads maintenance
- Savings assurance
- Customer Service redesign
- Prepare for LDF Public Inquiry
- Balancing the budget process
- Procurement of Public Health services

Equality and Human Rights

66 There are no specific implications in the report. As regards demonstrating due regard to the council's Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), as part of our decision making

processes we ensure that individual directorates and service areas assess the potential impact of any proposed project, leading to fairer, transparent and informed decisions being made.

Financial Implications

67 Projects and activity within the delivery plan must be delivered within the budget agreed by Council in February 2014; they include projects and activity to deliver the cost reductions required for a balanced budget. Slippage in projects and activity to deliver cost reductions will impact on the overall council budget and will require remedial or mitigating actions to maintain financial stability. A detailed budget monitoring report appears elsewhere on the Cabinet agenda.

Legal Implications

68 None.

Risk Management

69 The corporate plan and its delivery plan are integral elements of the council's risk management framework. Risks associated with each objective and project are entered onto the relevant service or directorate risk register and escalated as appropriate. Risks are also considered in the 'What needs improving further' and 'Priorities for the next quarter' sections of this report above.

Consultees

70 None in relation to this report. The development of the delivery plan was informed by the evidence base already gathered during the year and which includes user, resident and partner feedback where available.

Appendices

None

Background Papers

- Adults and Wellbeing databook
- Children's Wellbeing databook
- Economy, Communities and Corporate databook

Herefordshire Council

MEETING:	**CABINET**
MEETING DATE:	**13 November 2014**
TITLE OF REPORT:	**Strategic Plan for Education**
REPORT BY:	**Assistant Director Education and Commissioning**

Classification

Open

Key Decision

This is a key decision because it is likely to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising one or more wards in the county.

NOTICE has been served in accordance with Part 3, Section 9 (Publicity in Connection with Key Decisions) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To approve the Strategic Plan for Education in Herefordshire.

Recommendation(s)

THAT:

(a) the Strategic Plan for Education in Herefordshire be approved.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Chris Baird Assistant director education and commissioning on Tel (01432) 260264

Alternative options

1 Continue to carry out statutory duties without a cohesive approach driven by a strategic plan. This would not provide a clear direction from the council, not enable strategic developments to take place to benefit children and young people in Herefordshire and not enable due governance to take place.

Reasons for recommendations

2 To enable the council to set a clear strategic direction for the next three years and to develop it with partners. Herefordshire will be able to build on the strengths in education across the county; to address areas that need to be improved and to deliver our aspiration to have a vibrant, high performing education system that improves the lives of children and young people, is valued by communities, and supports economic growth.

Key considerations

3 The council has made protecting children and giving them a great start in life one of its key priorities. A successful education system plays a critical role in achieving this priority. Our goal for children and young people in Herefordshire is for national top quartile performance by 2016/7. By having high expectations and aspirations for every child and young person their prospects for adult life will be enhanced.

4 The proposed strategic plan enables the council and partners including communities, schools and settings (such as early years providers, colleges), the Diocese of Hereford, and the Archdiocese of Cardiff, to clearly address priorities, creates opportunities for investment and provides clarity about the role of the council at a time when the national policy agenda has established new bodies with a role in education.

5 There are many positive features of education provision in Herefordshire; most notable the high percentage of children that attend good or outstanding schools, the commitment of leaders and staff working in education, and the individual achievement of some children and young people. There has been a range of good results and progress over the past year. A clear strategy going forward will build on these achievements and provide a united focus for further improvement

6 The priorities of the strategy are to work with children and young people, parents / carers, schools and settings to:

- Improve the quality of leadership and management, including the quality and availability of governors
- Improve the progress and achievement of all pupils which includes all pupils who are at risk of not making better than their expected levels of progress throughout their education, from early years to Key Stage 5.
- Improve the achievement and progress of pupils who are looked after
- Increase the numbers of pupils who have access to good or outstanding schools and settings in Herefordshire.

- Develop a strategic approach to ensure the sustainability of high quality educational provision in Herefordshire

- Play an active part in contributing to economic development in Herefordshire, including the development of higher education

7 The role of the local authority has undergone significant change during the period of the present national government. There has been an emphasis nationally on developing more autonomy for individual schools and groups of schools, with a significant acceleration in the conversion of schools to academy status. There has also been the opportunity for free schools to be created, as has happened in Herefordshire.

8 The role of the local authority is principally to be a champion of children, parents and communities. This means setting high expectations so that all children achieve well and attainment gaps are closed, to enable and develop partnerships so that there is the context for a culture of collective improvement, and to be a maker and shaper of effective commissioning so that there are sufficient high quality early years and school places where families need them and there are courses and opportunities available for young people to make the most of their post 16 education, training and employment. The proposed Strategic Plan for Education enables the local authority to take this agenda forward over the next three years.

9 There are c.40,000 0-20 year olds in Herefordshire, with c.22,000 in primary and secondary age schools. Outcomes for children and young people in Herefordshire can be outstanding. Overall, Herefordshire has delivered outcomes broadly in line with average national performance for a number of years. Within this overall picture there have been vulnerable groups that continually do not achieve as well as their peers. The gap in progress between certain groups, including those eligible for free school meals is too wide and occurs at the different points of measurement in a child's life, from early years to accessing good universities or being in education, training or employment.

10 Over the past year there have been improvements in the number of children achieving a good level of development at foundation stage. Key stage 2 results have showed a marked rate of improvement compared to the national change, but are broadly still below the national average. Some of the gaps between vulnerable groups and their peers have narrowed. The number of young people not known has reduced significantly and is now amongst the lowest nationally for 16 and 17 year olds. A' level students perform among the best in the country – but a significant number of these, who drive future economic growth, leave the county to pursue higher education which has a very restricted offer within the county. The percentage of pupils attending good or outstanding schools in Herefordshire at both primary and secondary age has increased over 2013/14, with primary increasing markedly. The initial results overall for Key Stage 4 in 2014 are encouraging. There are a range of strengths that will be built on.

11 Herefordshire has recognised the primary role of communities to determine the future of individual schools. The strategy recognises this whilst also establishing a policy framework and programme for considering the future of education provision in local areas, taking into account the economic development plans and also the condition and suitability of the current schools and the resources that are available. Whilst there are a number of good quality school buildings there remain a significant number of schools in building stock which needs enhancement. The development of an

estates strategy forms part of the proposed Education Strategy and will be ready for the new council to consider in June 2015.

12 Building upon the council's drive to maximise the use of digital technology the strategy and actions will exist on the council's website. The Education Strategy portal will provide one route into the different aspects of the strategy and enable interested parties to explore what the strategy means for them, how they can contribute and also what progress is being made.

13 The strategy will develop over the period as initiatives take place and our approach is enhanced through the involvement of children and young people, parents, carers, settings and schools, governors, members and other interested parties. Updates to information and actions will take place on the website and through the use of the portal.

14 There is now an Ofsted inspection regime in place to assess the effectiveness of a local authority's arrangements for supporting school improvement. A clear, accessible strategy with tangible actions that demonstrate impact will be a critical success factor for any inspection.

Community impact

15 The proposed Education Strategy encompasses the actions set out in the council's corporate plan for 2014/15 and contributes to the wider Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Actions within it will contribute to the emerging Herefordshire Economic Master Plan, the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership plans, and also the Local Plan. Businesses, economic developments, and families moving into Herefordshire will all be attracted by highly successful educational provisions and outcomes for Herefordshire's children and young people.

16 Children and young people play an important part in community life and their successes in education directly contribute to wider economic, social, community and health outcomes within Herefordshire and to the wider society. Individuals and communities have a continued interest in the success of schools and settings and also their role in the wider community, making the provision of high quality places an important issue within a rural community and economy.

Equality and human rights

17 The proposed Strategic Plan for Education encompasses a vision and set of principles that pay due regard to protected characteristics and promote a particular focus on vulnerable and potentially disadvantaged groups. An impact assessment has been undertaken and is attached at appendix 2. Actions from the plan, including the closing the gap initiative address issues of underperformance amongst vulnerable groups at risk of not making expected progress. Individual actions will have an equalities impact assessment carried out to ensure that they have due regard to the need to -

eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct ... prohibited by or under this Act;

advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Financial implications

18 There are significant budgets involved directly in the education of children and young people in Herefordshire. The proposed Strategic Plan for Education contains actions where the local authority has direct control over budget spend, but also areas where the finances are delegated directly to settings and schools. This delegation has increased in emphasis over the life of this current government, included within the promotion of academies and free schools. As part of the Education Plan work is taking place to clarify areas of financial risk, particularly in relation to capital.

19 Education is funded from a number of government grants and council budgets. Funding for direct service provision by schools and early years settings is predominantly from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), which is often supplemented by additional government grants for sixth form provision and national education policies such as the pupil premium. Given the mixed economy of locally maintained, academy and free schools not all such grants are directed through the council.

20 Education services provided by the council are funded partly by the Education Services Grant (see para 23 below). Statutory SEN services, school transport, youth services and adult education are funded directly by the council at a cost of £5.9m (including £4.7m on school transport).

21 In 2014/15 Dedicated Schools Grant was £111m which was budgeted as follows

a. Locally maintained schools £53.7m

b. Academy schools £37.2m

c. High needs schools & pupils £13.3m

d. Early years settings £6.8m

22 Of these amounts, £0.2m is retained from the schools block to fund schools forum, admissions and licences funded nationally by the DfE; £0.35m is retained for early years advice services and £1.8m on high needs central services provided to schools and pupils.

23 The government has announced an increase in DSG for 2015/16 of £2.7m for Herefordshire as part of a fair funding initiative for low funded authorities. Additionally, a further £1.8m will be added to DSG to fund free schools and non-recoupment academies as all funding for all schools in a local authority area will in future be distributed through DSG. Adjustments are made to DSG throughout the year to reflect academy conversions.

24 Education Services Grant is used to fund council services such as statutory and regulatory education services, school improvement and asset management. The grant for 2014/15 for the statutory services provided on behalf of all pupils is £15 per pupil, i.e. £ 0.34m. The remainder of the grant is shared pro-rata between the council and academies, the council receiving £1.7m and academies receiving £1.2m. As with DSG, adjustments are made throughout the year to reflect academy conversions.

25 There are a variety of funding streams to support capital works at schools. The national schools funding formula means all schools receive a relatively small devolved capital allocation to support minor works and maintenance. Schools may convert revenue budgets to capital to make improvements. Bigger maintenance works like the replacement of a roof, a new heating system or windows are funded through a central maintenance grant awarded to the council or via the academy capital maintenance scheme. Denominational schools are given a separate grant to support works. There is also a Basic Need fund to address school places. The total maintenance and basic need funding for 2014/15 is £4m.

Legal implications

26 There are no specific legal implications surrounding the implementation of the Education Strategy, however implementation of this Strategy would demonstrate how the Council is meeting its legal duty under Section 13A of the Education Act 1996 to promote high standards and the fulfilment of potential in relation to all its education functions and specifically to ensure that all its education functions are (so far as they are capable of being so exercised) exercised by the authority with a view to:

(a) promoting high standards;

(b) ensuring fair access to opportunity for education and training; and

(c) promoting the fulfilment of learning potential by every person under the age of 20 (or persons aged 20 or over but under 25 who are subject to learning difficulty assessment.)

Risk management

27 The risk in Cabinet not agreeing the Strategic Plan for Education is that the administration does not have a clear strategic approach to education which enables it to deliver on the vision for the council or the actions set out in the corporate plan. There is a risk to the council's reputation that by not having a plan in place the wider learning community is unclear of the strategic approach to education and unable to align their own activities and contribute. This could lead to insufficient progress in improving attainment and achievement for the children and young people in Herefordshire.

28 The plan contains actions to strategically develop local approaches to high quality education provision, in partnership with local communities and particularly governors of all schools. Herefordshire has not progressed sufficiently in defining and enabling high quality provision to be developed and the education landscape is now more complex with the wide variety of organisations that can now directly run individual and groups of settings and schools. Failure to provide a cohesive long term plan will potentially disadvantage Herefordshire's local communities who may not benefit from funding opportunities when they arise either from the Department for Education (DfE) or as part of wider economic development.

29 These risks will be addressed through the adoption of the strategic plan.

Consultees

30 The draft plan has been discussed with a range of school headteachers, with the Strategic Education Board, and with councillors through a members seminar. The ongoing development of the strategy and implementation will be carried out through further consultation and involvement with settings and schools, governors, leaders of education, and communities. This will form a very necessary part of the development and implementation of the strategy, which reflects the leadership and enabling role of the council. Schools and settings would welcome greater clarity on the strategic direction in Herefordshire and the role of the local authority.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Strategic Plan for Education

Appendix 2 Equality Impact Assessment

Background papers

- Consultation presentation used to discuss the approach

Herefordshire Council

Strategic Plan for Education for Children and Young People in Herefordshire 2014 – 2017

Herefordshire Council's priority is to protect children and give them a good start in life. This means that by 2016/17

- Education & Health outcomes, particularly for vulnerable groups of children & young people, will be top quartile performance nationally
- Our safeguarding services will be good and judged so by Ofsted

and we will do this within our available resources.

We have the highest aspirations for all of our children and young people and will continually focus on building on their strengths and capacity, enhancing their opportunities and support so that they make the most of their educational experiences. This is particularly the case with children and young people who are vulnerable, for example those who are looked after.

This document sets out our strategic approach to education in Herefordshire for the next three years to achieve our aims. The approach focuses on 0-19 year olds, 0 to 25 for those with learning difficulties or disabilities. Strong links will be made with the adult and community learning agenda taking place in Herefordshire and to the economic developments that are taking place.

The strategic approach recognises the fundamental changes that have taken place with education and local authorities over the past few years with much of the responsibilities firmly placed at an individual setting (such as an early years playgroup or nursery), school and college level. The Local Authority has a critical role in strategic developments, championing outcomes for children and young people, and ensuring high quality education is available and delivered in Herefordshire. The Local Authority also has an important role in developing and enabling partnerships, including constructive working relationships with the Archdiocese of Cardiff and the Diocese of Hereford, as well as governing bodies and other organisations that are accountable for the running of settings and schools.

Mission statement and guiding principles of Herefordshire's Learning Community

The following mission statement and guiding principles were created by Herefordshire's Learning Community, which incorporates all early years settings, schools, colleges and education providers, council staff and councillors.

We are committed to educating and developing EVERY child and young person within a cost effective and sustainable learning community. We will have the highest expectation and belief in every individual's talents and abilities - we will not turn our back on anyone.

We will be able to show that we

- Have the highest expectations and aspirations for every child and young person.
- Educate and develop the intellectual, physical, social and spiritual needs of every child and young person to help them achieve their best and enable them to make a positive contribution.
- Provide high quality teaching and learning, care, guidance and support.
- Have a curriculum and other learning opportunities that meet the needs of Herefordshire children and young people.
- Contribute to mutually supportive relationships with parents, carers and other agencies that put the needs and aspirations of children and young people first.
- Work with businesses to create learning experiences that are relevant to the world of work and the economic needs of Herefordshire.
- Work with partners to ensure every child and young person has barriers to their learning identified early then reduce or remove the impact.
- Implement and commission appropriate collaborative partnerships within and across education phases to deliver high quality, cost- effective, education provision.
- Ensure that all providers of education contribute to the development of their communities and to the wider community of Herefordshire.

Context and focus

There is much to celebrate about the existing education arrangements in Herefordshire; most notable the high percentage of children that attend good or outstanding schools, the commitment of leaders and staff working in education, and the individual achievement of some children and young people. There has been a range of good results and progress over the past year, 2013/14. This Strategy is designed to build on the existing positives and bring about further sustained improvement.

Children and young people are educated in a wide variety of early years settings, schools, sixth forms, colleges, training providers, Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and other alternative provision settings, including the home. Settings have their own accountabilities and governance and our current state system places significant responsibilities them. Education enriches the lives of young people, enable them to develop and gain confidence, qualifications and skills to play a full and positive part in society as adults. Herefordshire has highly committed headteachers and staff, volunteers and governors who work hard to provide this education. Parents and carers play a fundamental role in the education of their children and are legally responsible. It is families and communities who bring up children and protect them; they are the biggest asset in children's lives.

Herefordshire has a mixture of city, town and rural communities. Education and the wider roles of schools and settings play important parts within these communities. Rurality and a sparse population in some areas are important considerations in education provision in Herefordshire and are reflected in the number of small rural schools and settings. As a result some primary schools have mixed age classes and a number of schools have developed arrangement to share leadership and management, teaching and learning approaches as well as administrative functions to make the most of the funding available. More details of the characteristics of Herefordshire, including issues such as child poverty, can be found on the Herefordshire Facts and Figures web page.

All young people will now have to be in education, training or employment with training until the age of 18. After the age of 18 many young people go on to continue their learning in higher education, or through work based learning. Some children and young people achieve outstanding progress and results, as do some individual schools and settings. For many however, overall levels of attainment are not meeting the expectations we have set at the different points where pupil progress and attainment are measured, from early years to age 18. Though some individual vulnerable children and the schools and settings that support them do really well, overall, the progress and performance for some vulnerable groups of children in Herefordshire is not at the level that we want them to be. We have identified trends in our performance in

Herefordshire and have a wealth of data and analysis to inform our approach. These can be found on our website and through the Education Portal (this is currently in development. To give a flavour of how it will look and work, please refer to the attached spreadsheet).

Our priority is to work with children and young people, parents/carers, schools and settings to:

- Improve the quality of leadership and management, including the quality and availability of governors
- Improve the progress and achievement of all pupils which includes all pupils who are at risk of not making better than their expected levels of progress throughout their education, from early years to Key Stage 5.
- Improve the achievement and progress of pupils who are looked after
- Increase the numbers of pupils who have access to good or outstanding schools and settings in Herefordshire.
- Develop a strategic approach to ensure the sustainability of high quality educational provision in Herefordshire
- Play an active part in contributing to economic development in Herefordshire

By the end of 2016/17 we will have:

- Achieved our aspiration of top quartile performance in education indicators for Herefordshire, including raising overall attainment, relative to other local authority areas, and particularly in relation to vulnerable groups including looked after children, those with additional needs including diversity, and those not in education, training or employment
    - This means that by 2016/17 we have :
    - Consistent trends of improvement, with no settings (including early years) or schools falling below attainment in the previous year and therefore improved achievement and attainment for individual children and young people
    - Conversion rates on Early Years Foundation Stage through to KS4 are at least at the national average for each setting and school

- improved the attainment of gifted and able children and young people e.g. at least 15% of children entered for level 6 (national target) with a higher percentage of children achieving a level 6 than reported nationally

- Enabled schools and settings to have a greater understanding of issues in Herefordshire through enhanced analysis and dissemination of key performance issues, particularly trends over time
- All schools involved in school to school practice development and include the early years settings where appropriate. The local authority will be working with teaching schools and other parties to establish and embed networks and support such as new headteacher, deputy headteacher and subject expert teacher networks.
- Enhanced the understanding and work of governors through high quality briefing sessions that focus on key issues in Herefordshire, as well as national issues
- Developed a cadre of experienced governors who can support other school governing bodies
- Establish an estates strategy for schools.

What we are going to do

Our strategy contains a series of approaches that will be set out on our Education Portal (below is the proposed content of the front screen on the web). Each area of focus would provide links to where you can find out more about the work taking place.

Herefordshire Council

Education Delivery Plan

1	**What we want to achieve?**	For all children and young peoples to achieve and attain the best they can and for outcomes to be in the top quartile for 2016/17.										
		For all education provision to be judged good or outstanding.										
		For all education provision to be highly valued by children and young people, parents and carers , the community and employers.										
2	**Who can help us with the plan?**	Children and young people	Parents and carers.	Head teachers/ principals and senior leaders .	Governors	Businesses and Employers	Teachers and staff	Councillors of the Council and strategic groups	Staff in and commissioned by Children's Wellbeing	Diocese, Arch Diocese	Academy Trusts and sponsors	Parish councils, voluntary groups
3	**Things that will affect us**	Government policy	The spread of the population and new housing plans.	The amount of money we have	Choices of provision by parents/carers and young people.	Condition, size and location of existing schools and settings.	Rurality and context of Herefordshire, including cross border relations					
4	**What is our approach?**	Provide strong collegiate leadership, working with partners across all sectors . Developing strategic plans for Early Years, School improvement, 14-19(25 for LDD) and adult and community learning plans										
		Encourage and support all educational establishments to continually improve , emphasising and developing support between and across schools and settings.										
		Track all children and young people 0- 25 years to ensure they achieve the best they can.										
		Keep provision under review so delivers:										
		* the best outcomes for children and young people and										
		* is what the community want										
5	**In the next year we will:**	Drive improvement through setting to setting and school to school cooperation coordinated by Herefordshire School Improvement Partnership.		Further develop targeted programmes to improves outcomes particularly; .		Further engage those who can help so they:		Work with representatives from school clusters to plan how to best manage school places and drive improvement to the estate including:				
				disadvantaged two year olds		have clear information		securing improvements to school buildings and provision.				
				"closing the gap" in achievement and attainment for vulnerable groups and those underachieving.		the opportunity to contribute to improvement		developing shared leadership, management and governance .				
				Reduction in 16- 18 year olds NEET and unknowns								
6	**How we will judge the effectiveness of the plan ?**	Attainment and progress measures for all children will be in the top quartile nationally particularly in English and Maths		The % of education settings where Ofsted judge them to be good or outstanding will be in the top quartile of LA's		The % of NEET and not known will be in the top quartile of LA's .		There will be between 10 and 15% spare capacity in or schools and 95% of parents will get the provision they want.				
7	**Links to other key plans and initiatives affecting education:**	Herefordshire Strategic Plan										
		Healthy Child programme										
		Families First										
		Safeguarding and Family Support Action Plan										
		Child Poverty Strategy										

Governance of the Strategy

The Director for Children's Wellbeing and the Lead Member for Young People and Children's Wellbeing fulfil their statutory responsibilities and hold this strategy to account through the Strategic Group for Education.

The Director of Children's Services (Herefordshire's Children's Wellbeing) is professionally responsible for Herefordshire's education and social services functions. The Lead Member for Children's Services (Herefordshire's Young People and Children's Wellbeing) has political responsibility. They work together to provide strong, strategic local leadership making the most of partnership arrangements to support the drive for high educational standards for all children and young people, paying particular attention to the most disadvantaged groups.

Key aspects of this work are the promotion of preventative approaches, early intervention and the offer of early help. Fair access to provision, including for those with special educational needs or disabilities is also paramount. Throughout all of this, the championing of looked after children and acting as an outstanding corporate parent is at the forefront of the work.

To address the key areas of focus we have established the following ways of involving pupils and parents, early years settings, schools, colleges, governors, the Diocese of Hereford and the Archdiocese of Cardiff.

Strategic Group for Education

Aim: To determine key areas for action, promote action and carry out a cycle of reviews on key performance and educational issues in Herefordshire.

Work will be carried out through the following supporting group arrangements

School Improvement Partnership

Aim: To improve outcomes for school age pupils in Herefordshire

Work will be carried out to identify key issues across Herefordshire and also on a school by school basis, to promote school to school support and learning, where necessary to provide challenge so that pupil outcomes improve

Early Years Strategic Group

Aim: To co-ordinate the arrangements and provision to improve outcomes for 0-5 year olds and ensure they are school ready.

The group brings together key provides and leaders of support services (including health and social care) to consider how best to improve outcomes across, learning, health, parenting.

14-25 Strategic Group

Aim: To co-ordinate the arrangements for improving provision, performance and approaches to securing the best outcomes of young people 14-19 (25 for disabilities)

The group develop a strategic plan focused on improving outcomes and ensuring children and young people are moving into adulthood with the best opportunities available to them.

Closing the gap

Aim: To provide a clear focus on individual pupils at risk of not making expected levels of progress

Work will be carried out with individual schools to identify individual pupils and then put in place action at an individual, school and local area level to support pupils and enhance teaching and learning. Certain groups are more at risk of not achieving and this includes Looked After Children.

Educational Development programme

Aim: To establish a programme for sustainable school provision.

Development work will be carried out initially on a local area basis with chairs of governors and then widened out to include school and community representatives

Schools Forum

Aim: To provide leadership, consultation on local authority proposals and specific decision making on certain areas regarding the use of resources available to support pupils in early years settings, schools and other provision, primarily through the Dedicated Schools Grant.

Behaviour and Personal Development Strategy Group

Aim: To co-ordinate the development the continuum of provision for those with emotional and social needs across the county

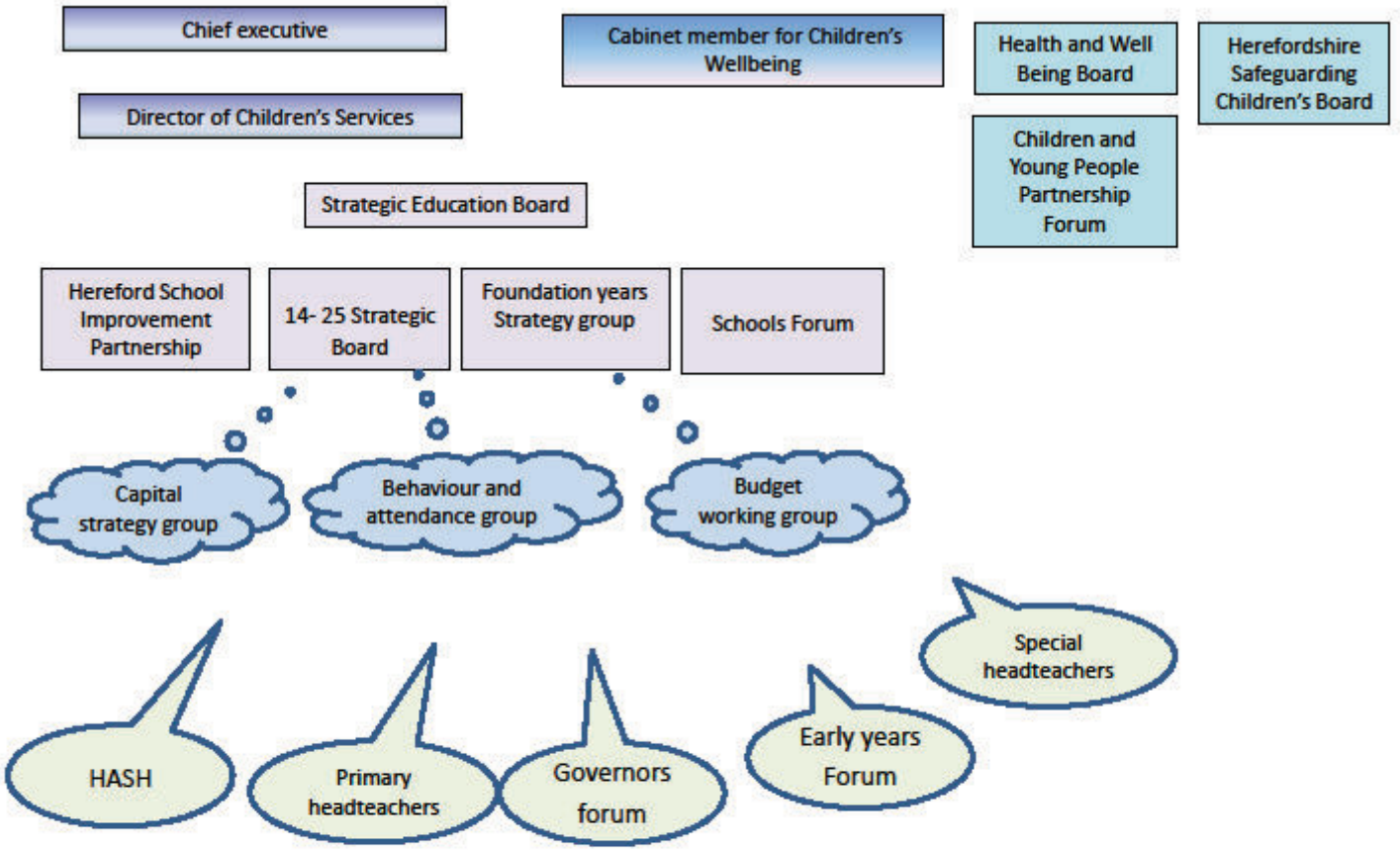
The group is made up of senior managers, practitioners and governors from mainstream settings, specialist settings and the LA. The group has developed and monitors a strategic plan to address improvements to the full span of provision from that offered in all settings to the most specialist provision across the full age-range.

Work with Herefordshire Governors and Herefordshire Governors Association (distinct body)

Aim: To support the development of high quality governors in Herefordshire schools

Development work is carried out through regular engagement with the HGA sessions for governors and head teachers, and by promoting development opportunities with other organisations including arranging sessions directly with groups of governors

The following diagram sets out the governance of the strategy and the groups that oversee aspects of the work


Chief executive
Director of Children's Services
Cabinet member for Children's Wellbeing
Health and Well Being Board
Herefordshire Safeguarding Children's Board
Children and Young People Partnership Forum
Strategic Education Board
Hereford School Improvement Partnership
14- 25 Strategic Board
Foundation years Strategy group
Schools Forum
Capital strategy group
Behaviour and attendance group
Budget working group
HASH
Primary headteachers
Governors forum
Early years Forum
Special headteachers

Equality Impact and Needs Assessment Form

A) Description

Name of service, function, policy (or other) being assessed

Strategic Plan for Education

Directorate or organisation responsible (and service, if it is a policy)

Children's Wellbeing, Education & Commissioning

Date of assessment

12 August 2014

Names and/or job titles of people carrying out the assessment

Chris Baird, Assistant Director Education and Commissioning

Accountable person

Director for Children's Wellbeing

What are the aims or main purpose of the service, function or policy? What does it provide and how does it provide it?

Overarching strategic plan, including vision and principles to improve achievement and attainment for children and young people in Herefordshire 0-19 and 0-25 if they have a learning disability.

Location or any other relevant information

Plan addresses all learnings, with a particular focus on those who may be at risk of not achieving their aspirations and potential. In Herefordshire this is particularly relevant for vulnerable groups including those eligible for free school meals, who have special educational needs , who are looked after.

List any key policies or procedures to be reviewed as part of this assessment.

The strategic plan itself and the proposed estates strategy.

Who is intended to benefit from the service, function or policy?

Children, parents, staff at schools and settings, governors, wider community members

Who are the stakeholders? What is their interest?

Children and young people in education, interested in experiencing stimulating and relevant education
Parents and carers who are interested in their children receiving a high quality education
Staff in settings and schools
Governors, academy trusts, who are responsible for the running of schools
Archdiocese of Cardiff and the Diocese of Hereford who are responsible for the faith schools in Herefordshire
Staff in the council, CCG and other public bodies
Communities in Herefordshire, particularly those that have schools and settings

within them. Parish Councils Private, independent and voluntary organisations that support education, children and young people, and learning Regional Commissioner, DfE, OfSTED

B) Partnerships and Procurement

If you contract out services or work in partnership with other organisations, Herefordshire Council remains responsible for ensuring that the quality of provision/delivery meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, ie.

- Eliminates unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups
- Fosters good relations between different groups

What information do you give to the partner/contractor in order to ensure that they meet the requirements of the Act? What information do you monitor from the partner/contractor in order to ensure that they meet the requirements of the Act?

N/A in relation to this strategy

Are there any concerns at this stage that indicate the possibility of inequalities/negative impacts? For example: complaints, comments, research, and outcomes of a scrutiny review. Please describe:

None. The vision, guiding principles and actions all explicitly address potential inequalities

C) Information

D) Assessment/Analysis

Describe your key findings (eg. negative, positive or neutral impacts - actual or potential). Also your assessment of risk.

Strand/community	Impact
Existence and approval of plan	Positive. Provides a clear direction for education, with specific targets to improve achievement and attainment. Also includes positive steps to address inequalities of outcomes and buildings to make them accessible.
Areas within the plan	Some will require their own EIA, particularly in relation to initiatives such as closing the gap and estates.

E) Consultation

Did you carry out any consultation?

YES ☒ NO ☐

Who was consulted?

School leaders including head teachers and governors, council members, Strategic Education Board including representatives of early years setttings, Diocese of Hereford, Archdiocese of Cardiff, representatives of primary and secondary schools

Describe other research, studies or information used to assist with the assessment and your key findings.

N/A

Do you use diversity monitoring categories? Yes ☒ No ☐
(if No you should use this as an action as we are required by law to monitor diversity categories)
If yes, which categories?

☒ Race
☒ Sex
☐ Sexual Orientation
☒ Religion & Belief
☒ Disability
☒ Age
☐ Gender Reassignment
☐ Marriage & Civil Partnership
☐ Pregnancy & Maternity

What do you do with the diversity monitoring data you gather? Is this information published? And if so, where?

Used to assess pupil performance and also respond to need. Published in aggregate form as part of the council's analysis of pupil performance. Also published in relation to special educational needs services and performance

F) Conclusions

	Action/objective/target OR Justification	Resources required	Timescale	I/R/S/J
a)	Review specific actions and carry out EIA as required	Within existing	2014-17	I
b)				

(I) *Taking immediate effect.*
(R) *Recommended to Council/Directors through a Committee or other Report*.*

(S) *Added to the Service Plan.*
(J) *To be brought to the attention of the Herefordshire Equality & Human Rights Group.*

*Summarise your findings in the report. Make the full assessment available for further information.

NB: Make sure your final document is suitable for publishing in the public domain.

Herefordshire Council

MEETING:	**CABINET**
MEETING DATE:	**13 November 2014**
TITLE OF REPORT:	**Council acquisition of the Three Elms Trading Estate, Hereford, HR4 9PU**
REPORT BY:	**Ian Higgs – Development Manager**

Classification

Open.

Key Decision

This is a key decision because it is likely to result in the council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates.

NOTICE has been served in accordance with Park 3, Section 9 (Publicity in connection with key decisions) of The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

Wards Affected

Three Elms.

Purpose

To approve the council's purchase of the Three Elms Trading Estate from the Homes and Communities Agency at market value, estimated to be in the region of £1.75 to £1.85m, which will enable the council to release value from its adjoining land.

Recommendation(s)

THAT:

(a) Subject to Council approval of the 2015/16 capital programme and subject to agreeing acceptable terms, the council purchases the freehold interest of the Three Elms Trading Estate from the Homes and Communities Agency;

(b) Subject to Council approval of the 2015/6 capital programme, further investment of £850k be made into the estate in order to improve the site infrastructure thus improving the prospect of further investment in the development of the vacant land and improvements to the existing buildings;

(c) It be recommended to Council that provision of £2.6m be made in the 2015/16 capital programme to support the above recommendations.

Alternative options

1 The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) proceed to offer the estate for sale on the open market and complete a sale before March 2015. Depending upon the priorities of the eventual purchaser the estate may deteriorate further due to lack of investment which would impact on the surrounding residential estates and public open space. It would also result in a missed opportunity to maximise the economic benefit that the estate could make in the contribution to the economic growth of the city/county by providing existing and new commercial premises to attract new business and enable the growth of existing ones. The estate was purchased by HCA in support of the council's delivery of the city centre redevelopment scheme and if the council were to purchase that function would continue.

2 The HCA retain ownership of the estate. This is not an option as the property is part of their Local Stewardship Delivery Plan and is identified for disposal during the period 2012/15. The HCA have agreed to delay the disposal to the latest possible time in order to allow the Council to present the best possible case at the Link Road CPO Pubic Inquiry which closed in May. The HCA will proceed to market and dispose of the estate by March 2015 unless a sale to the Council is completed this year.

Reasons for recommendations

3 There are several reasons why the council should purchase the estate, the main ones being as follows:

- Financial return. Purchase of the estate has a positive financial benefit for council over the short to medium term. Assuming terms can be agreed to purchase for £1.75m the net rental income would cover the annual borrowing costs of £98k. The site is currently over 80% occupied and whilst there is a risk that the income may reduce should units become vacant or expenditure increase. Occupancy levels would need to fall to below 65% before the borrowing costs exceeded the net rental

income.

- There is further opportunity to improve the quality and occupancy of the estate by carrying out additional works including drainage and access improvement totalling £850k. The borrowing cost of this would be £66k per annum and will be met from rental income if current occupancy levels are maintained.

- To support business growth and economic development in the city/county. Currently there are limited employment sites within the city north of the river and none in Council ownership. Those employment sites there are have in the past been subject to successful planning applications/appeals to change of use to residential which has inhibited the retention/growth of some business. By securing ownership the council is not reliant solely on planning policy to control the future use of the site it is also able to deliver development at a time that meets with the demands of business rather than be influenced by other private sector objectives.

Key considerations

4 The Three Elms Trading Estate was purchased by Advantage West Midlands in 2006/7 and transferred to HCA in 2011. It comprises a site of approximately 7 acres of which approx 2 acres is undeveloped and in conjunction with the Council's adjoining 0.9 acres is capable of accommodating circa 60,000 sq ft of new industrial/warehouse space. There is currently some 61,500 sq ft of existing buildings of which 83% is let to a total of eleven tenants. The leases are all relatively short term i.e. will expire or with break clauses within the next five years and some units are currently occupied under licence pending completion of a lease. The site was purchased in support of the Council's delivery of the city centre regeneration scheme, primarily as a key employment site for the relocation of business from within the ESG area. While a significant part of the ESG scheme has been delivered i.e. retail quarter, further elements remain i.e. the link road and urban village. As such this key employment site still has a role in meeting the demand for business relocation and its ownership by a body that is committed to supporting the delivery of key Council objectives is desirable.

5 It should be noted that the Council does not propose to undertake any direct development of new buildings. It is envisaged that new development will take place by the Council working with occupiers or developers who will provide the funding for any new buildings. Although the option of direct development should not be ruled out subject to there being funds available and a robust business case presented at the time.

6 The Council owns approximately 0.9 acres of land adjacent to the northern boundary of the estate, which carries an estimated value of £200k as employment use land Whilst this land has outline planning permission for employment use, it cannot be accessed or serviced other than through the trading estate. The Council can only release the value of this area of land by either purchasing the trading estate and merging the two land areas to effectively increase the overall size of the trading estate; or by purchasing access rights and easements from the owners of the trading estate. The HCA have indicated that they would consider this but only if the land were to be sold at the same time as they sell the estate and the Council share the sale proceeds of its land on a 50/50 basis, i.e. the Council would only receive 50% of the commercial value of its land. A new owner may not be prepared to grant access or easements.

7 If the HCA offers the property for sale on the open market then a new purchaser will have different objectives and pressures and, while it may be possible for the Council to establish a relationship that will result in some recognition of Council priorities, these will

only be secondary and therefore delivery of Council objectives may be delayed or frustrated.

8 The Council already has an existing property portfolio and is experienced in owning and managing property of this type i.e. Rotherwas industrial estate. It has been managing the estate on behalf of the HCA for the last three years, albeit with short term management objectives which would need to change once owned by the Council. Initially existing staff from the Property Services and Economic Development teams would manage the property but additional support may be needed to manage the further investment and this would be funded from the surplus rental income or from the allocated capital budget.

Community impact

9 There is unlikely to be any immediate community impact following acquisition of the trading estate by the Council. However over time following implementation of the investment the built environment of the estate will improve and this should have a positive impact on the adjoining houses and users of the public open space. Further investment will over time result in more job opportunities for local people and more and better quality premises for business growth.

Equality and human rights

10 There are no equality or human rights issues associated with this project. The marketing and letting of vacant units will be compliant with equality and human rights policy.

Financial implications

11 It is proposed that the Council will use prudential borrowings of £2.6m to fund the project, being circa £1.75m for the purchase of the freehold and the balance i.e. £850k for the following site improvement works. The annual cost of borrowing the total amount would be £164k for 25 years. This is made up of £98k for the purchased of the freehold and £66k for improvement works. The current net rental income generated from the estate is £180k so will fund the repayment of the borrowings over a 25 year period.

12 It is anticipated that as planned improvement works are carried out occupancy and rents will increase or part disposals will generate capital receipts then the borrowings could be reduced.

13 After meeting borrowing costs, any surplus income will contribute to the Council's overall budget position.

14 Purchase of the trading estate will also enable the Council to realise and retain 100% of the value of its adjoining land (£200k) which already has outline planning permission for employment use.

Legal implications

15 Legal will need to conduct extensive due diligence to investigate key issues which could affect the viability of the proposed purchase to include reviewing all current lease and licence arrangements as if the site is acquired it will be subject to such occupation and whatever terms are in place will bind the council whether favourable or not..

16 Legal will need to review whether the proposed purchase improves the potential for the adjoining land.

17 There is no guarantee even if tenants have been paying rent and observing the covenants of their leases that they will continue to do so and thus the site could result in liabilities rather than income in the worst case scenario.

18 The opinion of the district Valuer will be necessary to attest to the market value of the purchase price.

19 It is proposed that the borrowing for the purchase is met via rents over a 25 year period. Unless the current tenants are all occupying pursuant to leases with another 25 years to run which is very unlikely this is not certain. All purchases of commercial property involve a level of risk but this does need to be accepted.

20 Procurement will need to be consulted as to the appointment of agents for marketing of units once the council is in a position to do so.

Risk management

21 There are the normal risks associated with owning commercial property i.e. non-payment of rent or arrears due to tenant cash flow/trading problems, tenant bankruptcy, empty property costs, unrecoverable repair and maintenance costs etc. Through the Council's existing staff resources and procedures, careful and active management, these risks will be managed and reduced where possible.

22 A down turn in the economy or increased borrowing costs may squeeze the rental income or increase the expenditure. However a number of sensitivity tests have been carried out and the project can stand an approximate 20% variance to income or expenditure without while still maintaining a self-funding position.

23 As part of the selling process reports are being commissioned on the condition of the existing buildings and services and once these are available the future investment plan will be finalised to accord with the priorities and available budget.

24 In the event that the Council should not purchase the estate from the HCA it will need to work with the HCA to agree a communication statement regarding the disposal.

Consultees

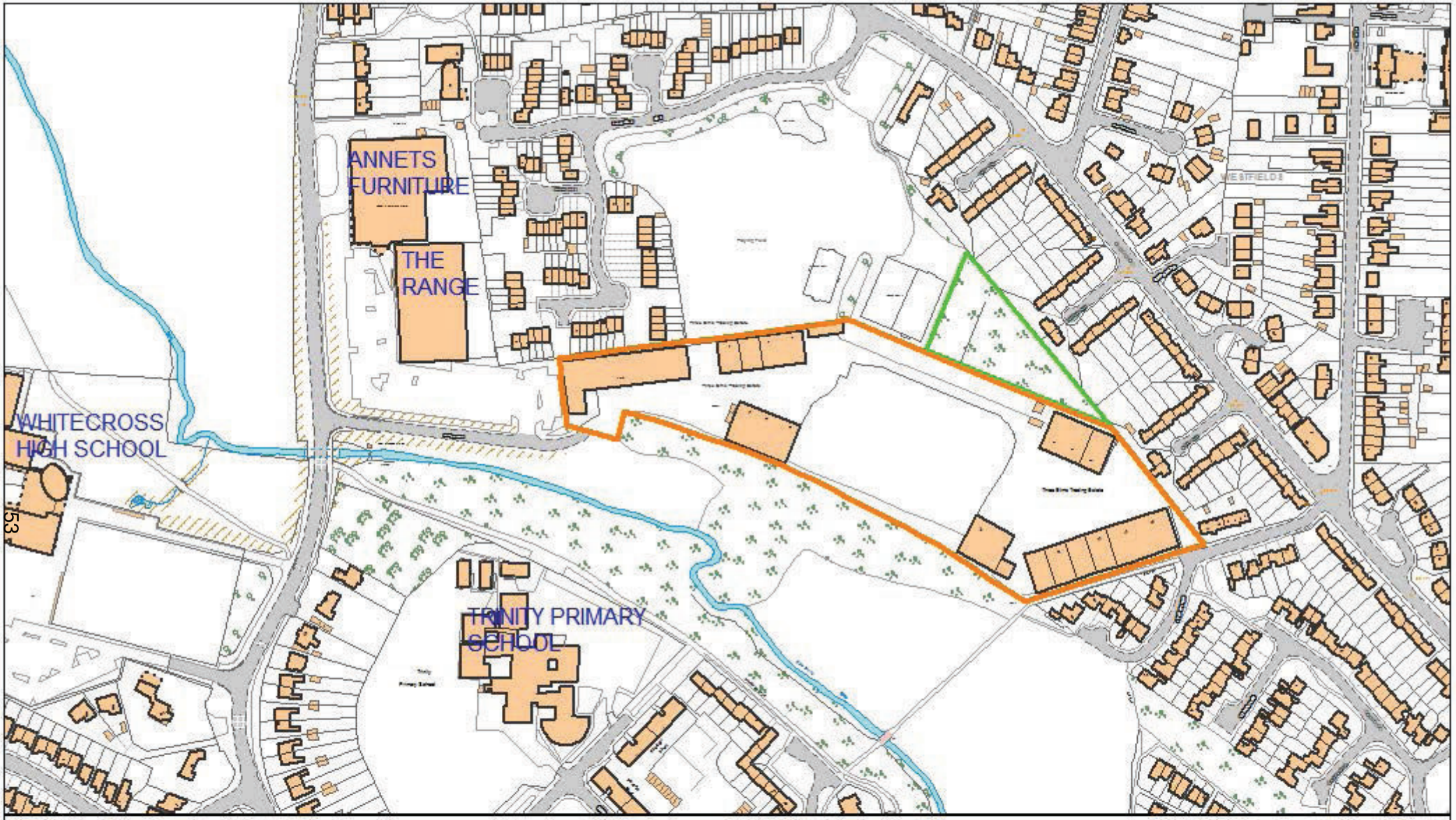
25 In addition to the seven internal consultees, the Economic Development Manager has been consulted on and is supportive of the report and its recommendations. We have consulted with the HCA regard to the Council's potential interest in purchasing the property. Following a decision on this report we will contact the tenants on the estate and advise of the (proposed) acquisition by the Council.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Map of estate and adjoining council land

Background papers

None identified.



Herefordshire Council

LOCATION PLAN - Land Ownership at Three Elms Trading Estate

NORTH

SCALE 1:3000

HCA Land Ownership

Herefordshire Council Land Ownership

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Herefordshire Council, Asset Management, PO Box 4, Hereford HR4 0XH propertyinformation@herefordshire.gov.uk

Herefordshire Council

MEETING:	**CABINET**
MEETING DATE:	**13 November 2014**
TITLE OF REPORT:	**SOUTH WYE TRANSPORT PACKAGE**
REPORT BY:	**Assistant Director Place Based Commissioning.**

Classification

Open

Key Decision

This is a key decision because it is likely to result in the council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates.

And

This is a key decision because it is likely to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising one or more wards in the county.

NOTICE has been served in accordance with Part 3, Section 9 (Publicity in connection with key decisions) of The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

Wards Affected

Hollington, Stoney Street, Belmont and St Martins & Hinton.

Purpose

To consider consultation responses and confirm a preferred package for a new link road from the A49 to the A465.

Recommendation(s)

THAT:

(a) route SC2 is selected as the preferred route for the Southern Link Road (SLR)

(b) authority is delegated to Assistant Director Place Based Commissioning to prepare and submit a planning application for a

scheme along route SC2.

(c) subject to planning consent being obtained authority is delegated to the Assistant Director Place Based Commissioning to continue detailed design of the scheme and develop proposals for land acquisition. A further report will be prepared for cabinet outlining land and property acquisition plans and draft orders in due course.

Alternative Options

1 No Road Option: If a route is not selected and a road scheme is not approved / route selected, the transport objectives within the South Wye area cannot be achieved. Economic growth at the Hereford Enterprise Zone would be impacted and congestion could not be reduced. This option would be inconsistent with Unitary Development Plan, emerging Local Development Framework and the Strategic Economic Plan for the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership.

2 Other route option selected – If a route other than SC2 is selected this would be inconsistent with best practice for route selection for road schemes. The process followed uses DfT Webtag as a framework for appraisal. If a route is selected which scores less than SC2 this could be challenged and would compromise scheme delivery.

Reasons for Recommendations

3 A package of measures that would overcome transport problems within the South Wye area of Hereford has been developed and assessed. The South Wye Transport Package (SWTP) has identified a number of possible improvements, covering different transportation modes, strategies and interventions.

4 The assessment has concluded that in order to address the transport problems within the South Wye area, a new Southern Link Road (SLR) from the A49 to the A465 (with a link to B4349) is necessary. This would generate additional capacity with new infrastructure to the south of Hereford. A new road would improve existing connections between the A465, A49 and the Hereford Enterprise Zone. It would support economic development and growth of the city in line with the Strategic Economic Plan for the Marches LEP.

5 Route options for this new road have been considered and appraised by the councils consultants Parsons Brinkerhoff (PB) and the results of their appraisal is set out in a preferred options report (South Wye Transport Package – Preferred Option Report (November 2014)) which can be found in Appendix 1.

6 This report describes the scheme development, and identified that an appraisal of the route options determined that four of the initial eight options represented feasible solutions to problems, with the other four routes sifted out due to environmental considerations.

7 Public consultation took place in July / August 2014 where the results of the appraisal of these four routes were set out and feedback was invited. Following consideration of this feedback detailed appraisal of a number of alternative alignments suggested by the public and third parties took place. These alternative alignments were appraised to the same level of detail as the four options originally consulted on. Each of the final

routes were appraised in terms of engineering considerations, economic outcomes, impact to the environment, and an assessment of the social implications of each route.

8 The Council's project team has reviewed the report and is satisfied with the conclusions. Using nationally recognised guidance in order to carry out a robust appraisal, Option SC2 has the highest score of all the routes appraised. This route corridor also received the highest levels of support based on feedback from public consultation. It is therefore recommended that this SC2 is selected as the preferred route to be taken forward for planning and implementation.

Key Considerations

Background

9 The aim of the South Wye Transport Package is to promote economic growth within Hereford while tackling specific problems in the South Wye area. The provision of transport infrastructure and improvements is to achieve this by unlocking the barriers for both housing and economic growth, including land at the Hereford Enterprise Zone (HEZ).

The aims of the South Wye Transport Package (SWTP) are:

Economic:

- Reduce congestion and delay
- Enable access, particularly to developments such as the HEZ

Environmental:

- Reduce the growth in emissions such as CO2, NOx and PM10s
- Reduce traffic noise

Health:

- Encourage physical activity
- Reduce accidents

10 The South Wye Transport Package has been developed to bring forward transport improvements in accordance with the Council's Local Transport Plan strategy for Hereford. It is also consistent with the adopted Unitary Development Plan, emerging Local Development Framework and the Strategic Economic Plan for the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership.

Technical Appraisal Process

11 Considerable technical work has been undertaken to develop and assess the various options for addressing the transport problems in the area. An appraisal of the different elements of the package has been undertaken using the Department for Transport guidance, WebTAG, as a framework. The approach taken is described below and in more detail within the appendices to this report.

12 A number of possible options that could address the problems and objectives of the study were identified. These elements covered many different transportation modes, strategies and interventions. The options are:

Traffic max – This approach aimed to generate maximum capacity for vehicles within the South Wye area by improving existing junctions or roads.

Sustainable transport max – This approach aimed to reduce the use of the private car through improvements to public transport, cycle routes and lanes, pedestrian crossings, traffic management, behavioural change activities, and small localised improvements.

New Southern Link Road (SLR) – This approach aimed to generate additional capacity with new infrastructure to the south of Hereford, in order to improve existing connections between the A465, A49 and the Rotherwas Estate.

13 Traffic Max - aimed to reduce the amount of congestion along the A465 by:

Widening the existing A465 to accommodate two lanes in each direction. This does not reduce the level of traffic, and does not have a significant impact upon the level of congestion. The current levels of noise and air quality problems are unchanged, while severance is increased due to the widened highway within the Belmont area.

Grade separation of the A49/A465 junction. This element would be prohibitively costly and would have significant environmental implications due to the proximity of local properties and the River Wye Special Area of Conservation.

Removal of traffic signals from the A49/A465 junction and remodelling of the junction. This element would have substantial safety implications for both vehicles and pedestrians. The level of congestion would also be expected to increase as a result, therefore making no improvement to the poor levels of noise and air quality.

14 These traffic max elements do not provide sufficient capacity to enable access to new developments such as the Hereford Enterprise Zone and the encouragement of physical activity by all ages.

15 Sustainable Transport Max : A package of sustainable transport measures within the Belmont and Holme Lacy Road areas aimed to:

Reduce severance caused by these highways within communities.

Promote physical activity through the use of walking and cycling for shorter distance trips.

Reduce accidents by reducing conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles.

Reduce congestion through modal shift. Additionally there is a complementary behavioural change element, aimed at maximising awareness, to encourage and support use of the improved sustainable travel offer.

16 Although the sustainable transport max option encourages modal shift and promotes physical activity, it does not fully alleviate the existing congestion and delays, nor does it unlock the barriers to development at the Hereford Enterprise Zone.

17 New Southern Link Road (SLR): The SLR would be a new single carriageway road connecting the B4349, the A465 and the A49. At this stage, eight options were

developed. Following the identification of the above options, further detailed work and appraisal was undertaken to sift the amount of options. The results of this analysis and appraisal illustrated that four of these options do not represent feasible solutions due to environmental considerations. These routes have been identified as affecting the designated ancient woodland area of Newton Coppice and Hayleasow Wood. The National Planning Policy Framework now identifies ancient woodland as an irreplaceable habitat that is unlikely to be fully mitigated, and the cost to mitigate the options in this area would be significant. There are also clear alternatives to avoid this significant environmental constraint and hence these options were not progressed further. Four remaining route options that did not affect this area of ancient woodland have been appraised. In addition, as outlined in paragraph 33 below, following consultation a further three options have subsequently been appraised following public consultation. This means that over the course of the whole route selection process a total of 11 options will have been considered.

18 Assessment has indicated that none of the three approaches in isolation satisfies all of the study objectives. The 'Traffic Max' approach does not provide substantial benefit within the South Wye area nor does it satisfy any of the study objectives. Therefore, this approach has not been deemed feasible. The 'Sustainable Max' and the 'New Southern Link Road' contribute to the delivery of the study objectives but do not satisfy all of the objectives in isolation. Therefore, the recommendation is to combine the 'New Southern Link Road' with elements of the 'Sustainable Transport Max' approach.

Package Appraisal

19 A high level qualitative assessment of the different packages that comprise the SWTP and a Stage 1 Appraisal of the different route options for a link road from the A49 to the A465 (with link to B4349) has been undertaken.

20 A package of measures was developed containing a number of elements that could address the problems in the South Wye area. These elements cover many different transportation modes, strategies and interventions.

21 In total eight options were initially developed for a new Southern Link Road from the A49 Ross Road/Rotherwas Access Road roundabout to the A465 and the B4349 Clehonger Road. As further detailed work and appraisal has been undertaken on these options, four routes were identified as affecting avoidable ancient woodland. National policy considers ancient woodland as an irreplaceable habitat which is unlikely to be fully mitigated. As a result these options were not considered further.

22 The following four route options were therefore appraised in detail as shown on the plan in Appendix 2.

23 These are:

SC2: a route located at the southern end of the Southern Link Road Route Corridor. The road crosses over the railway line and underneath Haywood Lane.

SC2A: a variation on SC2 whereby the road crosses underneath the railway line.

SC5: a route located further north of SC2/SC2A and south of Merryhill Lane. The road crosses underneath the railway line and Haywood Lane.

SC7: roughly similar to SC5 but more twisted in nature thereby avoiding a number of existing environmental constraints.

Public Consultation on appraisal results

24 Member briefings and public consultation was carried out over the summer 2014. A series of public exhibitions was held at the Three Counties Hotel, Hereford from Tuesday 1 to Thursday 3 July to set out proposals and obtain feedback. This exhibition set out the results of the appraisal of the four route options and showed SC2 as the best performing route when considered across all criteria considered as set out in the table below:

Appraisal Criteria	SC2	SC2A	SC5	SC7
ECONOMY				
Business users & transport providers	1	1	1	1
Reliability impact on Business users	1	1	1	1
Regeneration	3	3	3	3
Wider Impacts	2	2	2	2
ENVIRONMENT				
Noise	-3	-3	-3	-3
Air Quality(LOCAL)	-2	-2	-2	-2
Greenhouse gases	-1	-1	-1	-1
Landscape/Townscape	-2	-2	-3	-2
Historic Environment	-1.5	-1.5	-1.5	-1.5
Biodiversity	-2	-2	-2	-1.5
Water Environment	-1	-1	-1	-1
SOCIAL				
Commuting and Other users	1	1	1	1
Reliability impact on Commuting and Other users	1	1	1	1
Physical activity	-2	-2	-2	-2
Journey quality	2	2	1	1
Accidents	2	2	2	2
Security	2	2	2	2
Access to services	2	2	2	2
Affordability	1	1	1	1
Severance	1	1	1	1
Option and non-use values	0	0	0	0
PUBLIC ACCOUNTS				
Cost to Broad Transport Budget	2	1	0	0
Indirect Tax Revenues	0	0	0	0
Total	**6.5**	**5.5**	**2.5**	**4**

Note: The scores are made up of criteria under the main headings of Economy, Environment, Social and Public Accounts. The range for the scores is from -3 (Major Adverse), to 0 (Neutral), to +3 (Major Beneficial).

Local Members, residents and stakeholders were asked to provide feedback which would be considered alongside appraisal results and inform the choice of preferred route. The exhibitions were well attended with 199 people attending in total. Two further events were held at Belmont & Hereford Library which gave people who could not attend the Three Counties a chance to view the exhibition materials. The public consultation ran from 1 July to 8 August 2014. In total 253 people took the opportunity to respond to the consultation; sending comments using the questionnaire or providing detailed feedback in other formats. The results of this public consultation are set out in the report in Appendix 3.

25 When selecting which option was preferred, out of the 404 responses to this question, the results were as follows:

SC2 – 35%

SC2A – 23%

SC5 – 8%

SC7 – 8%

No Road – 26%

26 Whilst not supported by all, the responses from the questionnaires identified that route SC2 was the most preferred. This option was also supported by a 73-name petition.

27 The alternative 'No Road' option to the SLR received the second highest number of positive responses.

28 Route SC2A was also received well. This route follows the same alignment as SC2, only differing by going under the railway line.

29 The two SLR options that have a northern alignment, SC5 and SC7, received the lowest amount of support from the public.

30 As well as the questionnaire responses, there have also been additional queries and letters, which have provided feedback from the public and other stakeholders. Some of these letters debated which road choice would affect residents the most, with more responses concluding that the alignments for SC2 and SC2A would affect fewer properties.

31 The responses from local residents also included requests to consider the proposed alignments in relation to their land and properties. Opinions were expressed that perhaps additional routes could be designed to achieve an option that would affect fewer residents.

Further appraisal to consider issues raised at public consultation

32 It is important that the feedback from consultation is considered to ensure that a robust process is followed in the selection of a preferred route. Some of the responses required detailed consideration and undertaking further technical work to properly consider the issues raised.

33 This work has now been carried out and included the consideration of three further potential route options. These have been assessed to the same level of detail as the four routes which were consulted upon over the summer to ensure the Council has the required level of understanding to allow a decision to be taken regarding a preferred route. The three additional route options are illustrated on the plan in Appendix 4 and in summary are:

Option SC8: Option SC8 passes through the northern part of Grafton Wood and, in a generally westerly direction, crosses to the south of the densely wooded area between Lane and Withy Brook. It crosses Grafton Lane at grade and the route climbs over the railway line on embankment and then dips down in cutting underneath Haywood Lane, passing to the south of Beech Grove/Merry Hill. The road turns in a north-westerly direction avoiding Newton Coppice before tying into a new roundabout on the A465. A new link is provided from this roundabout to the B4349 Clehonger Road avoiding the property known as Pykeways.

Option SC8A - The alignment of Option SC8A is identical to SC8 above except that the new road passes underneath the railway line in a deep excavation.

Option SC9 - Option SC9 is largely based on the horizontal alignment of Option SC8. The difference lies within the central section where the route is aligned to cross the railway line in a near perpendicular angle, in order to simplify the bridge crossing. In so doing the route climbs over the railway on embankment and then turns westwards towards Haywood Lane to pass over the lane.

34 The results of the appraisal of these three routes are summarised in the table below and set alongside results of appraisal of four routes which were consulted upon. SC2 remains the overall best technically performing route following this additional technical appraisal carried out to take account of responses submitted during the public consultation.

Appraisal Criteria	SC2	SC2A	SC5	SC7	SC8	SC8A	SC9
ECONOMY							
Business users & transport providers	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Reliability impact on Business users	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Regeneration	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Wider Impacts	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
ENVIRONMENT							
Noise	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3
Air Quality(LOCAL)	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2
Greenhouse gases	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1
Landscape/Townscape	-2	-2	-3	-2	-2	-2	-3
Historic Environment	-1.5	-1.5	-1.5	-1.5	-1.5	-1.5	-2
Biodiversity	-2	-2	-2	-1.5	-2	-2	-2
Water Environment	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1
SOCIAL							
Commuting and Other users	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Reliability impact on Commuting and Other users	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Physical activity	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2
Journey quality	2	2	1	1	2	2	2
Accidents	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Security	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Access to services	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Affordability	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Severance	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Option and non-use values	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PUBLIC ACCOUNTS							
Cost to Broad Transport Budget	2	1	0	0	1.5	0	2
Indirect Tax Revenues	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	**6.5**	**5.5**	**2.5**	**4**	**6**	**4.5**	**5**

Note: The scores are made up of criteria under the mian headings of Economy, Environment, Social and Public Accounts. The range for the scores is from -3 (Major Adverse), to 0 (Neutral), to +3 (Major Beneficial).

Conclusion and next steps

35 A complex and detailed appraisal has been carried out of the proposals which comprise the South Wye Transport Package. The provision of new road infrastructure in the form of a new Southern Link Road from the A49 to the A465 (with a link to B4349) to the south of Hereford is a key part of the proposals. In order to progress this scheme, it is now necessary for the Council to select a preferred route to allow a detailed scheme to be prepared for submission for planning permission. A range of options have been appraised using national guidance by our consultants Parsons Brinkerhoff and the results presented within this report. The Council's project team, including representatives from Balfour Beatty, has reviewed the work carried out and is satisfied that the results are valid. Cabinet is therefore invited to support the

recommendations of this report and confirm SC2 as the preferred route for the provision of a new Southern Link Road from the A49 to the A465 (with a link to B4349). In addition, that this be progressed alongside the other elements of the South Wye Transport Package and that a planning application be prepared and submitted as soon as is practicable.

36 Subject to the recommendations being approved, a planning application will be completed. This will include the results of the detailed assessment of the options and an Environmental Statement (ES). The ES will describe which alternative routes were considered, and why one route was selected and the others were discounted. This will take into account, not only the environmental, social and economic constraints identified in this report, but also the results of the Public Consultation carried out.

37 Subject to planning permission being secured the following outline delivery programme would be anticipated, subject to funding and all the necessary approvals being confirmed.

Planning Application	December 2014
Planning Determination	Spring 2015
Complete Detailed Design	Winter 2015
CPO Process	Spring 2016
Construction Commences	Winter 2016
Construction Complete	end 2017 / early 2018

38 The delivery of a new road scheme inevitably has an impact upon land and residents in the vicinity. Residents potentially directly affected by the Southern Link Road have been kept informed throughout the process and provided with opportunities to feedback as part of the consultation carried out. With the selection of a preferred route, some residents will be more and less affected by the chosen route. It is recognised that this is a significant concern for those affected and the Council will continue to ensure that residents are treated with fairness and respect throughout the process and are kept informed during the delivery of this scheme. The approach to acquiring the land required for the scheme will be developed over the coming months and may require the use of a compulsory purchase order process or other suitable powers. This will be the subject of a further report once planning permission has been secured.

Community Impact

39 The economic, environmental and health objectives of the South Wye Transport Package (SWTP) and the Southern Link Road (SLR) contribute to the corporate plan and health and wellbeing strategy. The SWTP aims to reduce congestion and enable access to developments such as the Hereford Enterprise Zone. A package of measures alongside the new SLR will reduce growth in emissions such as CO2 and NOx and reduce traffic noise. The sustainable measures on Holme Lacy and Belmont Road and other links to improve connections to the city cycle network alongside a programme of behavioural change aims to encourage physical activity and reduce accidents.

Equality and Human Rights

40 This decision pays due regard to public sector equality duty as set out below:

Note: Under Section 149, the "General Duty" on public authorities is set out thus:

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

eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct ... prohibited by or under this Act;

advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it."

41 The appraisal process used to select a preferred route for the SLR assesses the impact of the scheme equally across all route options considered. Social impacts of each route are considered alongside economy, environmental and public account criteria. WebTag requires appraisal of how costs and benefits of a scheme accrue to different groups in society.

Financial Implications

42 A provisional allocation of £27m of Government funding for the delivery of this project has been made through the Marches LEP.

43 This funding is allocated to support the implementation of the South Wye Transport Package which comprises the Southern Link road and complementary sustainable transport measures. Any match funding required to deliver the overall package is anticipated to come from private sector contributions and existing transport capital allocations.

44 The costs of carrying out the route appraisal and consultation processes during the current year have been funded from the council's revenue budget allocation for the scheme of £0.5m

45 Confirmation of SC2 as the preferred route will enable the costs to prepare a planning application and the future costs of completing the detailed design, land and construction to be capitalised. It is anticipated that these capital costs associated with the scheme to remain on programme will be £1.6m to be funded from the council's transport capital allocation. In 2014/15 this is estimated to be £0.6m and £1m in 2015/16, pending the drawing down of Government funding. The process the council will need to follow to draw down funding for the scheme is currently being developed by the Department for Transport.

46 The current estimated cost for the delivery of the Southern Link Road along the recommended route of SC2 is £25m including the £1.6m in paragraph 45. Any remaining funding following the delivery of the SLR will be used to deliver the complementary sustainable transport measures in the South Wye area.

Legal Implications

47 There is no statutory public consultation process required in the choice of a preferred route.

48 However there is a common law duty to act fairly but the content of that duty varies, depending upon the circumstances. Given that the construction of the southern link road will adversely affect legally protected interests it would be considered fair to carry out public consultation when choosing a preferred route. This has been carried out during the summer as outlined earlier in the report.

49 The Council's common law obligation to consult goes no further than letting those who have a potential interest in the matter know, in clear terms what the proposal is and the reasons for it.

50 It is noted that, as a result of the public consultation, further possible routes SC8, SC8A and SC9, were further considered by the council's consultants and subjected to the same intensity of appraisal as the other routes.

51 Given the additional suggested alternative routes, which arose out of the public consultation, the possibility of a public re-consultation exercise needs to be considered.

52 In this regard, case law has determined that if there is to be a re-consultation there must be a "fundamental difference" between the previous proposals consulted on and those now recommended (R v Shropshire Health Authority ex p Duffus (1990) and in the very recent Supreme Court case R (on the application of Moseley (in substitution of Stirling Deceased)) (Appellant) v London Borough of Haringey (Respondent) (2014), the court did not order that the consultation should be re-run, ruling that to do so would be disproportionate.

53 It is noted that the additional alternative routes were further considered by the council's consultants, and subjected to the same intensity of appraisal as the other routes. From the consultant's report, it is also noted that the preferred SC2 route, (which was subject to public consultation), is a projected £1m less expensive than any of the alternatives, and a projected £1.6m less expensive than the alternative SC8 route. The SC2 route is also the highest scoring of all the alternatives. Given this, it is considered it would be disproportionate in having to re-consult the public on the preferred route.

Risk Management

54 Residents and statutory bodies could lodge successful objections to the South Wye Transport Package and Southern Link Road at future statutory stages if the Council does not carry out a robust appraisal process in relation to scheme selection. This is being mitigated by appointing internationally respected consultants Parsons Brinckerhoff and following an approach in line with nationally recognised transport guidance. In addition, the work of our consultants is reviewed and challenged through a project team involving technical officers from within the Council and our delivery partner Balfour Beatty. Legal advice has been sought which confirms that the appraisal process followed to date is sound.

55 Funding could be withdrawn if a preferred route is not selected and a planning application submitted in accordance with the programme outlined within this report. This risk has been mitigated by ensuring a robust process has been carried out to enable a preferred route to be recommended to cabinet in this report. Resources are also in place to enable the submission of a planning application for the recommended preferred route.

56 Whilst a provisional allocation of Government funding has been made to fund the South Wye Package, the council will be required to complete further funding submissions to the Department for Transport to draw down the funding. The project team will continue to draw upon the expertise of technical consultants to ensure these submissions are robust and the allocated funding is drawn down to enable the scheme to progress in accordance with the programme outlined above. Delays to funding being released by the Department for Transport could result in a delay to the delivery of the scheme and the need to continue to fund development costs for the scheme from existing funding.

Consultees

57 Following a number of member briefings in late June a series of public exhibitions was held at the Three Counties Hotel Hereford from Tuesday 1 to Thursday 3 July to set out proposals and obtain feedback. The exhibitions were well attended with 199 people attending in total. Two further events were held at Belmont & Hereford Library. The public consultation ran from 1 July to 8 August 2014. In total 253 people took the opportunity to respond to the consultation; sending comments using the questionnaire or providing detailed feedback in other formats. The results of this public consultation are set out in the report in Appendix 3.

58 Consultation with stakeholders such as Natural England and the Environment Agency has commenced as well as English Heritage and will continue during the planning process.

Appendices

Appendix 1 South Wye Transport Package – Preferred Route Option (November 2014)

Appendix 2 Route Options

Appendix 3 South Wye Transport Package – Public Consultation

Appendix 4 – Additional Route Options

Background Papers

- None identified.

PARSONS BRINCKERHOFF

Balfour Beatty Living Places

November 2014

SOUTH WYE TRANSPORT PACKAGE PREFERRED OPTION REPORT

Herefordshire Council

3512983A-HHR

Final

South Wye Transport Package
Preferred Option Report

3512983A-HHR

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APPENDIX A: Appraisal Summary Tables – SLR Options
APPENDIX B: Appraisal Summary Tables – SLR Options Including Sustainable Transport Package

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Parsons Brinckerhoff (PB) has been commissioned by Balfour Beatty Living Places (BBLP) on behalf of Herefordshire Council (HC) to develop options for improving the transport conditions in the South Wye area of Hereford. Figure 1 at the rear of this report illustrates the study area. Various improvements, considered as a package of measures, have been analysed in the process. These improvements are described as the South Wye Transport Package (SWTP).

1.1.2 The SWTP builds upon the initial work undertaken by Amey regarding highway improvements to the Belmont Area. Option development for a new Southern Link Road (SLR) is one measure in the package of measures. Other measures included the following:

Traffic max – This approach aimed to generate maximum capacity for vehicles within the South Wye area by improving existing junctions or roads.

Sustainable transport max – This approach aimed to reduce the use of the private car through improvements to public transport, cycle routes and lanes, pedestrian crossings, traffic management, behavioural change activities, and small localised improvements.

1.1.3 The development of these measures is outlined in the SWTP – Package Assembly Report.

1.1.4 The aim of this report is to consider the route options for the new SLR, and identify a preferred route to be included as part of the SWTP.

1.2 Scheme History and Development

1.2.1 The 'Hereford Relief Road' is considered to be a key strategic transport proposal to relieve the city of its current congestion levels and enable delivery of the council's Core Strategy. Potential corridors orbiting Hereford have been identified across a number of studies, one of these being the 'Southern Corridor'.

1.2.2 The Hereford Relief Road Study of Options Report in 2010 considered two routes options for a link between the A49 and the A465. These two routes differed to consider the impacts upon the special wildlife site and were designed to exploit the optimum crossing locations of both the railway line and minor roads.

1.2.3 The Hereford Relief Road Southern Core Corridor Assessment Report, which was undertaken by Amey in May 2012, included six variations for a Southern Link Road. This was further refined in the Belmont Transport Package to eight different options in December 2012. These eight route options are illustrated in Figure 2 at the rear of this report.

1.2.4 PB undertook further assessment and refinement of these options in 2013, in preparation for a 2014 planning application. The results of this appraisal illustrated that four of these options do not represent practical solutions to the transportation problems due to environmental considerations, as they were identified as affecting the ancient woodland of Newton Coppice and Hayleasow Wood.

1.2.5 Both woodlands are mapped by Natural England as Ancient Woodland. Ancient woodland is land that has had a continuous woodland cover since at least 1600 AD and may be ancient semi-natural woodland, which retains a native tree and shrub cover that has not been planted, although it may have been managed by coppicing or felling and allowed to regenerate naturally, or ancient replanted woodland where the original tree cover has been felled and replaced by planting, often with conifers, and usually over the last century. The removal of conifers is often one of the key principles to the restoration of ancient woodland.

1.2.6 Hayleasow Wood and Newton Coppice have been mapped with elements of both types of ancient woodland (semi-natural and re-planted). At a local level, the woodlands are protected by Council Policy as they are designated as Special Wildlife Site SO43/18: "Hayleasow Wood, Newton Coppice and Spring Grove SWS - an area of ancient woodland, with a small number of introduced species. Oak is dominant, with hazel coppice".

1.2.7 During initial survey works undertaken by Parsons Brinckerhoff to date, several plant species were noted in both woodlands which can be indicators of ancient woodland, because they are often not effective colonisers of plantations or secondary woodland. Species identified included Herb-Paris (Paris quadrifolia), bluebell (Hyacinthoides non-scripta), wood anemone (Anemone nemorosa), yellow archangel (Lamiastrum galeobdolen) and dog's mercury (Mercurialis perennis).

1.2.8 The National Planning Policy Framework now identifies ancient woodland as an irreplaceable habitat that is unlikely to be fully mitigated, and the cost to mitigate the options in this area would be significant. There are also clear alternatives to avoid this significant environmental constraint.

1.2.9 These options would also affect additional properties in the vicinity of the B4349 / A465 junction, as the proposed connection to the A465 would enlarge the current junction.

1.2.10 The remaining four route options for the SLR were presented at a public consultation exhibition during July 2014. These options were:

- SC2: a route located at the southern end of the previously identified SLR route corridor. The road crosses over the railway line and underneath Haywood Lane.
- SC2A: a variation on SC2 whereby the road crosses underneath the railway line.
- SC5: a route located further north of SC2/SC2A within the SLR Route Corridor and south of Merryhill Lane. The road crosses underneath the railway line and Haywood Lane.
- SC7: roughly similar to SC5 but more twisted in nature thereby avoiding a number of existing environmental constraints.

1.2.11 During the consultation process, the public and third parties suggested a number of alternative alignments. The suggestions were considered in advance of this report being finalised.

1.3 Purpose of the Preferred Option Report

1.3.1 This Preferred Option Report describes the results of the appraisal of the various SLR route options as part of the SWTP. The report follows the principles of the guidance outlined in WebTAG, with a review against stakeholder acceptability and deliverability, with the objective of providing a recommendation for a preferred route.

2 POLICY, OBJECTIVES AND APPRAISAL METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 This Preferred Option Report describes how the preferred route for the Southern Link Road (SLR) has been identified using the WebTAG appraisal process as a framework tool. The results of this assessment will then be presented as part of the planning application within the 'alternatives' section of the Environmental Statement (ES). The ES will describe which alternative routes were considered, and why one route was selected and the others were discounted. This will take into account not only the environmental, social and economic constraints identified in this report, but also the results of the public consultation carried out in July and August 2014.

2.2 Transport Policy

2.2.1 As stated in paragraph 1.2.1, a 'Hereford Relief Road' has been identified as a key strategic transport proposal to relieve the city of its current congestion levels and to ensure proposed growth can be accommodated. A 'Southern Corridor' has been identified as a potential route that is part of a network providing relief to Hereford.

2.2.2 The Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Strategic Economic Plan sets out how the LEP aims to unlock growth and prosperity across the area. It sets out priorities in addressing areas of business need, including transport, education and investment need, whilst unlocking land for housing and employment growth.

2.2.3 The Marches LEP has identified Hereford as an Urban Powerhouse, which will play a vital part in the accelerated growth for the LEP area. Part of Rotherwas Estate was awarded Enterprise Zone status in 2011, creating a focal point for the creation of new businesses and jobs.

2.2.4 Improvements to existing infrastructure are fundamental to the delivery of the Hereford Enterprise Zone (HEZ) as development is currently being constrained by the high levels of congestion across the city. Unlocking land for both housing and employment growth, including land at the HEZ, will enable development to go forward.

2.2.5 Herefordshire Council's Core Strategy has set objectives to promote:

- 'social progress (supporting strong communities by meeting housing, education and health, transport and infrastructure needs) including the development of 1,000 homes at Bullingham;
- economic prosperity (supporting new jobs, area regeneration, business, tourism and retail); and
- environmental quality (addressing climate change, protecting and enhancing the environmental assets of the county).'

2.2.6 Herefordshire Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP) identifies that an efficient transport network is essential and important for the county's economy, the ability to access services and maintain independence. The LTP therefore sets objectives to:

- reduce short distance car based trips and the impact of car access;
- support regeneration and the successful investment in jobs at the Hereford Enterprise Zone;

- ensure that the county's highway network remains fit for purpose and is safe; and
- provide alternatives so that longer distance commuters could reduce their car use and adopt healthier lifestyles.

2.3 Package Objectives

2.3.1 Specific problems identified within the South Wye area are caused by low network capacity as a result of a limited number of crossings of the River Wye, resulting in significant levels of congestion along the A465 and A49. This has resulted in poor levels of air quality, noise, and public transport usage, which has resulted in large numbers of short distance trips being made by car. This in turn has led to less physical activity, which is a contributing factor to increased levels of obesity and other associated health problems. These problems are expected to increase if no action is taken.

2.3.2 The aim of the South Wye Transport Package (SWTP) and the SLR is to promote the council's aspirations for Hereford and the wider region while tackling the specific problems identified within the South Wye area. Specific objectives have been identified for the study to provide key aims against which the different elements can be assessed. These are:

- **Economic:**
  - Reduce congestion and delay
  - Enable access, particularly to developments such as the HEZ
- **Environmental:**
  - Reduce the growth in emissions such as CO2, NOx and PM10s
  - Reduce traffic noise
- **Health:**
  - Encourage physical activity
  - Reduce accidents

2.4 Appraisal Methodology

2.4.1 The appraisal of the different elements of the package and the SLR options used the principles of a Stage 1 level of appraisal outlined in the Department for Transport guidance WebTAG to identify a preferred route for the SLR.

2.4.2 The remaining chapters of this report appraise the four route options for the SLR to identify a preferred route.

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3 EXISTING CONDITIONS – TRANSPORT

3.1 Description of the Locality

3.1.1 The cathedral city of Hereford is the main service centre and largest urban area in Herefordshire. The city lies on the River Wye, and is approximately 16 miles east of the English border with Wales, 24 miles southwest of Worcester, and 23 miles northwest of Gloucester.

3.1.2 Herefordshire's Economic Development Strategy outlines four key aims that are essential for creating a strong economy. This is achieved by sustaining business survival and growth, increasing wage levels, having a skilled population to meet future work needs and developing the county's built infrastructure so enterprise can flourish

3.1.3 Hereford has an unemployment rate of 6%, which is slightly higher than the unemployment rate for Herefordshire (4%). However, this is still lower in comparison with the average for England (6%). Of those whom are economically active, 56% are in full time employment and 23% are in part-time employment[1].

3.1.4 Herefordshire had the lowest median earnings of all 14 West Midlands authorities, as has been the case for the past five years. It was also lower than Monmouthshire, Powys and Gloucestershire and is the lowest out of the nearest neighbour grouping of local authorities. In fact, Herefordshire had the second lowest median earnings out of all upper tier authorities in Great Britain, after Blaenau Gwent.

3.1.5 The dominant choice of mode for the purpose of travelling to work in Hereford is the car, accounting for 55% of modal share. The contribution of sustainable modes is dominated by journeys by foot, with 22%. The bicycle accounts for 8% of modal share, and bus, minibus or coach 2%. The average distance for trips to work in Hereford is 11.8 km, with the majority being less than 2km.

3.1.6 Journey times and reliability in Hereford are currently limited by congestion along the network. As such, the associated problems with shipping and receiving goods around Hereford have been raised by businesses. This issue further jeopardises the competitiveness of the businesses operating in and through Hereford and ultimately affects the performance of local firms.

3.1.7 The economic development strategy for Herefordshire recommends that there needs to be greater connectivity between businesses as well as improving transport infrastructure.

3.2 Land Use

3.2.1 The city of Hereford is Herefordshire's main centre for employment, administration, health, education, and shopping. Most of these land uses are north of the river Wye; with neighbourhood centres in the South Wye area at Putson, Hinton, Hunderton, and Redhill. Figure 3 identifies the key trip generators in the study area.

3.2.2 The majority of the land in the South Wye area is residential, industrial and agricultural.

[11] 2011 Census data

Residential

3.2.4 Hereford has a population of approximately 60,000, with two thirds of these residents living south of the river. Residential areas in the study area include Redhill, Hunderton, and Hinton.

3.2.5 A strategic location to the south of the city at Lower Bullingham has been identified as an expansion area for urban growth. This Southern Urban Expansion will be a mixed use development, with around 1,000 new homes.

Industrial

3.2.6 The Hereford Enterprise Zone (HEZ) is located to the south-east of the city, on the Rotherwas Industrial Estate. The Enterprise Zone has a focus on the defence and security sector, and has been named Skylon Park. It is a 71 ha site, and is made up of three development areas; South Magazine, North Magazine, and Chapel Road.

3.2.7 The HEZ is located on the B4399, and benefits from the Rotherwas Access Road, which was completed in June 2008. This access road provides the estate with access to the A49, which connects with the M50 to the south, providing access to the M5.

Agriculture

3.2.8 A significant portion of the land within the South Wye study area is rural in nature, with farms located in Grafton, Merryhill, and along Haywood Lane.

3.3 Highway Network

3.3.1 The main roads located south of Hereford are the A49 Ross Road, the A465 Abergavenny Road, the B4399 Rotherwas Access Road, and the B4349 Clehonger Road. These are illustrated on Figure 4, which can be found at the rear of this report. All these single carriageway roads, of varying standard, are County Roads with the exception of the A49, which is a Trunk Road falling under the responsibility of the Highways Agency (Area 9).

3.3.2 There are traffic related issues currently in the Belmont area to the south of Hereford town centre. This is particularly evident on the approach to the junction of the A49(T) and the A465, near what is locally referred to as the Asda Roundabout.

3.3.3 There are also two minor roads located in the countryside. These are known as Grafton Lane and Haywood Lane. Grafton Lane is accessed from the A49(T) and Haywood Lane is accessed from the A465. Both are linked to the south near the hamlet of Callow, and a previous cross-link further north along Merryhill Lane has been altered allowing access to residents only. At peak times during weekdays there is a tendency for Grafton Lane and, in particular, Haywood Lane to be used as cross-country 'rat runs'.

3.4 Pedestrian and Cycling

3.4.1 The South Wye area is relatively well served with walking and cycling facilities as shown in Figure 5 (rear of report). This includes the Great Western Way shared use path, linking south-west Hereford to the city centre and beyond, and the recently opened Connect 2 link between the Hereford Enterprise Zone and the city centre.

3.4.2 The walking facilities in the area are generally good, with footpaths, drop kerbs, lighting, and crossings in appropriate places. However, the large volume of traffic on the A465 and A49 causes severance within the community and wide junction mouths at several locations further detract from walking.

3.4.3 As shown in Figure 5, the area is well served by cycling routes, and more than 10% of people cycle to work in several parts of the South Wye area (2011 Census). However, there are gaps in the cycling network, including adjacent to the A465 and A49, and limited east to west links.

3.4.4 There are currently no footpath or cycle paths on the A49 and A465 at either end of the proposed Southern Link Road.

3.5 Public Transport

3.5.1 The existing bus routes in the area are shown in Figure 6, at the rear of this report. There are frequent Monday to Saturday daytime services calling at Belmont, Hunderton, Newton Farm, Redhill, and Putson. However, Rotherwas and Lower Bullingham are less well served and many bus routes have long journey times and an unreliable service due to traffic congestion.

3.5.2 Bus occupancy surveys were conducted during 2012 across the city centre at 11 cordon sites. The survey showed the busiest route during the AM (08:00-09:00) and IP (11:00-12:00) periods was Belmont Road north of Belmont Avenue (Inbound), with a total of 105 passengers in the AM peak and 91 passengers between 11:00 and 12:00.

3.5.3 In May 2014, Herefordshire Council reported on a consultation on Herefordshire bus services, stating the need to save one million pounds from the transport budget over the next two years. Over two thirds of respondents were currently able to access their bus stop within 10 minutes. If their main bus service was no longer available 37% would travel by car and 10% by taxi, which would lead to further traffic congestion in the area.

3.5.4 Hereford railway station, managed by Arriva Trains Wales, is located north of the city centre, providing direct services to Worcester, Birmingham and Cardiff. The railway station has a car park with 175 spaces and 50 cycle storage spaces, and the bus services that serve south of the Wye also serve the city centre, within walking distance to the railway station.

3.6 Traffic Flows

3.6.1 Base year (2012) traffic flows on key roads, extracted from the validated Herefordshire Council SATURN model, developed based on actual traffic counts in 2012, are shown in Table 1 below. The AM and PM peak demand flows are also illustrated on Figure 7 at the rear of this report.

Link	Dir	AM (08:00-09:00)	IP (Avg 10:00-16:00)	PM (17:00-18:00)	24hr AADT
A465 west of SLR	NE	207	234	317	3,140
A465 west of SLR	SW	281	220	318	3,273
A465 Belmont Rd west of Tescos Roundabout	NE	416	370	548	5,377
A465 Belmont Rd west of Tescos Roundabout	SW	522	351	663	5,907
A465 Belmont Rd west of Walnut Tree Ave	NE	622	700	775	8,907
A465 Belmont Rd west of Walnut Tree Ave	SW	681	675	1,192	10,139
A465 Belmont Rd west of Belmont Roundabout	NE	1,036	749	722	10,341
A465 Belmont Rd west of Belmont Roundabout	SW	648	757	1,156	10,484
Walnut Tree Avenue	EB	285	249	353	3,591
Walnut Tree Avenue	WB	404	249	380	4,024
A49 north of Belmont Roundabout	NB	2,308	1,685	1,844	23,833
A49 north of Belmont Roundabout	SB	1,735	1,733	2,522	24,405
A49 north of Walnut Tree Ave	NB	1,320	784	1,025	12,329
A49 north of Walnut Tree Ave	SB	772	710	891	9,769
A49 Ross Road south of Walnut Tree Ave	NB	1,039	564	728	9,111
A49 Ross Road south of Walnut Tree Ave	SB	633	629	990	9,086
Holme Lacy Road east of A49	EB	552	419	375	5,615
Holme Lacy Road east of A49	WB	738	519	884	8,344
The Straight Mile	EB	287	133	279	2,587
The Straight Mile	WB	241	139	296	2,543
B3499 Rotherwas Access Road	NB	223	71	71	1,363
B3499 Rotherwas Access Road	SB	93	68	198	1,323

Table 1: 2012 Traffic Flows

3.6.2 The results show the highest flows occur on the A49 north of Belmont Roundabout, A49 north of Walnut Tree Ave, and A465 Belmont Road west of Belmont Roundabout.

3.6.3 An assessment of link capacity according to DMRB guidance TA79/99 reveals that all links were operating within capacity in 2012.

3.6.4 A high proportion of short distance trips within Hereford are made by car, leading to congestion, less physical activity and obesity. In addition, there is a low level of resilience in the network, and blockages on the River Wye crossing can cause severe congestion.

3.6.5 If nothing is done, traffic flows on the A49 and A465 are forecast to increase over time as a result of economic growth. We can therefore expect increased congestion along the A49 and A465, causing increased severance, lower accessibility to public transport, and further social deprivation as a result of constrained economic and housing development.

3.7 Accidents

3.7.1 An accident plot showing accidents within the South Wye area can be found in Figure 8 at the rear of this report, and a summary is shown in Table 2.

3.7.2 During the 5 year period from January 2009 to December 2013, there were a total of 281 road casualties in the study area. There were 3 fatal casualties, 22 serious, and 256 slight. In addition, 38 of the casualties involved pedestrians and 51 involved cyclists.

Year	All Casualties	Slight	Serious	Fatal	Pedestrian	Cyclist
2009	96	87	8	1	11	15
2010	53	51	2	0	5	10
2011	54	50	2	2	15	6
2012	41	35	6	0	2	11
2013	37	33	4	0	5	9
TOTAL	281	256	22	3	38	51

Table 2: Casualties in South Wye Area

3.7.3 The overall trend in accidents and casualties the South Wye area is downward. As could be expected, there are clusters of accidents around major junctions, and in particular the Belmont Roundabout.

3.7.4 There is a notable cluster of pedestrian casualties on the A465 adjacent to Our Lady's Church, and a cluster of cycle casualties at the junction of Hoarwithy Road and Holme Lacy Road, which has recently been the subject of a road safety scheme. There are also a string of cycle casualties on the A465 to the west of the Tesco's roundabout.

3.8 Statutory Undertakers

3.8.1 The following Statutory Undertakers currently have apparatus within the area identified for the SLR routes:

- British Telecom (BT) has underground and overhead cables in the area, which generally run north to south along the existing road/lane network.
- National Grid (gas) have a medium pressure gas main on the B4349 Clehonger Road.
- Western Power Distribution (WPD) have underground and overhead cables ranging from Low Voltage to High Voltage (up to 66kV). These cables generally cross east to west between the A49(T) and the A465. Route Options SC2 and SC2A are affected less than SC5 and SC7.
- Dwr Cymru Welsh Water have water supply mains in the area, which generally run north to south along the existing road/lane network.

4 EXISTING CONDITIONS – ENVIRONMENTAL

4.1 Air Quality

4.1.1 Air quality in the area immediately surrounding the SLR routes is generally good. Road transport is the dominant local source of pollutants.

4.1.2 Herefordshire Council has declared two Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) and is in the process of assessing the determination of a third. These are areas in which one or more of the objectives for ambient air quality set out in the UK's Air Quality Strategy are not being met. In Hereford, all AQMAs are in built up areas, and have been declared as a result of the exceedance of the objective for annual mean nitrogen dioxide concentrations.

4.1.3 The closest AQMA to the proposed scheme is Hereford City AQMA, in which monitored roadside concentrations of nitrogen dioxide exceed the objective (40µg/m^3) by some margin and show no strong trend over time. This lies 2.6km to the north of the scheme and is connected to the scheme via the A49 and the A465.

4.1.4 Baseline air quality monitoring has been undertaken at 11 locations across the study area in order to determine existing baseline nitrogen dioxide concentrations in ambient air. These locations are illustrated in Figure 9.



Figure 9: Location of Diffusion Tube Monitoring Sites

4.1.5 The results from the air quality monitoring are shown in Table 3. The standard for NO_2 as defined in the Air Quality Strategy for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland 2007 (Defra in partnership with the Scottish Executive, Welsh Assembly Government and Department of the Environment Northern Ireland) is 40

Sample Site	NO_2 Concentration / $\mu g/m^3$
Belmont Road	15.23
Jct. A465, B4349	25.19
B4349	30.82
Belmont Road Roundabout	19.63
Merryfield Farm	12.42
A49, B4399 Roundabout	23.40
A49 Railway bridge	38.66
Grafton Village	8.68
Grafton Lane	7.56
Victoria Street, Air Quality Monitoring Station	47.68
Wye River Monitoring Station	6.20

Table 3: Baseline Nitrogen Dioxide Concentrations, monitored across study area 4th February to 6th May 2014

4.1.6 It can be seen that at certain roadside locations, concentrations of nitrogen dioxide can be elevated. Air quality monitoring has indicated that air quality along the proposed scheme options is generally good, though poor in selected areas of Hereford town centre.

4.2 Noise

4.2.1 The study corridor for the SLR is primarily rural, agricultural land with some residential properties and farm buildings. The Hereford to Cardiff railway line bisects the study corridor. The existing noise climate is dominated by local sources (e.g. agricultural activities), road traffic noise from the A49 and A465, and frequent but transient railway noise. Towards the western and eastern extents of the scheme, the relative contribution from existing road traffic noise becomes more significant.

4.2.2 The final extents of the wider study corridor used in the assessment will depend on the roads, which are predicted to experience a significant change in traffic flows (as defined in DMRB guidance). However, it is likely that roads within the urban area of Hereford, namely the A465 and A49, to the northeast of the new road will form part of the study area. This area is predominately residential with some commercial activity, which is likely to influence the existing baseline noise environment.

4.2.3 A number of noise sensitive receptors (NSRs) including residential properties, schools, public footpaths and churches have been identified within the study corridor.

4.2.4 The Noise Action Plan for Major Roads (outside agglomerations) published by DEFRA (March, 2010) shows there are Important Areas (IAs) within the likely wider study corridor. These are located at:

- A465 Tesco Roundabout
- A465 adjacent to Monkscroft Drive
- A465 to the east of the Great Western Way
- A465 between Walnut Tree Avenue and Asda Roundabout

4.2.5 There is also a First Priority Location (FPL) on the A49 between the River Wye Crossing and the Newmarket Street Roundabout. The presence of IAs and FPLs indicate that noise from road traffic is high along the main roads in Hereford.

4.2.6 No existing issues with regard to complaints from existing noise sources in the area have been identified at this stage.

4.3 Greenhouse Gases

4.3.1 The release of greenhouse gases (GHGs) into the atmosphere, as a result of human activity, is responsible, at least in part, for global warming. Carbon Dioxide (CO_2), whilst not the most potent GHG, accounts for around 80% of GHGs produced nationally.

4.3.2 The Climate Change Act commits the UK to achieve an 80% carbon emission reduction by 2050 against its 1990 emission baseline.

4.3.3 Emissions from road transport forms an important component of this carbon emissions reduction target, particularly as new technologies allow road transport to be less reliant on fossil fuels.

Existing and Baseline Knowledge

4.3.4 Herefordshire's carbon footprint in 2010 was 1.61 million tonnes (MtCO2). This is equal to 9.0 tonnes per head of population (per capita) in the county. For comparison the UK as a whole emits 7.6 tonnes of CO2 per capita and the West Midlands 7.4 tonnes per capita.

4.3.5 Figure 10 shows the distribution of these emissions across the major emission categories in Herefordshire.

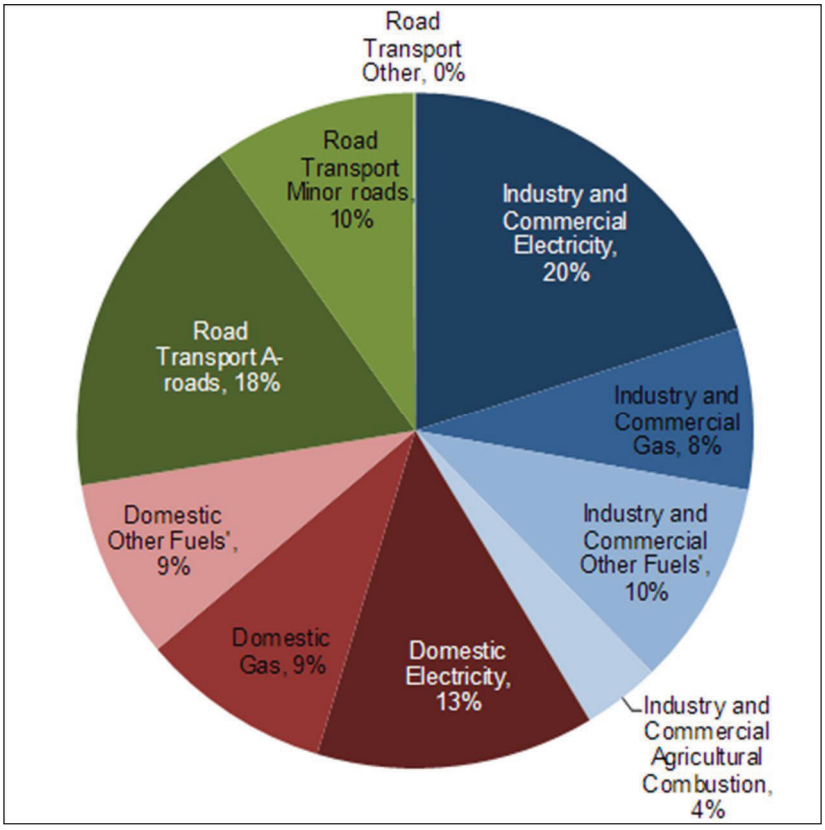

Figure 10: Proportion of CO_2 emissions in Herefordshire by source (2005 to 2010)

4.3.6 Herefordshire County's total carbon emissions reduced by 7% between 2005 and 2010. This is compared to a carbon emission reduction of 8% across the UK in the same period.

4.3.7 A detail breakdown of Herefordshire's CO2 emissions show that between 2009 and 2010:

- Industry and commercial recorded 6% CO2 emission increase.
- Domestic recorded an 8% CO2 emission increase.
- Road transport saw no change in CO2 emissions.

4.4 Landscape/Townscape

Study Area

4.4.1 The study area for landscape effects will include the route corridor and the wider landscape context within which the project may influence landscape character and visual amenity.

Baseline

Landscape Character

4.4.2 Landscape character is what makes an area unique. It is defined as 'a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements, be it natural (soil, landform) and/or

human (for example settlement and development) in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another, rather than better or worse.

4.4.3 The essential components of landscape character are:

- Landscape elements are the dominant features which characterise, contribute to or detract from the overall landscape impression, i.e. the built form, the landform, land use, vegetation, water, field patterns, walls etc. They are quantifiable and can be described.
- Landscape types are identifiable at the broader scale and are understood in terms of areas with a homogeneous character based on geology, topography, geomorphology, vegetation and / or land use or dominant elements, e.g. moorland, rolling upland, historic parkland, urban. These are elements or groups of elements which can be classified as a landscape type of a particular quality and value. Sensory experiences, e.g. tranquillity and wildness, are also considered as part of the overall makeup of the character type.

4.4.4 The study area lies within Natural England's National Character Area (NCA) 100: South Herefordshire Lowlands and adjacent to NCA 104: South Herefordshire and Over Severn.

4.4.5 The key landscape characteristics of South Herefordshire Lowlands [NCA 100] are considered to be:

- Wide river valleys
- Intensive arable farming with low hedges
- Undulating valley sides
- Steep wooded hills
- Frequent orchards and hop yards
- Historic parks
- Old Red Sandstone and timber framed buildings
- Large farmsteads and frequent hamlets

4.4.6 The key landscape characteristics of South Herefordshire and Over Severn [NCA 104] are considered to be:

- Fertile, undulating farmland with extensive arable farming
- Substantial red sandstone farmsteads
- Large to medium fields with variable, commonly low hedges
- Ageing hedgerow trees
- Numerous churches and manor houses in small hamlets
- Clusters of parkland trees
- Narrow, meandering floodplain with low hedges, ditches, scattered mature trees and willow pollards
- Contrasting steep wooded slopes and gentle riverside slip-off slopes

4.4.7 Potentially significant landscape issues are likely to arise for all routes as the scheme involves construction and operation of new highway infrastructure in a rural setting. The rolling open character of the topography, with numerous small woodland copses, hedgerow trees and low hedges, will need to be carefully considered in terms of alignment and reinstatement.

Visual Amenity

4.4.8 Visual receptors include residential and commercial properties, and users of public amenity areas, rights of way, roads and the railway. Although the route options do not pass through or near large centres of population, there are a number of residential properties (either individual or as part of a hamlet) that are likely to be affected by the routes. Visibility maybe increased through the removal of trees and hedgerows and the contouring of the land.

4.4.9 Visual receptors, such as users of buildings, recreational spaces, footpaths and transport routes, have differing sensitivities to their visual environment. Generally, this is dependent upon their interest in the visual environment, their viewing opportunity and duration, and the context of the views.

4.4.10 The residential visual receptors have been grouped into seven clusters, based on their proximity to one another.

- Group A includes Grafton Inn; Grafton Villa; Lavender Cottage and other nearby buildings.
- Group B includes The Green; Newhouse Farm; Veddoes Farm and other nearby buildings.
- Group C includes Ashley Cottage; Garlands Cottage; Merry Cottage; Graftonbury Cottage; Cedar Folly and other nearby buildings.
- Group D includes Glendale; Vine Cottage; Merryhill Cottage; Merryhill Park; Merryhill Farm and other nearby buildings.
- Group E includes Haywood Lodge; Haywood Lodge Farm House; Haywood Lodge Cottages; the Granary and other nearby buildings.
- Group F includes Abbey Cottages; Highfield; Whiteholme; and other nearby buildings.
- Group G includes Broadmeadow Farm; Golden Post; Golden Post House; Copper Beeches and other nearby buildings.

4.4.11 Other receptors to be considered under effects on visual amenity will include users of the railway, A49; A465; B4349; local lanes [Haywood Lane; Grafton Lane] and public rights of way [National Cycle Network Route 46; Byway on the eastern section of HA3; Bridleway from Haywood Farm to Golden Post via Broadmeadow Farm; Footpaths HA3 (western section), HA5, HA7, and GF3].

4.5 Historic Environment

Scheduled Monuments

4.5.1 There are two Scheduled Ancient Monuments within 2km of the proposed routes, the medieval churchyard cross at Bullinghope Old Church, to the north of Rotherwas Access Road; and the Iron Age hillfort of Dinedor Camp, to the south of Rotherwas Access Road.

Listed Structures

4.5.2 Options SC2/2A is located approximately 150m from a Grade II milestone on the A465 and approximately 220m from the agricultural structures at Clehonger Court, which are Grade II Listed Buildings. The options are also located approximately 300m from the Listed Building complex at Haywood Hall Lodge, containing one Grade II* and three Grade II structures and approximately 350m from the Grade II Listed Buildings at Merryhill.

4.5.3 Option SC5 is located approximately 220m from the Grade II Listed Buildings at Merryhill and approximately 400m of the Listed building complex at Haywood Lodge, containing one Grade II* and three Grade II structures.

4.5.4 Option SC7 is located approximately 200m of the Grade II Listed Buildings at Merryhill and approximately 520m of the Listed building complex at Haywood Lodge, containing one Grade II* and three Grade II structures.

Archaeology

4.5.5 Options SC2/2A would traverse four fields from which archaeological artefacts have been recovered.

4.5.6 Option SC5 would traverse the Medieval site in Field 15 and two cropmarks in Fields 10 and 34, as well as four fields from which significant archaeological artefacts have been recovered.

4.5.7 Option SC7 would traverse a cropmark in Field 10, as well as four fields from which significant archaeological artefacts have been recovered.

4.6 Biodiversity

4.6.1 Environmental constraints within the study area are illustrated in Figure 11, at the rear of this report.

4.6.2 Due to the lead-in time required for ecological survey, a majority of the ecological surveys and studies have commenced at the time of writing (September 2014) and a summary of the information gathered to date is provided below.

Statutory designated sites

4.6.3 Table 4 lists Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) within 2km of the proposed routes and SACs within 30km of the proposed routes where bats are the qualifying interest.

Name and Designation	Area (ha)	Distance and direction from scheme	Description
River Wye (SAC)	2234.89	1.3 km North	**Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site** 3260 Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculion fluitantis* and *Callitricho-Batrachion* vegetation **Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site** 7140 Transition mires and quaking bogs **Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site** 1092 White-clawed (or Atlantic stream) crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) 1095 Sea lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus*) 1096 Brook lamprey (*Lampetra planeri*) 1099 River lamprey (*Lampetra fluviatilis*) 1103 Twaite shad (*Alosa fallax*) 1106 Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*) 1163 Bullhead (*Cottus gobio*) 1355 Otter (*Lutra lutra*) **Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection** 1102 Allis shad (*Alosa alosa*)
Wye Valley Woodlands (SAC)	528.7	21 km South	**Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site** 9130 *Asperulo-Fagetum* beech forests 9180 *Tilio-Acerion* forests of slopes, screes and ravines * Priority feature 91J0 *Taxus baccata* woods of the British Isles * Priority feature **Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site** Not applicable. **Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site** Not applicable. **Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection** 1303 Lesser horseshoe bat
Wye Valley & Forest Of	144.02	22 km South East	**Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site**

Name and Designation	Area (ha)	Distance and direction from scheme	Description
Dean Bat Sites (SAC)			Not applicable **Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site** Not applicable. **Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site** 1303 Lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros* 1304 Greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum* **Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection** Not applicable.

Table 4: SACs within 2km of the proposed routes and within 30km of the proposed routes where bats are the qualifying interest

4.6.4 Other statutory designated sites that are present within 2 km of the scheme are listed in Table 5.

Name	Map code	Designation	Area (ha)	Distance and direction from scheme	Description
Belmont meadows	B	LNR	5.82	400 m North	Described as 'grassland habitats' in Natural England citation
River Wye	A	SSSI	1404.8	1.3 km North	The River Wye (Lower Wye) is a rare example of a near natural, large western eutrophic river which, unlike many rivers of a similar type, has not been subject to significant modification from human activities. The river is of special interest for three main aquatic plant community types - rivers on sandstone, mudstone and hard limestone, clay rivers and lowland rivers with minimal gradient, as well as for certain flowering plants and bryophytes. Key species: Allis shad (*Alosa alosa*) Twaite shad (*Alosa fallax*) Sea lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus*) Brook lamprey (*Lampetra planeri*) River lamprey (*Lampetra fluviatilis*) Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*) Bullhead (*Cottus gobio*) Grayling (*Thymallus thymallus*) Common otter (*Lutra lutra*) Atlantic stream crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) Freshwater pearl mussel (*Margaritifera margaritifera*)

Table 5: Statutory Designated Sites within 2km of the scheme

Non-statutory designated sites

4.6.5 Several non-statutory designated sites are present within 2 km of the scheme. These include Roadside Verge Nature Reserves, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs), and Special Wildlife Sites (SWSs). These are presented in Table 6 in map code order. The information presented below has been obtained from Herefordshire Biological Records Centre's designated sites registers.

Name	Map code	Designation	Approximate distance and direction from scheme	Description (extracts from HBRC designated sites register)
Roadside Verge Nature Reserve 16	C	Roadside Verge Nature Reserve	1.6 km South East	Designated in 1975 for green hellebore (*Helleborus viridis*). Annual Report 2000 (Herefordshire Nature Trust)
Meadow south of St Johns Cottage	SINC_39	SINC	500 m North	Small herb-rich meadow
Belmont Pool & Environs	SINC_40	SINC	800 m North	Area of standing water fed by Newton Brook. The western end is surrounded by Newton Coppice; the eastern end which is used for fishing has an edging of mature trees and has an island in the middle.
Newton Brook	SINC_41	SINC	900 m North	The Register states "Newton Brook forms part of the eastern boundary of the city. It flows in and out of Belmont pool, then continues towards the city bounded by alder until it reaches the built-up area where it becomes canalised and edged with hawthorn. The brook then passes through a small wet area with willow just before flowing into the River Wye opposite the water intake at Broomy Hill."
Newton Farm Wet Woodland	SINC_43	SINC	400 m North	The Register states "A small damp woodland dominated by ash standards with hazel coppice in places. Bramble, ferns, bluebells, wood anemones and marsh marigold were seen. Holly was growing at the south-west end of the wood by a shallow pond. The pond seems to be the source of the stream that flows through the wood. Because of its small size, the wood was not included in the NCC ancient woodland survey, but the variety of plants would suggest this site has been woodland for a considerable length of time."
Newton Farm Open Space	SINC_44	SINC	400 m North	The Register states "A planting by the City Council of standards of various trees species on the Open Space at Newton Farm..."

Name	Map code	Designation	Approximate distance and direction from scheme	Description (extracts from HBRC designated sites register)
Pond north of Newton Farm Open Space	SINC_45	SINC	900 m North	The Register states "A shallow pond on the edge of the built up area. Because the water levels have been reduced it is floristically uninteresting…"
Newton Farm Wet Woodland Stream	SINC_46	SINC	900 m North	The Register states "A small stream originating in Newton Farm Wet Woodland. It joins the Newton brook at the edge of the built up area..."
Woodland to South of Newton Farm	SINC_47	SINC	200 m North	The Register states "A narrow woodland with oak standards with bramble and bluebells underneath…"
Great Western Way	SINC_48	SINC	900 m North	The Register states "500383 - Great Western Way above Frome Avenue and between Stanberrow Road and Charlton Avenue. Linear woodland developing trees and scrub with good cover from canopy to ground. 501385 - Great Western Way below Belmont Road has fairly good scrub with blackberry, privet, blackthorn, rose, birch and hazel with a few trees (oak, ash and pine). 501387 - Mature trees lining Belmont Road on both sides of Great Western Way Bridge on the town side with sycamore, elm, ash and hawthorn and ivy on ground. 501390 - Good scrub cover on both sides of the path. Sallow, goat willow, rose, hawthorn, sycamore, elder and field maple. Some is planted, some (mostly ash and sycamore) has self-grown. 501392 - Stone arch over Wye path has rustyback and hart's tongue ferns and creeping cinquefoil with low scrub of dogwood, hawthorn, sallow and rose. West embankment of Great Western Way below Wye Bridge with elm, hawthorn and blackberry. Grassland along this stretch mostly rye-grass. Further on, on both sides there is introduced scrub with some native scrub species."
Grafton House Orchard	SINC_50	SINC	600 m North	The Register states "About 53 trees thought to be approx. 120 years old. Some are collapsing but most appear to be fine, if unproductive. The grassland, which is occasionally grazed, is semi-improved over most of the orchard but at the back becomes unimproved…"

Name	Map code	Designation	Approximate distance and direction from scheme	Description (extracts from HBRC designated sites register)
Land west of Great Western Way South of Wye	SINC_51	SINC	600 m North	The Register states "Plantation alongside the railway is a mix of native and exotic tree species with crack, white and goat willow, horse and sweet chestnut, ash, birch, alder, lime, field maple, sycamore, beech and grey poplar. The grass under these trees is species-rich…"
Land east of Great Western Way South of Wye	SINC_52	SINC	800 m North	The Register states "Edge of very sheltered grassland between housing at Beaufort Avenue and bottom of playing fields of Haywood School, the last part of the Great Western Way dismantled railway and the current British Rail line. Lesser knapweed, with abundant cat's ear and hogweed, also meadowsweet, meadow buttercup, sorrel, Yorkshire fog, red fescue, cock's-foot and meadow foxtail. The outgrown hedge on two sides of this triangle (on railway embankments) is species-rich with frequent spindle, also dogwood, hawthorn, blackthorn, rose, blackberry, elder, oak, crack willow and sallow and some snowberry, honeysuckle, black and white bryony. The southern embankment of railway that boundaries the wedge site abuts a 15m strip of unimproved grassland in otherwise semi-improved pasture…"
Active Railway South of Wye	SINC_54	SINC	400 m North	The Register states "Part of the Newport-Shrewsbury railway line which passes through the city. It has several areas of scrub which are of importance to wildlife."
Withy Brook	SINC_55	SINC	200 m North	The Register states "It forms a major part of the south-eastern boundary of the city. Parts of the stream near the river have quite dense shrub on the banks."
Land to north of Withy Brook	SINC_56	SINC	800 m North	The Register states "An area of grazed land with patches of bramble adjoining the Withy Brook near Bullinghope Court. Trees were still standing on the banks of the brook…"
Cage Brook Valley and Woodlands	SO43/12	SWS	1.9 km West	The register states: "Lady's and Broomy rise Coppices. Ruckhall and Tuck Woods. An area of semi-natural woodland and unimproved grassland in the valley of the Cage Brook. Oak and ash are the dominant trees with cherry, and the understorey is hazel. The ground flora includes greater tussock-sedge and monk's-hood, which are both uncommon in Herefordshire."

Name	Map code	Designation	Approximate distance and direction from scheme	Description (extracts from HBRC designated sites register)
Clehonger Village Pond	SO43/15	SWS	700 m West	The register states: "An open pond, with a good flow of water. 13 plant species occur and leech, newt, mallard, coot and swan have been recorded."
Breinton Wood	SO43/17	SWS	1.5 km North	The register states: "A mixed woodland with oak predominate and other species such as cherry and coppiced field maple. The ground flora includes stinking iris with abundant wild daffodils and bluebells. The site forms a good habitat for butterflies: the white letter hairstreak is amongst those species recorded."
Hayleaseow Wood, Newton Coppice and Spring Grove	SO43/18	SWS	Immediately adjacent to the scheme	The register states: "An area of ancient woodland, with a small number of introduced species. Oak is dominant, with hazel coppice."
Belmont wood and Hunderton Rough SWS	SO43/19	SWS	1.1 km North	The register states: "A mixed woodland with a dense understorey. Species present include oak, ash, yew and other conifers"
Knockerhill Wood and Adjoining Woodland	SO43/20	SWS	1.0 km South	The register states: "Remnants of ancient woodland which have been interplanted with conifer and sweet chestnut in parts. There is a good mixture of species. Oak, ash and birch are dominant with cherry, field maple and wild service-tree also present."
Hopleys Wood	SO53/01	SWS	1.8 km South East	The register states: "An ancient semi-natural woodland, mostly ash standards with some oak and coppiced wych elm and hazel. The ground flora includes wood spurge, bluebell and wood anemone."
Reeces Wood	SO53/03	SWS	1.3 km South East	The register states: "An ancient semi-natural woodland, mainly ash and oak standards with coppiced ash. The ground flora includes dog's mercury and bluebell."
Roadside bank near Twyford	SO53/04	SWS	1.8 km South East	The register states: "Roadside banks on both sides of the road with a rich flora, including primrose and green helleborine."
River Wye	SO53/06	SWS	1.3 km North	See SSSI and SAC descriptions

Table 6: Non-statutory designated sites present within 2 km of the scheme

Notable Habitats

4.6.6 The survey area is rural in nature and is largely comprised of arable land and improved pasture, with fields separated by both species-rich and species-poor hedgerows. Both Grafton Lane and Haywood Lane bisect the survey area north-

south, and the Hereford to Newport railway line runs north-east to south-west through the site. Two minor tributaries of the River Wye are present within the survey area (Newton Brook and Withy Brook), both of which are designated as SINCs further downstream. Several ponds are present both within the survey area and in the wider study area.

4.6.7 Fragmented areas of woodland are present within the survey area, the largest of which is Hayleasow Wood/Newton Coppice (designated SWS). This woodland is mapped by Natural England as Ancient Woodland (ancient semi-natural woodland in some areas and ancient replanted woodland in others). It is also mapped by Natural England as deciduous woodland BAP priority habitat. Grafton Wood is the second most substantial woodland within the survey area, also mapped as deciduous woodland BAP priority habitat. Three smaller pockets of unnamed woodland present within the survey area are also mapped as deciduous woodland BAP priority habitat. Aside from Hayleasow Wood/Newton Coppice, none of these other woodlands are currently mapped by Natural England as Ancient Woodland.

4.6.8 An updated Ancient Woodland Inventory for Herefordshire has recently been made available to Herefordshire Biological Records Centre (July 2014). This updated inventory revises the current inventory by analysing the continuity of woodland cover of land parcels in Herefordshire as indicated by a time sequence of several geo-rectified digitised maps and aerial photography. Woodlands in whole or part which are missing from the current inventory but are depicted as woodland on the maps and aerial photographs were considered by this updated work to have sufficient historical continuity to be put forward as 'candidate ancient woodlands'. Two such 'candidate ancient woodlands' are present within the survey area, including Grafton Wood. One further unnamed woodland is mapped as possible ancient woodland, with map evidence being equivocal and further evidence being required before it is put forward as a candidate addition to the inventory. Several other 'candidate ancient woodlands' are present within the wider 2 km study area. Further assessment is proposed to evaluate the ecological attributes of the 'candidate ancient woodlands' within the survey area.

4.6.9 Woodpasture and parkland BAP priority habitat is mapped in the wider 2 km study area but is not mapped within the survey area. However, the field layer vegetation within Grafton Wood is of an open grassland nature, rather than a woodland ground flora. This is consistent with it having been used as a wood pasture in the past.

4.6.10 Several orchards are present within the survey area, which are of various ages and subject to different management regimes. All of the orchards within the survey area are mapped by Natural England as traditional orchard BAP priority habitat.

Protected/notable species

Badgers

4.6.11 HBRC returned records of road-kill badgers (*Meles meles*) to the east and west of the 2 km study area. The woodlands, hedgerows and railway embankments provide suitable sett-building habitats.

4.6.12 Badger surveys were undertaken in July 2014, with the survey area encompassing 500 m to either side of the scheme where accessible. Badger activity was considered to be low, with five outlying setts identified approximately 500 m from the scheme and a single outlying sett identified adjacent to the scheme, near to the A465.

Dormice

4.6.13 HBRC returned several records of dormice (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) from 2008 within the 2 km study area. All were field signs and presumably from the same survey, as all records were located between approximately 200 m and 400 m north of scheme, adjacent to railway. The woodlands and hedgerows provide suitable dormouse habitat.

4.6.14 A total of 300 dormouse tubes were deployed in May 2014 and will be checked a total of four times with the final check undertaken in November 2014. Three of the checks have so far been undertaken at the time of writing and no evidence of dormouse found, however absence cannot be confirmed until the surveys have been completed.

Otters

4.6.15 HBRC returned several records of otters (*Lutra lutra*) within the 2 km study area. East of the A49, signs were recorded on Withy Brook approximately 1.4 km north east of the scheme and also on Red Brook further east. Records of otter road-kill were returned from the A465 near to Belmont Pools and approximately 1.1 km south of the scheme on the A49. Although small brooks, both Newton Brook and Withy Brook have the potential to form part of the territory of otters in the local area; and the desk study records indicate that otters are using all of these tributaries of the river Wye.

4.6.16 Otter surveys were deemed necessary on Newton Brook and Withy Brook. Otter surveys were undertaken in September 2014 and encompassed 300 m upstream and 300 m downstream of the scheme where accessible. Otter spraint was recorded on Withy Brook. Water voles

4.6.17 HBRC returned no records of water voles (*Arvicola amphibius*) within the 2 km study area. Newton Brook and Withy Brook contain both shaded and more densely vegetated sections and on-line ponds which are more suitable for the species. The brooks are however fairly isolated, flowing through urban areas downstream before reaching the river Wye, and reaching their source either on or adjacent to the survey area.

4.6.18 Water vole surveys were deemed necessary on Newton Brook and Withy Brook. Water vole surveys were undertaken in September 2014 and encompassed 300 m upstream and 300 m downstream of the scheme where accessible. No definitive evidence of water vole was recorded.

Bats

4.6.19 The scheme falls within habitats that are considered to be of medium quality for bat species, consisting largely of arable and pasture farmland, separated by hedgerows and pockets of woodland.

4.6.20 HBRC returned recent (2004-present) records for 13 of the 17 bat species resident within the UK. These data are summarised in Table 7 . The importance to the county bat population of areas of semi-natural habitat in the wider landscape (such as the Wye valley and larger areas of woodland to the south west) is reflected in these records.

Species	Present within 10 km	Present roosting within 10 km	Comments
Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*)	Yes	Yes	Major roost present approximately 1.9 km west of the scheme, adjacent to the river Wye within Cage Brook valley.
Soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*)	Yes	Yes	Major roosts present adjacent to the river Wye; in Cage Brook valley, Fownhope and Credenhill.
Nathusius pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus nathusii*)	Yes	No	Two records returned only
Brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*)	Yes	Yes	
Grey long-eared bat (*Plecotus austriacus*)	No	No	
Natterer's bat (*Myotis nattereri*)	Yes	Yes	
Whiskered bat (*Myotis mystacinus*)	Yes	Yes	
Brandt's bat (*Myotis brandtii*)	Yes	No	
Alcathoe bat (*Myotis alcathoe*)	No	No	
Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*)	Yes	Yes	
Bechstein's bat (*Myotis bechsteinii*)	No	No	
Noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*)	Yes	Yes	
Leisler's bat (*Nyctalus leisleri*)	Yes	No	
Serotine (*Eptesicus serotinus*)	Yes	No	
Barbastelle (*Barbastella barbastellus*)	Yes	No	Two records returned only
Greater horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*)	No	No	No recent records were returned; one record from 2002 detailed the presence of 5 droppings at a site near the river Wye east of the A49.
Lesser horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*)	Yes	Yes	Several major roosts recorded near to Holme Lacy (adjacent to the river Wye) approximately 5 km east of the scheme; and near large areas of woodland at Whitfield, approximately 7 km to the south west of the scheme.

Table 7: HBRC Bat Records

4.6.21 Some of the HBRC records are located less than 500 m from the scheme. Lesser horseshoe bat, barbastelle, serotine, Leisler's, noctule, long-eared spp., Natterer's, soprano pipistrelle and common pipistrelle were all recorded as present in 2008 approximately 300 m north of scheme, adjacent to the railway. A minor common pipistrelle and long-eared spp. roost has been recorded near to Grafton Lane approximately 200 m south of the scheme.

4.6.22 Surveys are on-going for this species group however to date it has been determined that the site is, in general, 'bat rich' with at least 10 species recorded to date. This includes two Annex 2 species: barbastelle and lesser horseshoe bat. For both species, the records are spread throughout the site, with no 'hotspots' identified.

4.6.23 Foraging and commuting activity levels are considered to be relatively high, with continuous foraging activity recorded at several locations, on several occasions and for several different species. The level of roosting activity recorded to date is limited to two minor soprano pipistrelle roosts in two adjacent orchard trees near to Grafton Lane.

Birds

4.6.24 HBRC returned recent (2004-present) records of the following birds which are protected, priority species, or species of conservation concern. These are presented in Table 8.

Species common name	Species latin name	Designation *
Barn Owl	*Tyto alba*	BAmb, Bern2, CITESA, HBAPCC, HBAPPS, WCA1i
Black-Headed Gull	*Larus ridibundus*	BAmb, HBAPCC
Bullfinch	*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*	BAmb, HBAPCC, HBAPPS, HBAPSR
Common Buzzard	*Buteo buteo*	CITESA, CMS_A2, HBAPCC
Common Cuckoo	*Cuculus canorus*	BRed, Sect.41, UKBAP
Common Kestrel	*Falco tinnunculus*	BAmb, Bern2, CITESA, CMS_A2, HBAPCC, HBAPPS
Common Kingfisher	*Alcedo atthis*	BAmb, BD1, Bern2, HBAPCC, HBAPSR, WCA1i
Common Linnet	*Carduelis cannabina*	Bern2, BRed, HBAPCC, HBAPPS
Common Starling	*Sturnus vulgaris*	BRed
Eurasian Curlew	*Numenius arquata*	BAmb, CMS_A2, HBAPCC, Sect.41, UKBAP
Eurasian Hobby	*Falco subbuteo*	Bern2, CITESA, CMS_A2, HBAPCC, WCA1i
Eurasian Teal	*Anas crecca*	BAmb, CITESC, CMS_A2, HBAPCC, HBAPSR
European Golden Plover	*Pluvialis apricaria*	BAmb, BD1, CMS_A2, HBAPCC, HBAPSR
Fieldfare	*Turdus pilaris*	BRed, HBAPCC, WCA1i
Garden Warbler	*Sylvia borin*	HBAPCC

Species common name	Species latin name	Designation *
Goosander	*Mergus merganser*	CMS_A2, HBAPCC, HBAPSR
Green Woodpecker	*Picus viridis*	BAmb, Bern2, HBAPCC
Grey Partridge	*Perdix perdix*	BRed, HBAPCC, HBAPPS, Sect.41, UKBAP
House Sparrow	*Passer domesticus*	BRed, HBAPCC, HBAPSR, Sect.41, UKBAP
Lesser Redpoll	*Carduelis cabaret*	BRed, Sect.41, UKBAP
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	*Dendrocopos minor*	Bern2, BRed, HBAPCC, HBAPSR
Marsh Tit	*Poecile palustris*	Bern2, BRed, HBAPCC
Northern Lapwing	*Vanellus vanellus*	BRed, CMS_A2, HBAPCC, HBAPPS, Sect.41, UKBAP
Northern Wheatear	*Oenanthe oenanthe*	BAmb, Bern2, HBAPCC
Peregrine Falcon	*Falco peregrinus*	BD1, Bern2, CITESA, CMS_A2, HBAPCC, HBAPPS, WCA1i
Pied Flycatcher	*Ficedula hypoleuca*	BAmb, CMS_A2, HBAPCC
Raven	*Corvus corax*	HBAPCC
Red Kite	*Milvus milvus*	BAmb, BD1, CITESA, CMS_A2, WCA1i
Redwing	*Turdus iliacus*	BRed, HBAPCC, WCA1i
Reed Bunting	*Emberiza schoeniclus*	BAmb, Bern2, HBAPCC, HBAPPS, Sect.41, UKBAP
Sand Martin	*Riparia riparia*	BAmb, Bern2, HBAPCC
Sedge Warbler	*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*	HBAPCC, HBAPSR
Sky Lark	*Alauda arvensis*	BRed, HBAPCC, HBAPPS, Sect.41
Song Thrush	*Turdus philomelos*	BRed, HBAPCC, HBAPPS
Spotted Flycatcher	*Muscicapa striata*	Bern2, BRed, CMS_A2, HBAPCC, HBAPPS, Sect.41, UKBAP
Stonechat	*Saxicola torquata*	Bern2, HBAPCC, HBAPSR
Whitethroat	*Sylvia communis*	BAmb, HBAPCC
Yellowhammer	*Emberiza citrinella*	Bern2, BRed, HBAPCC, Sect.41, UKBAP

*BD1= Birds Directive Annex 1; WCA1= Wildlife and Countryside Act Sch 1; UKBAP= UKBAP priority species; Bred= IUCN Bird Population Status- red; Sect.41= Species of Principal Importance under S41 of the NERC ACT; HBAPPS= Herefordshire BAP Priority Species; HBAPCC= Herefordshire LBAP: Conservation Concern Species

Table 8: HBRC Bird Records

4.6.25 The scheme falls within habitats that are considered to be suitable for a common assemblage of farmland birds.

4.6.26 A breeding bird survey was undertaken in order to record the breeding bird assemblage throughout the scheme corridor and to note any protected, priority or species of conservation concern. Six visits were undertaken between 29th April 2014

and 9th July 2014 following Common Bird Census methodologies. Each visit comprised three transect surveys undertaken generally on a consecutive dawn-pre dusk-dawn basis. Barn owls have been recorded flying and likely foraging. A likely barn owl roost has been recorded near to Haywood Lane.

Reptiles

4.6.27 HBRC returned recent (2004-present) records of slow-worm (*Anguis fragilis*) and common lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*) within the 2 km study area. The hedgerows, woodlands, grassland and railway embankments are suitable to support common reptile species. Surveys are on-going for this species group. Slow-worms, common lizards and grass snakes (*Natrix natrix*) have been recorded in low numbers. All seven visits have been completed.

Amphibians

4.6.28 HBRC returned a record of great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*) approximately 2 km east of the scheme. Several ponds are present within 500 m of the scheme which are suitable to support great crested newts. Surveys undertaken in 2014 revealed a medium population of great crested newts to be present. Smooth newts (*Lissotriton vulgaris*), palmate newts (*Lissotriton helveticus*), common frogs (*Rana temporaria*) and common toads (*Bufo bufo*) were also observed.

Invertebrates

4.6.29 HBRC returned one record of a White Clawed Crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) from 2005 situated within Newton Brook (at Newton Coppice). This species is listed under Annex 2 of the Habitats and Species Directive and is also a Species of Principal Importance and Local BAP Priority species.

4.6.30 HBRC also returned four records of Noble Chafer beetle (*Gnorimus nobilis*) situated approximately 1.5 km from the scheme and two records of Brown-banded Carder Bee (*Bombus (Thoracobombus) humilis*) situated approximately 1 km from the scheme. Both species are LBAP priority species and Species of Principal Importance. HBRC also returned one record of Club-Tailed Dragonfly (*Gomphus vulgatissimus*) situated approximately 1.8 km from the scheme, a LBAP priority species which is also listed on IUCN Red List as a Lower risk - Near Threatened species.

4.6.31 Invertebrate surveys are on-going. Invertebrate sampling of Newton Brook and Withy Brook has so far revealed a species assemblage typical of farmland drainage systems.

4.6.32 To date, a total of five species with current conservation status have been found during terrestrial sampling. The key features assessed as having significant conservation value for invertebrates are a group of veteran apple trees located adjacent to the south of the scheme which contain important wood-decay habitat for saproxylic invertebrates (including the Nationally Scarce large fruit tree bark beetle *Scolytus mali* and the very localised darkling beetle *Prionychus ater*); and veteran oak trees, in particular a hedgerow oak pollard located adjacent to the south of the scheme which also contains important wood-decay habitat, with an associated click beetle species *Procraerus tibialis* currently with British Red Data Book status and Brown Tree Ant *Lasius brunneus*, currently with Nationally Scarce status. Of more local interest for invertebrates to date are the woodlands described in this section, and the hedgerow habitats.

4.6.33 White-clawed crayfish surveys of Newton Brook and Withy Brook have been undertaken during September 2014. This involved daytime stone-turning and refugia searches, detailed habitat assessments and night-time torchlight surveys. No evidence of this species was recorded.

Flora

4.6.34 HBRC returned a record of a bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*), and bluebells were also noted to be present within several of the woodlands described in this section. This species is a species of conservation concern in the Local BAP.

4.6.35 HBRC also returned records of mistletoe (*Viscum album*), a priority species on the LBAP, together with species listed in the LBAP as species of conservation concern such as cowslip (*Primula veris*), small-flowered buttercup (*Ranunculus parviflorus*), small-leaved lime (*Tilia cordata*), columbine (*Aquilegia vulgaris*) and grass vetchling (*Lathyrus nissolia*).

4.6.36 The dominant habitats are heavily managed arable and pasture farmland, separated by pockets of woodland and hedgerows. Some of the hedgerows and woodlands are species-rich and contain a diverse flora, with species of note to date including small-leaved lime and several ancient woodland indicator species within some of the woodland areas. The walkover survey identified some species-rich hedgerows. These will be categorised prior to the end of October 2014 in compliance with the Hedgerows Regulations to assess whether they are Important Hedgerows.

4.7 Water Environment

4.7.1 An assessment of potential impacts on the water environment was undertaken to inform the selection of the preferred option. The assessment identified existing environmental receptors that had the potential to be affected by the options and the potential significance of these effects. Environmental receptors comprised surface water features, groundwater features, flood plains and receptors at risk of flooding. Attributes of the water environment that were considered in this assessment included:

- Water supply
- Transport and dilution of waste products
- Biodiversity
- Aesthetics
- Cultural heritage
- Recreation
- Value to economy
- Conveyance of flow and material
- Conveyance of flood flows

4.7.2 The assessment identified that between the A49 in the east and the A465 in the west the route options pass over or near to Withy Brook and Newton Brook. These watercourses are classed as 'ordinary watercourses' under the jurisdiction of Herefordshire Council and ultimately discharge into the River Wye.

4.7.3 The assessment identified that the route options pass over or near to other minor watercourses and water features within the site boundary and wider study area. Whilst these features may be insignificant in terms of the majority of attributes listed above, they offer value in terms of transport and dilution of waste products and conveyance of flood flows.

4.7.4 The route options were identified to be located in the low risk Flood Zone 1 and do not pass through areas at risk from fluvial or tidal flooding. However, all route options were identified to pass through areas shown by the EA's online mapping to be at risk of surface water flooding.

4.7.5 Review of groundwater vulnerability maps indicated that the area is underlain by a Secondary A aquifer overlain by soils of an intermediate leaching potential. The area is not within a designated a Source Protection Zone. None of the route options are likely to have an adverse impact on groundwater abstractions in the area.

5 ROUTE OPTIONS

5.1 Options

5.1.1 Four route options were presented at the formal Public Consultation Exhibition held in Hereford between 30 June and 3 July 2014. These were Options SC2, SC2A, SC5 and SC7, representing the four shortlisted (southern) options identified within the SLR Route Corridor. These are illustrated in Figure 12 to Figure 15. The alternative four (northern side) options were discounted mainly on environmental grounds and the significant cost to mitigate this impact. The main constraint being the need to cross the ancient wood located to the north, known as Newton Coppice.

5.1.2 As part of the consultation process, various suggestions for amendments to the shortlisted options or alternative routes were made by third parties. These have been reviewed by the project team and are addressed within the later chapters of this report.

5.2 Southern Link Road Options

Option SC2

5.2.1 Option SC2 involves construction of a new section of road between the A49 Ross Road/Rotherwas Access Road Roundabout and a new roundabout constructed on the A465/B4349 Clehonger Road Junction. The road passes roughly through the centre of Grafton Wood and continues westwards over Grafton Lane and Withy Brook before crossing above the existing railway line. The route then immediately straightens up heading in a north-west direction to the A465 and to the south-west of Merry Hill/Beech Grove. It avoids Newton Coppice, passing to the south-west.

5.2.2 Option SC2 involves the construction of a new roundabout on the A465. As an addition to the new section of road connecting the A49 and the A465, SC2 would also include a new direct link from the A465 to the B4349 Clehonger Road, passing east of the property known as Pykeways.

5.2.3 With some adjustment to the horizontal and vertical alignments this is the most likely option to re-use all the material excavated. This is because the vertical alignment, in the main, follows the rolling profile of the countryside, except where it passes over the railway and under Haywood Lane.

Option SC2A

5.2.4 The alignment of Option SC2A is identical to SC2, except that the new road will pass underneath the railway line in a deep excavation, rather than over it. Although the vertical alignment on the east side follows the rolling profile of the countryside, it is forced deep in cutting in order to cross underneath the railway and Haywood Lane. This could give rise to groundwater and road drainage problems as well as generating a large amount of excess spoil, which cannot be reused on the scheme.

Option SC5

5.2.5 Option SC5 passes through the northern part of Grafton Wood and, in a generally north-westerly direction, crosses the densely wooded area between Grafton Lane and Withy Brook. It also crosses a site of archaeological importance before turning in a more westerly direction to cross underneath the railway line. The route continues through Merry Hill and under Haywood Lane. This alignment would require the demolition of the outbuildings to the south of Merryhill Farm. From this location the road turns in a slightly more northerly direction to overlap with the western alignment of Options SC2 and SC2A, avoiding Newton Coppice.

5.2.6 Option SC5 involves the construction of a new roundabout on the A465, but to avoid the property known as Pykeways, the new link to connect with the B4349 Clehonger Road is located further south-west. The arrangement of this new junction with the A465 would need to be determined during detailed design (ghost island turning, signalised junction etc.).

5.2.7 Although the vertical alignment of Option SC5 on the east side follows the rolling profile of the countryside, it is soon forced into deep cutting through Merry Hill and under Haywood Lane. This could give rise to groundwater and road drainage problems as well as generating a large amount of excess spoil which cannot be re-used on the scheme. The route crosses existing overhead power lines a number of times (including a 66kV) and is located partly within the main corridor of electricity cables running east to west.

Option SC7

5.2.8 Option SC7 passes through the northern tip of Grafton Wood but avoids the southern extent of the dense wooded area between Grafton Lane and Withy Brook. It also avoids the site of archaeological importance and runs to the south of Merryhill Lane before cutting through Merry Hill and under Haywood Lane. From this location the road heads in a westerly direction to overlap with the western alignment of Options SC2, SC2A and SC5, avoiding Newton Coppice.

5.2.9 Option SC7 involves the construction of a new roundabout on the A465. As an addition to the new section of road connecting the A49 and the A465, SC7 would also include a new direct link from the A465 to the B4349 Clehonger Road, passing east of the property known as Pykeways.

5.2.10 Although the vertical alignment on the east side largely follows the rolling profile of the countryside, it is soon forced into deep cutting through Merry Hill and under Haywood Lane. This could give rise to groundwater and road drainage problems as well as generating a large amount of excess spoil that cannot be re-used on the scheme.

5.2.11 The route crosses existing overhead power lines a number of times (including a 66kV) and is located largely within the main corridor of electricity cables running east to west. The route crosses Grafton Lane on a high embankment where existing services are present. This could be problematic in terms of providing a new (north to south) road crossing of the National Cycle Route.

5.2.12 Although the twisted alignment at the eastern end of the scheme helps to avoid environmental constraints, in so doing, it will introduce a speed limit restriction of 50mph instead of the standard national speed limit of 60mph.

6 ENGINEERING ASSESSMENT

6.1 Options

6.1.1 The four options under consideration are shown in Figures 12 to 15. The forecast traffic flow on the SLR is outlined below for both the Opening Year (2017) and Design Year (2032) are outlined below.

Year	Traffic Flow (AADT)
Opening Year	6,500
Design Year	11,004

Table 9: Design flow ranges

6.1.2 DMRB TA46/97 outlines the following opening year economic flow ranges:

Carriageway Standard	Opening year AADT	
	Minimum	Maximum
S2	Up to 13,000	
WS2	6,000	21,000
D2AP	11,000	39,000
D3AP	23,000	54,000

Table 10: Opening Year Economic Flow Ranges

6.1.3 Based on the design flow ranges, all routes adopt an S2 standard 7.3m (with two 1m hardstrips) single carriageway cross-section in accordance with TD27/05 'Cross Sections and Headrooms'.

Option SC2

6.1.4 Earthworks – with some adjustment to the horizontal and vertical alignments this is the most likely option to achieve as near as possible a cut/fill balance. The vertical alignment in the main follows the rolling profile of the countryside but with an embankment up to 7m high on the approaches to the railway and a 7.5m deep cutting under Haywood Lane. Preliminary bulk earthworks calculations suggest a net shortfall of 36,000m^3.

6.1.5 Design Standards – 60mph design speed with Departures from Standard are unlikely to be required. Opportunities for overtaking are also unlikely due to the topography (vertical curvature). The route has a relatively straight crossing of the existing country lanes and railway. The provision of new accesses for land areas being severed by the scheme and the provision of drainage runoff storage have yet to be determined.

6.1.6 Physical features – the route goes through Grafton Wood, which, although not listed on the Natural England Ancient woodland inventory, was identified as Candidate Ancient Woodland during the Ancient Woodland and Trees of Herefordshire Project.

6.1.7 Utilities – the route crosses existing overhead power lines a number of times (including a 66kV) but is located to the south of the main corridor of electricity cables

running east to west. The route crosses Grafton Lane almost at grade where existing services run north to south including a water main.

6.1.8 Rail structure – the route crosses over the existing railway line, which is Network Rail's preferred solution for reasons relating to asset ownership and future maintenance liability. Initial discussions with Network Rail have revealed that key issues that they will be looking for in relation to a new crossing over the railway are (i) ownership and liabilities for the new bridge; (ii) headroom clearances; (iii) lateral clearances; (iv) any effect on the siting of their current infrastructure e.g. signals; (v) the ability to accommodate likely future improvements to the railway e.g. four-tracking and electrification; (vi) vehicular containment of highway vehicles; (vii) impact resistance of parts of the structure from derailed trains; (viii) railway disruption both during construction and ongoing future maintenance of the new structure; and (ix) whether the new road provides them with opportunities to close any existing level crossings in the area.

6.1.9 Highway structures – A new bridge structure will be required to carry Haywood Lane over the new SLR thereby maintaining the north-south connectivity. The bridge is likely to take the form of a single span structure with prestressed concrete beams and an insitu reinforced concrete deck. To achieve the vertical clearance required there may be a need to raise the alignment of Haywood Lane locally. At the location where the SLR meets Grafton Lane (also the route of National Cycle Network Route No 46), the lane will be stopped up for motorised users, provision only being made for an at-grade crossing for non-motorised users. This will require local realignment of Grafton Lane to tie in with the alignment of the SLR.

Option SC2A

6.1.10 Earthworks – the vertical alignment on the east side follows the rolling profile of the countryside but is forced deep into cutting (on average 7-8m deep) to cross underneath both the railway and Haywood Lane. This could give rise to groundwater and road drainage problems. Preliminary bulk earthworks calculations suggest a net surplus of 50,000m3.

6.1.11 Design Standards – 60mph design speed with Departures from Standard are unlikely to be required. Opportunities for overtaking are also unlikely due to the topography (vertical curvature). The route has a relatively straight crossing of the existing country lanes and railway. The provision of new accesses for land areas being severed by the scheme and the provision of drainage runoff storage have yet to be determined.

6.1.12 Physical features – the route goes through Grafton Wood, which, although not listed on the Natural England Ancient woodland inventory, was identified as Candidate Ancient Woodland during the Ancient Woodland and Trees of Herefordshire Project.

6.1.13 Utilities – the route crosses existing overhead power lines a number of times (including a 66kV) but is located to the south of the main corridor of electricity cables running east to west. The route crosses Grafton Lane almost at grade where existing services run north to south including a water main.

6.1.14 Rail structure – the route crosses underneath the existing railway line, which is not Network Rail's preferred solution as they would be responsible for its future maintenance. Initial discussions with Network Rail have revealed that key issues which they will be looking for in relation to a new crossing over the railway are (i) ownership and liabilities for the new bridge; (ii) headroom clearances; (iii) lateral clearances; (iv) any effect on the siting of their current infrastructure e.g. signals; (v)

the ability to accommodate likely future improvements to the railway e.g. four-tracking and electrification; (vi) vehicular containment of highway vehicles; (vii) impact resistance of parts of the structure from derailed trains; (viii) railway disruption both during construction and ongoing future maintenance of the new structure; and (ix) whether the new road provides them with opportunities to close any existing level crossings in the area.

6.1.15 Highway structures – A new bridge structure will be required to carry Haywood Lane over the new SLR thereby maintaining the north-south connectivity. The bridge is likely to take the form of a single span structure with prestressed concrete beams and an insitu reinforced concrete deck. To achieve the vertical clearance required there may be a need to raise the alignment of Haywood Lane locally. At the location where the SLR meets Grafton Lane (also the route of National Cycle Network Route No 46), the lane will be stopped up for motorised users, provision only being made for an at-grade crossing for non-motorised users. This will require local realignment of Grafton Lane to tie in with the alignment of the SLR.

Option SC5

6.1.16 Earthworks – the vertical alignment on the east side follows the rolling profile of the countryside but is forced into cutting after Grafton Lane in order to cross under the railway. There is a significant 13m deep cutting through Merry Hill to enable the route to cross under Haywood Lane which could give rise to groundwater and road drainage problems. Preliminary bulk earthworks calculations suggest a net surplus of 150,000m3.

6.1.17 Design Standards – 60mph design speed with Departures from Standard are unlikely to be required. Opportunities for overtaking are also unlikely. The angled crossing of existing country lanes and the railway will increase cost. The provision of new accesses for land areas being severed by the scheme and the provision of drainage runoff storage have yet to be determined.

6.1.18 Physical features – the route goes through Grafton Wood, which, although not listed on the Natural England Ancient woodland inventory, was identified as Candidate Ancient Woodland during the Ancient Woodland and Trees of Herefordshire Project. It also passes through a wooded area between Grafton Lane and Withy Brook, a site of archaeological importance known as Grafton Enclosure and a barn yard situated south-west of the Merryhill Lane junction with Haywood Lane.

6.1.19 Utilities – the route crosses existing overhead power lines a number of times (including a 66kV) and is located partly within the main corridor of electricity cables running east to west. The route crosses Grafton Lane at grade where existing services run north to south including a water main. There is also conflict with a concentration of overhead and buried services in/around Haywood Lane including BT and a water main.

6.1.20 Rail structure – the route crosses underneath the existing railway line, which is not Network Rail's preferred solution as they would be responsible for its future maintenance. Initial discussions with Network Rail have revealed that key issues which they will be looking for in relation to a new crossing over the railway are (i) ownership and liabilities for the new bridge; (ii) headroom clearances; (iii) lateral clearances; (iv) any effect on the siting of their current infrastructure e.g. signals; (v) the ability to accommodate likely future improvements to the railway e.g. four-tracking and electrification; (vi) vehicular containment of highway vehicles; (vii) impact resistance of parts of the structure from derailed trains; (viii) railway disruption both

during construction and ongoing future maintenance of the new structure; and (ix) whether the new road provides them with opportunities to close any existing level crossings in the area.

6.1.21 Highway structures – A new bridge structure will be required to carry Haywood Lane over the new SLR thereby maintaining the north-south connectivity. The bridge is likely to take the form of a single span structure with prestressed concrete beams and an insitu reinforced concrete deck. To achieve the vertical clearance required there may be a need to raise the alignment of Haywood Lane locally. At the location where the SLR meets Grafton Lane (also the route of National Cycle Network Route No 46), the lane will be stopped up for motorised users, provision only being made for an at-grade crossing for non-motorised users. This will require local realignment of Grafton Lane to tie in with the alignment of the SLR.

Option SC7

6.1.22 Earthworks – the vertical alignment on the east side follows the rolling profile of the countryside but is forced into cutting after Grafton Lane in order to cross under the railway. There is a significant 13m deep cutting through Merry Hill to enable the route to cross under Haywood Lane which could give rise to groundwater and road drainage problems. Preliminary bulk earthworks calculations suggest a net surplus of 85,000m3.

6.1.23 Design Standards – 50mph design speed with Departures from Standard are unlikely to be required. There will be no opportunity for overtaking due to the twisted alignment. The angled crossing of existing country lanes and the railway will increase cost. The provision of new accesses for land areas being severed by the scheme and the provision of drainage runoff storage have yet to be determined.

6.1.24 Physical features – being of a twisted nature the route manages to avoid many physical constraints but does go through the northern tip of Grafton Wood, which, although not listed on the Natural England Ancient woodland inventory, was identified as Candidate Ancient Woodland during the Ancient Woodland and Trees of Herefordshire Project.

6.1.25 Utilities – the route crosses existing overhead power lines a number of times (including a 66kV) and is located largely within the main corridor of electricity cables running east to west. The route crosses Grafton Lane on a 3m high embankment where overhead BT and buried water services are present. There is also conflict with a concentration of overhead and buried services in/around Haywood Lane including BT and a water main.

6.1.26 Rail structure – the route crosses underneath the existing railway line, which is not Network Rail's preferred solution as they would be responsible for its future maintenance. Initial discussions with Network Rail have revealed that key issues which they will be looking for in relation to a new crossing over the railway are (i) ownership and liabilities for the new bridge; (ii) headroom clearances; (iii) lateral clearances; (iv) any effect on the siting of their current infrastructure e.g. signals; (v) the ability to accommodate likely future improvements to the railway e.g. four-tracking and electrification; (vi) vehicular containment of highway vehicles; (vii) impact resistance of parts of the structure from derailed trains; (viii) railway disruption both during construction and ongoing future maintenance of the new structure; and (ix) whether the new road provides them with opportunities to close any existing level crossings in the area.

6.1.27 Highway structures – A new bridge structure will be required to carry Haywood Lane over the new SLR thereby maintaining the north-south connectivity. The bridge is likely to take the form of a single span structure with prestressed concrete beams and an insitu reinforced concrete deck. To achieve the vertical clearance required there may be a need to raise the alignment of Haywood Lane locally. At the location where the SLR meets Grafton Lane (also the route of National Cycle Network Route No 46), the lane will be stopped up for motorised users, provision only being made for an at-grade crossing for non-motorised users. This will require local realignment of Grafton Lane to tie in with the alignment of the SLR in view of the SLR being on a 3m high embankment at this location.

6.2 Departures and Relaxations from Standards

6.2.1 Various constraints on the proposed route for a road may mean that it cannot be reasonably designed to full standards. Any desirable or necessary reductions in standards are dealt with as design Relaxations or design Departures. All Departures must have formal approval from the Technical Approval Authority (TAA).

6.2.2 Based on the preliminary design work carried out on the four route options, one-step Relaxations are anticipated in relation to Stopping Sight Distance (SSD). These are considered justifiable and therefore the designs would remain in accordance with Design Standards. At present, any further variation beyond defined limits resulting in Departures from Standard are not expected, but this could change during design development. Any Relaxations and/or Departures would be considered during the design process with the aim of being designed out wherever possible.

6.3 Footway and Cycle Routes

6.3.1 All of the route options bisect Grafton Lane, which forms part of the National Cycle Network, and mitigation options have been proposed in a separate Technical Note. In addition, the route options bisect a varying number of Public Rights of Way (PRoW), as shown in Table 11 below.

Option	No. PRoW Bisected
SC2	3
SC2A	3
SC5	4
SC7	2

Table 11: Public Rights of Way bisected by each option

6.3.2 The difference between the schemes is due to the varying options for the link road to the north of the A465. For example, SC7 does not extend north of the A465 and as such does not affect the PRoW in this location, whereas SC5 bisects both PRoW in this area.

6.4 Railway and Structures

6.4.1 All routes considered for the SLR would need to cross the main Cardiff to Hereford railway line. All options except SC2 cross underneath the railway line. In close proximity of routes SC2 and SC2A, there is infrastructure associated with the railway consisting of a mast and a generator building. These will be affected by the proposals

unless a local horizontal realignment can be achieved. No other engineering structures e.g. bridges are known to be affected by the proposals.

6.5 Drainage

6.5.1 The drainage proposals are likely to consist of a combination of carrier drains, filter drains, and grassed surface water channels or similar such as swales. Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) will be utilised where possible.

6.5.2 Where appropriate drainage would be provided at the top and bottom of embankments and, if necessary, drainage would also be provided within the cutting slopes. Attenuation ponds may be required to control the flow of highway drainage water entering a watercourse.

6.5.3 Affected minor watercourses would be diverted and/or culverted.

6.5.4 Appropriate measures to intercept any pollutants entering the highway drainage system will be agreed with the Environment Agency.

6.6 Lay-bys

6.6.1 The recommended spacing for lay-bys in both directions on a single carriageway road is between 2 and 5km. With the SLR being just over 3km long between the A49(T) and the A465 there is no requirement to provide a lay-by in accordance with design guidance.

6.7 Road Lighting

6.7.1 Road lighting is only proposed for the roundabouts. In view of the proximity of the new A465 roundabout to some properties a lower standard of lighting may be considered in conjunction with Herefordshire Council's policy for lighting which also includes phased dimming overnight, as appropriate.

6.8 Road Restraint Systems [e.g. Vehicle Containment Barriers]

6.8.1 Road restraint systems would be provided in accordance with Design Standards.

6.9 Statutory Undertakers

6.9.1 Diversionary works will be required. These are to be determined and agreed with the Statutory Undertakers.

6.10 Scheme Cost of Options

6.10.1 Table 12 shows the estimated scheme costs for the various options based on 2012 prices. For the purposes of this assessment we have made a contingency allowance of 44% on construction cost. If the contingency was not required, the scheme cost would be the lower of the two values over the page.

Option	Scheme Cost
SC2	£16.5M-£25M
SC2A	£19.5M-£29M
SC5	£24M-£35M
SC7	£21M-£31M

Table 12: Cost of Options

6.11 Value Engineering

6.11.1 Value Engineering principles such as optimising the alignment, structures and cut/fill balance will be considered during further development of the preferred option. This may include a Value Engineering workshop.

6.12 Engineering Assessment Conclusion

6.12.1 In conclusion, SC2 performs better than the other options with regards to engineering based on the following elements:

- Follows the ground profile (except where it has to go over the railway and under Haywood Lane)
- Most likely to achieve a balance of bulk earthworks
- Not in very deep cut and removes the potential for groundwater/drainage issues
- 60mph design speed throughout
- No Departures from Standard's expected for road geometry
- Affects the least amount of private properties
- Goes over the railway so aligns with Network Rail's expectation
- Crosses Grafton Lane at grade so aids a solution for the new NMU road crossing
- Located to south of the main corridor of electricity cables running east-west
- Least expensive of the four options

7 TRAFFIC, SAFETY AND ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 The methodologies used to assess the options take account of the Department for Transport and Highways Agency technical and guidance documents. The assessments use actual and predicted traffic volumes on the road network in the study area.

7.2 Scenarios

7.2.1 The 'Do Minimum' scenario within the Herefordshire Council SATURN model comprises of traffic and development growth that would occur regardless of whether or not one of the options is constructed. The 'Do Minimum' scenario also includes committed highway schemes in the area. The 'Do Something' scenario includes all of the above and the Southern Link Road.

7.3 Future Year Traffic Flows

7.3.1 Traffic flows have been predicted for 2017 (the Opening Year). The Opening Year is that when any Option constructed is expected to be completed and opened to traffic. The traffic flows have also been predicted for 2032 (the Design Year), which is 15 years post opening the SLR. With the Southern Link Road in place (Do Something Scenario), traffic flows are forecasted to change as shown in Table 13.

		AADT					
Link	Dir	2017 DM	2017 DS	% Change	2032 DM	2032 DS	% Change
A465 west of SLR	NE	3,606	3,221	-11%	4,255	4,439	4%
A465 west of SLR	SW	3,761	3,702	-2%	4,716	4,171	-12%
A465 Belmont Rd west of Tescos Roundabout	NE	5,318	5,406	2%	5,485	6,025	10%
A465 Belmont Rd west of Tescos Roundabout	SW	6,441	6,911	7%	7,682	7,932	3%
A465 Belmont Rd west of Belmont Roundabout	NE	8,466	8,562	1%	10,007	9,850	-2%
A465 Belmont Rd west of Belmont Roundabout	SW	9,885	9,563	-3%	12,264	11,302	-8%
Walnut Tree Avenue	EB	4,646	3,978	-14%	4,848	4,794	-1%
Walnut Tree Avenue	WB	4,078	3,401	-17%	4,603	4,145	-10%
A49 north of Walnut Tree Ave	NB	14,192	13,949	-2%	20,766	18,839	-9%
A49 north of Walnut Tree Ave	SB	12,164	12,167	0%	14,864	14,172	-5%
Holme Lacy Road east of A49	EB	7,767	7,566	-3%	9,729	8,911	-8%
Holme Lacy Road east of A49	WB	8,706	8,406	-3%	10,942	10,813	-1%
B3499 Rotherwas Access Road	NB	2,371	2,615	10%	4,887	4,383	-10%
B3499 Rotherwas Access Road	SB	2,201	2,279	4%	6,944	5,963	-14%

Table 13: Change in Traffic Flow

7.3.2 Figures 16 and 17 at the rear of this report illustrate the modelled traffic flows in the 2017 AM and PM peaks for both Do Minimum and Do Something scenarios.

7.3.3 Figures 18 and 19 at the rear of this report illustrate the modelled traffic flows in the 2032 AM and PM peaks for both Do Minimum and Do Something scenarios.

7.3.4 The results show that traffic reduces on the A465, and there is broadly no change in traffic flows on the A49 north of Walnut Tree Avenue, taking into account two-way flows.

7.4 Reliability Impacts

7.4.1 There is not expected to be a significant difference between the options in terms of reliability.

7.4.2 Reduced congestion along the A465 provides greater journey time reliability for users of the A465. Journey times along the A49 are expected to remain at existing levels.

7.5 Accident Impacts

7.5.1 There is not expected to be a significant difference between the options in terms of accidents. Option SC7 has a 50mph design speed, which is lower than the other options and is likely to reduce the accident rate. However, this is likely to be offset by a relative increase in accidents due to the poor overtaking opportunities and sinuous alignment.

7.5.2 The Southern Link Road is designed to the latest design standards and is likely to be safer than the A465 and A49. A reduction in traffic along the A465 will result in a reduced accident rate along this section of road, although the increase in traffic along the A49 in some time periods may cause the accident rate to increase on this section of road.

7.6 Economy Impacts

7.6.1 There is not expected to be a significant difference between the Select Link Road options in terms of economy, with no significant differences in journey times, affordability, or accidents. However, the options do have different construction costs which would affect the overall cost benefit ratio for each option. Scheme costs are detailed in Section 6.10.

7.6.2 The scheme is anticipated to result in reduced congestion along the A465 Belmont Road due to diversion of traffic onto the Southern Link Road, resulting in journey time savings for existing users. There is likely to be increased traffic along the A49 in some time periods, but the level of delay at the A49/A465 junction is proposed to remain at existing levels.

7.6.3 The Southern Link Road provides a direct connection to the Hereford Enterprise Zone (HEZ) from the A465. This will encourage development at the Enterprise Zone and improve the infrastructure serving the wider Rotherwas estate having subsequent benefits to the promotion of inward investment relating to both residential and employment development.

8 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

8.1 Air Quality

8.1.1 A high level assessment of the air quality impacts of scheme options was undertaken. Due to the scheme options not yet reaching detailed design stage, and in the absence of data, impacts were qualitatively assessed.

8.1.2 Assessment criteria included the change in proximity between the road centreline to sensitive receptors, which included residential premises as well as designated habitats. This criteria was assumed to represent the potential changes in exposure of sensitive receptors to vehicle emissions that the particular scheme option brought.

8.1.3 In order to distinguish between the potential impacts from each of the scheme options, the number of sensitive receptors within 200m either side of the scheme were recorded. These were totalled into residential properties within each 50m band, up to 200m from the centreline of the road.

Assumptions

8.1.4 It was assumed that all traffic flows along each of the scheme options would be identical in the number of vehicles and the fleet mix (% of HGVs and non-HGVs).

8.1.5 In addition for the purpose of the scheme options assessment, it was assumed that the air quality impact upon the centre of Hereford Town would be identical for all of the scheme options. Therefore impacts upon the Hereford Town AQMA were considered to be identical for each option and therefore not assessed at this stage.

Potential Effects

8.1.6 Air quality impacts from the operation of all scheme options will be as a result of the introduction of traffic into areas which were previously free from road traffic or had experienced very low traffic.

8.1.7 Table 14 shows the number of residential properties within 200m from each route option, split into bands. This only includes where the scheme introduces a new section of road, and does not include existing roads.

Distance from Road Centreline	Number of Properties			
	Option SC2	Option SC2A	Option SC5	Option SC7
0 – 50m	0	0	0	0
50m – 100m	4	4	7	4
100m – 200m	5	5	11	14
Total	**9**	**9**	**18**	**18**

Table 14: Residential properties within 200m of each route

8.1.8 There will also be potential secondary effects upon woodland habitats from air pollutants as a result of traffic flows across each of the scheme options. All scheme options would have identical secondary impacts upon Hayleasow Wood, Newton Coppice and Grafton Scheme. However, Options SC2 and SC2A would have some

secondary impacts upon Veddoes Coppice, which is to the east of the Hereford to Newport railway line.

8.2 Noise

8.2.1 For each of the route options identified, a qualitative assessment of potential noise and vibration impacts has been undertaken. Table 15 contains the number of properties within 600m of each route option. This information has been used to complete the AST for each route option.

Distance from Road Centreline	Number of Receptors by Route Option			
	Option SC2	Option SC2A	Option SC5	Option SC7
0 – 50m	0	0	0	0
50m – 100m	4	4	7	4
100m – 200m	5	5	11	14
200m – 300m	14	14	26	16
300m – 600m	82	82	68	71
Total	**105**	**105**	**112**	**105**

Table 15: Residential properties within 600m of each route

8.2.2 At this stage, it is not possible to undertake a more detailed assessment of potential noise and vibration impacts associated with each route option as validated traffic data is not available.

8.3 Greenhouse Gases

8.3.1 The four scheme Options SC2, SC2A, SC5 and SC7 were assessed for their potential greenhouse (CO_2eq) gas production in relation to the scheme length, change in vehicle speeds and changes to journey lengths as a consequence of the road traffic use of the proposed scheme options.

Scheme Options Assessment

8.3.2 The Department of Transport Emissions Factor Toolkit (EFT v6.01) was used to estimate the change in CO_2 emissions as a consequence of changes in vehicle speeds along the scheme option route. As a consequence the Total Carbon production (tonnes per year) was calculated for the 2013, current baseline 2013, opening year 2017 and the future year 2020, a range of speeds between 50 to 90 kph.

Assumptions

8.3.3 It was assumed that all scheme options were of a similar length and that traffic speeds would be similar between each scheme option. It was also assumed that traffic using all scheme options would be required to travel over slightly greater distances than the traffic currently using the local roads network. As a guide the percentage of HGVs predicted to use the scheme options was assumed to remain unchanged, at 5% for all assessment years.

Potential Effects

8.3.4 It is highly probable that local traffic speeds will increase as a result of the scheme development. In addition, the distance that vehicles will be required to travel is estimated to increase slightly as a result of the scheme development.

8.3.5 Figure 20 illustrates that increases in vehicle speeds between 60 to 90 kph increases CO_2 emissions. Therefore, it is possible that all scheme options will have a slight adverse impact on greenhouse gases due to vehicles travelling greater distances and at higher speeds.

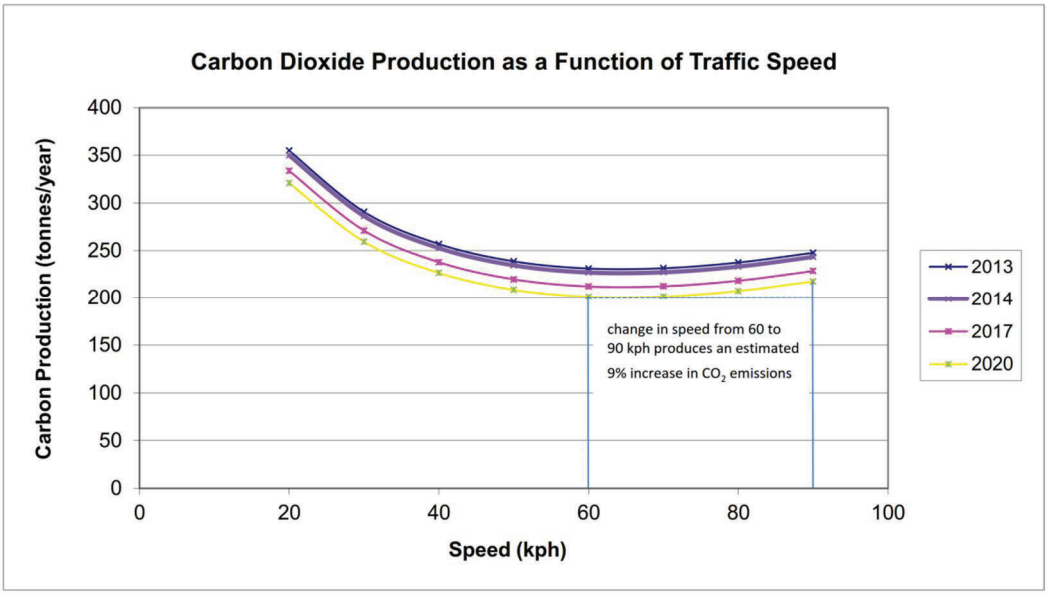

Figure 20: Carbon Dioxide Production as a Function of Traffic Speed (Emissions Factor Toolkit v6.01, Defra)

8.4 Landscape/Townscape

Options SC2 and SC2A

8.4.1 Route SC2 and SC2A pass through fertile, undulating farmland with extensive arable fields, with low hedges and occasional woodland. Although the routes are within the Herefordshire Lowlands character area, it is more typical of South Herefordshire and Over Severn. In terms of woodland, the routes cut through the centre of Grafton Wood (candidate ancient woodland and low density of trees). For the remainder of the route, Option SC2/SC2A is free of woodland and avoids Newton Brook.

8.4.2 The route passes Haywood Lodge Farm and associated properties with a resulting potential for adverse visual effects. One route passes under the railway (SC2) and one route passes over (SC2A). As a result, SC2A is likely to have more visual impact due to the increased earthworks and visibility of the highway and associated structures. A new roundabout on A465 and a short section of road connecting to B4349, introduces further built infrastructure. The landscape in this area would be classed as being of medium sensitivity (good quality example of Herefordshire rural landscape). The magnitude of effect on the landscape resource is likely to be influenced by the additional sections of road, roundabout, embankments for the bridge over the railway in Option SC2A and the proximity to residential properties.

Option SC5

8.4.3 SC5 passes through fertile, undulating farmland with extensive arable fields, with low hedges and occasional woodland. Although most of the route is within the Herefordshire Lowlands character area, it is more typical of South Herefordshire and Over Severn. In terms of woodland, it cuts through the centre of Grafton Wood (candidate ancient woodland and low density of trees) and a dense copse near Withy Brook. It runs close to residential properties along Grafton Lane and involves the loss of a large commercial premises accessed from Haywood Lane. It avoids Newton Brook and Hayleasow Wood. A new roundabout on A465 and an upgrade to the existing lane connecting to the B4349, introduces further built infrastructure and will adversely affect the character of the lane.

8.4.4 The landscape in this area would be classed as being of medium sensitivity (good quality example of Herefordshire rural landscape). The magnitude of effect on the landscape resource is likely to be influenced by the loss of woodland, the route going through a large Site of Archaeological Importance, the proximity of residential properties, the loss of commercial premises, and a new roundabout with loss of character due to the upgrade of the existing lane. Therefore, the magnitude of effect on the landscape resource is likely to be influenced by the loss of woodland, hedges and key local landscape characteristics.

Option SC7

8.4.5 SC7 passes through fertile, undulating farmland with extensive arable fields, with low hedges and occasional woodland. Although most of the route is within the Herefordshire Lowlands character area, it is more typical of South Herefordshire and Over Severn. In terms of woodland, it cuts through the centre of Grafton Wood (candidate ancient woodland and low density of trees). It runs close to residential properties along Grafton Lane. It avoids Newton Brook and Hayleasow Wood. A new roundabout will be constructed on the A465 and a new section of road connecting with the B4349 will introduce further built infrastructure.

8.4.6 The landscape in this area would be classed as being of medium sensitivity (good quality example of Herefordshire rural landscape). The magnitude of effect on the landscape resource is likely to be influenced by the loss of woodland, the proximity of residential properties, and a new roundabout with additional section of road. Therefore, the magnitude of effect is likely to be influenced by the loss of some local landscape features.

8.5 Historic Environment

Options SC2 and SC2A

8.5.1 This option would have no effect on any Scheduled Monument or its setting resulting in no significant effect.

8.5.2 This option would encroach within 300m of but be largely screened from the Listed Building complex at Haywood Lodge, containing one Grade II* and three Grade II structures. It would encroach within 350m of but be largely screened from the Grade II Listed Buildings at Merryhill. It would encroach within 220m of but be largely screened from the agricultural structures at Clehonger Court, which are Grade II Listed Buildings. It would encroach within 150m of and be visible from the Grade II milestone on the A465.

8.5.3 The Listed Buildings in the study area are of high value. Although passing close to the listed milestone on the A465, the roadside is the appropriate setting for structure and, therefore, this option would have no significant effect. It would have a minor impact on the settings of the listed structures at Haywood Lodge, Merryhill and Clehonger Court, resulting in a slight to moderate effect.

8.5.4 This option would traverse four fields from which significant artefacts have been recovered. As they consist of findspots, the undesignated sites are of uncertain value, though the effect upon them could be major.

Option SC5

8.5.5 This option would have no effect on any Scheduled Monument or its setting resulting in no significant effect.

8.5.6 This option would encroach within 220m of but be largely screened from the Grade II Listed Buildings at Merryhill. It would encroach within 400m of but be largely screened from the Listed Building complex at Haywood Lodge, containing one Grade II* and three Grade II structures. It would encroach within 220m of but be largely screened from the agricultural structures at Clehonger Court, which are Grade II Listed Buildings. It would encroach within 150m of and be visible from the Grade II milestone on the A465.

8.5.7 The Listed Buildings in the study area are of high value. Although passing close to the listed milestone on the A465, the roadside is the appropriate setting for this structure and, therefore, this option would have no significant effect. It would have a minor impact on the settings of the listed structures at Clehonger Court, Merryhill and Haywood Lodge, resulting in a slight to moderate effect.

8.5.8 This option would traverse the Medieval site in Field 15 and two cropmark sites in Fields 10 and 34, as well as four fields from which significant artefacts have been recovered. As well as the findspots, which are of uncertain value, there are two cropmark sites, one of which is of medium value, and this option would have a major impact upon them, resulting in a moderate to large effect.

Option SC7

8.5.9 This option would have no effect on any Scheduled Monument or its setting. The Scheduled Ancient Monuments in the extended study area are of high value, but this option would have no effect upon them or their settings, resulting in no significant effect.

8.5.10 This option would encroach within 200m of but be largely screened from the Grade II Listed Buildings at Merryhill. It would encroach within 520m of but be largely screened from the Listed Building complex at Haywood Lodge, containing one Grade II* and three Grade II structures. It would encroach within 220m of but be largely screened from the agricultural structures at Clehonger Court, which are Grade II Listed Buildings. It would encroach within 150m of and be visible from the Grade II milestone on the A465.

8.5.11 The Listed Buildings in the study area are of high value. Although passing close to the listed milestone on the A465, the roadside is the appropriate setting for this structure and, therefore, this option would have no significant effect. It would have a minor impact on the settings of the listed structures at Merryhill, Clehonger Court and Haywood Lodge resulting in a slight to moderate effect.

8.5.12 This option would traverse and a cropmark site in Field 10, as well as four fields from which significant artefacts have been recovered. As well as the findspots, which are of uncertain value, there is a cropmark site, also of uncertain value, upon which this option would have a major effect.

8.6 Biodiversity

8.6.1 This options appraisal exercise has been produced following a similar methodology to that of the Appraisal Summary Tables included in Appendix A, with the information expanded where possible to incorporate updated survey information where this has become available.

Ecological receptors and their potential influence on the route options appraisal

8.6.2 Several of the potential ecological receptors identified in Section 4.6 have not been considered in this options appraisal process for the reasons outlined below.

Statutory and non-statutory designated sites

8.6.3 None of the four route options will directly affect any statutory or non-statutory designated sites. Impacts and mitigation measures are likely to be similar for all options and as such are not considered to affect the options appraisal.

Badgers

8.6.4 Minimal evidence of badger was recorded during the survey. Badgers are protected on the grounds of animal welfare rather than rarity / population decline and as such are not considered to affect the options appraisal. At this time there is no evidence to suggest badger-related road traffic collision risk will differ significantly between any of the options.

Dormice

8.6.5 The presence or absence of this species has not yet been determined however surveys are ongoing. There is insufficient information to date to fully consider this species in the options appraisal.

Otters

8.6.6 Otter has been identified using Withy Brook. All options cross this brook, therefore, impacts and mitigation are likely to be similar for all options.

Water voles

8.6.7 No evidence of this species was recorded, therefore it is not considered further in the options appraisal.

Bats

8.6.8 Surveys are on-going for this species group however to date it has been determined that the site is, in general, 'bat rich' with at least 10 species recorded to date. This includes two Annex 2 species (barbastelle and lesser horseshoe bat). These records are spread throughout the site, with no 'hotspots' identified for these species.

8.6.9 Foraging and commuting activity levels are considered to be relatively high, with continuous foraging activity recorded at several locations, on several occasions and for several different species. Bat activity has been recorded at all locations surveyed, with all options affecting areas where both higher and lower levels of activity have been recorded. As the four options follow the same broad corridor and will affect the same or very similar habitat features (such as woodlands and hedgerows), impacts and mitigation are likely to be similar for all options.

8.6.10 The level of roosting activity recorded to date is limited to two minor soprano pipistrelle roosts in two adjacent orchard trees. As these trees will not be directly affected by any of the route options, this data is not considered to affect the options appraisal. It is possible that roosts of greater conservation significance, which could influence the alignment, will be detected during the remaining surveys to be undertaken during September and October 2014, although this is relatively unlikely.

Birds

8.6.11 As the four options follow the same broad corridor and will affect the same or very similar habitat features (such as woodlands, arable fields and margins, and hedgerows), impacts and mitigation are likely to be similar for all options. Barn owls have been recorded flying and likely foraging and one likely roost has been recorded near to Haywood Lane. It is unlikely that any options will directly affect any barn owl roosts, should they be found during remaining surveys, and therefore this data is unlikely to affect the options appraisal.

Reptiles

8.6.12 Common reptile species have been recorded in low numbers within woodland glade and field margin habitats across the site. As the four options follow the same broad corridor and will affect the same or very similar habitat features, impacts and mitigation are likely to be similar for all options.

Amphibians

8.6.13 A medium population of great crested newts was recorded at several ponds within 500 m of the proposed options. None of the proposed options will directly affect any ponds, therefore impacts to great crested newts will be limited to terrestrial habitats.

8.6.14 Options SC2 and SC2A are the most proximate to the medium population recorded at Haywood Lodge, however it is considered that the scheme offers the potential for a net gain in the quality and quantity of suitable great crested newt habitats, therefore the residual effects of the options are likely to be similar. It is therefore not considered that this receptor affects the options appraisal.

Flora

8.6.15 Hedgerows Regulations data has not yet been analysed therefore there is insufficient information to date to consider this in the options appraisal.

<u>Consideration of the Four Options</u>

8.6.16 For the reasons detailed above a majority of the potential ecological receptors are not considered to influence the options appraisal at this stage. The main differences between the options are assessed below in terms of the habitats, which each option

will affect directly, and to some degree the invertebrate assemblages that these habitats support.

Options SC2 and SC2A

8.6.17 Options SC2 and SC2A pass through the centre of Grafton Wood, which has been identified as candidate ancient woodland by the updated ancient woodland inventory. This option would lead to habitat loss and fragmentation of the woodland.

8.6.18 Options SC2/SC2A would bisect species-rich hedgerows along and near to Grafton Lane, leading to habitat loss and fragmentation. Withy Brook would also be bisected. The option would pass close to, though would not directly affect, Hayleasow ancient woodland / plantation on ancient woodland, traditional orchard habitat, a further area of candidate ancient woodland, and a veteran oak tree.

8.6.19 There may be a slight preference for Option SC2A relative to SC2, as passing under the existing railway may allow an unmodified habitat corridor to be retained and enhanced along the railway line.

Option SC5

8.6.20 Option SC5 passes through Grafton Wood, slightly to the north of Options SC2/SC2A, with habitat loss and fragmentation impacts likely to be similar. Option SC5 would also lead to habitat loss and fragmentation within an area of candidate ancient woodland adjacent to Grafton Lane.

8.6.21 Akin to Options SC2/SC2A, Option SC5 would bisect species rich hedgerows along and near to Grafton Lane, leading to habitat loss and fragmentation. Withy Brook would also be bisected.

8.6.22 The option would pass close to, though would not directly affect, traditional orchard habitat and veteran oak trees. Option SC5 passes south of Hayleasow Wood ancient woodland, including a buffer zone of approximately 50 - 100 m.

Option SC7

8.6.23 Option SC7 passes through the northern edge of Grafton Wood; fragmentation impacts may therefore be less than Options SC5 and SC2/SC2A though habitat loss impacts would be similar.

8.6.24 Akin to the other options, Option SC7 would bisect species rich hedgerows along Grafton Lane, leading to habitat loss and fragmentation. This option would however bisect fewer hedgerows overall than the other options. Withy Brook would be bisected. Option SC7 would also bisect the very upper reaches of Newton Brook.

8.6.25 The option would pass close to, though would not directly affect, Hayleasow ancient woodland, traditional orchard habitat, and veteran oak trees.

Conclusions

8.6.26 There is likely to be little difference in impacts and mitigation measures between the four options for a majority of the ecological receptors, based on desk study and survey data gathered to date. This reflects the appraisal exercise undertaken in April 2014.

8.6.27 The chosen option should seek to minimise the impacts on the remaining pockets of woodland in a largely farmed landscape, therefore Option SC7 may be the preferred option as fragmentation impacts on Grafton wood are likely to be less, and this option avoids impacts to other areas of candidate ancient woodland. Option SC7 also bisects fewer hedgerows than the other options. Option SC7 could be improved by shifting the eastern end alignment slightly north to avoid Grafton Wood altogether, and by shifting the western end slightly south near Hayleasow Wood to increase the buffer distance here.

8.6.28 Any option selected will need to include suitable mitigation measures in relation to ecological impacts, with impacts predicted for all route corridor options remaining under consideration.

8.7 Water Environment

8.7.1 The most significant impacts to the water environment are likely to be associated with impacts to water quality and flood risk, specifically:

- Polluted surface water runoff during the construction phase consisting of high sediment load, chemicals, hydrocarbons and oils that may migrate or be discharged to surface water features or groundwater resources.
- Polluted surface water runoff during operation of the preferred route containing silts and hydrocarbons that may migrate or be discharged to surface water features or groundwater resources.
- Increased rates and volumes of surface water runoff during operation of the preferred route from an increase in impermeable area and/or changes to the existing drainage regime leading to a potential increase in flood risk.
- Flood risk to the route options as a result of construction within areas identified to be at flood risk and flood risk to people and property elsewhere as a result of the proposals.
- Impact to the hydromorphological and ecological quality of watercourses associated with works within or in close proximity to Withy Brook and Newton Brook.

8.7.2 With the information known at this stage, there is no significant difference between the route options.

8.8 Environmental Assessment Conclusion

8.8.1 A desktop review was undertaken of the Stage 2 Environment Assessment Report produced for the Belmont Transport Package by Amey in October 2013 to determine the baseline conditions in the study area.

8.8.2 In addition, the Biodiversity section was supplemented by a full desk study and survey data completed to date (September 2014) by Parsons Brinckerhoff.

8.8.3 The Environment Assessment undertaken reflects the assessment results from the Stage 2 Environment Assessment Report and the Appraisal Summary Tables produced in April 2014.

8.8.4 All of the four options will have adverse effects on the environment. On balance, Option SC7 performed the least worst of the four options while Option SC5 performed the worst.

9 SOCIAL ASSESSMENT

9.1 General

9.1.1 This section summarises our social appraisal of the four SLR route options against the following criteria:

- Physical activity
- Journey quality
- Security
- Access to services
- Affordability
- Severance

9.1.2 The appraisal is qualitative and proportionate to the characteristics of the scheme.

9.2 Physical Activity

9.2.1 Physical activity has an important role to play in preventing weight gain and obesity, and in improving mental health. Transport can affect physical activity levels by encouraging or discouraging walking and cycling.

9.2.2 Physical activity impacts can be important for schemes targeted at walking or cycling interventions. This is not the case with any of the SLR options assessed in isolation from the supporting sustainable transport improvements. All route variations will have an adverse impact on walking and cycling levels in the rural area, discouraging these activities by increasing severance on existing routes and loss of rural amenity through the introduction of traffic noise and proximity to traffic.

9.2.3 A numerical assessment of the number of pedestrians and cyclists affected is not possible based on the data available, and given the type of scheme being assessed not considered necessary. The four SLR options are assessed to have a moderate adverse impact on physical activity.

9.3 Journey Quality

9.3.1 Journey quality is a measure of the real and perceived physical and social environment experienced when travelling. The guidance breaks down the journey quality impacts into three groups:

- Traveller care – cleanliness, level of facilities, information and the general environment
- Traveller's views – pleasantness of the external surroundings
- Traveller stress – frustration, fear of accidents and route uncertainty

9.3.2 Both traveller views and traveller stress are of relevance to the appraisal of the SLR options. All four route options have been designed to divert traffic from existing built-up areas of the A465 and A49, to a new more open route with rural landscape vistas, greater route certainty, and reduced fear of accidents for users.

9.3.3 There are, however, some counter-acting adverse impacts for A465 and A49 users that do not use the SLR. These relate to having to negotiate new SLR connecting junctions, and to the degraded views of earthworks associated with both those junctions and the SLR route itself.

9.3.4 On balance, all four SLR options are assessed to have a beneficial impact on journey quality. Differences between the schemes relate to the scale and works associated with:

- The new A465 roundabout arrangement - imposing additional stress to travellers on the A465 and connecting between the B4349 and A465, and
- The extent of earthworks and cuttings in taking the SLR route over/ under the railway and other structures– restricting views from the A465, A49 and SLR respectively.

9.3.5 SLR route Options SC2 and SC2A have been assessed as moderate beneficial in respect of journey quality. Options SC5 and SC7 have been assessed as minor beneficial.

9.4 Security

9.4.1 Security impacts relate to fear of and vulnerability to crime. These impacts can be important for public transport users, while there are no formal guidelines for road users. The only impact relevant to the SLR route options is considered to be reduced vulnerability to crime where users are less likely to be required to stop their vehicles or travel at slow speeds. This benefit can be attributed to users of the A465, A49 and SLR itself. The slight beneficial impact is the same for all four options.

9.5 Access to Services

9.5.1 Access to services relates to opportunities for people to travel and access the services they require or desire. Accessibility impacts are primarily concerned with households that do not have access to a car, and with interventions that influence opportunities to access services by public transport, walking and cycling. In the case of the SLR, all four options provide a potential new bus route between the A465 and A49, but not one that serves the key local destinations in Hereford City Centre. For this reason such a bus service is unlikely to materialise.

9.5.2 There may be some improved access to services for car users as a result of reduced journey times both into Hereford City Centre on the A465 and A49, and to key destinations located south of the city including HEZ. Consideration of accessibility, according to the guidance however is not concerned with car users. The assessment is therefore neutral for the four SLR options.

9.6 Affordability

9.6.1 Monetary costs can be a barrier to mobility for low-income groups, affecting their ability to access key destinations. Changes to the transport network involving changes in user charges can have a strong impact on people in low-income groups.

9.6.2 The SLR, when appraised in isolation of supporting sustainable transport options, is primarily concerned with re-routing to facilitate more efficient journeys. This has the impact of reducing congestion on the A465 and A49 to the north of the scheme, whilst increasing speeds and reducing distances for journeys between the A465 and A49.

Both will impact positively on the personal affordability of car drivers, saving on fuel costs. The impact has been assessed as slight beneficial for all four route options.

9.7 Severance

9.7.1 Severance is concerned with the physical separation of people from the facilities and services they use, or would use, within their community. Severance is important where infrastructure and/ or traffic using it presents a barrier to safe pedestrian movement. According to the guidance the appraisal of severance is concerned only with pedestrians, and not with the movement of cyclists, car users, or other user groups. Severance is classified according to hindrance of movement and the numbers of people affected.

9.7.2 When considering the SLR in isolation, all four options increase severance significantly, but for a very low number of residents located in rural communities. Scheme mitigation associated with Grafton Lane, other minor lanes and a number of PROWs, however, will have the effect of reducing/ minimising this severance. The severance experienced by a few, as a direct result of the SLR infrastructure, should be more than compensated by the reduction in severance resulting from reduced travel volumes through Belmont Road and the Holme Lacy Road area.

9.7.3 The net assessment of severance for the SLR is slightly beneficial, with no material difference in impact between the four route options.

9.8 Social Assessment Conclusion

9.8.1 There is not a great deal of difference between the scheme options in respect of the social impact appraisal criteria. The marginal differences between the four options are in relation to:

- The number and nature of PROWs and minor lanes affected.
- The complexity and scale of the junctions connecting the SLR with the A465 and B4349.
- The extent of earthworks and cuttings associated with the route.

9.8.2 In conclusion, route Options SC2 and SC2A demonstrate slightly more social benefits than Options SC5 and SC7. It should be stated, however, that the differences between all four options are slight.

10 SUMMARY OF APPRAISAL

10.1 Introduction

10.1.1 A brief summary of the results of the appraisal is given below.

10.1.2 An Appraisal Summary Table comparing the different SLR Options is at Appendix A. Option SC2 has the highest overall AST score of 1.5. Option SC5 and SC7 have the lowest scores of -2.5 and -1 respectively.

10.2 Route Option SC2

10.2.1 This option has many benefits to the economy, for instance reducing congestion and improving journey times, as well as enhanced accessibility to employment opportunities with the HEZ. However, there are negative impacts to the environment, including increasing road traffic noise and reducing air quality, with impacts upon woodlands, and the impact to the landscape and biodiversity. There are several social benefits, however, including improvements to journey quality, making the roads safer and reducing the number of collisions. It will also improve access to services.

10.3 Route Option SC2A

10.3.1 As with Option SC2, this option has many social and economic benefits to the economy, with a reduction in congestion, improvements to journey enjoyment, and an increase in accessibility to employment and services. However, there are some negative impacts to the environment, including increasing road traffic noise and reducing air quality, with impacts upon woodlands and to the landscape and biodiversity.

10.4 Route Option SC5

10.4.1 This option has many social benefits, as well as benefits to the economy. It will reduce congestion and improve journey times, as well as enhance accessibility to services and employment opportunities. There are some negative impacts to the environment, including increasing road traffic noise and reducing air quality. This option also has a significant impact to the landscape, as it would involve the loss of woodland, and cause severe damage to key characteristics.

10.5 Route Option SC7

10.5.1 This option has many benefits, for instance reducing congestion and improving journey reliability, as well as enhanced accessibility to services and employment. Furthermore, Option SC7 is considered the most ecologically preferable, with minimal impact on biodiversity and habitats. There are some negative impacts to the environment, however, including increasing road traffic noise and reducing air quality. As with the other options, there are social benefits, including making roads safer and reducing the number of collisions. Other options, however, will see greater benefits to journey quality by reducing driver stress.

10.6 Impact of Sustainable Transport Elements on Appraisal

10.6.1 As discussed in the SWTP – Package Assembly Report, the SLR options can be combined with a Sustainable Package of Measures, which could include such things as bus and cycle lanes, townscape improvements, and personalised travel planning programmes.

10.6.2 An Appraisal Summary Table comparing the different SLR Options combined with the Sustainable Transport Package is at Appendix B. The sustainable package has the same impact on each of the route options, and Option SC2 has the highest overall AST score of 5.5. Options SC5 and SC7 have the lowest scores of 2.5 and 4 respectively.

11 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

11.1 Public and Stakeholder Acceptability

11.1.1 Public and Stakeholder acceptability considers the likelihood that a proposal would be accepted by the public and stakeholders and is based on the results of the public consultation.

Public Consultation

11.1.2 Part of the study was to undertake a Public Consultation to obtain public opinion on the options developed as part of the SWTP. These options included improvements to encourage sustainable travel, as well as the four route options for the SLR discussed throughout this report (SC2, SC2A, SC5, and SC7).

11.1.3 The consultation period was advertised for the six-week period from the 1 July 2014 to 8 August 2014. A total of 199 people attended the Public Exhibition at the Three Counties Hotel, Hereford, between the 30 June and 3 July 2014. Additional exhibitions were held at Belmont Library on the 15 July 2014 and Hereford City Library on the 18 July 2014.

11.1.4 Brochures outlining the SWTP options (see Appendix A) were distributed to the public during the course of the consultation. To accompany these, questionnaires (Appendix C) were enclosed.

11.1.5 231 questionnaires were received in response to the consultation. In general, the responses to questions relating to the solutions for solving the transportation problems in the area demonstrated that the public felt that a SLR would be the best solution.

11.1.6 When selecting which option was preferred, out of the 404 responses to this question, the results were as follows:

- SC2 – 35%
- SC2A – 23%
- SC5 – 8%
- SC7 – 8%
- No Road – 26%

11.1.7 The responses from the questionnaires identified that route SC2 was the most preferred. This option was also supported by a 73-name petition, and 'scored' highly in the appraisal of the SLR options.

11.1.8 The alternative 'No Road' option to the SLR received the second highest number of positive responses.

11.1.9 Route SC2A was also received well. This route follows the same alignment as SC2, only differing by going under the railway line.

11.1.10 The two SLR options that have a northern alignment, SC5 and SC7, received the lowest amount of support from the public.

11.1.11 As well as the questionnaire responses, there have also been additional queries and letters, which have provided feedback from the public and other stakeholders. Some of these letters debated which road choice would affect residents the most, with more responses concluding that the alignments for SC2 and SC2A would affect fewer properties.

11.1.12 The responses from local residents also included requests to re-consider the proposed alignments in relation to their land and properties. Opinions were expressed that perhaps additional routes could be designed to achieve an option that would affect fewer residents.

Stakeholder Views

11.1.13 **Hereford City Council** has provided feedback on the proposals, and has commented that improving facilities for cyclists generally is highly desirable. It recognises that there may be some difficulties installing a cycle lane on the length of the Belmont Road, given the narrow width at points. If safe separation can be achieved without increasing congestion on an over-crowded road, then the Council would support such a plan. It has been acknowledged that local Councillors regard congestion in Belmont Road as a real concern, which they point out is echoed in the community consultation responses.

11.1.14 **The Highways Agency** has provided its views in writing. It acknowledges the commitment of £34.98 million towards the SWTP from the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) single growth fund settlement. It notes that the SWTP provides a series of complementary transport measures, which is welcomed in principle. It supports the proposed improvements to walking and cycling on the A465, but would like to understand the traffic implications to the A49 if a bus priority measure were to be included. The Agency notes that the route alignment options appear to reflect the need to consider local topography. It supports the location of the junction with the A49 at the roundabout with the Rotherwas Access Road in principle, provided assessments of capacity are undertaken. The Agency requests that the design standards and alignment of the scheme are considered with reference to the Western Relief Road, should the Council's Submission Draft Core Strategy be approved.

11.1.15 **English Heritage** has provided its views in writing. The outlined that they were not directly consulted on the recent consultation of the four options. They acknowledge that there are a number of heritage assets, both designated and undesignated that may be affected by the proposed routes. They outline that a more detailed assessment of the harm to the significance of the heritage assets, including their settings will be required. They also recognise that as a statutory agency they will be engaged through any future planning application and EIA stage, although they want to highlight that the Council should ensure that all the appropriate evidence base and assessment has been undertaken in identifying the preferred route in the first instance.

11.1.16 **Jesse Norman MP** has provided a written response to the consultation in his capacity as Member of Parliament for Hereford and South Herefordshire. He welcomes the objectives of the SWTP, and is broadly in favour of the measures proposed to improve accessibility and reduce congestion in Hereford. He however, does have some caveats and concerns, including the need to have costings and detailed traffic modelling in order to appraise the effect of the Southern Link Road. He would like to see a detailed cost-benefit analysis before approval. He also recognises the need for sensitivity towards the environment and local residents, and urges that their concerns are listened to. He welcomes proposals to provide additional pedestrian crossings,

and would like to see existing cycle infrastructure made safer and more welcoming. He has concerns over the proposed bus lane, for instance how it would be monitored, and if it is indeed necessary given the cuts to bus services.

Conclusion

11.1.17 The consultation process concluded with a number of alternative alignments suggested by the public and third parties. These alignments have been assessed and those that were deemed viable have since been appraised to the same level of detail as the four options contained earlier in this report. The following chapter provides the assessment of the additional route options: SC8, SC8A, and SC9.

12 ADDITIONAL OPTION ASSESSMENT

12.1 Route Options

12.1.1 The additional routes that have been designed are SC8, SC8A, and SC9. These three route options are illustrated in Figure 21, and plans showing longitudinal sections for each route are shown in Figures 22 to 24, which can be found at the rear of this report.

Option SC8

12.1.2 Option SC8 passes through the northern part of Grafton Wood and, in a generally westerly direction, crosses to the south of the densely wooded area between Grafton Lane and Withy Brook. It crosses Grafton Lane at grade and avoids the site of archaeological importance. The route climbs over the railway line on embankment and then dips down in cutting underneath Haywood Lane, passing to the south of Beech Grove/Merry Hill. The alignment passes to the south of the outbuildings located to the south of Merryhill Farm. From this location, the road turns in a north-westerly direction avoiding Newton Coppice before tying into a new roundabout on the A465. A new link is provided from this roundabout to the B4349 Clehonger Road avoiding the property known as Pykeways. The excavation underneath Haywood Lane is the main source of fill to create the embankment to cross over the railway. With some adjustment to the horizontal and vertical alignments, this option may offer the potential to achieve an earthworks balance. However, this need for a deep excavation could give rise to groundwater and road drainage problems. The route crosses existing overhead power lines located at the eastern and western ends of the scheme (including a 66kV) but generally avoids them within the middle section.

Option SC8A

12.1.3 The alignment of Option SC8A is identical to SC8 above except that the new road passes underneath the railway line in a deep excavation. The road remains in a deep cutting underneath Haywood Lane, which in itself could give rise to groundwater and road drainage problems. The lack of embankments along the route gives rise to a scheme which requires the disposal of a huge amount of excess spoil.

Option SC9

12.1.4 Option SC9 is largely based on the horizontal alignment of Option SC8. The difference lies within the central section where the route is aligned to cross the railway line in a near perpendicular angle, in order to simplify the bridge crossing. In so doing the route climbs over the railway on embankment and then turns westwards towards Haywood Lane to pass over the lane. This is the only option under consideration to cross over Haywood Lane. Between the railway and Haywood Lane the road passes through Beech Grove/Merry Hill, requiring the need for a small excavation over the top of the land feature. The route passes on an embankment just to the south of the outbuildings belonging to Merryhill Farm. A comparison of the earthworks generated from cuttings and the need for spoil to create embankments show a large shortage of material, which would require importation from an off-site source. Existing utilities are affected in the same way as those described above for SC8 above.

12.2 Engineering Assessment

12.2.1 As per Options SC2, SC2A, SC5 and SC& the additional options adopt an S2 standard 7.3m (with two 1m hardstrips) single carriageway cross-section in accordance with TD27/05 'Cross Sections and Headrooms'.

Option SC8

12.2.2 Earthworks – to cross over the railway line Option SC8 requires the construction of an embankment up to 8m high and to get underneath Haywood Lane, the cutting would be over 7m deep which could give rise to groundwater and road drainage problems. Preliminary bulk earthworks calculations suggest a net surplus of 16,000m3 which could be used in landscaping works. However, with some adjustment to the horizontal and vertical alignments this option may offer the potential to achieve an earthworks balance.

12.2.3 Design Standards – 60mph design speed with Departures from Standard unlikely to be required. Opportunities for overtaking are unlikely due to the topography (vertical curvature). Angled crossing of the existing railway will increase cost but the crossing of Haywood Lane is relatively straight. The provision of new accesses for land areas being severed by the scheme and the provision of drainage runoff storage have yet to be determined.

12.2.4 Physical features – the route skirts around the south-west corner of Newton Coppice (designated as Ancient Woodland) and through the northern section of Grafton Wood which, although not listed on the Natural England Ancient woodland inventory, was identified as Candidate Ancient Woodland during the Ancient Woodland and Trees of Herefordshire Project. The route also passes to the south of the wooded area between Grafton Lane and Withy Brook as well as to the south of the barn yard belonging to Merryhill Farm. The route passes to the south of Grafton Enclosure and Beech Grove (refer to commentary on Option SC9).

12.2.5 Utilities – the route clashes with existing overhead power lines located at the eastern and western ends of the scheme (including a 66kV) but generally avoid them within the central area. The route crosses Grafton Lane at grade (or thereabouts) where BT and water services are present. There is conflict with a concentration of overhead and buried services in/around Haywood Lane including BT, a water main and a sewer.

12.2.6 Rail structure – the route crosses over the existing railway line, which is Network Rail's preferred solution for reasons relating to asset ownership and future maintenance liability. Initial discussions with Network Rail have revealed that key issues which they will be looking for in relation to a new crossing over the railway are (i) ownership and liabilities for the new bridge; (ii) headroom clearances; (iii) lateral clearances; (iv) any effect on the siting of their current infrastructure e.g. signals; (v) the ability to accommodate likely future improvements to the railway e.g. four-tracking and electrification; (vi) vehicular containment of highway vehicles; (vii) impact resistance of parts of the structure from derailed trains; (viii) railway disruption both during construction and ongoing future maintenance of the new structure; and (ix) whether the new road provides them with opportunities to close any existing level crossings in the area.

12.2.7 Highway structures – a new bridge structure will be required to carry Haywood Lane over the new SLR thereby maintaining the north-south connectivity. The bridge is likely to take the form of a single span structure with prestressed concrete beams and an insitu reinforced concrete deck. To achieve the vertical clearance required there

may be a need to raise the alignment of Haywood Lane locally. At the location where the SLR meets Grafton Lane (also the route of National Cycle Network Route No 46), the lane will be stopped up for motorised users, provision only being made for an at-grade crossing for non-motorised users. This will require local realignment of Grafton Lane to tie in with the alignment of the SLR.

Option SC8A

12.2.8 Earthworks – to cross underneath the railway line and Haywood Lane, Option SC8A requires an extensive cutting up to 11m deep which could give rise to groundwater and road drainage problems. Preliminary bulk earthworks calculations suggest a net surplus of 167,000m3 which will require disposal off site.

12.2.9 Design Standards – 60mph design speed with Departures from Standard unlikely to be required. Opportunities for overtaking are unlikely due to the topography (vertical curvature). Angled crossing of the existing railway will increase cost but the crossing of Haywood Lane is relatively straight. The provision of new accesses for land areas being severed by the scheme and the provision of drainage runoff storage have yet to be determined.

12.2.10 Physical features – the route skirts around the south-west corner of Newton Coppice (designated as Ancient Woodland) and through the northern section of Grafton Wood which, although not listed on the Natural England Ancient woodland inventory, was identified as Candidate Ancient Woodland during the Ancient Woodland and Trees of Herefordshire Project. The route also passes to the south of the wooded area between Grafton Lane and Withy Brook as well as to the south of the barn yard belonging to Merryhill Farm. The route passes to the south of Grafton Enclosure and Beech Grove (refer to commentary on Option SC9).

12.2.11 Utilities – the route clashes with existing overhead power lines located at the eastern and western ends of the scheme (including a 66kV) but generally avoid them within the central area. The route crosses Grafton Lane at grade (or thereabouts) where BT and water services are present. There is conflict with a concentration of overhead and buried services in/around Haywood Lane including BT, a water main and a sewer.

12.2.12 Rail structure – the route crosses underneath the existing railway line, which is not Network Rail's preferred solution as they would be responsible for its future maintenance. Initial discussions with Network Rail have revealed that key issues which they will be looking for in relation to a new crossing over the railway are (i) ownership and liabilities for the new bridge; (ii) headroom clearances; (iii) lateral clearances; (iv) any effect on the siting of their current infrastructure e.g. signals; (v) the ability to accommodate likely future improvements to the railway e.g. four-tracking and electrification; (vi) vehicular containment of highway vehicles; (vii) impact resistance of parts of the structure from derailed trains; (viii) railway disruption both during construction and ongoing future maintenance of the new structure; and (ix) whether the new road provides them with opportunities to close any existing level crossings in the area.

12.2.13 Highway structures – a new bridge structure will be required to carry Haywood Lane over the new SLR thereby maintaining the north-south connectivity. The bridge is likely to take the form of a single span structure with prestressed concrete beams and an insitu reinforced concrete deck. To achieve the vertical clearance required there may be a need to raise the alignment of Haywood Lane locally. At the location where the SLR meets Grafton Lane (also the route of National Cycle Network Route No 46), the lane will be stopped up for motorised users, provision only being made for an at-

grade crossing for non-motorised users. This will require local realignment of Grafton Lane to tie in with the alignment of the SLR.

Option SC9

12.2.14 Earthworks – the route is predominantly on embankment both sides of Beech Grove/Merry Hill. To cross over the railway line Option SC9 requires the construction of an embankment up to 8.5m high and to get over Haywood Lane another embankment up to 8m high. The small cutting over Beech Grove is up to 4m deep. Preliminary bulk earthworks calculations suggest a net shortfall of 110,000m3 which would need to be brought in from an external source.

12.2.15 Design Standards –60mph design speed with Departures from Standard unlikely to be required. Opportunities for overtaking are also unlikely due to the topography (vertical curvature). Straighter crossing of railway will reduce the cost of the structure. The provision of new accesses for land areas being severed by the scheme and the provision of drainage runoff storage have yet to be determined.

12.2.16 Physical features – being of a twisted nature the route manages to avoid many physical constraints except the northern section of Grafton Wood which, although not listed on the Natural England Ancient woodland inventory, was identified as Candidate Ancient Woodland during the Ancient Woodland and Trees of Herefordshire Project. It passes close to the wooded area between Grafton Lane and Withy Brook and the barn yard belonging to Merryhill Farm. The route crosses the railway at a near perpendicular angle which should be beneficial in engineering and cost terms. The unique distinction between this route and others under consideration is that it goes through the middle of Beech Grove. To date it has not been confirmed whether the feature has archaeological relevance/significance or otherwise. Beech Grove does not appear as a specific record on the Herefordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) and is not listed as a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Grafton Enclosure (off Grafton Lane) on the other hand does appear on the HER and is believed to be a lost early medieval castle site. However, it is not affected by the alignment of Option SC9, the route passing well to the south of it.

12.2.17 Utilities – the route clashes with existing overhead power lines located at the eastern and western ends of the scheme (including a 66kV) but generally avoids them within the central area. The route crosses Grafton Lane at grade (or thereabouts) where BT and water services are present. There is conflict with a concentration of overhead and buried services in/around Haywood Lane including BT, a water main and a sewer.

12.2.18 Rail structure - the route crosses over the existing railway line, which is Network Rail's preferred solution for reasons relating to asset ownership and future maintenance liability. Initial discussions with Network Rail have revealed that key issues which they will be looking for in relation to a new crossing over the railway are (i) ownership and liabilities for the new bridge; (ii) headroom clearances; (iii) lateral clearances; (iv) any effect on the siting of their current infrastructure e.g. signals; (v) the ability to accommodate likely future improvements to the railway e.g. four-tracking and electrification; (vi) vehicular containment of highway vehicles; (vii) impact resistance of parts of the structure from derailed trains; (viii) railway disruption both during construction and ongoing future maintenance of the new structure; and (ix) whether the new road provides them with opportunities to close any existing level crossings in the area.

12.2.19 Highway structures – a new bridge structure will be required to carry the SLR over Haywood Lane. The bridge is likely to take the form of a single span structure with

prestressed concrete beams and an insitu reinforced concrete deck. The need to cross over Haywood Lane is likely to cause difficulty in tying the lane back to existing levels either side of it, particularly to the north at its junction with Merryhill Lane. At the location where the SLR meets Grafton Lane (also the route of National Cycle Network Route No 46), the lane will be stopped up for motorised users, provision only being made for an at-grade crossing for non-motorised users. This will require local realignment of Grafton Lane to tie in with the alignment of the SLR.

Departures and Relaxations from Standards

12.2.20 Various constraints on the proposed route for a road may mean that it cannot be reasonably designed to full standards. Any desirable or necessary reductions in standards are dealt with as design Relaxations or design Departures. All Departures must have formal approval from the Technical Approval Authority (TAA).

12.2.21 At present the number of Relaxations and Departures in the design is not known, although they are considered unlikely across all options. The aim would be to design out any Departures at detailed design stage.

Footway and Cycle Routes

12.2.22 All of the route options bisect Grafton Lane, which forms part of the National Cycle Network, and mitigation options have been proposed in a separate Technical Note. In addition, the route options bisect a varying number of Public Rights of Way (PRoW), as shown in Table 16 below.

Option	No. PRoW Bisected
SC8	3
SC8A	3
SC9	3

Table 16: Public Rights of Way bisected by each option

12.2.23 Each of the three additional options bisect the same PRoW.

Railway and Structures

12.2.24 All of the additional routes considered for the SLR would need to cross the main Cardiff to Hereford railway line. Options SC8 and SC9 cross over the railway line, while SC8A crosses underneath. No other engineering structures e.g. bridges are known to be affected by the proposals.

Drainage

12.2.25 The drainage proposals are likely to consist of a combination of carrier drains, filter drains, and grassed surface water channels or similar such as swales. Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) will be utilised where possible.

12.2.26 Where appropriate drainage would be provided at the top and bottom of embankments and, if necessary, drainage would also be provided within the cutting slopes. Attenuation ponds may be required to control the flow of highway drainage water entering a watercourse.

12.2.27 Affected minor watercourses would be diverted and/or culverted.

12.2.28 Appropriate measures to intercept any pollutants entering the highway drainage system will be agreed with the Environment Agency.

Lay-bys

12.2.29 The recommended spacing for lay-bys in both directions on a single carriageway road is between 2 and 5km. With the SLR being just over 3km long between the A49(T) and the A465 there is no requirement to provide a lay-by in accordance with design guidance.

Road Lighting

12.2.30 Road lighting is only proposed for the roundabouts. In view of the proximity of the new A465 roundabout to some properties a lower standard of lighting may be considered in conjunction with Herefordshire Council's policy for lighting which also includes phased dimming overnight, as appropriate.

Road Restraint Systems [e.g. Vehicle Containment Barriers]

12.2.31 Road restraint systems would be provided in accordance with Design Standards.

Statutory Undertakers

12.2.32 Diversionary works will be required. These are to be determined and agreed with the Statutory Undertakers.

Scheme Cost of Options

12.2.33 Table 17 shows the estimated scheme costs for the additional options based on 2012 prices. For the purposes of this assessment we have made a contingency allowance of 44% on construction cost. If the contingency was not required, the scheme cost would be the lower of the two values below.

Option	Scheme Cost
SC8	£17.9M-£26.5M
SC8A	£25.4M-£38.6M
SC9	£17.2M-£25.3M

Table 17: Cost of Additional Options

Value Engineering

12.2.34 Value Engineering principles such as optimising the alignment, structures and cut/fill balance will be considered during further development of the preferred option. This may include a Value Engineering workshop.

Engineering Assessment Conclusion

12.2.35 In conclusion, of the 3 additional alignment options considered, Option SC8 performs better than the other options in terms of engineering considerations. This is based on the following observations:

- The route is predominantly straight on plan only curving gradually north-west on the approach to the new A465 roundabout;

- The vertical alignment tends to follow the topography of the area and the need to create an embankment in order to cross over the railway is achieved from the cut area around Haywood Lane (adjacent). This should offer a sustainable earthworks solution, subject to the excavated material being acceptable for reuse as engineered fill;
- Of the three additional routes considered it is the most likely option to achieve a balance of bulk earthworks;
- 60mph design speed throughout;
- No Departures from Standard's expected for road geometry;
- The route offers a compromised alignment solution between the properties located in Merryhill and those around Haywood Lodge to the south. It is also located some 130m further north than Option SC2 from the property on Grafton Lane known as The Green;
- The route passes to the south of the knoll at Beech Grove/Merry Hill, the archaeological significance of which is not known to date;
- The route avoids the barns belonging to Merryhill Farm;
- The route goes over the railway so aligns with Network Rail's expectation. Furthermore it does not conflict with the existing communications mast and generator building located further south along the railway (which Option SC2 does);
- The central section of the route is located to south of the main corridor of overhead electricity cables running east-west;
- The route avoids Newton Coppice and the wooded area situated between Grafton Wood and Withy Brook.

12.3 Traffic, Safety and Economic Assessment

12.3.1 The methodologies used to assess the options take account of the Department for Transport and Highways Agency technical and guidance documents. The assessments use actual and predicted traffic volumes on the road network in the study area.

Future Year Traffic Flows

12.3.2 The traffic flows predicted for 2017 (the Opening Year) and 2032 (the Design Year) are those outlined in Table 13 in Section 7.4.

Reliability Comparison

12.3.3 There is not expected to be a significant difference between the options in terms of reliability.

12.3.4 Reduced congestion along the A465 provides greater journey time reliability for users of the A465. Journey times along the A49 are expected to remain at existing levels.

Accident Comparison

12.3.5 There is not expected to be a significant difference between the additional options in terms of accidents. The options will be designed to the latest design standards and are likely to be safer than the A465 and A49 as per the Options SC2, SC2A, SC5 and SC7. A reduction in traffic along the A465 will result in a reduced accident rate along this section of road, although the increase in traffic along the A49 in some time periods may cause the accident rate to increase on this section of road.

Economy Comparison

12.3.6 There is not expected to be a significant difference between the options in terms of economy. Scheme costs for the additional options are detailed in Section 12.2.33.

12.3.7 The scheme is anticipated to result in reduced congestion along the A465 Belmont Road due to diversion of traffic onto the Southern Link Road, resulting in journey time savings for existing users. There is likely to be increased traffic along the A49 in some time periods, but the level of delay at the A49/A465 junction is proposed to remain at existing levels.

12.4 Environmental Assessment

Air Quality

12.4.2 The methodology undertaken on the three additional options is consistent with the approach outlined in Chapter 8.

Potential Effects

12.4.3 Air quality impacts from the operation of the three additional options will be as a result of the introduction of traffic into areas which were previously free from road traffic or had experienced very low traffic.

12.4.4 Table 18 shows the number of residential properties within 200m from each route option, split into bands. This only includes where the scheme introduces a new section of road, and does not include existing roads.

Distance from Road Centreline	Number of Properties		
	Option SC8	Option SC8A	Option SC9
0 – 50m	0	0	0
50m – 100m	4	4	3
100m – 200m	5	5	4
Total	**9**	**9**	**7**

Table 18: Residential properties within 200m of each route

12.4.5 There will also be potential secondary effects upon woodland habitats from air pollutants as a result of traffic flows across each of the three additional options. All scheme options would have identical secondary impacts upon Hayleasow Wood, Newton Coppice and Grafton Scheme.

Noise

12.4.6 For each of the route options identified, a qualitative assessment of potential noise and vibration impacts has been undertaken. Table 19 contains the number of properties within 600m of each route option. This information has been used to complete the AST for each route option.

Distance from Road Centreline	Number of Receptors by Route Option		
	Option SC8	Option SC8A	Option SC9
0 – 50m	0	0	0
50m – 100m	4	4	3
100m – 200m	5	5	4
200m – 300m	13	13	13
300m – 600m	81	81	78
Total	**103**	**103**	**98**

Table 19: Residential properties within 600m of each route

12.4.7 At this stage, it is not possible to undertake a more detailed assessment of potential noise and vibration impacts associated with each route option as validated traffic data is not available.

Greenhouse Gases

The methodology adopted for the additional options is consistent with the approach outlined in Chapter 8. SC8, SC8A and SC9 were assessed for their potential greenhouse (CO_2eq) gas production in relation to the scheme length, change in vehicle speeds and changes to journey lengths as a consequence of the road traffic use of the proposed scheme options.

Potential Effects

12.4.8 It is highly probable that local traffic speeds will increase as a result of the scheme development. In addition the distances that vehicles will be required to travel is estimated to increase slightly as a result of the scheme development.

12.4.9 Figure 20 in Chapter 8 illustrates that increases in vehicle speeds between 60 to 90 kph increases CO_2 emissions. Therefore it is possible that all three of the additional options will have a slight adverse impact on greenhouse gases due to vehicles travelling greater distances and at higher speeds.

Landscape/Townscape

Option SC8

12.4.10 SC8 passes through fertile, undulating farmland with extensive arable fields, with low hedges and occasional woodland. Although most of the route is within the Herefordshire Lowlands character area, more typical of South Herefordshire. In terms of woodland, it cuts through the centre of Grafton Wood, which is not designated and has a low density of trees. This route runs in close proximity to Haywood Lodge Farm and associated properties, with potential for visual amenity effects. It avoids Newton Brook. The alignment of the eastern half of the route runs in a straight line and cuts across the grain of the landscape. The route therefore fails to take into account the undulating topography and irregular field pattern. SC8 will require extensive works to create embankments to take the route over the railway line resulting in a visible central section (as it passes over the railway line) and will have engineered slopes that will be disruptive to the character of the local topography.

12.4.11 The landscape in this area would be classed as being of Medium sensitivity (good quality example of Herefordshire rural landscape). The magnitude of effect on the landscape resource with the additional sections of road, roundabout and proximity to residential properties, is Moderate (loss of resource, at odds with the local pattern and landform, visually intrusive and will adversely impact on the landscape).

Option SC8A

12.4.12 SC8A passes through fertile, undulating farmland with extensive arable fields, with low hedges and occasional woodland. Although most of the route is within the Herefordshire Lowlands character area, more typical of South Herefordshire. In terms of woodland, it cuts through the centre of Grafton Wood, which is not designated and has a low density of trees. This route runs in close proximity to Haywood Lodge Farm and associated properties, with potential for visual amenity effects. It avoids Newton Brook. The alignment of the eastern half of the route runs in a straight line and cuts

across the grain of the landscape. The route therefore fails to take into account the undulating topography and irregular field pattern. SC8A will require extensive works to create a cutting to take the route under the railway and will involve engineered slopes that will be disruptive to the character of the local topography.

12.4.13 The landscape in this area would be classed as being of Medium sensitivity (good quality example of Herefordshire rural landscape). The magnitude of effect on the landscape resource with the additional sections of road, roundabout and proximity to residential properties, is Moderate (loss of resource, at odds with the local pattern and landform, visually intrusive and will adversely impact on the landscape).

Option SC9

12.4.14 SC9 passes through fertile, undulating farmland with extensive arable fields, with low hedges and occasional woodland. Although most of the route is within the Herefordshire Lowlands character area, more typical of South Herefordshire. In terms of woodland, it cuts through the centre of Grafton Wood, which is not designated and has a low density of trees. This route will be visible from Haywood Lodge Farm and associated properties, however it curves away in a NW direction after crossing the railway line. As it takes a NW direction it passes directly through a local landscape feature called Beech Grove. Similar to other more southerly routes, it avoids Newton Brook.

12.4.15 The landscape in this area would be classed as being of Medium sensitivity (good quality example of Herefordshire rural landscape). The magnitude of effect on the landscape resource would be Major (is at considerable variance with the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape, is visually intrusive and will adversely impact on the landscape).

Historic Environment

Options SC8 and SC8A

12.4.16 These options would have no effect on any Scheduled Monument or its setting. The Scheduled Monuments in the extended study area are of high value, but these options would have no effect upon them or their settings, resulting in no significant effect.

12.4.17 SC8 and SC8A would encroach within 370m of but be largely screened from the Listed Building complex at Haywood Lodge, containing one Grade II* and three Grade II structures. It would encroach within 320m of but be largely screened from the Grade II Listed Buildings at Merryhill. It would encroach within 220m of but be largely screened from the agricultural structures at Clehonger Court, which are Grade II Listed Buildings. It would encroach within 150m of and be visible from the Grade II milestone on the A465.

12.4.18 The Listed Buildings in the study area are of high value. Although passing close to the listed milestone on the A465, the roadside is the appropriate setting for structure and, therefore, these options would have no significant effect. It would have a minor impact on the settings of the listed structures at Haywood Lodge, Merryhill and Clehonger Court, resulting in a slight to moderate effect.

12.4.19 These options would traverse four fields from which significant artefacts have been recovered. As they consist of findspots, the undesignated sites are of uncertain value, though the effect upon them could be major.

Option SC9

12.4.20 This option would have no effect on any Scheduled Monument or its setting. The Scheduled Monuments in the extended study area are of high value, but this option would have no effect upon them or their settings, resulting in no significant effect.

12.4.21 This option would encroach within 420m of but be largely screened from the Listed Building complex at Haywood Lodge, containing one Grade II* and three Grade II structures. It would encroach within 250m of but be largely screened from the Grade II Listed Buildings at Merryhill. It would encroach within 220m of but be largely screened from the agricultural structures at Clehonger Court, which are Grade II Listed Buildings. It would encroach within 150m of and be visible from the Grade II milestone on the A465.

12.4.22 The Listed Buildings in the study area are of high value. Although passing close to the listed milestone on the A465, the roadside is the appropriate setting for structure and, therefore, this option would have no significant effect. It would have a moderate impact on the settings of the listed structures at Haywood Lodge and Merryhill and a minor impact Clehonger Court, resulting in a moderate effect.

12.4.23 This option would traverse five fields from which significant artefacts have been recovered. As they consist of findspots, the undesignated sites are of uncertain value, though the effect upon them could be major.

Biodiversity

12.4.24 This options appraisal exercise has been produced following a similar methodology to that of the Appraisal Summary Tables included in Appendix A, with the information expanded where possible to incorporate updated survey information where this has become available.

Statutory and non-statutory designated sites

12.4.25 None of the three additional options will directly affect any statutory or non-statutory designated sites. Impacts and mitigation measures are likely to be similar for all options and as such are not considered to affect the options appraisal.

Badgers

12.4.26 Minimal evidence of badger was recorded during the survey. Badgers are protected on the grounds of animal welfare rather than rarity / population decline and as such are not considered to affect the options appraisal. At this time there is no evidence to suggest badger-related road traffic collision risk will differ significantly between any of the options.

Dormice

12.4.27 The presence or absence of this species has not yet been determined however surveys are ongoing. There is insufficient information to date to fully consider this species in the options appraisal.

Otters

12.4.28 Otter has been identified using Withy Brook. All options cross this brook, therefore, impacts and mitigation are likely to be similar for all options.

Water voles

12.4.29 No evidence of this species was recorded, therefore it is not considered further in the options appraisal.

Bats

12.4.30 Surveys are on-going for this species group however to date it has been determined that the site is, in general, 'bat rich' with at least 10 species recorded to date. This includes two Annex 2 species (barbastelle and lesser horseshoe bat). These records are spread throughout the site, with no 'hotspots' identified for these species.

12.4.31 Foraging and commuting activity levels are considered to be relatively high, with continuous foraging activity recorded at several locations, on several occasions and for several different species. Bat activity has been recorded at all locations surveyed, with all options affecting areas where both higher and lower levels of activity have been recorded. As the three additional options follow the same broad corridor as the other options and will affect the same or very similar habitat features (such as woodlands and hedgerows), impacts and mitigation are likely to be similar for all options.

12.4.32 The level of roosting activity recorded to date is limited to two minor soprano pipistrelle roosts in two adjacent orchard trees. As these trees will not be directly affected by any of the route options, this data is not considered to affect the options appraisal. It is possible that roosts of greater conservation significance, which could influence the alignment, will be detected during the remaining surveys to be undertaken during October 2014, although this is relatively unlikely. It is possible that roosts may be present within trees that would be directly affected by SC9; insufficient surveys have been completed on these trees to determine presence or absence.

Birds

12.4.33 As the three additional options follow the same broad corridor as the other options and will affect the same or very similar habitat features (such as woodlands, arable fields and margins, and hedgerows), impacts and mitigation are likely to be similar for all options. Barn owls have been recorded flying and likely foraging and one likely roost has been recorded close to Haywood Lane. It is unlikely that any options will directly affect any barn owl roosts, should they be found during remaining surveys, and therefore this data is unlikely to affect the options appraisal.

Reptiles

12.4.34 Common reptile species have been recorded in low numbers within woodland glade and field margin habitats across the site. As the three additional options follow the same broad corridor as the other options and will affect the same or very similar habitat features, impacts and mitigation are likely to be similar for all options.

Amphibians

12.4.35 A medium population of great crested newts was recorded at several ponds within 500 m of the proposed options. None of the proposed options will directly affect any ponds, therefore impacts to great crested newts will be limited to terrestrial habitats.

Flora

12.4.36 Hedgerows Regulations data has not yet been analysed therefore there is insufficient information to date to consider this in the options appraisal.

Consideration of the three additional options

12.4.37 For the reasons detailed above a majority of the potential ecological receptors are not considered to influence the options appraisal at this stage. The main differences between the options are assessed below in terms of the habitats which each option will affect directly, and to some degree the invertebrate assemblages which these habitats support.

Options SC8 and SC8A

12.4.38 Options SC8/8A passes through the centre of Grafton Wood and is likely to lead to the greatest extent of habitat loss / disturbance within Grafton Wood relative to other route options under consideration, with comparable impacts to SC2/2A and SC9.

12.4.39 Akin to Options SC2/SC2A, Options SC8/8A would bisect species rich hedgerows along and near to Grafton Lane, leading to habitat loss and fragmentation. Withy Brook would also be bisected

12.4.40 There may be a slight preference to bridge over the railway, which would allow the railway corridor to act as an underpass under the road.

Options SC9

12.4.41 SC9 passes through the centre of Grafton Wood and is likely to lead to the greatest extent of habitat loss / disturbance within Grafton Wood relative to other route options under consideration, with comparable impacts to SC2/2A and SC8/8A.

12.4.42 Akin to Options SC2/SC2A, Option SC9 would bisect species rich hedgerows along and near to Grafton Lane, leading to habitat loss and fragmentation. Withy Brook would also be bisected

12.4.43 Option SC9 would pass over Haywood Lane via an overbridge, the only route option which does so. Haywood Lane could therefore provide an underpass for use by bats (providing this can be unlit), which may provide a more easily effective mitigation solution than having the proposed road passing under Haywood Lane. However, SC9 would directly affect several mature / veteran trees within hedgerows to the east of the railway (some of which have high bat roosting potential), which would not be affected by other route options.

Conclusion

12.4.44 There is likely to be little difference in impacts and mitigation measures between the three additional options for a majority of the ecological receptors, based on desk study and survey data gathered to date. This reflects the appraisal exercise undertaken in April 2014.

12.4.45 Any option selected will need to include suitable mitigation measures in relation to ecological impacts, with impacts predicted for all route corridor options remaining under consideration.

Water Environment

12.4.46 The most significant impacts to the water environment are likely to be associated with impacts to water quality and flood risk, specifically:

- Polluted surface water runoff during the construction phase consisting of high sediment load, chemicals, hydrocarbons and oils that may migrate or be discharged to surface water features or groundwater resources.
- Polluted surface water runoff during operation of the preferred route containing silts and hydrocarbons that may migrate or be discharged to surface water features or groundwater resources.
- Increased rates and volumes of surface water runoff during operation of the preferred route from an increase in impermeable area and/or changes to the existing drainage regime leading to a potential increase in flood risk.
- Flood risk to the route options as a result of construction within areas identified to be at flood risk and flood risk to people and property elsewhere as a result of the proposals.
- Impact to the hydromorphological and ecological quality of watercourses associated with works within or in close proximity to Withy Brook and Newton Brook.

12.4.47 With the information known at this stage, there is no significant difference between the route options.

Environmental Assessment Conclusion

12.4.48 A desk top review was undertaken of the Stage 2 Environment Assessment Report produced for the Belmont Transport Package by Amey in October 2013 to determine the baseline conditions in the study area.

12.4.49 In addition, the Biodiversity section was supplemented by a full desk study and survey data completed to date (September 2014) by Parsons Brinckerhoff.

12.4.50 The Environment Assessment undertaken reflects the assessment results from the Stage 2 Environment Assessment Report and the Appraisal Summary Tables produced in April 2014.

12.4.51 All of the options, including the three additional options, will have adverse effects on the environment. On balance Option SC7 performed the least worst of all the options whilst Options SC5 / SC9 performed the worst.

12.5 Social Assessment

Physical Activity

12.5.2 Physical activity has an important role to play in preventing weight gain and obesity, and in improving mental health. Transport can affect physical activity levels by encouraging or discouraging walking and cycling.

12.5.3 Physical activity impacts can be important for schemes targeted at walking or cycling interventions. This is not the case with any of the SLR options assessed in isolation from the supporting sustainable transport improvements. All seven route variations will have an adverse impact on walking and cycling levels, discouraging these activities by increasing severance on existing routes and loss of rural amenity through the introduction of traffic noise and proximity to traffic.

12.5.4 A numerical assessment of the number of pedestrians and cyclists affected is not possible based on the data available, and given the type of scheme being assessed, not considered necessary. The three additional options are assessed to have a moderately adverse impact on physical activity.

Journey Quality

12.5.5 Journey quality is a measure of the real and perceived physical and social environment experienced when travelling. The guidance breaks down the journey quality impacts into three groups:

- Traveller care – cleanliness, level of facilities, information and the general environment
- Traveller's views – pleasantness of the external surroundings
- Traveller stress – frustration, fear of accidents and route uncertainty

12.5.6 Both Traveller views and traveller stress are of relevance to the appraisal of the SLR options. The three additional options have been designed to divert traffic from existing built-up areas of the A465 and A49, to a new, more open, route with rural landscape vistas, greater route certainty, and reduced fear of accidents for users.

12.5.7 There are, however, some counter-acting adverse impacts for A465 and A49 users that do not use the SLR. These relate to having to negotiate new SLR connecting junctions, and to the degraded views of earthworks associated with both those junctions and the SLR route itself.

12.5.8 On balance, all three additional options are assessed to have a beneficial impact on journey quality. Differences between the schemes relate to the scale and works associated with:

- The new A465 roundabout arrangement - imposing additional stress to travellers on the A465 and connecting between the B4349 and A465, and
- The extent of earthworks and cuttings in taking the SLR route over/ under the railway and other structures, restricting views from the A465, A49 and SLR respectively.

12.5.9 All three additional routes, SC8, SC8A and SC9 have been assessed as moderate beneficial in respect of journey quality.

Security

12.5.10 Security impacts relate to fear of and vulnerability to crime. These impacts can be important for public transport users, while there are no formal guidelines for road users. The only impact relevant to the SLR route options is considered to be reduced vulnerability to crime where users are less likely to be required to stop their vehicles or travel at slow speeds. This benefit can be attributed to users of the A465, A49 and SLR itself. The slight beneficial impact is the same for all three additional options.

Access to Services

12.5.11 Access to services relates to opportunities for people to travel and access the services they require or desire. Accessibility impacts are primarily concerned with households that do not have access to a car, and with interventions that influence opportunities to access services by public transport, walking and cycling. In the case of the three additional options they provide a potential new bus route between the A465 and A49, but not one that serves the key local destinations in Hereford City Centre. For this reason such a bus service is unlikely to materialise.

12.5.12 There may be some improved access to services for car users as a result of reduced journey times both into Hereford City Centre on the A465 and A49, and to key destinations located south of the city including HEZ. Consideration of accessibility, according to the guidance however is not concerned with car users. The assessment is therefore neutral for the three additional options.

Affordability

12.5.13 Monetary costs can be a barrier to mobility for low-income groups, affecting their ability to access key destinations. Changes to the transport network involving changes in user charges can have a strong impact on people in low-income groups.

12.5.14 The SLR, appraised in isolation of supporting sustainable transport options, is primarily concerned with re-routing to facilitate more efficient journeys. This has the impact of reducing congestion on the A465 and A49 to the north of the scheme, whilst increasing speeds and reducing distances for journeys between the A465 and A49. Both will impact positively on the personal affordability of car drivers, saving on fuel costs. The impact has been assessed as slight beneficial for all three additional options.

Severance

12.5.15 Severance is concerned with the physical separation of people from the facilities and services they use, or would use, within their community. Severance is important where infrastructure and/ or traffic using it presents a barrier to safe pedestrian movement. According to the guidance, the appraisal of severance is concerned only with pedestrians, and not with the movement of cyclists, car users, or other user groups. Severance is classified according to hindrance of movement and also the numbers of people affected.

12.5.16 In the case of the three additional options, they increase severance significantly but for a very low number of residents located in rural communities. Scheme mitigation associated with Grafton Lane, other minor lanes and a number of PROWs, however,

will have the effect of reducing/ minimising this severance. The severance experienced by a few, as a direct result of the SLR infrastructure, should be more than compensated by the reduction in severance resulting from reduced travel volumes through Belmont Road and the Holme Lacy Road area.

12.5.17 The net assessment of severance for the three additional options is slight beneficial, as there is no material difference in impact between them.

Social Assessment Conclusion

12.5.18 There is little difference between the three additional options in respect of the social impact appraisal. In conclusion, SC8, SC8A and SC9 demonstrate similar social benefits to SC2 and slightly more benefit that Options SC5 and SC7. It should be stated, however, that the differences between all seven options are marginal.

13 OTHER FACTORS

13.1 General

13.1.1 There are other measures that need to be considered as part of the option appraisal as identified in Section 2.0. These factors include technical and operational feasibility, financial affordability and deliverability, and the likely risks associated with the option.

13.2 Technical and Operational Feasibility

13.2.1 Technical and operational feasibility considers for each option its implementation, buildability and influence on network resilience. Each of the seven options under consideration are seen to be technically feasible and if introduced will offer greater network resilience.

13.2.2 However, Options SC2 and SC8 are considered to offer a less challenging technical solution than the other five options because the routes cross over the railway line rather than underneath. Not only does this align with Network Rail's expectation, there may be less programming challenges in terms of possible closures and construction phasing than with the options that cross underneath. Options SC2 and SC8 also reduce the potential for groundwater/drainage issues associated with a very deep cut.

13.3 Financial Affordability and Deliverability

13.3.1 Financial affordability and deliverability acknowledges the estimated scheme costs, opportunities for phased construction and likelihood of third-party funding.

13.3.2 There are no funding issues associated with any particular route. It is worth noting however, that the SC2 rates of £4.6M/km is at least 8% less than the other options.

13.4 Risk

13.4.1 This requires an assessment of the potential risks associated with the implementation of the proposal.

13.4.2 The risks associated vary from option to option. Details of these risks can be found in the South Wye Transport Package Risk Register.

14 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

14.1 Conclusions

14.1.1 PB has been commissioned by BBLP on behalf of HC to identify a package of measures that would address the transport problems within the South Wye area of Hereford. The SWTP has identified a number of possible improvements, covering different transportation modes, strategies and interventions.

14.1.2 One approach within the SWTP is to construct a new Southern Link Road, which would generate additional capacity with new infrastructure to the south of Hereford. The new road would improve existing connections between the A465, A49 and the Rotherwas Estate.

14.1.3 This Preferred Option Report describes the scheme development, and identifies that an appraisal of the route options determined that four of the initial eight options represented possible solutions to the transportation problems, with the other four routes discounted due to environmental considerations.

14.1.4 The four route options for the Southern Link Road initially assessed in this report were:

- SC2: the most southerly route, which crosses over the railway line and underneath Haywood Lane.
- SC2A: a variation on SC2 whereby the road crosses underneath the railway line.
- SC5: a route located further north of SC2/SC2A, which runs south of Merryhill Lane. The road crosses underneath the railway line and Haywood Lane.
- SC7: roughly similar to SC5, but more twisted in nature avoiding a number of existing environmental constraints but reducing the speed limit to 50mph.

14.1.5 This report outlined the consultation process, and concluded that as there were a number of alternative alignments suggested by the public and third parties, further assessment was necessary. Three additional routes that were deemed viable have been appraised to the same level of detail as the four options outlined above.

14.1.6 This report has assessed each of the final seven route options in terms of engineering considerations, economic outcomes, impact to the environment, and an assessment of the social implications of each route. The performances of these options within the appraisal have been mixed.

14.1.7 The engineering assessment concluded that SC2 and SC8 performed better than the other route options. Some of the reasons for this, as discussed in Chapter 6 and 11 of this report, include that Option SC2 and SC8 follows the ground profile (except where it has to go over the railway and under Haywood Lane), removes the potential for groundwater/drainage issues, they would have a 60mph design speed throughout, and it is goes over the railway so aligns with Network Rail's expectation.

14.1.8 In relation to the scheme costs, Option SC8A is the most expensive of the seven options whilst Option SC2 is the cheapest.

14.1.9 All seven options performed well under economy, by providing significant regeneration and wider economic impacts. There is not expected to be a significant difference between the options with regards to the economic benefits, as all seven are

anticipated to reduce congestion along the A465, and provide access to the Hereford Enterprise Zone.

14.1.10 All of the four options performed negatively against environment. Option SC7 performed the least worst of the four options as it is considered the most ecological preferable, with minimal impacts on biodiversity and habitats. Option SC5 performed the worst due to its significant impact upon the landscape.

14.1.11 All the options performed well in respect to the social impacts, with marginal differences between the seven options. Options SC2, SC2A, SC8, SC8A and SC9 demonstrate slightly more social benefits than Options SC5 and SC7.

14.1.12 Overall, Option SC2 had the highest score for the appraisal although SC8 also scores highly within the appraisal. Both of these options perform the best of the seven options with regards to engineering.

14.2 Recommendations

14.2.1 The results of the appraisal have demonstrated that all of the options provide many benefits to the economy, reduce congestion, and improve journey times. All of the options cross greenfield land and have a negative impacts to the environment, including increasing traffic noise, reducing air quality, and impacts to the landscape.

14.2.2 The appraisal work has demonstrated that option SC2 is the best performing option within the technical appraisal. This option also received the highest level of support as a proportion of feedback received of the four that were taken to public consultation. Therefore, it is recommended that option SC2 is the preferred option for the SLR.

Figures

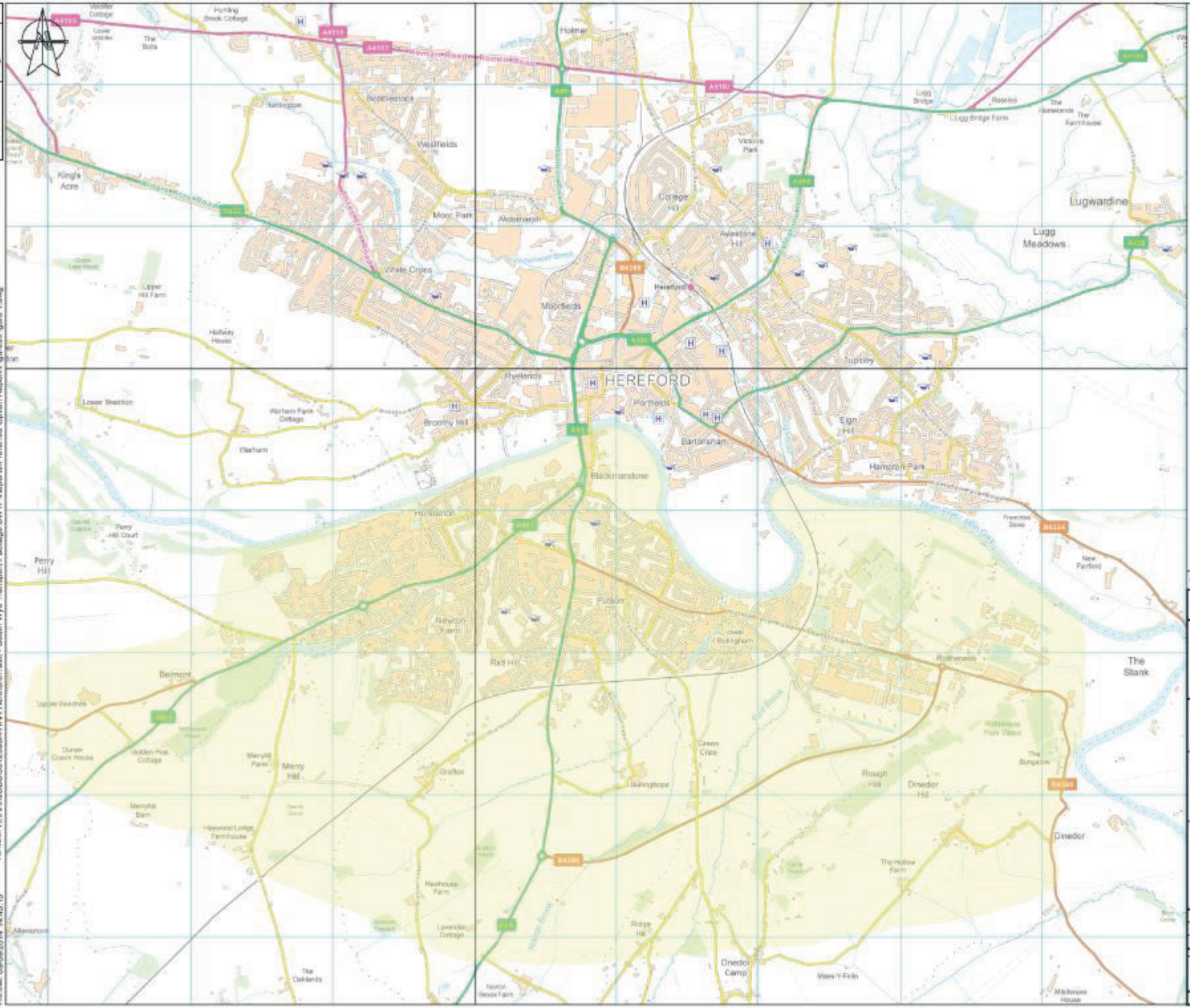

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Figure 1

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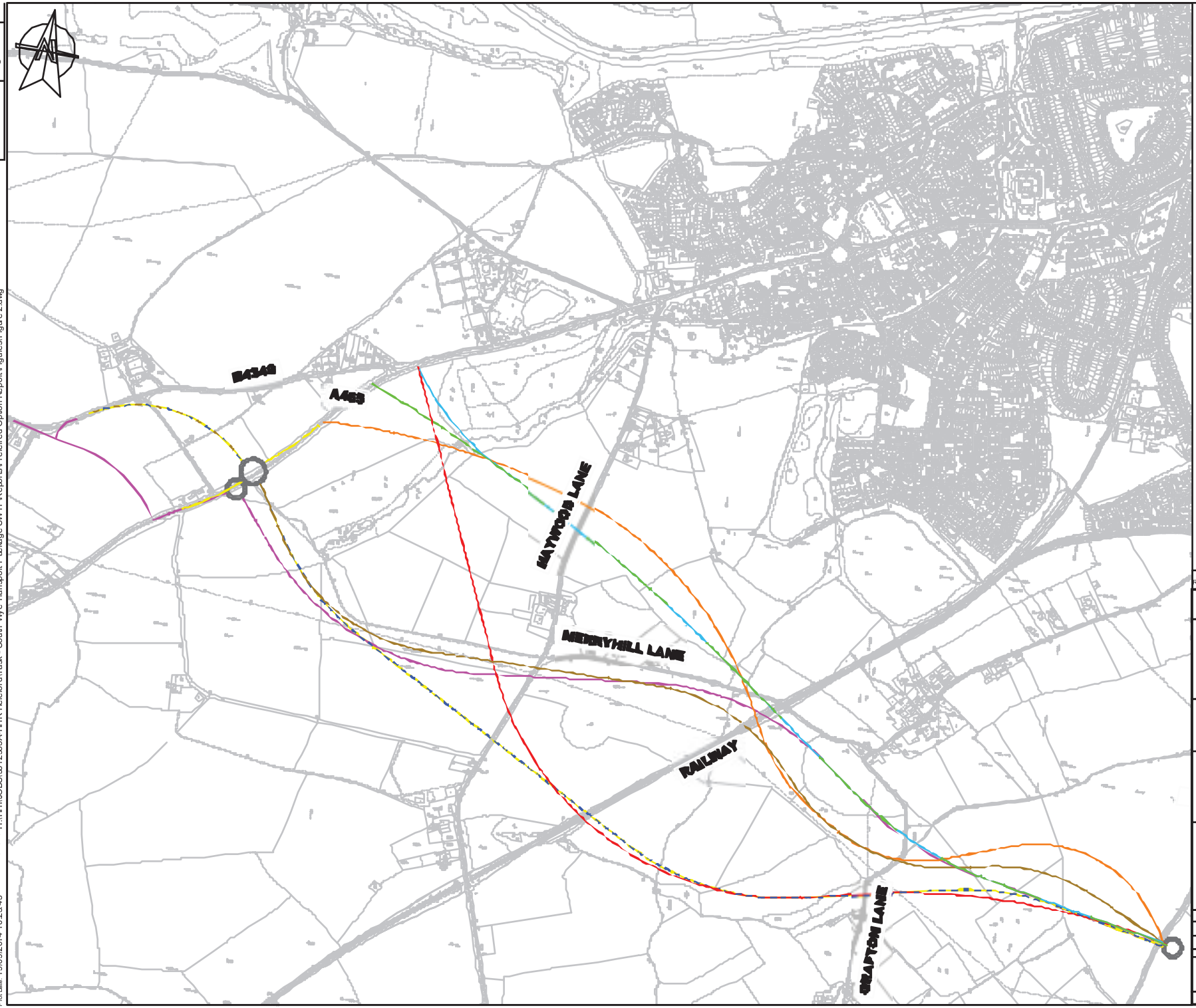

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- SC2
- SC2A
- SC3
- SC4
- SC5
- SC6
- SC7

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- SCHOOLS
- SMALL RETAIL OUTLETS
- LARGE SUPERMARKETS
- COMMUNITY AND HEALTHCARE CENTRES
- CHURCHES
- PLAY PARKS
- POLICE STATION
- HOTEL / RESTAURANT

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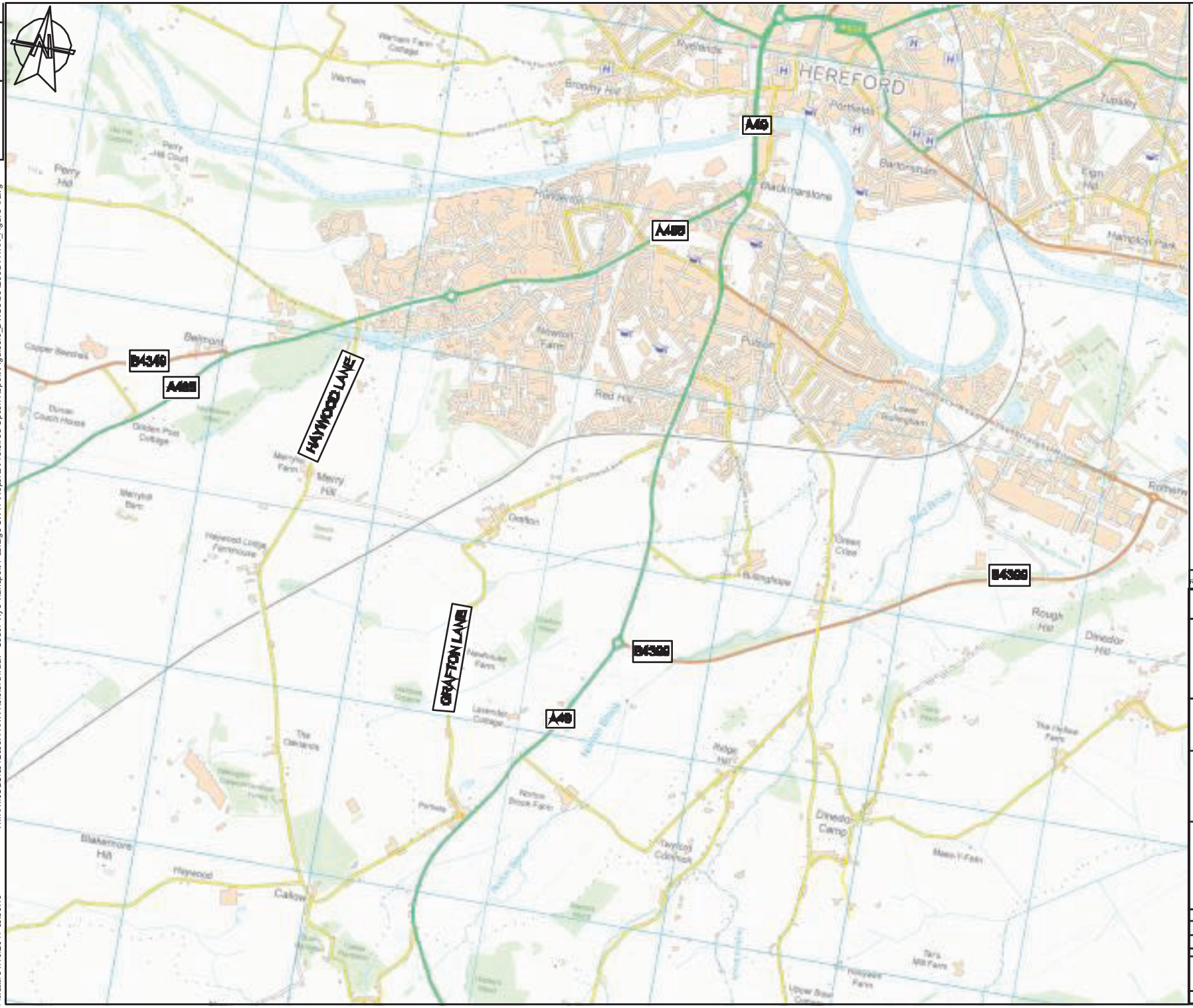

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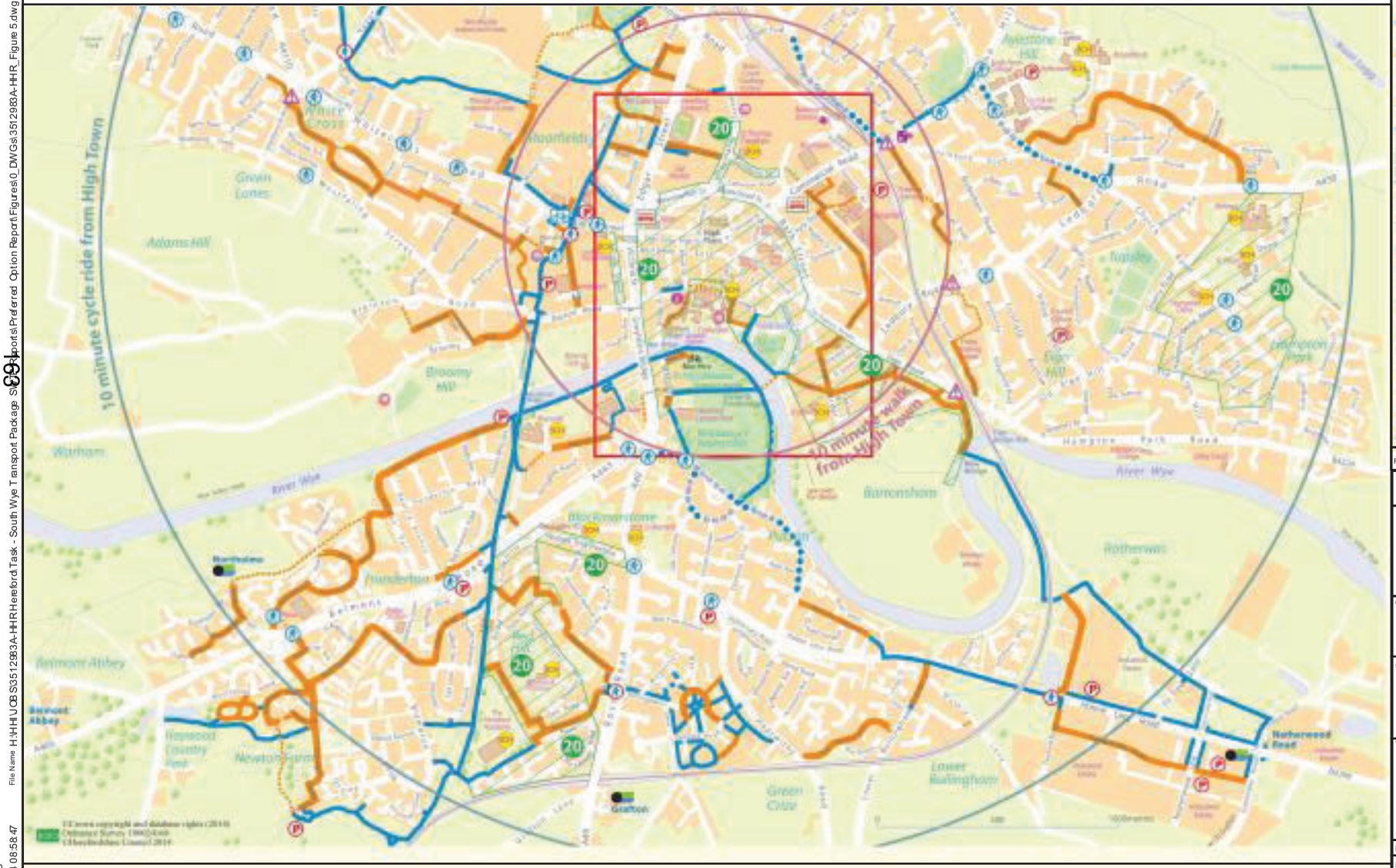
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10 minute walk from High Town
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Whitecross
Green Lanes
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Barrons Park
Blackfriars Street
Bewell Street
Belmont Abbey
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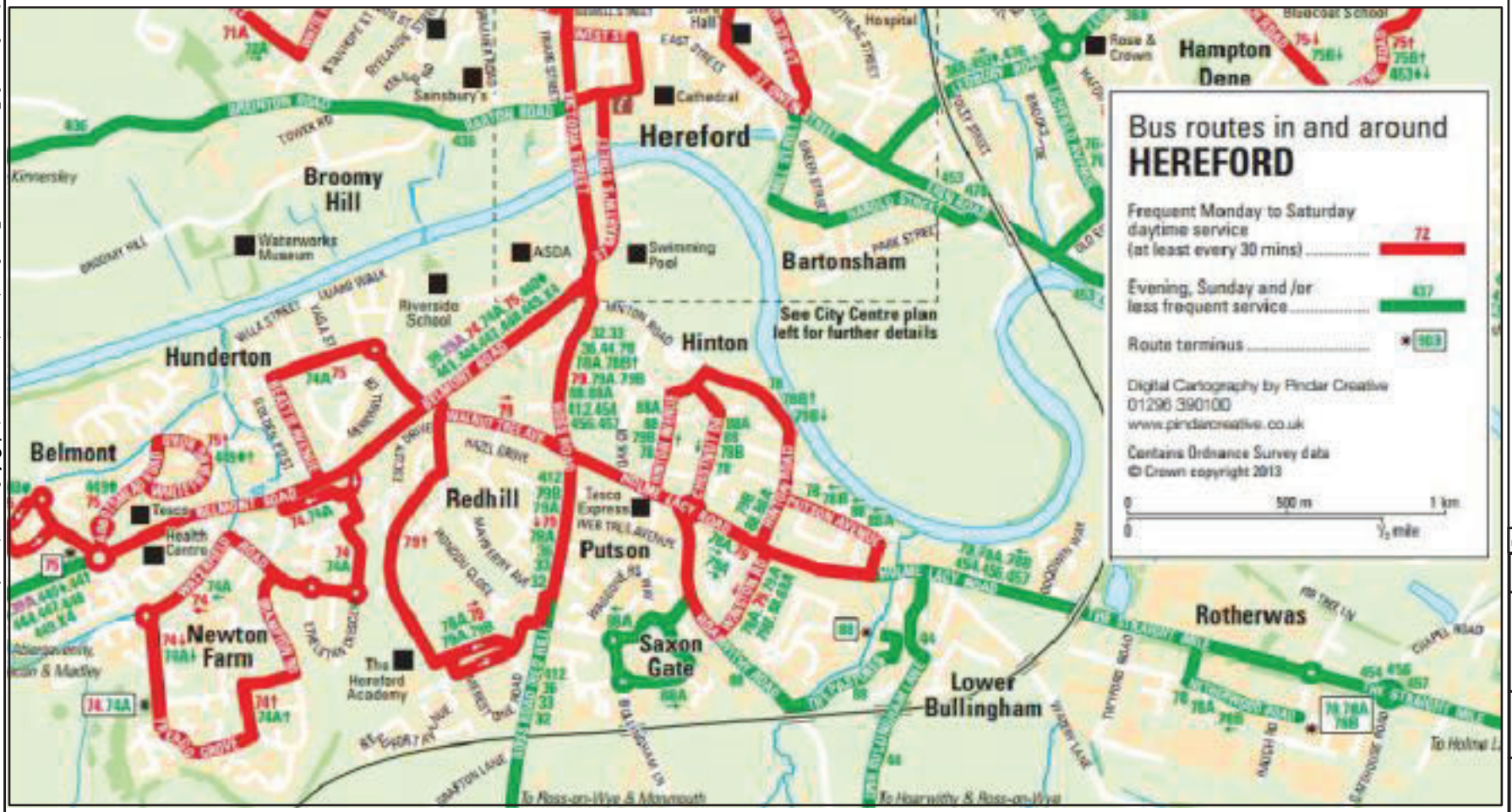

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SWTP
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Title:
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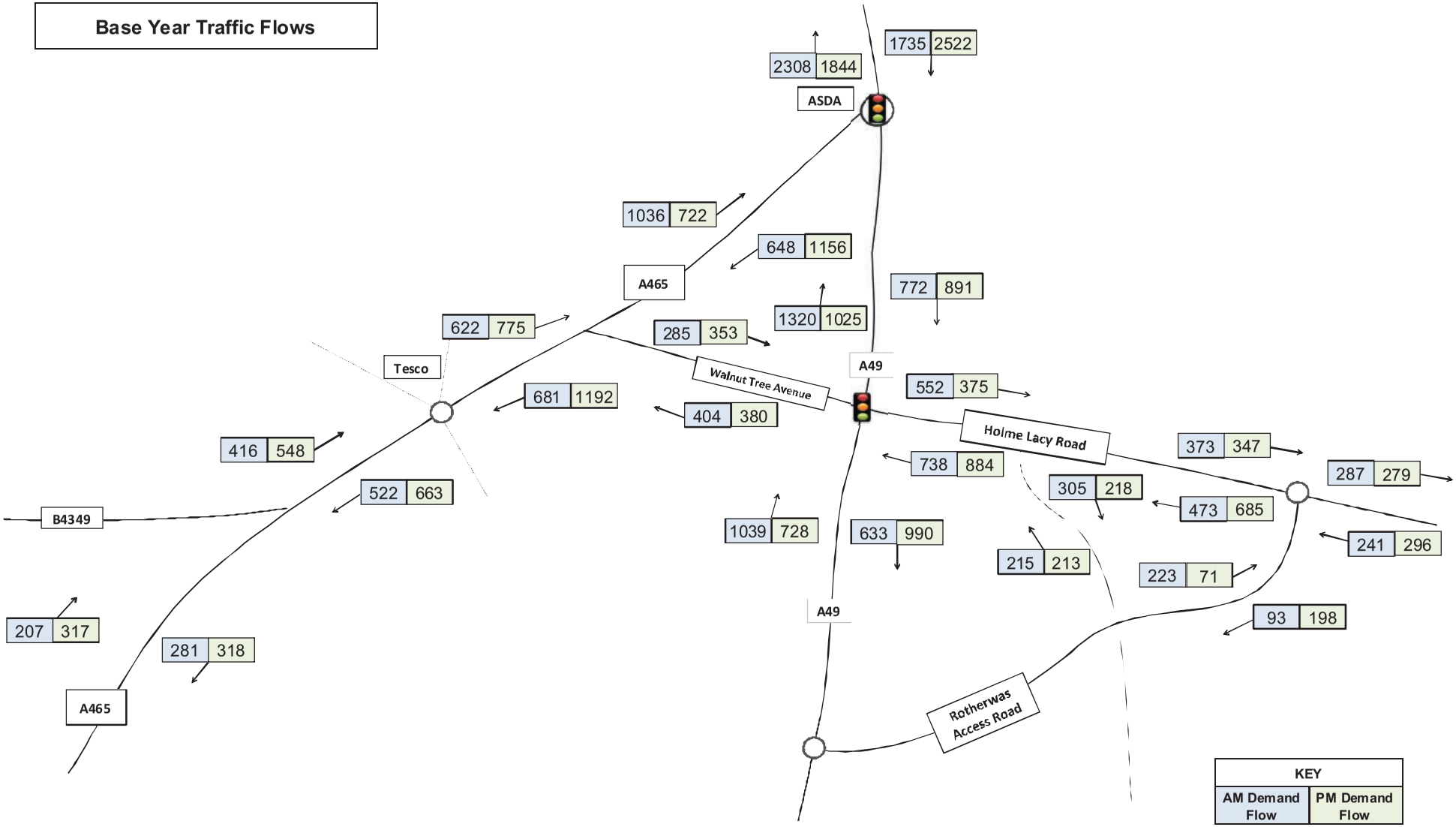

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PROJECT
South Wye Transport Package

DRAWING TITLE
Base Year Traffic Flows

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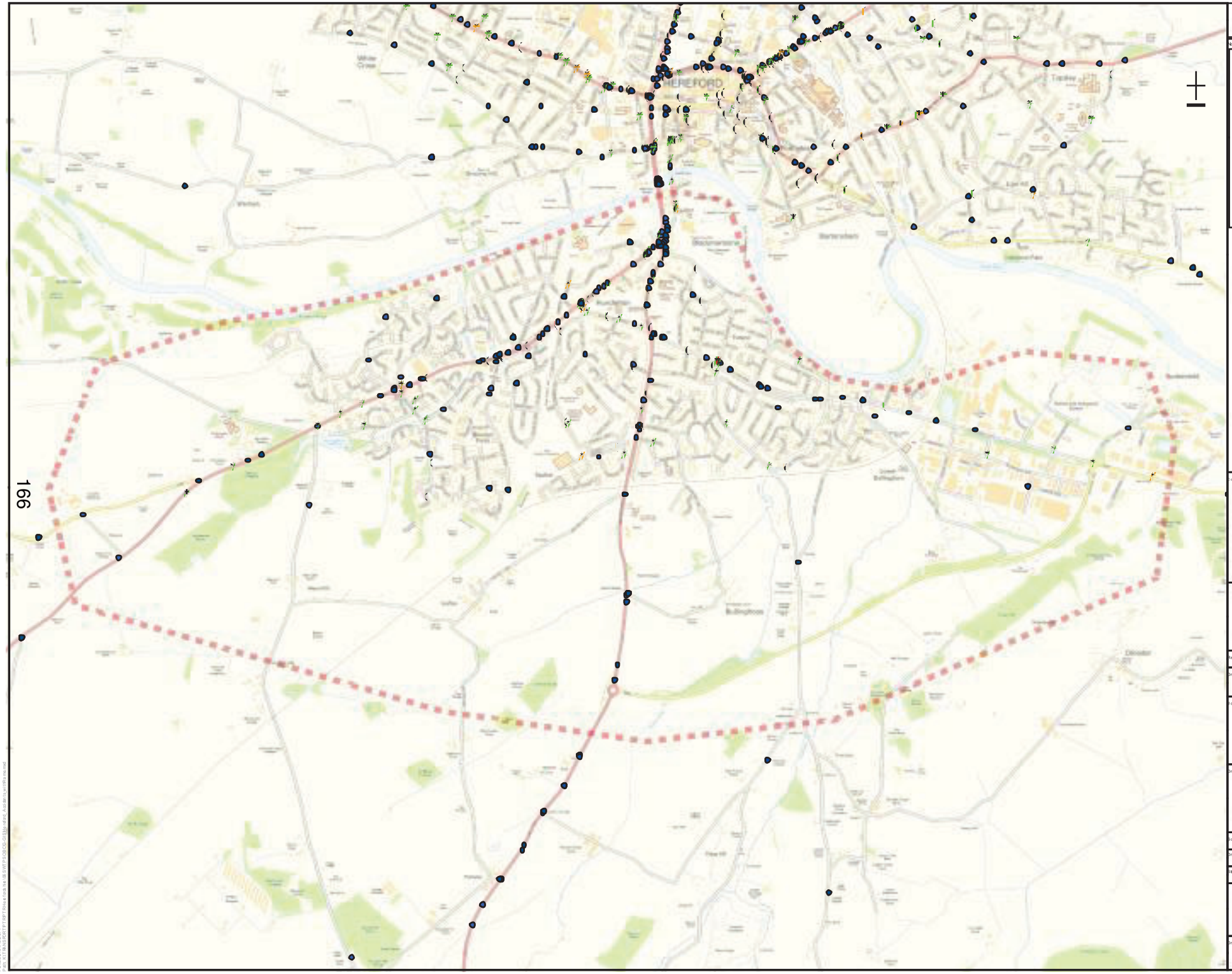

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- South_Wye_Area

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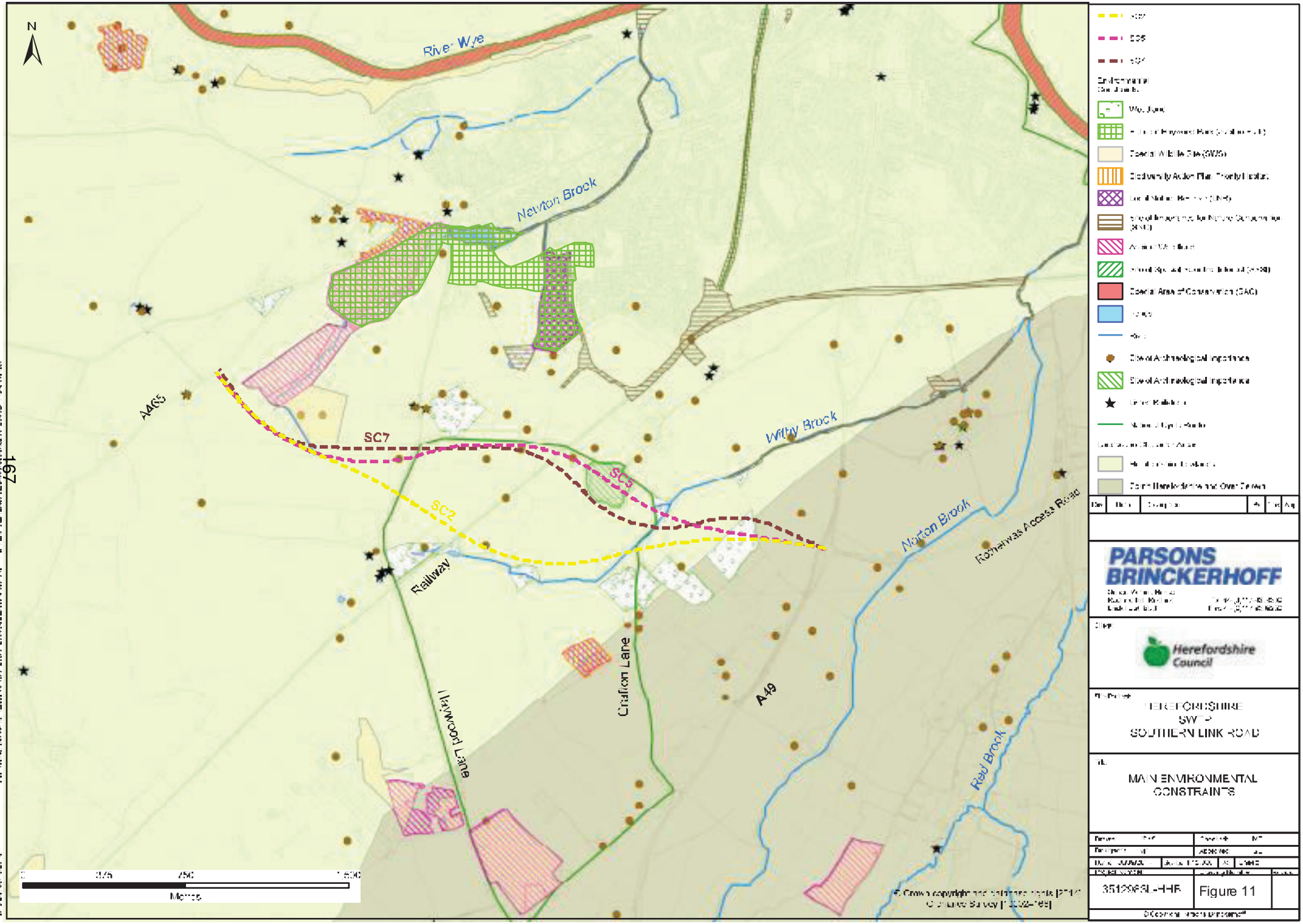
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Environmental Constraints
Special Wildlife Site (SWS)
Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitat
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
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Site of Archaeological Importance
Zone Herefordshire and Over Severn
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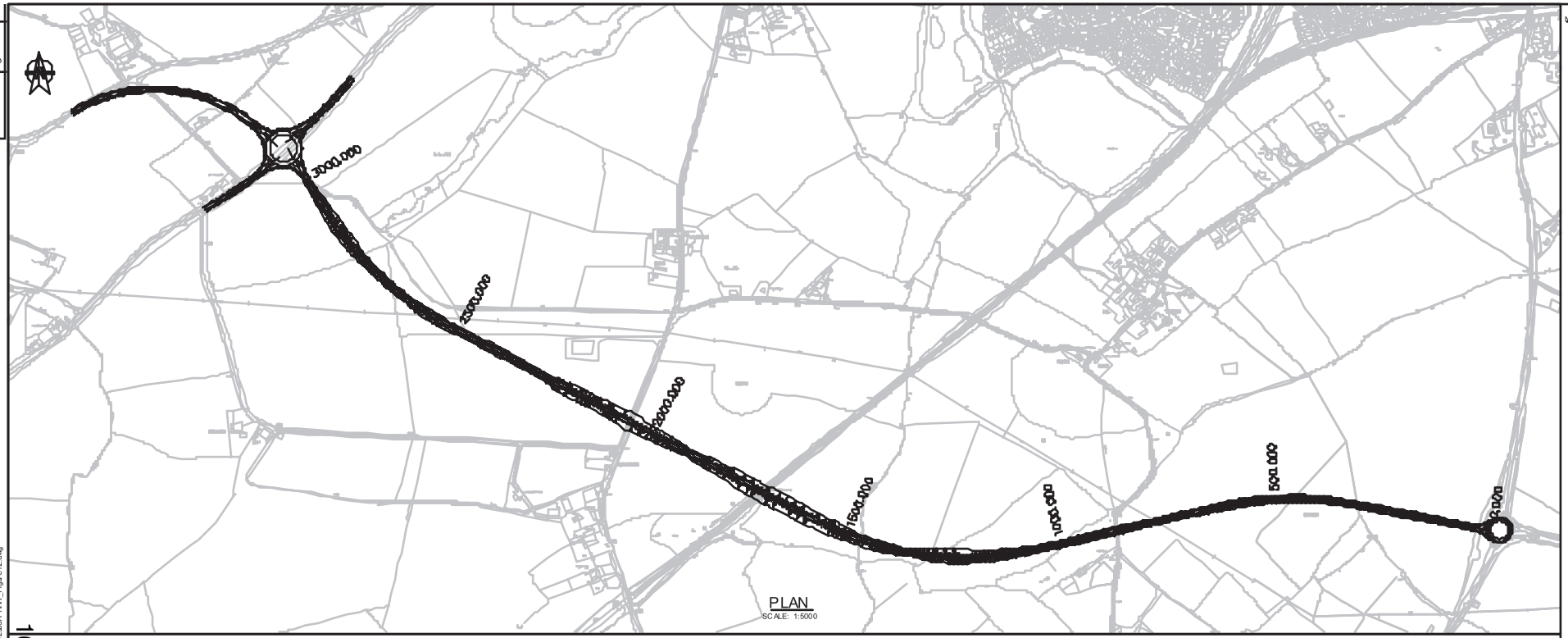

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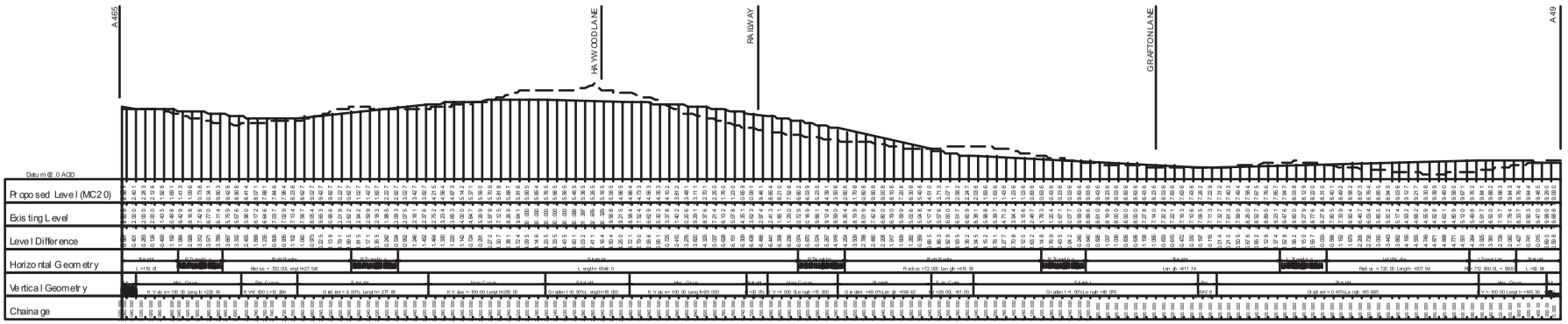

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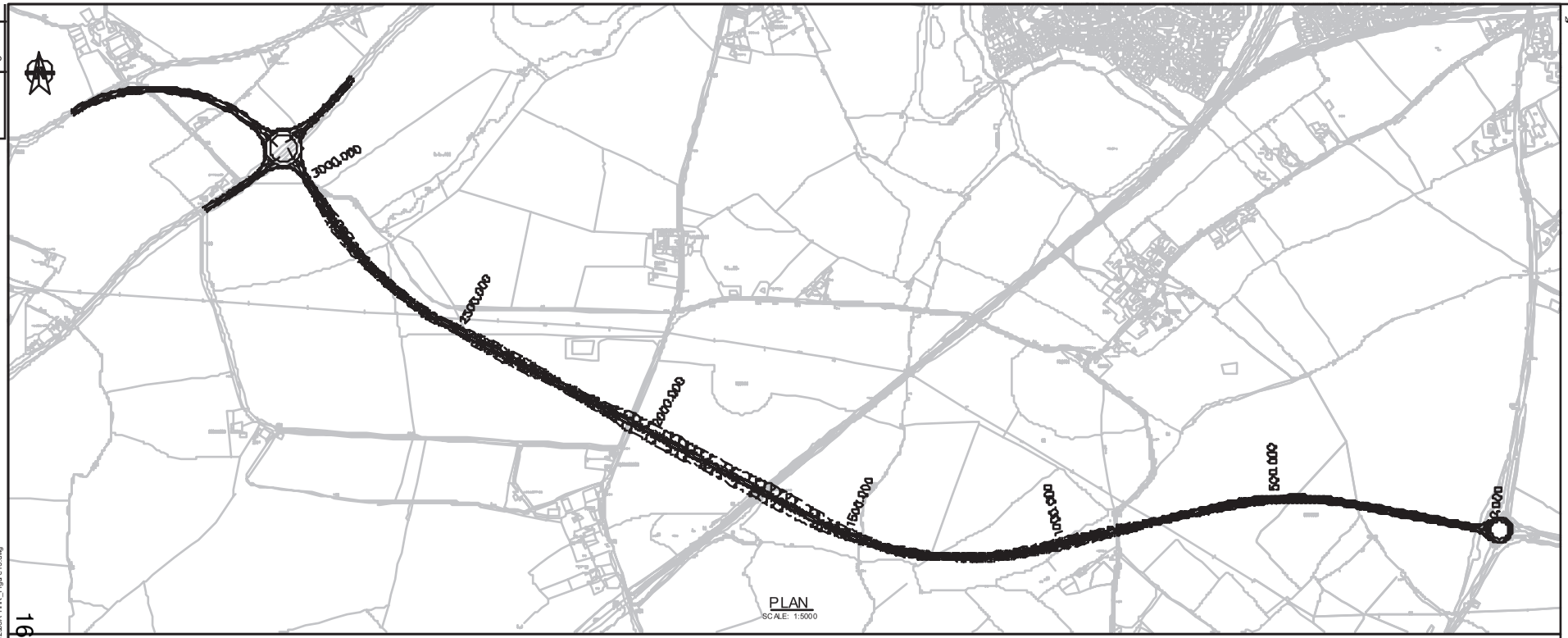

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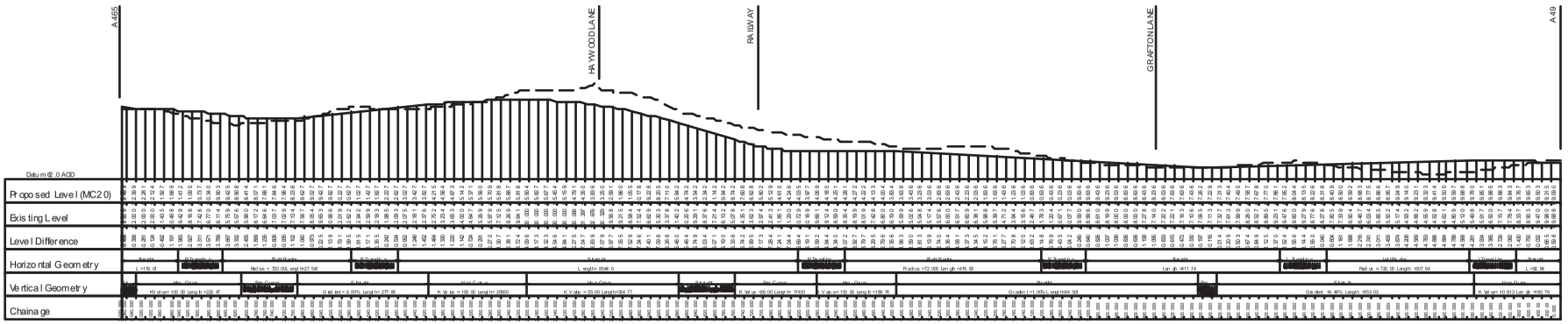

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Project Number: 3512983A-HHR	Design Number: Figure 13	Revision: -	

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Figure13 -

3512983A-HHR

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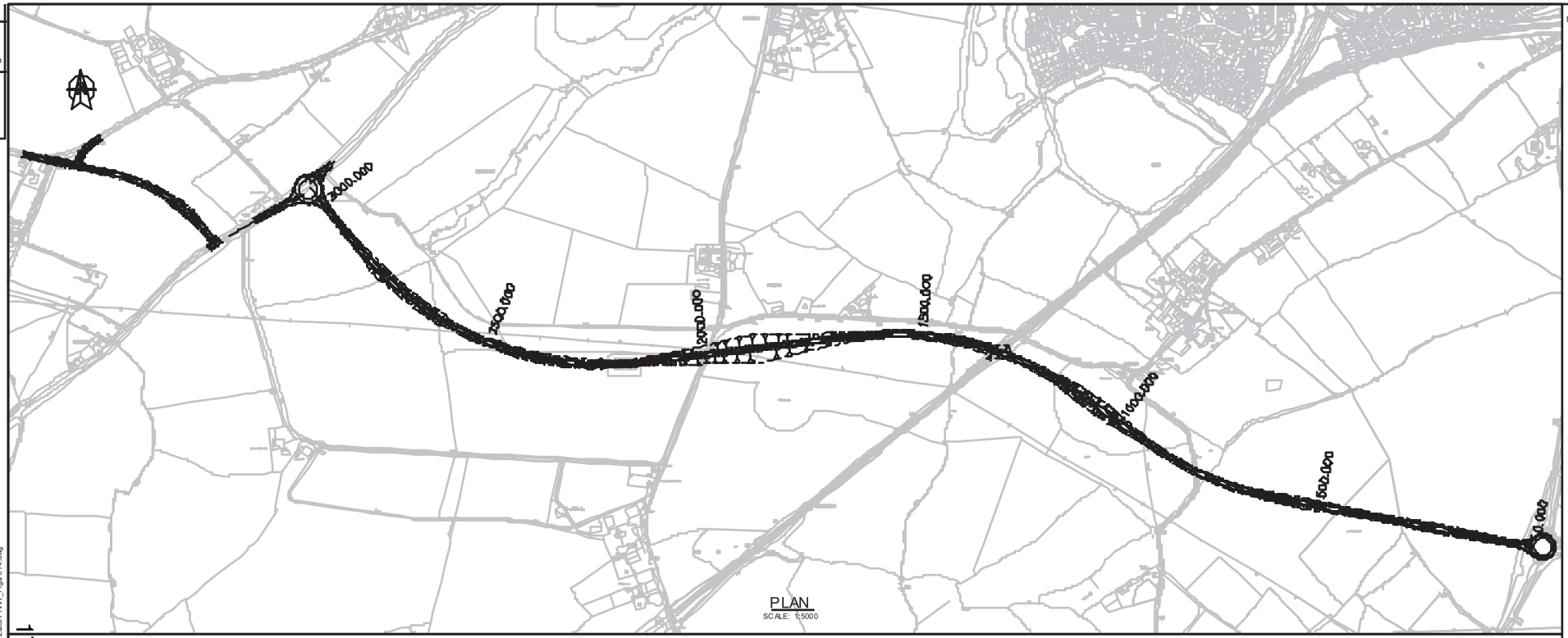
169



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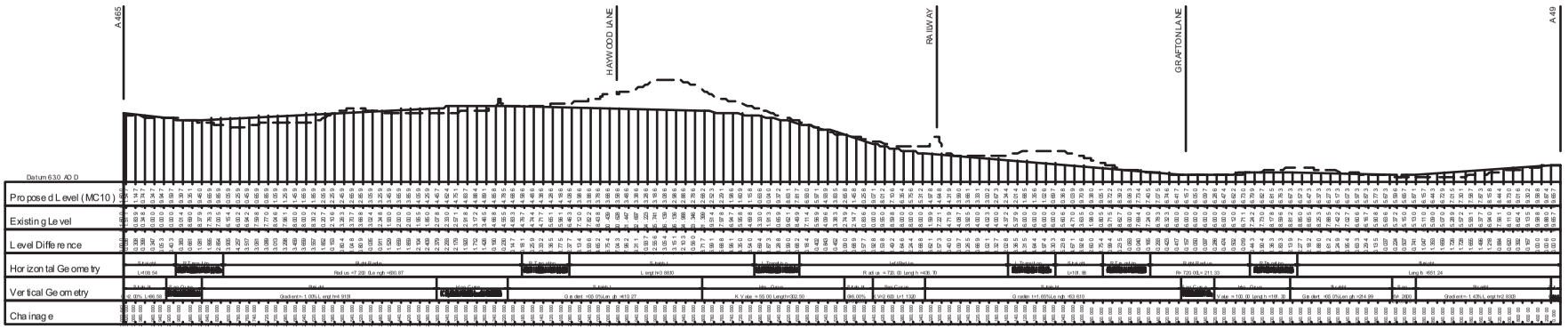

LONGITUDINAL SECTION
SCALE: 1:5000 H, 1:1000V

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HEREFORDSHIRE
SWTP
SOUTHERN LINK ROAD

Title:

PLAN AND
LONGITUDINAL SECTION
OPTION SC5

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3512983A-HHR		Figure 14	-

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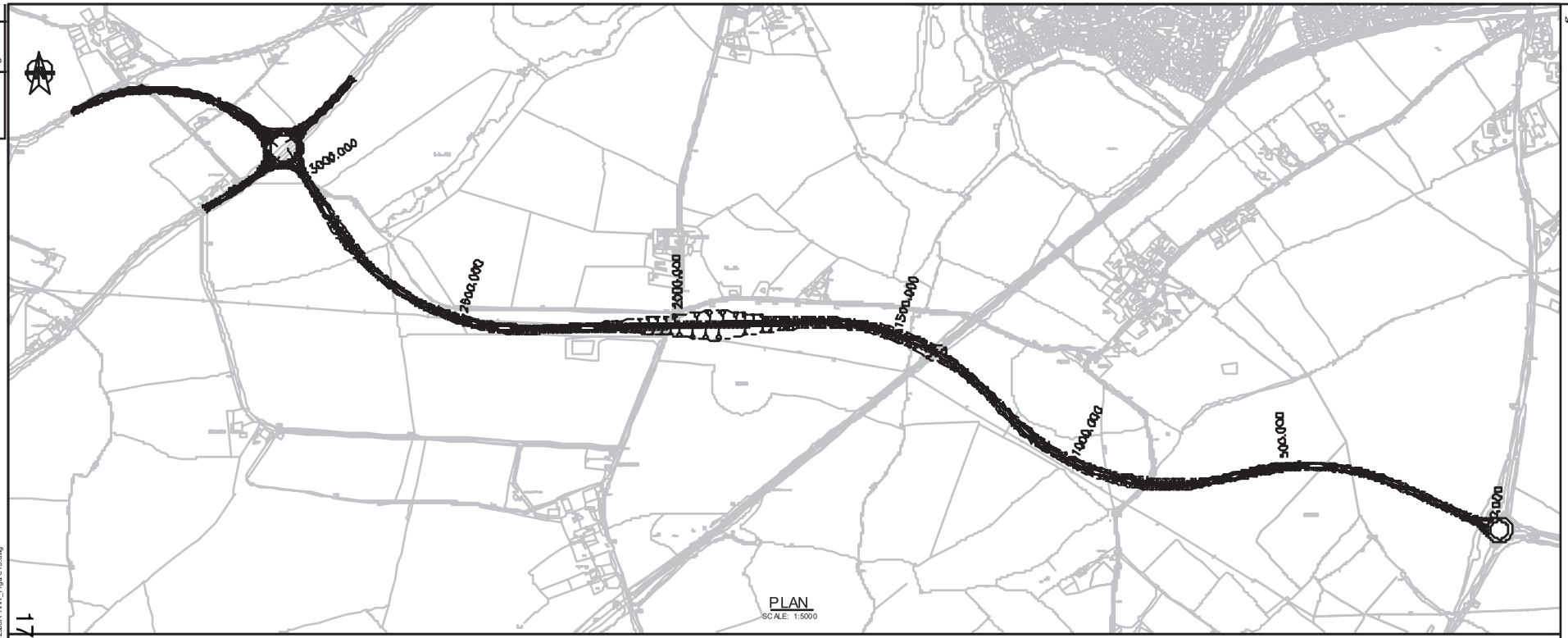

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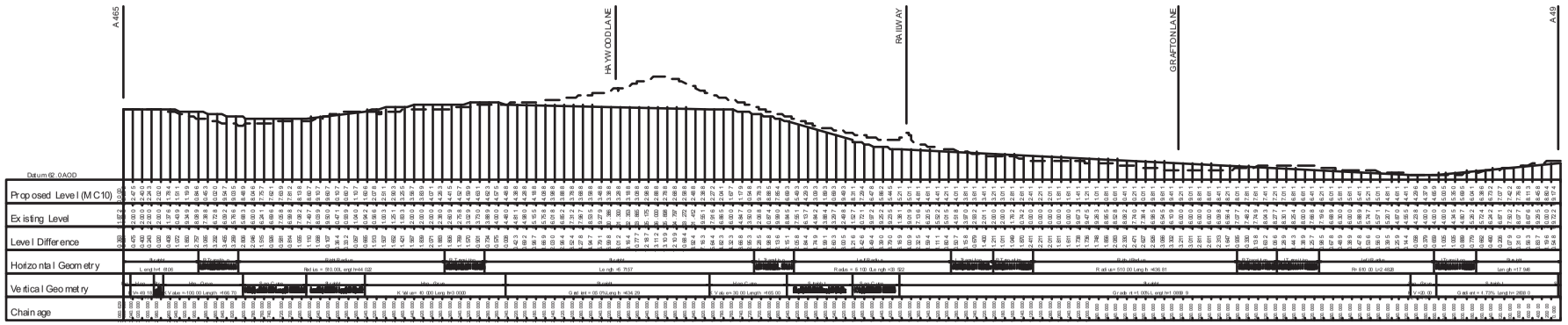

LONGITUDINAL SECTION
SCALE: 1:5000 H, 1:1000V

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Title:

PLAN AND
LONGITUDINAL SECTION
OPTION SC7

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Figure 15 -

3512983A-HHR

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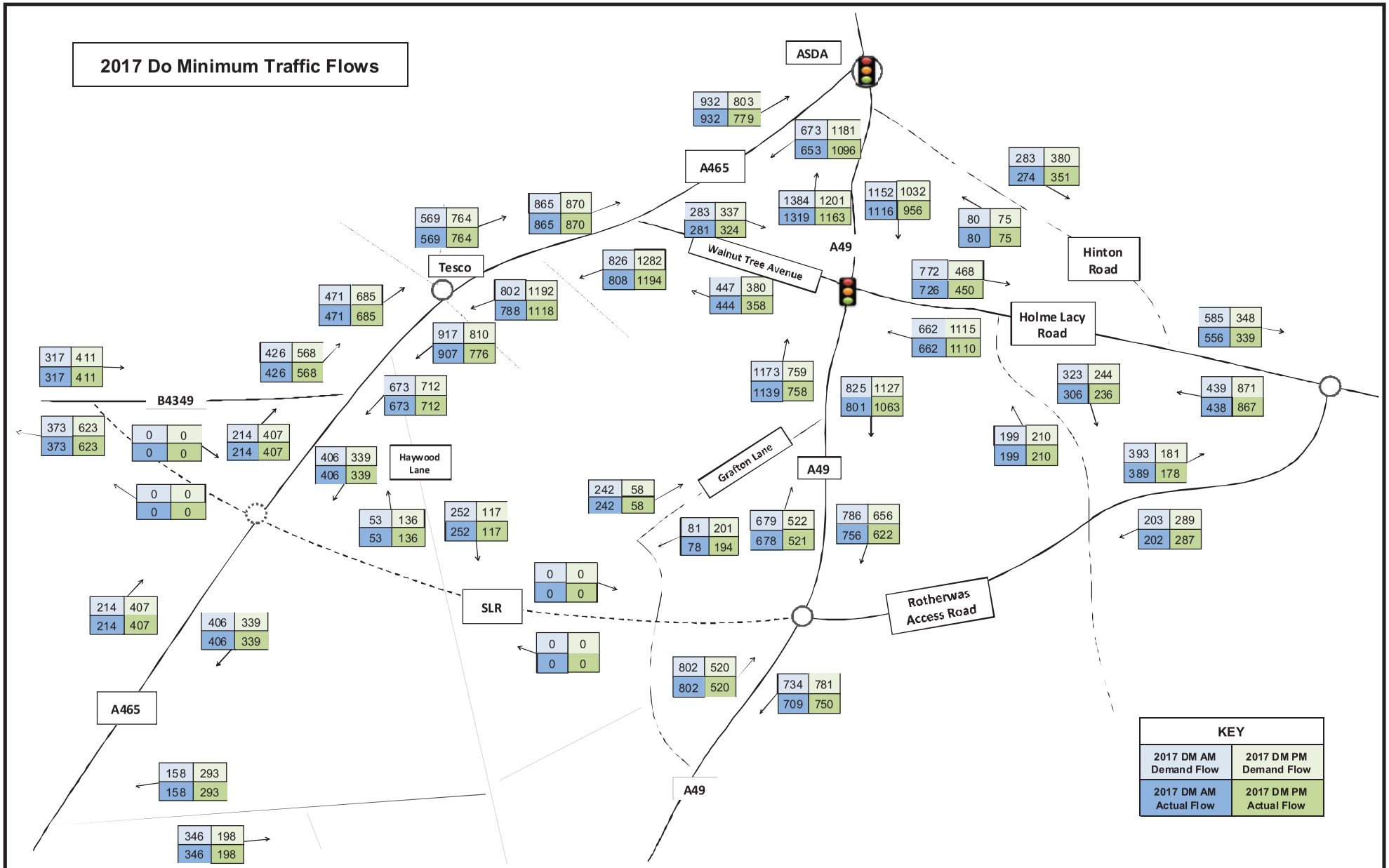
171

2017 Do Minimum Traffic Flows



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2017 DM AM Actual Flow	2017 DM PM Actual Flow

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DATE 03/09/2014

CLIENT/PROJECT
Herefordshire Council

PROJECT
South Wye Transport Package

DRAWING TITLE
2017 Do Minimum Traffic Flows

Figure 16

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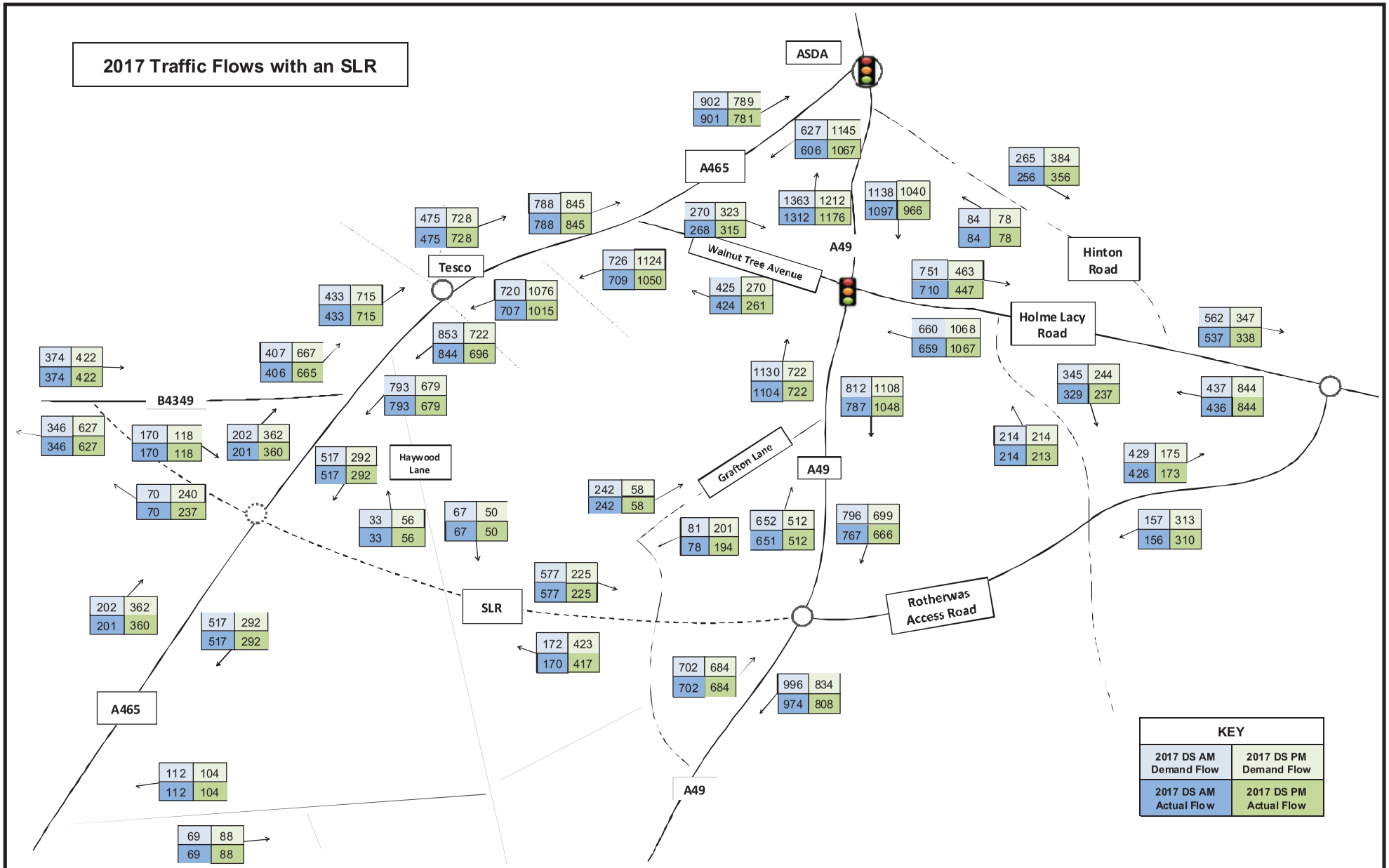
2017 Traffic Flows with an SLR



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PROJECT
South Wye Transport Package

DRAWING TITLE
2017 Traffic Flows with an SLR

Figure 17

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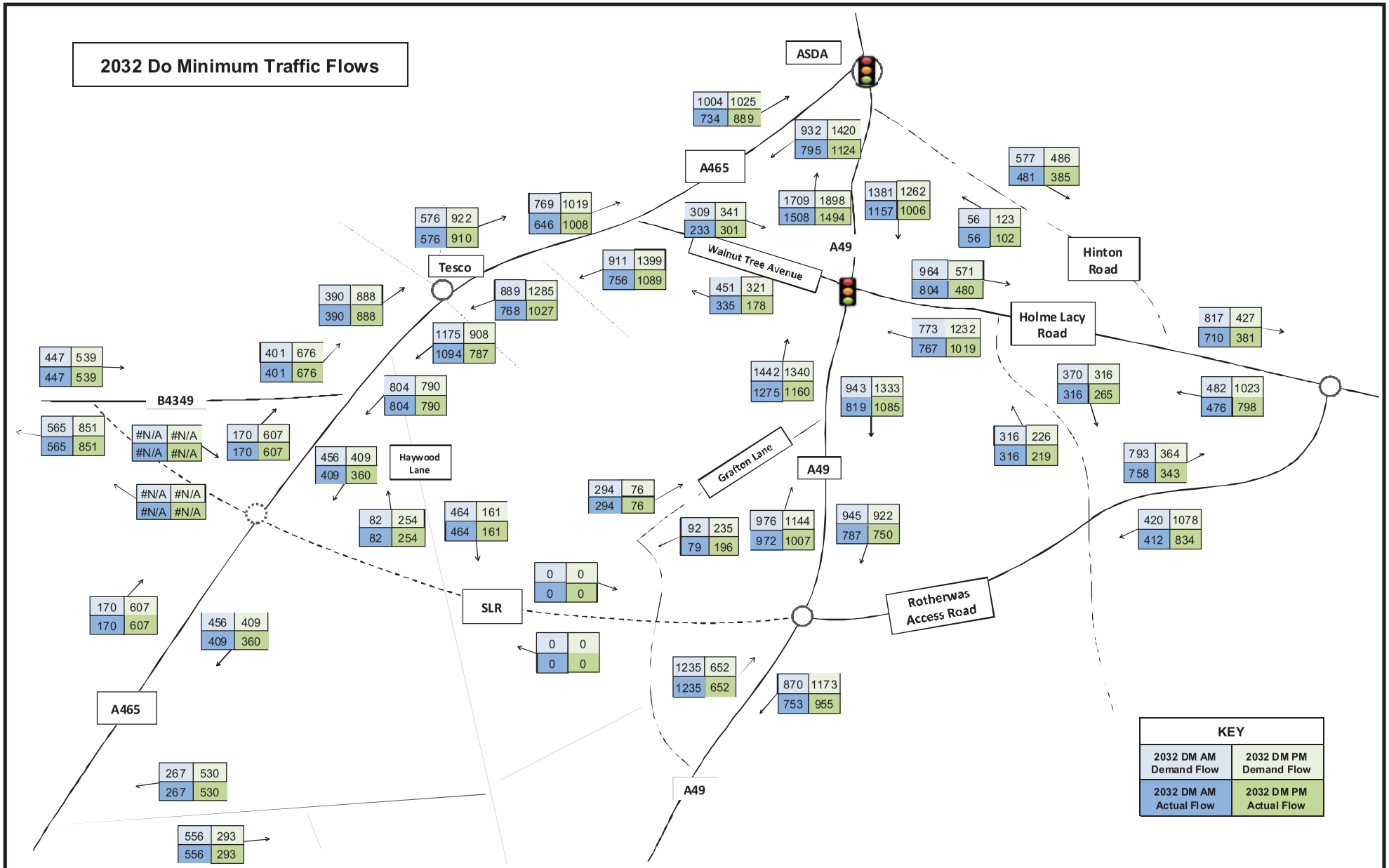
2032 Do Minimum Traffic Flows



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2032 DM AM Actual Flow	2032 DM PM Actual Flow

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DATE 03/09/2014

CLIENT/PROJECT
Herefordshire Council

PROJECT
South Wye Transport Package

DRAWING TITLE
2032 Do Minimum Traffic Flows

Figure 18

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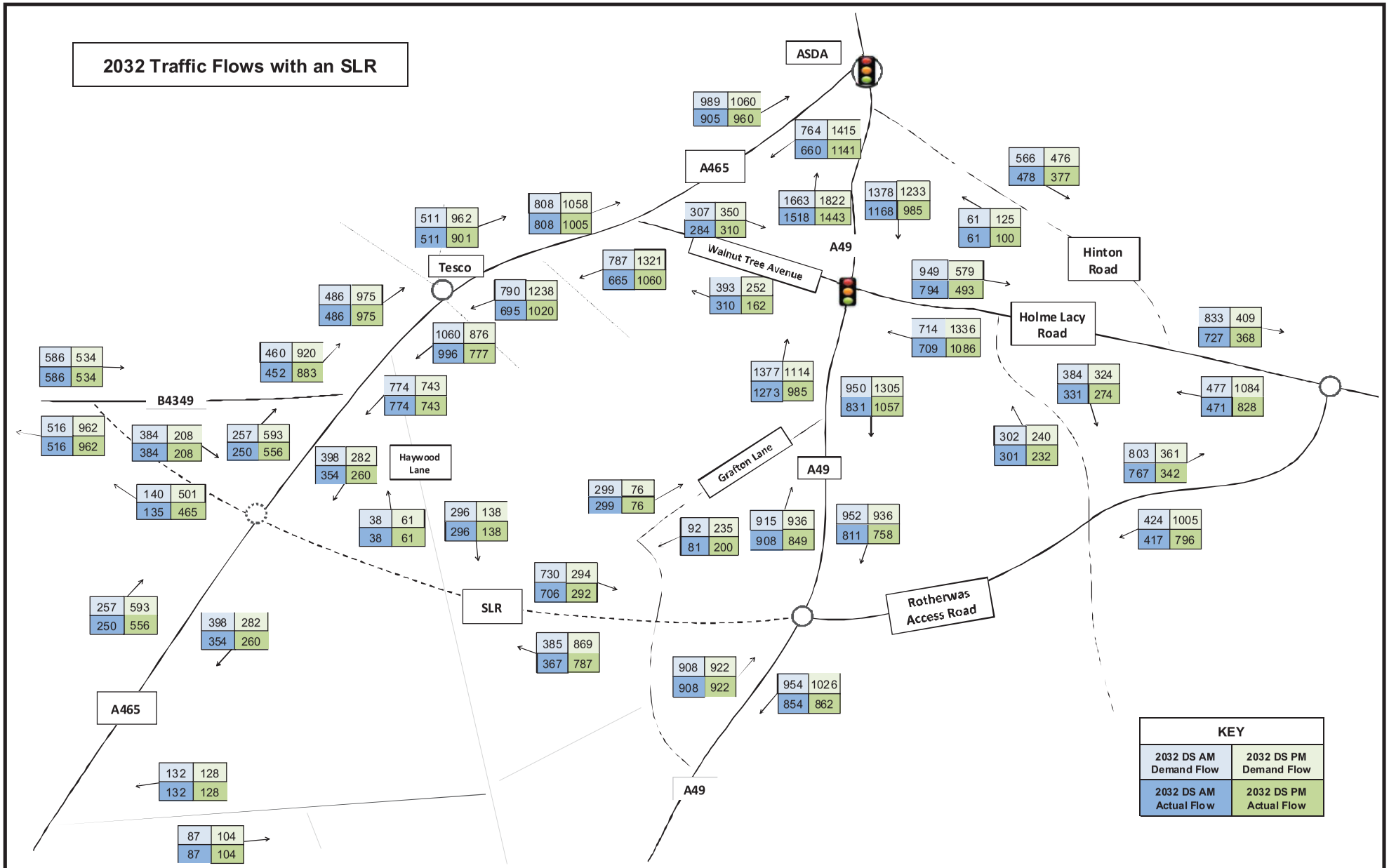
2032 Traffic Flows with an SLR



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PROJECT
South Wye Transport Package

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2032 Traffic Flows with an SLR

Figure 19

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KEY:

- SC8
- SC8A
- SC9

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SOUTH WYE TRANSPORT PACKAGE

Title:
ADDITIONAL ROUTE OPTIONS

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Project Number: 3512983A-HHR		Drawing Number: Figure 21	Revision

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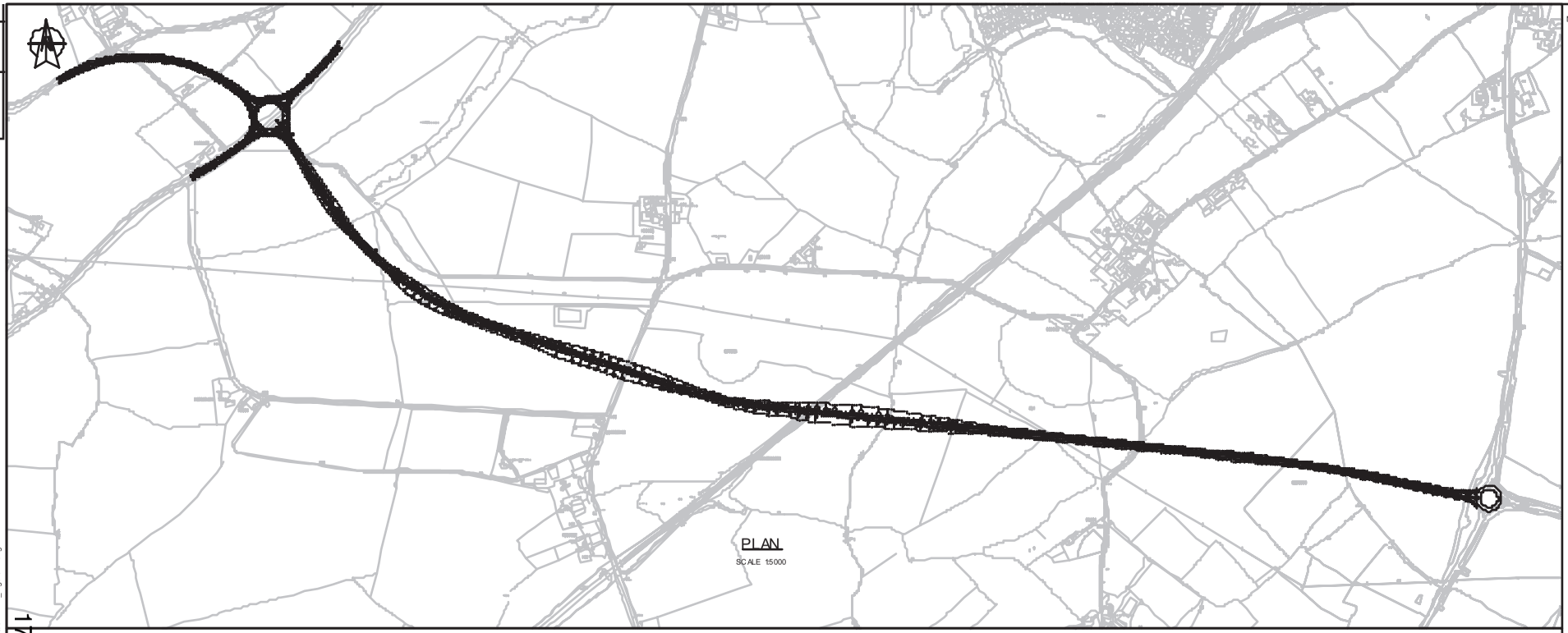

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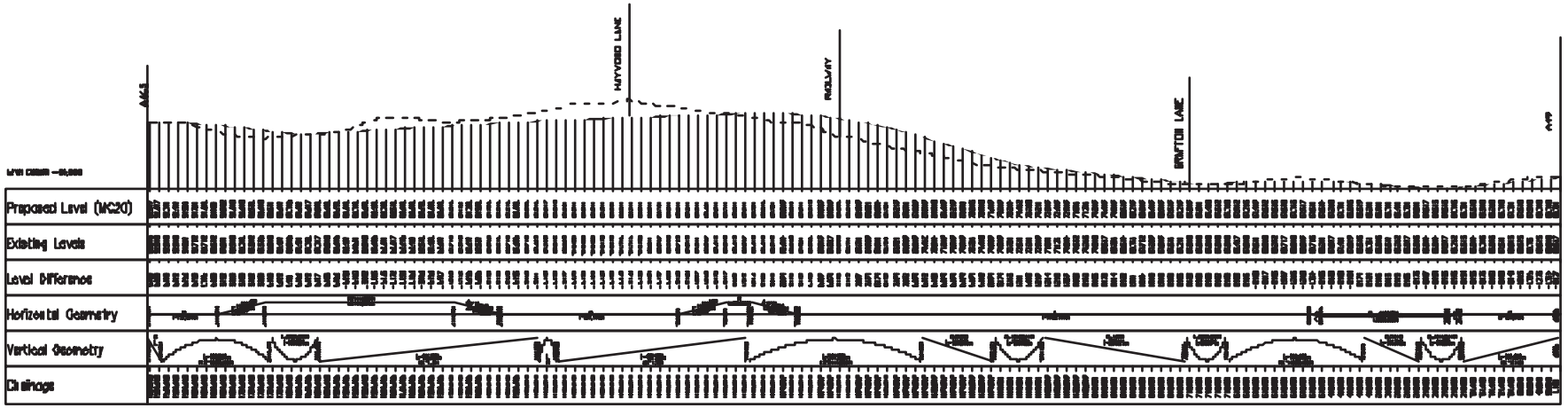

LONGITUDINAL SECTION

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HEREFORDSHIRE SWTP SOUTHERN LINK ROAD

Title:

PLAN AND LONGITUDINAL SECTION OPTION SC8

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35 12983A-HHR Figure 22

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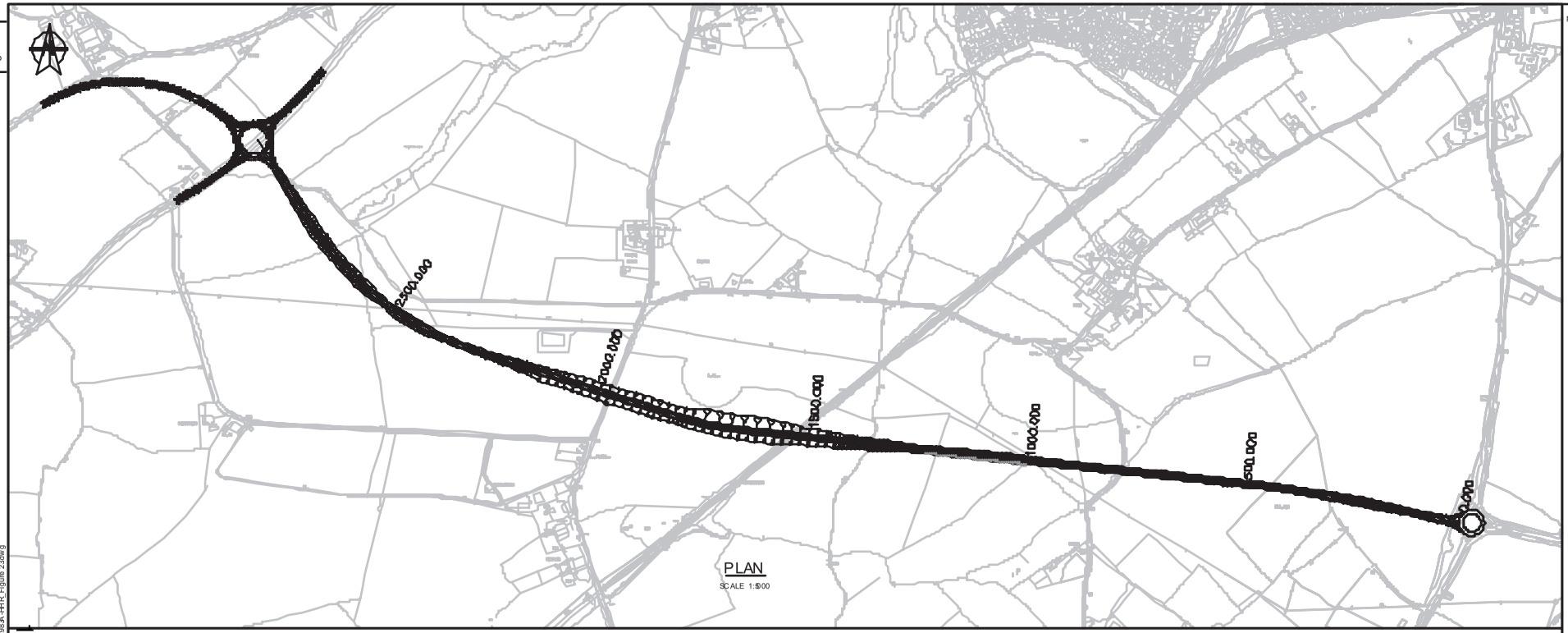

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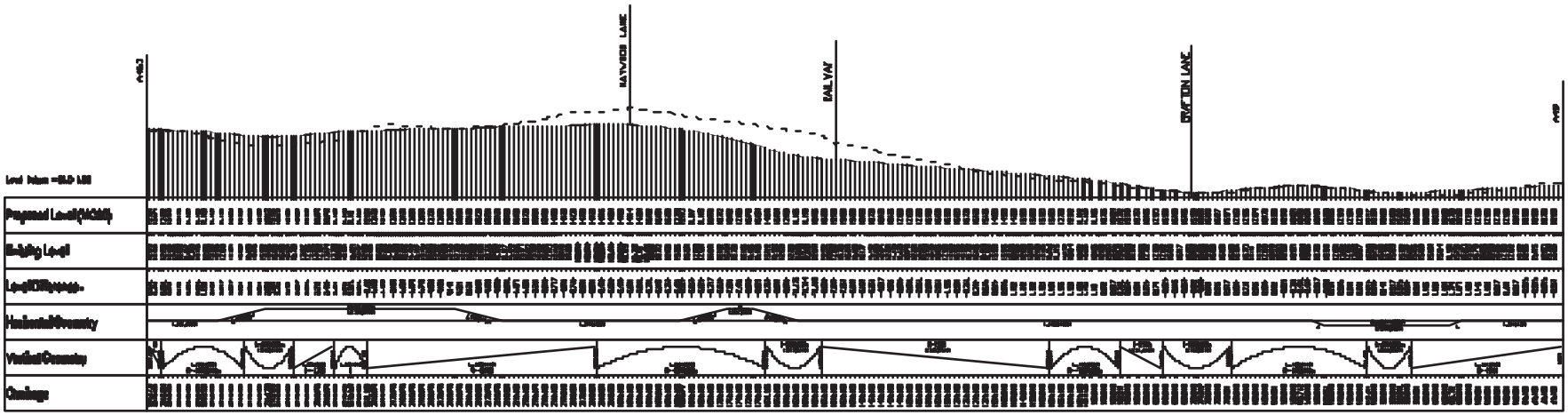

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Title:

PLAN AND LONGITUDINAL SECTION OPTION SC8A

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Figure 23

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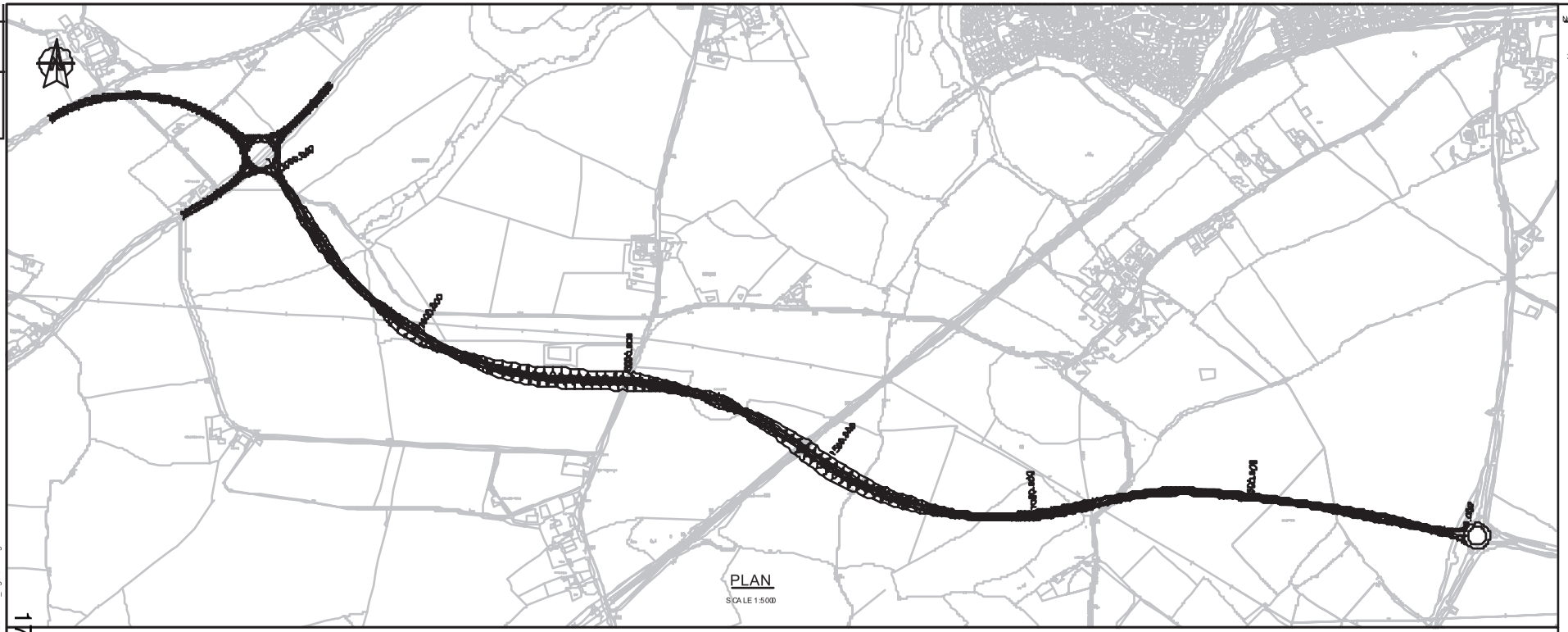

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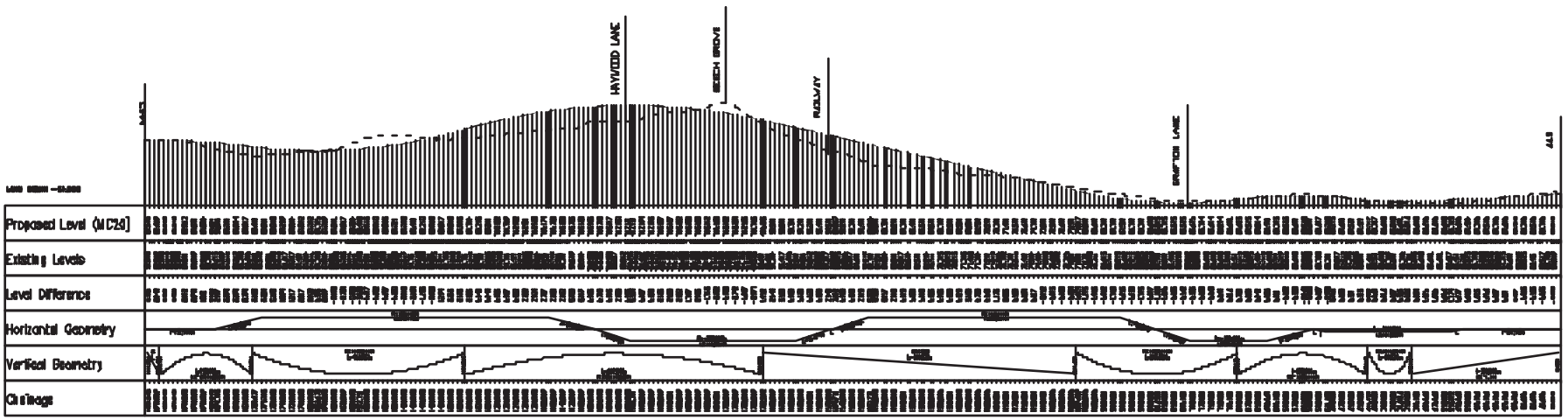

LONGITUDINAL SECTION

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A	09/10/14	Clerk of work earthworks added	AM	GJ	GJ

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HEREFORDSHIRE SWTP SOUTHERN LINK ROAD

Title:

PLAN AND LONGITUDINAL SECTION OPTION SC9

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Project Number: 3512983A-HHR	Design Number: Figure 24	Revision:	

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3512983A-HHR Figure 24

Appendix A

Appraisal Summary Tables – SLR Options

Appraisal Summary Table Date Produced: 17/04/2014

Name of scheme:	South Wye Transport Package - **Option SC2**
Description of scheme:	Option SC2 passes through the centre of Grafton Wood and continues westwards over Grafton Lane and Withy Brook. Thereafter, it straightens up immediately heading in a north-west direction to the A465. SC2 involves the construction of a new roundabout on the A465/B4349 Clehonger Road Junction.

Impacts		Summary of Key Impacts	Qualitative Assessment
Economy	Business users & transport providers	Reduced congestion along the A465 Belmont Road due to diversion of traffic onto the Southern Link therefore journey time savings for existing users of the A465. Longer journeys for those business users who divert to the Southern Link. Increased traffic along the A49 but level of delay at the A49/A465 junction proposed to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Reliability impact on Business users	Reduced congestion along the A465 provide greater journey time reliability for users of the A465. Journey times along the A49 are expected to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Regeneration	Southern Link Road provides direct connection to the Hereford Enterprise Zone (HEZ) from the A465. Improves the supply of employment land by allowing the planning conditions that presently limit development at the HEZ to be extinguished, therefore removing substantial barriers to inward investment relating to both residential and employment development. Regeneration benefits within Belmont enhanced due to greater accessibility to employment opportunities within the HEZ.	Major Beneficial +++
	Wider Impacts	Potential for greater agglomeration benefits across Hereford and as a result of greater connections to the HEZ. Scheme will support the adopted economic growth of the Marches Sub-region.	Moderate Beneficial ++
Environmental	Noise	Significant increase in road traffic noise likely at properties close to new road. Possible decreases in noise at properties adjacent to A465 and A49 (DEFRA Noise Action Planning Important Area on A465 between Tesco and Asda Roundabouts).	Major Adverse - - -
	Air Quality	Air quality along both Belmont Road and Ross Road is relatively poor but, at property facades, is currently just below the air quality objective. Traffic is expected to decrease on Belmont Road and increase on Ross Road. This will result in an improvement of air quality on Belmont Road and a deterioration on Ross Road. The deterioration in air quality could potentially lead to exceedance of the air quality objective. The option is not expected to affect the Hereford AQMA itself, since traffic flows across the river are not expected to be affected although some changes at the A465/A49 junction may result in highly localised air quality impacts. Regional air quality is likely to show a slight adverse impact for all options, due to the greater distance travelled by vehicles diverting onto the bypass and the greater speed of travel. Any impacts on congestion relief on roads into Hereford cannot be assessed at present.	Moderate Adverse (local) Slight Adverse (regional) - -
	Greenhouse gases	The option will have a slight adverse impact on greenhouse gas emissions due to the greater distance travelled by vehicles diverting onto the bypass and the greater speed of travel.	Slight Adverse -
	Landscape	Route passes through fertile, undulating farmland with extensive arable fields, with low hedges and occasional woodland. Although most of the route is within the Herefordshire Lowlands character area, more typical of South Herefordshire. In terms of woodland, it cuts through the centre of Grafton Wood (not designated and low density of trees) but then is free of woodland for its entire length. This route brings the road closest to Haywood Lodge Farm and associated properties with a resulting increase in adverse visual effects. It avoids Newton Brook. A new roundabout on A465 and a short section of road connecting to B4349, introduces further built infrastructure. The landscape in this area would be classed as being of Medium sensitivity (good quality example of Herefordshire rural landscape). The magnitude of effect on the landscape resource is the least of all the routes, however with the additional sections of road, roundabout and proximity to residential properties, the magnitude is Moderate (loss of resource, but not affecting the integrity/ key characteristics of the rural scene.	Moderate Adverse - Has the least effect on woodland when compared to the other routes - -
	Townscape	N/A	
	Historic Environment	Direct impact (minor) on the significance of the setting of a Grade II* and three Grade II listed buildings at Haywood Lodge; direct impact (minor) on the significance of the setting of the Grade II Clehonger Court buildings; direct impact (minor) on the significance of the setting of a Grade II listed milestone; direct physical impact (slight to moderate) on potential buried archaeological remains in four fields.	Slight to Moderate Adverse -

	Biodiversity	Route Option SC2 passes through the centre of Grafton Wood, which supports a mature tree canopy with some indicators of ancient woodland present. This Option is therefore likely to lead to the greatest extent of habitat loss/disturbance within Grafton Wood relative to other Route Corridor Options under consideration. All of the Route Corridor Options pass through extents of improved grassland and arable farmland, with fields separated by a network of hedgerows in varying condition. In terms of these habitats there is little to separate the different route corridor options or the species they are likely to support. The impacts of each Route Corridor Option on significant off-site receptors (for example receptors such as The River Wye SAC and bat roosts) are also likely to be broadly similar. East and west of the railway line, Route Corridor SC2 passes in close proximity (within 250 m) of a series of ponds. Initial surveys have confirmed the presence of great crested newts (a species receiving full protection under the conservation of Habitats and species Regulations 2010, as amended) in several of these ponds. Route corridor SC2 could destroy terrestrial habitat and fragment habitats either side of the proposed road used by great crested newts. With suitable scheme design and targeted mitigation it is likely these impacts could be mitigated, and the project may be able to deliver enhancements via the creation of new/enhanced aquatic and terrestrial habitat. Route corridor option SC2 passes south of Newton Coppice/Hayleasow Wood which includes semi-natural ancient woodland and plantation on ancient woodland. Surveys conducted by Amey (Environmental Assessment Report, 2013) and Parsons Brinckerhoff (unpublished) have confirmed the ancient character of these woodland habitats. Route Corridor Option SC2 also passes upstream of currently open sections of Newton Brook, and hence has reduced potential for impacts on this watercourse upstream of Newton Coppice/Hayleasow Wood. Consultation responses from Natural England (letter dated November 2012) have identified that they consider a route option that passes through the ancient woodland areas as non-preferred. The National Planning Policy Framework identifies ancient woodland as an irreplaceable habitat, and it is unlikely to be possible to fully mitigate a Route Corridor Option that passes through the ancient woodland.	Moderate Adverse - -
	Water Environment	Assuming surface water management design and construction measures are implemented, the proposed alignment is likely to have low significance impacts on transport and dilution of waste products and biodiversity in Withy Brook and Newton Brook.	Slight Adverse -
Social	Commuting and Other users	Reduced congestion along the A465 Belmont Road due to diversion of traffic onto the Southern Link therefore journey time savings for existing users of the A465. Longer journeys for those who divert to the Southern Link. Increased traffic along the A49 but level of delay at the A49/A465 junction proposed to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Reliability impact on Commuting and Other users	Reduced congestion along the A465 provide greater journey time reliability for users of the A465. Journey times along the A49 are expected to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Physical activity	Walking and cycling trips discouraged by severance of PROWs GF3 and HA7. Loss in rural amenity for recreational pedestrians using existing PROWs due to introduction of increased traffic noise and proximity to traffic.	Moderate Adverse --
	Journey quality	Road users benefiting from improved views and reduced traveller stress resulting from more open route with rural landscape vistas, greater route certainty, and reduced fear of accidents (compared to existing urban routes through Hereford town centre). New road with associated earthworks will degrade views slightly from A49 and Haywood Lane. New A465 roundabout will add stress to travellers on this road. Connecting of B4349 to SC2 at A465 will reduce driver stress compared to existing junction arrangement.	Moderate Beneficial ++
	Accidents	Southern Link Road designed to latest design standards. Reduction in traffic along A465 will reduction accident rate along this section of road although the resultant increase in traffic along the A49 may cause the accident rate to increase on this section of road.	Neutral
	Security	Road users slightly less vulnerable to crime as this option reduces need to stop vehicles or reduce speeds compared to existing routes. No impact on security of PT passengers.	Slight Beneficial +
	Access to services	Scheme provides a new potential bus route (between the A465 and A49) but not one that better serves key local destinations in Hereford Town Centre.	Neutral
	Affordability	Rerouting will impact on journey speeds and congestion on both A465 and A49 (north of the scheme), impacting positively on personal affordability of car users.	Slight Beneficial +
	Severance	Scheme option increases severance significantly for very low number hamlets but reduces severance slightly (by reducing traffic flows) through Belmont and Redhill residential areas in vicinity of A49 and A465.	Slight Beneficial +
	Option and non-use values	No impacts identified.	Neutral

Public Accounts	Cost to Broad Transport Budget	Indicative cost of SC2 proposal is circa £16-£20M	Moderate Beneficial ++
	Indirect Tax Revenues	N/A	N/A
Other Issues	Technical and operational feasibility	Earthworks – with some adjustment to the horizontal and vertical alignments this is the most likely option to achieve as near as possible a cut/fill balance. Vertical alignment in the main follows the rolling profile of the countryside. Design Standards – 60mph design speed and Departures from Standard unlikely. Opportunity for overtaking unlikely due to topography (vertical curvature). Straighter crossing of existing country lanes and railway. Side access issues yet to be looked at as well as any drainage runoff storage provision. Physical features – route goes through Grafton Wood (not designated). Utilities – route crosses existing overhead power lines a number of times (including a 66kV) but is located to the south of the main corridor of electricity cables running east to west. Route crosses Grafton Lane almost at grade where there is a concentration of services running north to south including HP gas, a trunk water main and a sewer. Rail structure – route crosses over the existing railway line so reduced risk for Network Rail's operations.	

Appraisal Summary Table Date Produced: 17/04/2014

Name of scheme:	South Wye Transport Package - **Option SC2A**
Description of scheme:	The SC2A option is identical to SC2, except that the new road section will pass under the railway line as opposed to passing over the top of it.

Impacts		Summary of Key Impacts	Qualitative Assessment
Economy	Business users & transport providers	Reduced congestion along the A465 Belmont Road due to diversion of traffic onto the Southern Link therefore journey time savings for existing users of the A465. Longer journeys for those business users who divert to the Southern Link. Increased traffic along the A49 but level of delay at the A49/A465 junction proposed to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Reliability impact on Business users	Reduced congestion along the A465 provide greater journey time reliability for users of the A465. Journey times along the A49 are expected to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Regeneration	Southern Link Road provides direct connection to the Hereford Enterprise Zone (HEZ) from the A465. Improves the supply of employment land by allowing the planning conditions that presently limit development at the HEZ to be extinguished, therefore removing substantial barriers to inward investment relating to both residential and employment development. Regeneration benefits within Belmont enhanced due to greater accessibility to employment opportunities within the HEZ.	Major Beneficial +++
	Wider Impacts	Potential for greater agglomeration benefits across Hereford and as a result of greater connections to the HEZ. Scheme will support the adopted economic growth of the Marches Sub-region.	Moderate Beneficial ++
Environmental	Noise	Significant increase in road traffic noise likely at properties close to new road. Possible decreases in noise at properties adjacent to A465 and A49 (DEFRA Noise Action Planning Important Area on A465 between Tesco and Asda Roundabouts).	Major Adverse
	Air Quality	Air quality along both Belmont Road and Ross Road is relatively poor but, at property facades, is currently just below the air quality objective. Traffic is expected to decrease on Belmont Road and increase on Ross Road. This will result in an improvement of air quality on Belmont Road and a deterioration on Ross Road. The deterioration in air quality could potentially lead to exceedance of the air quality objective. The option is not expected to affect the Hereford AQMA itself, since traffic flows across the river are not expected to be affected although some changes at the A465/A49 junction may result in highly localised air quality impacts. Regional air quality is likely to show a slight adverse impact for all options, due to the greater distance travelled by vehicles diverting onto the bypass and the greater speed of travel. Any impacts on congestion relief on roads into Hereford cannot be assessed at present.	Moderate Adverse (local) Slight Adverse (regional)
	Greenhouse gases	The option will have a slight adverse impact on greenhouse gas emissions due to the greater distance travelled by vehicles diverting onto the bypass and the greater speed of travel.	Slight Adverse
	Landscape	Route passes through fertile, undulating farmland with extensive arable fields, with low hedges and occasional woodland. Although most of the route is within the Herefordshire Lowlands character area, more typical of South Herefordshire. In terms of woodland, it cuts through the centre of Grafton Wood (not designated and low density of trees) but then is free of woodland for its entire length. This route brings the road closest to Haywood Lodge Farm and associated properties with a resulting increase in adverse visual effects. It avoids Newton Brook. A new roundabout on A465 and a short section of road connecting to B4349, introduces further built infrastructure. The landscape in this area would be classed as being of Medium sensitivity (good quality example of Herefordshire rural landscape). The magnitude of effect on the landscape resource is the least of all the routes, however with the additional sections of road, roundabout and proximity to residential properties, the magnitude is Moderate (loss of resource, but not affecting the integrity/ key characteristics of the rural scene.	Moderate Adverse - Has the least effect on woodland when compared to the other routes
	Townscape	N/A	
	Historic Environment	Direct impact (minor) on the significance of the setting of a Grade II* and three Grade II listed buildings at Haywood Lodge; direct impact (minor) on the significance of the setting of the Grade II Clehonger Court buildings; direct impact (minor) on the significance of the setting of a Grade II listed milestone; direct physical impact (slight to moderate) on potential buried archaeological remains in four fields.	Slight to Moderate Adverse

	Biodiversity	Route Option SC2A passes through the centre of Grafton Wood, which supports a mature tree canopy with some indicators of ancient woodland present. This Option is therefore likely to lead to the greatest extent of habitat loss/disturbance within Grafton Wood relative to other Route Corridor Options under consideration. All of the Route Corridor Options pass through extents of improved grassland and arable farmland, with fields separated by a network of hedgerows in varying condition. In terms of these habitats there is little to separate the different route corridor options or the species they are likely to support. The impacts of each Route Corridor Option on significant off-site receptors (for example receptors such as The River Wye SAC and bat roosts) are also likely to be broadly similar. East and west of the railway line, Route Corridor SC2A passes in close proximity (within 250 m) of a series of ponds. Initial surveys have confirmed the presence of great crested newts (a species receiving full protection under the conservation of Habitats and species Regulations 2010, as amended) in several of these ponds. Route corridor SC2A could destroy terrestrial habitat and fragment habitats either side of the proposed road used by great crested newts. With suitable scheme design and targeted mitigation it is likely these impacts could be mitigated, and the project may be able to deliver enhancements via the creation of new/enhanced aquatic and terrestrial habitat. Route corridor option SC2A passes south of Newton Coppice/Hayleasow Wood which includes semi-natural ancient woodland and plantation on ancient woodland. Surveys conducted by Amey (Environmental Assessment Report, 2013) and Parsons Brinckerhoff (unpublished) have confirmed the ancient character of these woodland habitats. Route Corridor Option SC2A also passes upstream of currently open sections of Newton Brook, and hence has reduced potential for impacts on this watercourse upstream of Newton Coppice/Hayleasow Wood. Consultation responses from Natural England (letter dated November 2012) have identified that they consider a route option that passes through the ancient woodland areas as non-preferred. The National Planning Policy Framework identifies ancient woodland as an irreplaceable habitat, and it is unlikely to be possible to fully mitigate a Route Corridor Option that passes through the ancient woodland. There would be a slight preference for Route Corridor Option SC2A relative to SC2, as passing under the existing railway should allow an unmodified and unlit habitat corridor to be retained along the railway line.	Moderate Adverse - -
	Water Environment	Assuming surface water management design and construction measures are implemented, the proposed alignment is likely to have low significance impacts on transport and dilution of waste products and biodiversity in Withy Brook and Newton Brook.	Slight Adverse -
Social	Commuting and Other users	Reduced congestion along the A465 Belmont Road due to diversion of traffic onto the Southern Link therefore journey time savings for existing users of the A465. Longer journeys for those who divert to the Southern Link. Increased traffic along the A49 but level of delay at the A49/A465 junction proposed to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Reliability impact on Commuting and Other users	Reduced congestion along the A465 provide greater journey time reliability for users of the A465. Journey times along the A49 are expected to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Physical activity	Walking and cycling trips discouraged by severance of PROWs GF3 and HA7. Loss in rural amenity for recreational pedestrians using existing PROWs due to introduction of increased traffic noise and proximity to traffic.	Moderate Adverse --
	Journey quality	Road users benefiting from improved views and reduced traveller stress resulting from more open route with rural landscape vistas, greater route certainty, and reduced fear of accidents (compared to existing urban routes through Hereford town centre). New road with associated earthworks will degrade views slightly from A49 and Haywood Lane. New A465 roundabout will add stress to travellers on this road. Connecting of B4349 to SC2A at A465 will reduce driver stress compared to existing junction arrangement.	Moderate Beneficial ++
	Accidents	Southern Link Road designed to latest design standards. Reduction in traffic along A465 will reduction accident rate along this section of road although the resultant increase in traffic along the A49 may cause the accident rate to increase on this section of road.	Neutral
	Security	Road users slightly less vulnerable to crime as this option reduces need to stop vehicles or reduce speeds compared to existing routes. No impact on security of PT passengers.	Slight Beneficial +
	Access to services	Scheme provides a new potential bus route (between the A465 and A49) but not one that better serves key local destinations in Hereford Town Centre.	Neutral
	Affordability	Rerouting will impact on journey speeds and congestion on both A465 and A49 (north of the scheme), impacting positively on personal affordability of car users.	Slight Beneficial +

	Severance	Scheme option increases severance significantly for very low number hamlets but reduces severance slightly (by reducing traffic flows) through Belmont and Redhill residential areas in vicinity of A49 and A465.	Slight Beneficial +
	Option and non-use values	No impacts identified.	Neutral
Public Accounts	Cost to Broad Transport Budget	Indicative cost of SC2A proposal is circa £21-£25M	Slight Beneficial +
	Indirect Tax Revenues	N/A	N/A
Other Issues	Technical and operational feasibility	Earthworks – Vertical alignment on the east side follows the rolling profile of the countryside but is forced deep in cutting to cross under the railway and Haywood Lane. This could give rise to groundwater and road drainage problems. Large amount of excess spoil generated. Design Standards – 60mph design speed and Departures from Standard unlikely. Opportunity for overtaking unlikely due to topography (vertical curvature). Straighter crossing of existing country lanes and railway. Side access issues yet to be looked at as well as any drainage runoff storage provision. Physical features – route goes through Grafton Wood (not designated). Utilities – route crosses existing overhead power lines a number of times (including a 66kV) but is located to the south of the main corridor of electricity cables running east to west. Route crosses Grafton Lane almost at grade where there is a concentration of services running north to south including HP gas, a trunk water main and a sewer. Rail structure - route crosses underneath the existing railway line so increased risk for Network Rail's operations.	

Appraisal Summary Table Date Produced: 17/04/2014

Name of scheme:	South Wye Transport Package - **Option SC5**
Description of scheme:	Route Option SC5 passes through the northern part of Grafton Wood and in a north-westerly direction, crosses the densely wooded area between Grafton Lane and Withy Brook and a site of archaeological importance before turning west to cross underneath the railway line. The route continues through Merry Hill and under Haywood Lane towards the A465.

	Impacts	Summary of Key Impacts	Qualitative Assessment
Economy	Business users & transport providers	Reduced congestion along the A465 Belmont Road due to diversion of traffic onto the Southern Link therefore journey time savings for existing users of the A465. Longer journeys for those business users who divert to the Southern Link. Increased traffic along the A49 but level of delay at the A49/A465 junction proposed to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Reliability impact on Business users	Reduced congestion along the A465 provide greater journey time reliability for users of the A465. Journey times along the A49 are expected to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Regeneration	Southern Link Road provides direct connection to the Hereford Enterprise Zone (HEZ) from the A465. Improves the supply of employment land by allowing the planning conditions that presently limit development at the HEZ to be extinguished, therefore removing substantial barriers to inward investment relating to both residential and employment development. Regeneration benefits within Belmont enhanced due to greater accessibility to employment opportunities within the HEZ.	Major Beneficial +++
	Wider Impacts	Potential for greater agglomeration benefits across Hereford and as a result of greater connections to the HEZ. Scheme will support the adopted economic growth of the Marches Sub-region.	Moderate Beneficial ++
Environmental	Noise	Significant increase in road traffic noise likely at properties close to new road. Possible decreases in noise at properties adjacent to A465 and A49 (DEFRA Noise Action Planning Important Area on A465 between Tesco and Asda Roundabouts).	Major Adverse - - -
	Air Quality	Air quality along both Belmont Road and Ross Road is relatively poor but, at property facades, is currently just below the air quality objective. Traffic is expected to decrease on Belmont Road and increase on Ross Road. This will result in an improvement of air quality on Belmont Road and a deterioration on Ross Road. The deterioration in air quality could potentially lead to exceedance of the air quality objective. The option is not expected to affect the Hereford AQMA itself, since traffic flows across the river are not expected to be affected although some changes at the A465/A49 junction may result in highly localised air quality impacts. Regional air quality is likely to show a slight adverse impact for all options, due to the greater distance travelled by vehicles diverting onto the bypass and the greater speed of travel. Any impacts on congestion relief on roads into Hereford cannot be assessed at present.	Moderate Adverse (local) Slight Adverse (regional) - -
	Greenhouse gases	The option will have a slight adverse impact on greenhouse gas emissions due to the greater distance travelled by vehicles diverting onto the bypass and the greater speed of travel.	Slight Adverse -
	Landscape	Route passes through fertile, undulating farmland with extensive arable fields, with low hedges and occasional woodland. Although most of the route is within the Herefordshire Lowlands character area, more typical of South Herefordshire. In terms of woodland, it cuts through the centre of Grafton Wood (not designated and low density of trees) and a dense copse near Withy Brook. It runs close to residential properties along Grafton Lane and involves the loss of a large commercial premises accessed from Haywood Lane. It avoids Newton Brook and Hayleasow Wood. A new roundabout on A465 and a separate short section of road connecting to B4349, introduces further built infrastructure. The landscape in this area would be classed as being of Medium sensitivity (good quality example of Herefordshire rural landscape). The magnitude of effect on the landscape resource is influenced by the loss of woodland, the route going through a large Site of Archaeological Importance, the proximity of residential properties, the loss of commercial premises, a new roundabout and additional sections of road. Therefore the magnitude of effect on the landscape resource would be Major (loss of resource and severe damage to key characteristics.	Major Adverse - - -
	Townscape	N/A	

	Historic Environment	Direct impact (minor) on the significance of the setting of Grade II listed Merryhill Stables; direct impact (minor) on the significance of the setting of Grade II listed Harwood Lodge; direct physical impact (moderate) on site of medieval fortifications (10467); direct physical impact (minor) on two cropmarks in fields 10 and 34; direct physical impact (slight to moderate) on potential buried archaeological remains in four fields.	Slight to Moderate Adverse -
	Biodiversity	Route Corridor Option SC5 passes through Grafton Wood, slightly to the north of the most central alignments. It is therefore likely to lead to similar levels of Habitat Loss as Options SC1/2/3/4, but more than options SC6/7. Grafton Wood supports a mature tree canopy, with some indicator species for ancient woodland present. All of the Route Corridor Options pass through extents of improved grassland and arable farmland, with fields separated by a network of hedgerows in varying condition. In terms of these habitats and the species they are likely to support there is little to separate the different Route Corridor Options. The impacts of each Route Corridor Option on significant off-site receptors (for example The River Wye SAC, bat roosts etc) are also likely to be broadly similar. This Route Corridor Option is further away from ponds known to support great crested newts than options SC1/2. Impacts on great crested newts, a European Protected Species, are therefore likely to be reduced relative to the more southern options SC1/2. Route Corridor Option SC5 passes south of Newton Coppice/Hayleasow Wood including a buffer zone of approximately 50 - 100 m. Newton coppice/Hayleasow wood supports semi-natural ancient woodland and plantation on ancient woodland. Surveys conducted by Amey (Environmental Assessment Report, 2013) and Parsons Brinckerhoff (unpublished) have confirmed the ancient character of these woodland habitats. Route Corridor Option SC5 also passes upstream of currently open sections of Newton Brook, and hence has reduced potential for impacts on this watercourse relative to Routes passing through/adjacent to the woodland. Consultation responses from Natural England (letter dated November 2012) have identified that they consider a Route Corridor Option that passes through the ancient woodland areas as non-preferred. The National Planning Policy Framework identifies ancient woodland as an irreplaceable habitat, and it is unlikely to be possible to fully mitigate a Route Corridor Option that passes through the ancient woodland.	Moderate Adverse - -
	Water Environment	Assuming surface water management design and construction measures are implemented, the proposed alignment is likely to have low significance impacts on transport and dilution of waste products and biodiversity in Withy Brook and Newton Brook.	Slight Adverse -
Social	Commuting and Other users	Reduced congestion along the A465 Belmont Road due to diversion of traffic onto the Southern Link therefore journey time savings for existing users of the A465. Longer journeys for those who divert to the Southern Link. Increased traffic along the A49 but level of delay at the A49/A465 junction proposed to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Reliability impact on Commuting and Other users	Reduced congestion along the A465 provide greater journey time reliability for users of the A465. Journey times along the A49 are expected to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Physical activity	Walking trips discouraged by severance of PROWs GF3, HA7, CH9 and CH10. Loss in rural amenity for recreational pedestrians on PROWs due to introduction of increased traffic noise and proximity to traffic.	Moderate Adverse - -
	Journey quality	Road users benefiting from improved views and reduced traveller stress resulting from more open route with rural landscape vistas, greater route certainty, and reduced fear of accidents (compared to existing urban routes through Hereford town centre). New roundabout will degrade views slightly from A465. New A465 roundabout will add stress to travellers on this road. New link between B4349 and A465, in addition to the new A465 roundabout will increase stress for drivers connecting between the B4349 and SC5.	Slight Beneficial +
	Accidents	Southern Link Road designed to latest design standards. Reduction in traffic along A465 will reduction accident rate along this section of road although the resultant increase in traffic along the A49 may cause the accident rate to increase on this section of road.	Neutral
	Security	road users slightly less vulnerable to crime as this option reduces need to stop vehicles or reduce speeds compared to existing routes. No impact on security of PT passengers.	Slight Beneficial +
	Access to services	Scheme provides a new potential bus route (between the A465 and A49) but not one that better serves key local destinations in Hereford Town Centre.	Neutral
	Affordability	Rerouting will impact on journey speeds and congestion on both A465 and A49 (north of the scheme), impacting positively on personal affordability of car users.	Slight Beneficial +

	Severance	Scheme option increases severance significantly for very low number hamlets but reduces severance slightly (by reducing traffic flows) through Belmont and Redhill residential areas in vicinity of A49 and A465.	Slight Beneficial +
	Option and non-use values	No impacts identified	Neutral
Public Accounts	Cost to Broad Transport Budget	Indicative cost of proposal is circa £21-£25M	Slight Beneficial +
	Indirect Tax Revenues	N/A	N/A
Other Issues	Technical and operational feasibility	Earthworks – Vertical alignment on the east side follows the rolling profile of the countryside but is forced into cutting after Grafton Lane in order to cross under the railway. 13m deep cutting through Merry Hill in order to cross under Haywood Lane which could give rise to groundwater and road drainage problems. Significant excess spoil generated. Design Standards – 60mph design speed and Departures from Standard unlikely. Opportunity for overtaking unlikely. Angled crossing of existing country lanes and railway will increase cost. Side access issues yet to be looked at as well as any drainage runoff storage provision. Physical features – route goes through Grafton Wood (not designated), a wooded area between Grafton Lane and Withy Brook, a site of archaeological importance and a barn yard situated south-west of the Merryhill Lane junction with Haywood Lane. Utilities – route crosses existing overhead power lines a number of times (including a 66kV) and is located partly within the main corridor of electricity cables running east to west. Route crosses Grafton Lane at grade where there is a concentration of services running north to south including HP gas, a trunk water main and a sewer. Conflict with a concentration of overhead and buried services in/around Haywood Lane including BT, a water main and a sewer. Rail structure - route crosses underneath the existing railway line so increased risk for Network Rail's operations.	

Appraisal Summary Table Date Produced: 17/04/2014

Name of scheme:	South Wye Transport Package - **Option SC7**
Description of scheme:	Route Option SC7 passes through the northern tip of Grafton Wood but avoids the southern extent of the dense wooded area between Grafton Lane and Withy Brook. It then runs to the south of Merryhill Lane before cutting through Merry Hill and under Haywood Lane. From this location the road heads in a westerly direction to the A465.

	Impacts	Summary of Key Impacts	Qualitative Assessment
Economy	Business users & transport providers	Reduced congestion along the A465 Belmont Road due to diversion of traffic onto the Southern Link therefore journey time savings for existing users of the A465. Longer journeys for those business users who divert to the Southern Link. Increased traffic along the A49 but level of delay at the A49/A465 junction proposed to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Reliability impact on Business users	Reduced congestion along the A465 provide greater journey time reliability for users of the A465. Journey times along the A49 are expected to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Regeneration	Southern Link Road provides direct connection to the Hereford Enterprise Zone (HEZ) from the A465. Improves the supply of employment land by allowing the planning conditions that presently limit development at the HEZ to be extinguished, therefore removing substantial barriers to inward investment relating to both residential and employment development. Regeneration benefits within Belmont enhanced due to greater accessibility to employment opportunities within the HEZ.	Major Beneficial +++
	Wider Impacts	Potential for greater agglomeration benefits across Hereford and as a result of greater connections to the HEZ. Scheme will support the adopted economic growth of the Marches Sub-region.	Moderate Beneficial ++
Environmental	Noise	Significant increase in road traffic noise likely at properties close to new road. Possible decreases in noise at properties adjacent to A465 and A49 (DEFRA Noise Action Planning Important Area on A465 between Tesco and Asda Roundabouts).	Major Adverse - - -
	Air Quality	Air quality along both Belmont Road and Ross Road is relatively poor but, at property facades, is currently just below the air quality objective. Traffic is expected to decrease on Belmont Road and increase on Ross Road. This will result in an improvement of air quality on Belmont Road and a deterioration on Ross Road. The deterioration in air quality could potentially lead to exceedance of the air quality objective. The option is not expected to affect the Hereford AQMA itself, since traffic flows across the river are not expected to be affected although some changes at the A465/A49 junction may result in highly localised air quality impacts. Regional air quality is likely to show a slight adverse impact for all options, due to the greater distance travelled by vehicles diverting onto the bypass and the greater speed of travel. Any impacts on congestion relief on roads into Hereford cannot be assessed at present.	Moderate Adverse (local) Slight Adverse (regional) - -
	Greenhouse gases	The option will have a slight adverse impact on greenhouse gas emissions due to the greater distance travelled by vehicles diverting onto the bypass and the greater speed of travel.	Slight Adverse -
	Landscape	Route passes through fertile, undulating farmland with extensive arable fields, with low hedges and occasional woodland. Although most of the route is within the Herefordshire Lowlands character area, more typical of South Herefordshire. In terms of woodland, it cuts through the centre of Grafton Wood (not designated and low density of trees). It runs close to residential properties along Grafton Lane. It avoids Newton Brook and Hayleasow Wood. A new roundabout on A465 and a short section of road connecting to B4349, introduces further built infrastructure. The landscape in this area would be classed as being of Medium sensitivity (good quality example of Herefordshire rural landscape). The magnitude of effect on the landscape resource is influenced by the loss of woodland, the proximity of residential properties, a new roundabout with additional section of road. Therefore, the magnitude is Moderate (loss of resource, but not affecting the integrity/ key characteristics of the rural scene.	Moderate Adverse - -
	Townscape	N/A	
	Historic Environment	Direct impact (minor) on the significance of the setting of Grade II listed Merryhill Stables; direct impact (minor) on the significance of the setting of Grade II listed Harwood Lodge; direct physical impact (minor) on cropmark in field 10; direct physical impact (slight to moderate) on potential buried archaeological remains in five fields	Slight to Moderate Adverse -

	Biodiversity	Route Corridor Option SC7 passes through the northern edge of Grafton Wood. Grafton Wood supports a mature tree canopy, with some indicator species for ancient woodland present. Route Corridor Option SC7 has a marginally increased impact on Grafton Wood relative to SC6, but less than SC1 - SC5. All of the Route Corridor Options pass through extents of improved grassland and arable farmland, with fields separated by a network of hedgerows in varying condition. In terms of these habitats and the species they are likely to support there is little to separate the different Route Corridor Options. The impacts of each Corridor on significant off-site receptors (for example The River Wye SAC, bat roosts etc) are also likely to be broadly similar. This Route Corridor Option is further away from ponds known to support great crested newts than options SC1/2. Impacts on great crested newts, a European Protected species, are therefore likely to be reduced relative to the more southern options SC1/2. Route corridor option SC7 passes south of Newton Coppice/Hayleasow Wood which includes semi-natural ancient woodland and plantation on ancient woodland, although it will be located close to the southern edge of the ancient woodland areas. Surveys conducted by Amey (Environmental Assessment Report, 2013) and Parsons Brinckerhoff (unpublished) have confirmed the ancient character of these woodland habitats. Route Corridor Option SC7 also passes upstream of currently open sections of Newton Brook, and hence has reduced potential for impacts on this watercourse relative to options passing through Newton Coppice/Hayleasow Wood. Consultation responses from Natural England (letter dated November 2012) have identified that they consider a Route Corridor Option that passes through the ancient woodland areas as non-preferred. The National Planning Policy Framework identifies ancient woodland as an irreplaceable habitat, and it is unlikely to be possible to fully mitigate a Route Corridor Option that passes through the ancient woodland. Route Corridor Option SC7 passes under the railway, and would therefore allow greater retention/enhancement of the habitat corridor along the railway line than the options involving overbridges. Route Corridor SC7 is considered the most ecologically preferable Option at this time, due to the minimal direct impacts on Grafton Wood and Hayleasow Wood/Newton Coppice, the location relative to emerging locations of great crested newt populations, and the inclusion of an underpass beneath the railway line. This Route Corridor Option could be improved further by moving the eastern end end of the alignment north of Grafton Wood (as per SC6), and moving the western end south to provide a buffer to Hayleasow wood/Newton Coppice (as per SC5).	Moderate / Slight Adverse - - / -
	Water Environment	Assuming surface water management design and construction measures are implemented, the proposed alignment is likely to have low significance impacts on transport and dilution of waste products and biodiversity in Withy Brook and Newton Brook.	Slight Adverse -
Social	Commuting and Other users	Reduced congestion along the A465 Belmont Road due to diversion of traffic onto the Southern Link therefore journey time savings for existing users of the A465. Longer journeys for those who divert to the Southern Link. Increased traffic along the A49 but level of delay at the A49?A465 junction proposed to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Reliability impact on Commuting and Other users	Reduced congestion along the A465 provide greater journey time reliability for users of the A465. Journey times along the A49 are expected to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Physical activity	Walking trips discouraged by severance of PROWs GF3, HA14, HAF, CH9 and CH10. Loss in rural amenity for recreational pedestrians on PROWs due to introduction of increased traffic noise and proximity to traffic.	Moderate Adverse - -
	Journey quality	Road users benefiting from improved views and reduced traveller stress resulting from more open route with rural landscape vistas, greater route certainty, and reduced fear of accidents (compared to existing urban routes through Hereford town centre). New road with associated earthworks will degrade views from A465, particularly where it is raised to bridge over Hayleasow Wood. New A465 roundabout will add stress to travellers on this road. New link between B4349 and A465, in addition to the new A465 roundabout will increase stress for drivers connecting between the B4349 and SC6.	Slight Beneficial +
	Accidents	Southern Link Road designed to latest design standards. Reduction in traffic along A465 will reduction accident rate along this section of road although the resultant increase in traffic along the A49 may cause the accident rate to increase on this section of road.	Neutral
	Security	road users slightly less vulnerable to crime as this option reduces need to stop vehicles or reduce speeds compared to existing routes. No impact on security of PT passengers	Slight Beneficial +
	Access to services	Scheme provides a new potential bus route (between the A465 and A49) but not one that better serves key local destinations in Hereford Town Centre	Neutral

	Affordability	Rerouting will impact on journey speeds and congestion on both A465 and A49 (north of the scheme), impacting positively on personal affordability of car users.	Slight Beneficial +
	Severance	Scheme option increases severance significantly for very low number hamlets but reduces severance slightly (by reducing traffic flows) through Belmont and Redhill residential areas in vicinity of A49 and A465	Slight Beneficial +
	Option and non-use values	No impacts identified	Neutral
Public Accounts	Cost to Broad Transport Budget	Indicative cost of proposal is circa £21-£25M	Slight Beneficial +
	Indirect Tax Revenues	N/A	N/A
Other Issues	Technical and operational feasibility	Earthworks – Vertical alignment on the east side follows the rolling profile of the countryside but is forced into cutting after Grafton Lane in order to cross under the railway. 13m deep cutting through Merry Hill in order to cross under Haywood Lane which could give rise to groundwater and road drainage problems. Large amount of excess spoil generated. Design Standards – 50mph design speed and Departures from Standard unlikely. No opportunity for overtaking due to the twisty alignment. Angled crossing of existing country lanes and railway will increase cost. Side access issues yet to be looked at as well as any drainage runoff storage provision. Physical features – being of a twisted nature the route manages to avoid many physical constraints but does go through the northern tip of Grafton Wood (not designated). Utilities – route crosses existing overhead power lines a number of times (including a 66kV) and is located largely within the main corridor of electricity cables running east to west. Route crosses Grafton Lane on a 3m high embankment where there is a concentration of services running north to south including HP gas, a trunk water main and a sewer. Conflict with a concentration of overhead and buried services in/around Haywood Lane including BT, a water main and a sewer. Rail structure - route crosses underneath the existing railway line so increased risk for Network Rail's operations.	

Appraisal Summary Table Date Produced: 17/10/2014

Name of scheme:	South Wye Transport Package - Option SC8
Description of scheme:	Option SC8 lies between the northern and southern options. The alignment is relatively straight over its entire length curving gradually north-west, west of the railway. It passes over the railway, underneath Haywood Lane and is at grade over Grafton Lane.

	Impacts	Summary of key impacts	Assessment Qualitative
Economy	Business users & transport providers	Reduced congestion along the A465 Belmont Road due to diversion of traffic onto the Southern Link therefore journey time savings for existing users of the A465. Longer journeys for those business users who divert to the Southern Link. Increased traffic along the A49 but level of delay at the A49/A465 junction proposed to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Reliability impact on Business users	Reduced congestion along the A465 provide greater journey time reliability for users of the A465. Journey times along the A49 are expected to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Regeneration	Southern Link Road provides direct connection to the Hereford Enterprise Zone (HEZ) from the A465. Improves the supply of employment land by allowing the planning conditions that presently limit development at the HEZ to be extinguished, therefore removing substantial barriers to inward investment relating to both residential and employment development. Regeneration benefits within Belmont enhanced due to greater accessibility to employment opportunities within the HEZ.	Significant Beneficial +++
	Wider Impacts	Potential for greater agglomeration benefits across Hereford and as a result of greater connections to the HEZ. Scheme will support the adopted economic growth of the Marches Sub-region.	Moderate Beneficial ++
Environmental	Noise	Signficant increase in road traffic noise likely at properties close to new road. Possible decreases in noise at properties adjacent to A465 and A49 (DEFRA Noise Action Planning Important Area on A465 between Tesco and Asda Roundabouts)	Major Adverse
	Air Quality	Air quality along both Belmont Road and Ross Road is relatively poor but, at property facades, is currently below the air quality objective. Traffic is expected to decrease on Belmont Road and increase on Ross Road. This will result in an improvement of air quality on Belmont Road and a deterioration on Ross Road. The deterioration in air quality could potentially lead to exceedence of the air quality objective. The option is not expected to affect the Hereford AQMA itself, since traffic flows across the river are not expected to be affected although some changes at the A465/A49 junction may result in highly localised air quality impacts. Regional air quality is likely to show a slight adverse impact for all options, due to the greater distance travelled by vehicles diverting onto the bypass and the greater speed of travel. Any impacts on congestion relief on roads into Hereford cannot be assessed at present	Moderate Adverse (local), Slight Adverse (regional)
	Greenhouse gases	The option will have a slight adverse impact on greenhouse gas emissions due to the greater distance travelled by vehicles diverting onto the Southern Link Road and the greater speed of travel	Slight Adverse
	Landscape/Townscape	Route passes through fertile, undulating farmland with extensive arable fields, with low hedges and occasional woodland. Although most of the route is within the Herefordshire Lowlands character area, more typical of South Herefordshire. In terms of woodland, it cuts through the centre of Grafton Wood, which is not designated and has a low density of trees. This route runs in close proximity to Haywood Lodge Farm and associated properties, with potential for visual amenity effects. It avoids Newton Brook. The alignment of the eastern half of the route runs in a straight line and cuts across the grain of the landscape. The route therefore fails to take into account the undulating topography and irregular field pattern. SC8 will require extensive works to create embankments to take the route over the railway line resulting in a visible central section (as it passes over the railway line) and will have engineered slopes that will be disruptive to the character of the local topography. The landscape in this area would be classed as being of Medium sensitivity (good quality example of Herefordshire rural landscape). The magnitude of effect on the landscape resource with the additional sections of road, roundabout and proximity to residential properties, is Moderate (loss of resource, at odds with the local pattern and landform, visually intrusive and will adversely impact on the landscape).	Moderate Adverse
	Historic Environment	Direct impact (minor) on the the setting of a Grade II* and three Grade II listed buildings at Haywood Lodge. Direct impact (minor) on the significance of the setting of the Grade II Clehonger Court buildings; direct impact (minor) on the significance of the setting of a Grade II listed milestone. Direct physical impact (slight to moderate) on potential buried archaeological remains in four fields.	Slight to Moderate Adverse

	Biodiversity	SC8 passes through the centre of Grafton Wood, which supports a mature tree canopy with some indicators of ancient woodland present. SC8 will likely to lead to the greatest extent of habitat loss / disturbance within Grafton Wood relative to other route options under consideration, with comparable impacts to SC2/2A and SC9. SC8 passes south of Newton Coppice / Hayleasow Wood which includes semi-natural ancient woodland and plantation on ancient woodland, although it will be located close to the southern edge of the ancient woodland areas. Recent surveys have confirmed the ancient character of these woodland habitats. SC8 also passes upstream of open sections of Newton Brook, and has reduced potential for impacts on this watercourse relative to route options passing through Newton Coppice / Hayleasow Wood. Consultation with Natural England has indicated that they would not prefer a route option that passes through ancient woodland areas. The National Planning Policy Framework identifies ancient woodland as an irreplaceable habitat, and it is unlikely to be possible to fully mitigate a Route Corridor Option that passes through the ancient woodland. SC8 is further away from ponds known to support great crested newts (GCN) than options SC2/2A. Impacts on GCNs, a European Pr+D25otected species, are therefore likely to be reduced relative to the more southern options SC2/2A. All of the route options pass through extents of improved grassland and arable farmland, with fields seperated by a network of hedgerows in varying condition. In terms of these habitats there is little to separate the different route corridor options or the species they are likely to support (other than GCN, see above). The impact of each route option on significant off-site receptors (e.g. River Wye SAC and bat roosts) are also likely to be broadly similar. SC8 would pass over the railway line, based on the current understanding of scheme-wide bat activity and design parameters (assuming the railway underpass would be unlit), SC8 would allow a wide underpass to be maintained under the new road alignment, subject to only infrequent train movements. Any overbridge would need to have wide vegetated margins in order to be as effective as an underpass.	Moderate adverse
	Water Environment	Assuming surface water management design and construction measures are implemented, the proposed alignment is likely to have low significance impacts on transport and dilution of waste products and biodiversity in Withy Brook and Newton Brook.	Slight Adverse
Social	Commuting and Other users	Reduced congestion along the A465 Belmont Road due to diversion of traffic onto the Southern Link therefore journey time savings for existing users of the A465. Longer journeys for those who divert to the Southern Link. Increased traffic along the A49 but level of delay at the A49/A465 junction proposed to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Reliability impact on Commuting and Other users	Reduced congestion along the A465 provide greater journey time reliability for users of the A465. Journey times along the A49 are expected to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Physical activity	Walking and cycling trips discouraged by severance of PROWs GF3 and HA7. Loss in rural amenity for recreational pedestrians using existing PROWs due to introduction of increased traffic noise and proximity to traffic.	Moderate Adverse - -
	Journey quality	Road users benefiting from improved views and reduced traveller stress resulting from more open route with rural landscape vistas, greater route certainty, and reduced fear of accidents (compared to existing urban routes through Hereford town centre). New road with associated earthworks will degrade views slightly from A49 and Haywood Lane. New A465 roundabout will add stress to travellers on this roadConnecting of B4349 to SC8 at A465 will reduce driver stress compared to existing junction arrangement.	Moderate Beneficial ++
	Accidents	Southern Link Road designed to latest design standards. Reduction in traffic along A465 will reduction accident rate along this section of road although the resultant increase in traffic along the A49 may cause the accident rate to increase on this section of road.	Neutral
	Security	Road users slightly less vulnerable to crime as this option reduces need to stop vehicles or reduce speeds compared to existing routes. No impact on security of PT passengers	Slight Beneficial +
	Access to services	Scheme provides a new potential bus route (between the A465 and A49) but not one that better serves key local destinations in Hereford Town Centre	Neutral
	Affordability	Rerouting will impact on journey speeds and congestion on both A465 and A49 (north of the scheme), impacting positively on personal affordability of car users.	Slight Beneficial +
	Severance	Scheme option increases severance significantly for very low number hamlets but reduces severance slightly (by reducing traffic flows) through Belmont and Redhill residential areas in vicinity of A49 and A465	Slight Beneficial +
	Option and non-use values	No impacts identified	Neutral
Public Accounts	Cost to Broad Transport Budget	Indicative cost of SC8 proposal is circa £26.5M	
	Indirect Tax Revenues	N/A	

Other Issues	Technical and operational feasibility	Earthworks – Vertical alignment of the option is similar at both the western and eastern ends of the route. The difference lies within the middle section either side of the railway line reflecting whether the route goes over or under it. To cross over the railway route Option SC8 requires the construction of an embankment up to 8m high. This could give rise to groundwater and road drainage problems. it may be possible to achieve a balanced earthworks scheme using alignment Option SC8. Design Standards – 60mph design speed and Departures from Standard unlikely. Although a much straighter route on plan, an opportunity for overtaking is unlikely due to topography (vertical curvature). Angled crossing of existing railway will increase cost but the crossing of Haywood Lane is relatively straight. Side access issues yet to be looked at as well as any drainage runoff storage provision. Physical features – the route skirts around the south-west corner of Newton Coppice (designated as Ancient Woodland), through the northern section of Grafton Wood (not designated), to the south of the wooded area between Grafton Lane and Withy Brook and to the south of the barn yard situated south-west of the Merryhill Lane junction with Haywood Lane. The route also passes to the south of Grafton Enclosure and Beech Grove (refer to commentary on Option SC9). Utilities – the route clashes with existing overhead power lines located at the eastern and western ends of the scheme (including a 66kV) but generally avoid them within the central area. Both routes cross Grafton Lane at grade (or thereabouts) where BT and water services are present. There is conflict with a concentration of overhead and buried services in/around Haywood Lane including BT, a water main and a sewer. Rail structure – route option SC8 (which crosses over the existing railway line) offers reduced risk for Network Rail's operations.

Appraisal Summary Table Date Produced: 17/10/2014

Name of scheme:	South Wye Transport Package - Option SC8A
Description of scheme:	The SC8A option alignment is identical to SC8 except that it crosses underneath the railway line.

	Impacts	Summary of key impacts	Assessment Qualitative
Economy	Business users & transport providers	Reduced congestion along the A465 Belmont Road due to diversion of traffic onto the Southern Link therefore journey time savings for existing users of the A465. Longer journeys for those business users who divert to the Southern Link. Increased traffic along the A49 but level of delay at the A49/A465 junction proposed to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Reliability impact on Business users	Reduced congestion along the A465 provide greater journey time reliability for users of the A465. Journey times along the A49 are expected to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Regeneration	Southern Link Road provides direct connection to the Hereford Enterprise Zone (HEZ) from the A465. Improves the supply of employment land by allowing the planning conditions that presently limit development at the HEZ to be extinguished, therefore removing substantial barriers to inward investment relating to both residential and employment development. Regeneration benefits within Belmont enhanced due to greater accessibility to employment opportunities within the HEZ.	Significant Beneficial +++
	Wider Impacts	Potential for greater agglomeration benefits across Hereford and as a result of greater connections to the HEZ. Scheme will support the adopted economic growth of the Marches Sub-region.	Moderate Beneficial ++
Environmental	Noise	Signficant increase in road traffic noise likely at properties close to new road. Possible decreases in noise at properties adjacent to A465 and A49 (DEFRA Noise Action Planning Important Area on A465 between Tesco and Asda Roundabouts)	Major Adverse
	Air Quality	Air quality along both Belmont Road and Ross Road is relatively poor but, at property facades, is currently below the air quality objective. Traffic is expected to decrease on Belmont Road and increase on Ross Road. This will result in an improvement of air quality on Belmont Road and a deterioration on Ross Road. The deterioration in air quality could potentially lead to exceedence of the air quality objective. The option is not expected to affect the Hereford AQMA itself, since traffic flows across the river are not expected to be affected although some changes at the A465/A49 junction may result in highly localised air quality impacts. Regional air quality is likely to show a slight adverse impact for all options, due to the greater distance travelled by vehicles diverting onto the bypass and the greater speed of travel. Any impacts on congestion relief on roads into Hereford cannot be assessed at present	Moderate Adverse - (local), Slight Adverse (regional)
	Greenhouse gases	The option will have a slight adverse impact on greenhouse gas emissions due to the greater distance travelled by vehicles diverting onto the Southern Link Road and the greater speed of travel	Slight Adverse
	Landscape/Townscape	Route passes through fertile, undulating farmland with extensive arable fields, with low hedges and occasional woodland. Although most of the route is within the Herefordshire Lowlands character area, more typical of South Herefordshire. In terms of woodland, it cuts through the centre of Grafton Wood, which is not designated and has a low density of trees. This route runs in close proximity to Haywood Lodge Farm and associated properties, with potential for visual amenity effects. It avoids Newton Brook. The alignment of the eastern half of the route runs in a straight line and cuts across the grain of the landscape. The route therefore fails to take into account the undulating topography and irregular field pattern. SC8A will require extensive works to create a cutting to take the route under the railwayand will involve engineered slopes that will be disruptive to the character of the local topography. The landscape in this area would be classed as being of Medium sensitivity (good quality example of Herefordshire rural landscape). The magnitude of effect on the landscape resource with the additional sections of road, roundabout and proximity to residential properties, is Moderate (loss of resource, at odds with the local pattern and landform, visually intrusive and will adversely impact on the landscape).	Moderate Adverse
	Historic Environment	Direct impact (minor) on the significance of the setting of a Grade II* and three Grade II listed buildings at Haywood Lodge, Grade II Clehonger Court buildings and a Grade II listed milestone. Direct physical impact (slight to moderate) on potential buried archaeological remains in four fields.	Slight to Moderate Adverse

	Biodiversity	SC8A passes through the centre of Grafton Wood, which supports a mature tree canopy with some indicators of ancient woodland present. SC8A will likely to lead to the greatest extent of habitat loss / disturbance within Grafton Wood relative to other route options under consideration, with comparable impacts to SC2/2A and SC9. SC8A passes south of Newton Coppice / Hayleasow Wood which includes semi-natural ancient woodland and plantation on ancient woodland, although it will be located close to the southern edge of the ancient woodland areas. Recent surveys have confirmed the ancient character of these woodland habitats. SC8A also passes upstream of open sections of Newton Brook, and has reduced potential for impacts on this watercourse relative to route options passing through Newton Coppice / Hayleasow Wood. Consultation with Natural England has indicated that they woould not prefer a route option that passes through ancient woodland areas. The National Planning Policy Framework identifies ancient woodland as an irreplaceable habitat, and it is unlikely to be possible to fully mitigate a Route Corridor Option that passes through the ancient woodland. SC8A is further away from ponds known to support great crested newts (GCN) than options SC2/2A. Impacts on GCNs, a European Protected species, are therefore likely to be reduced relative to the more southern options SC2/2A. All of the route options pass through extents of improved grassland and arable farmland, with fields seperated by a network of hedgerows in varying condition. In terms of these habitats there is little to separate the different route corridor options or the species they are likely to support (other than GCN, see above). The impact of each route option on significant off-site receptors (e.g. River Wye SAC and bat roosts) are also likely to be broadly similar. SC8A would pass under the railway line, based on the current understanding of scheme-wide bat activity and design parameters, SC8A would retain the rail corridor as a bridge, but with a 'drop-off' either side down to the road which is likely to lead to increased bat mortality / habitat fragmentation compared with SC8.	Moderate adverse
	Water Environment	Assuming surface water management design and construction measures are implemented, the proposed alignment is likely to have low significance impacts on transport and dilution of waste products and biodiversity in Withy Brook and Newton Brook.	Slight Adverse
Social	Commuting and Other users	Reduced congestion along the A465 Belmont Road due to diversion of traffic onto the Southern Link therefore journey time savings for existing users of the A465. Longer journeys for those who divert to the Southern Link. Increased traffic along the A49 but level of delay at the A49/A465 junction proposed to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Reliability impact on Commuting and Other users	Reduced congestion along the A465 provide greater journey time reliability for users of the A465. Journey times along the A49 are expected to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Physical activity	Walking and cycling trips discouraged by severance of PROWs GF3 and HA7. Loss in rural amenity for recreational pedestrians using existing PROWs due to introduction of increased traffic noise and proximity to traffic.	Moderate Adverse --
	Journey quality	Road users benefiting from improved views and reduced traveller stress resulting from more open route with rural landscape vistas, greater route certainty, and reduced fear of accidents (compared to existing urban routes through Hereford town centre). New road with associated earthworks will degrade views slightly from A49 and Haywood Lane. New A465 roundabout will add stress to travellers on this roadConnecting of B4349 to SC8A at A465 will reduce driver stress compared to existing junction arrangement.	Moderate Beneficial ++
	Accidents	Southern Link Road designed to latest design standards. Reduction in traffic along A465 will reduction accident rate along this section of road although the resultant increase in traffic along the A49 may cause the accident rate to increase on this section of road.	Neutral
	Security	road users slightly less vulnerable to crime as this option reduces need to stop vehicles or reduce speeds compared to existing routes. No impact on security of PT passengers	Slight Beneficial +
	Access to services	Scheme provides a new potential bus route (between the A465 and A49) but not one that better serves key local destinations in Hereford Town Centre	Neutral
	Affordability	Rerouting will impact on journey speeds and congestion on both A465 and A49 (north of the scheme), impacting positively on personal affordability of car users.	Slight Beneficial +
	Severance	Scheme option increases severance significantly for very low number hamlets but reduces severance slightly (by reducing traffic flows) through Belmont and Redhill residential areas in vicinity of A49 and A465	Slight Beneficial +
	Option and non-use values	No impacts identified	Neutral
Public Account	Cost to Broad Transport Budget	Indicative cost of SC8A proposal is circa £38.6M	
	Indirect Tax Revenues	N/A	

Other Issues	Technical and operational feasibility	Earthworks – Vertical alignment of the option is similar at both the western and eastern ends of the route. The difference lies within the middle section either side of the railway line reflecting whether the route goes over or under it. To cross over the railway route Option SC8A requires the construction of a cutting up to 11m deep. This could give rise to groundwater and road drainage problems. The extensive cutting on Option SC8A is likely to generate a significant amount of surplus spoil. Design Standards – 60mph design speed and Departures from Standard unlikely. Although a much straighter route on plan, an opportunity for overtaking is unlikely due to topography (vertical curvature). Angled crossing of existing railway will increase cost but the crossing of Haywood Lane is relatively straight. Side access issues yet to be looked at as well as any drainage runoff storage provision. Physical features – the route skirts around the south-west corner of Newton Coppice (designated as Ancient Woodland), through the northern section of Grafton Wood (not designated), to the south of the wooded area between Grafton Lane and Withy Brook and to the south of the barn yard situated south-west of the Merryhill Lane junction with Haywood Lane. The route also passes to the south of Grafton Enclosure and Beech Grove (refer to commentary on Option SC9). Utilities – the route clashes with existing overhead power lines located at the eastern and western ends of the scheme (including a 66kV) but generally avoid them within the central area. The route cross Grafton Lane at grade (or thereabouts) where BT and water services are present. There is conflict with a concentration of overhead and buried services in/around Haywood Lane including BT, a water main and a sewer. Rail structure – route option SC8A offers increased risk for Network Rail's operations.

Appraisal Summary Table Date Produced: 17/10/2014

Name of scheme:	South Wye Transport Package - Option SC9
Description of scheme:	This route is based on the alignment of Options SC8/SC8A except that it has a shorter, more direct crossing over the railway. It is the only option under consideration that crosses over Haywood Lane and through Beech Grove. Consequently the alignment is more twisted than Options SC8 and SC8A.

Impacts		Summary of key impacts	Assessment Qualitative
Economy	Business users & transport providers	Reduced congestion along the A465 Belmont Road due to diversion of traffic onto the Southern Link therefore journey time savings for existing users of the A465. Longer journeys for those business users who divert to the Southern Link. Increased traffic along the A49 but level of delay at the A49/A465 junction proposed to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Reliability impact on Business users	Reduced congestion along the A465 provide greater journey time reliability for users of the A465. Journey times along the A49 are expected to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Regeneration	Southern Link Road provides direct connection to the Hereford Enterprise Zone (HEZ) from the A465. Improves the supply of employment land by allowing the planning conditions that presently limit development at the HEZ to be extinguished, therefore removing substantial barriers to inward investment relating to both residential and employment development. Regeneration benefits within Belmont enhanced due to greater accessibility to employment opportunities within the HEZ.	Significant Beneficial +++
	Wider Impacts	Potential for greater agglomeration benefits across Hereford and as a result of greater connections to the HEZ. Scheme will support the adopted economic growth of the Marches Sub-region.	Moderate Beneficial ++
Environmental	Noise	Signficant increase in road traffic noise likely at properties close to new road. Possible decreases in noise at properties adjacent to A465 and A49 (DEFRA Noise Action Planning Important Area on A465 between Tesco and Asda Roundabouts)	Major Adverse
	Air Quality	Air quality along both Belmont Road and Ross Road is relatively poor but, at property facades, is currently below the air quality objective. Traffic is expected to decrease on Belmont Road and increase on Ross Road. This will result in an improvement of air quality on Belmont Road and a deterioration on Ross Road. The deterioration in air quality could potentially lead to exceedence of the air quality objective. The option is not expected to affect the Hereford AQMA itself, since traffic flows across the river are not expected to be affected although some changes at the A465/A49 junction may result in highly localised air quality impacts. Regional air quality is likely to show a slight adverse impact for all options, due to the greater distance travelled by vehicles diverting onto the bypass and the greater speed of travel. Any impacts on congestion relief on roads into Hereford cannot be assessed at present	Moderate Adverse - (local), Slight Adverse (regional)
	Greenhouse gases	The option will have a slight adverse impact on greenhouse gas emissions due to the greater distance travelled by vehicles diverting onto the Southern Link Road and the greater speed of travel	Slight Adverse
	Landscape/Townscape	Route passes through fertile, undulating farmland with extensive arable fields, with low hedges and occasional woodland. Although most of the route is within the Herefordshire Lowlands character area, more typical of South Herefordshire. In terms of woodland, it cuts through the centre of Grafton Wood, which is not designated and has a low density of trees. This route will be visible from Haywood Lodge Farm and associated properties, however it curves away in a NW direction after crossing the railway line. As it takes a NW direction it passes directly through a local landscape feature called Beech Grove. Similar to other more southerly routes, it avoids Newton Brook. The landscape in this area would be classed as being of Medium sensitivity (good quality example of Herefordshire rural landscape). The magnitude of effect on the landscape resource would be Major (is at considerable variance with the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape, is visually intrusive and will adversely impact on the landscape).	Major Adverse
	Historic Environment	Direct impact (moderate) on the significance of the setting of Grade II listed Merryhill Stables, Grade II* and three Grade II listed buildings at Haywood Lodge. Direct impact (minor) on the significance of the setting of the Grade II Clehonger Court buildings and a Grade II listed milestone. Direct physical impact (ranging from slight to substantial) on potential buried archaeological remains in five fields including the almost complete destruction of a feature of unknown date and function.	Moderate Adverse

	Biodiversity	SC9 passes through the centre of Grafton Wood, which supports a mature tree canopy with some indicators of ancient woodland present. SC9 is therefore likely to lead to the greatest extent of habitat loss / disturbance within Grafton Wood relative to other route options, with a level of immpactt comparable to SC2/2A and SC8/8A. SC9 passes south of Newton Coppice / Hayleasow Wood which includes semi-natural ancient woodland and plantation on ancient woodland, although it will be located close to the southern edge of the ancient woodland areas. Recent surveys have confirmed the ancient character of these woodland habitats. SC9 also passes upstream of currently open sections of Newton Brook, and hence has reduced potential for impacts on this watercourse relative to route options passing through Newton Coppice / Hayleasow Wood. Consultation with Natural England has detemrined that they do not prefer route options that passes through the ancient woodland areas. The National Planning Policy Framework identifies ancient woodland as an irreplaceable habitat, and it is unlikely to be possible to fully mitigate a route option that passes through the ancient woodland. SC9 is further away from ponds known to support great crested newts (GCNs) than SC2/2A. Impacts on GCNs, a European Protected species, are therefore likely to be reduced relative to the more southern options such as SC2/2A. All route options pass through areas of improved grassland and arable farmland, with fields seperated by a network of hedgerows in varying condition. There is little to separate the impacts of the different route options on these habitats or the species they are likely to support (other than GCN, see above). The impacts of each route option on significant off-site receptors (e.g. River Wye SAC and bat roosts) is also likely to be broadly similar. SC9 would pass over Haywood Lane via an overbridge, the only route option which does so. Haywood Lane could therefore provide an underpass for use by bats (providing this can be unlit), which may provide a more easily effective mitigation solution than having the proposed road passing under Haywood Lane. However, SC9 would directly affect several mature / veteran trees within hedgerows to the east of the railway (some of which have high bat roosting potential), which would not be affected by other route options.	Moderate Adverse
	Water Environment	Assuming surface water management design and construction measures are implemented, the proposed alignment is likely to have low significance impacts on transport and dilution of waste products and biodiversity in Withy Brook and Newton Brook.	Slight Adverse
Social	Commuting and Other users	Reduced congestion along the A465 Belmont Road due to diversion of traffic onto the Southern Link therefore journey time savings for existing users of the A465. Longer journeys for those who divert to the Southern Link. Increased traffic along the A49 but level of delay at the A49/A465 junction proposed to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Reliability impact on Commuting and Other users	Reduced congestion along the A465 provide greater journey time reliability for users of the A465. Journey times along the A49 are expected to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Physical activity	Walking and cycling trips discouraged by severance of PROWs GF3 and HA7. Loss in rural amenity for recreational pedestrians using existing PROWs due to introduction of increased traffic noise and proximity to traffic.	Moderate Adverse --
	Journey quality	Road users benefiting from improved views and reduced traveller stress resulting from more open route with rural landscape vistas, greater route certainty, and reduced fear of accidents (compared to existing urban routes through Hereford town centre). New road with associated earthworks will degrade views slightly from A49 and Haywood Lane. New A465 roundabout will add stress to travellers on this roadConnecting of B4349 to SC9 at A465 will reduce driver stress compared to existing junction arrangement.	Moderate Beneficial ++
	Accidents	Southern Link Road designed to latest design standards. Reduction in traffic along A465 will reduction accident rate along this section of road although the resultant increase in traffic along the A49 may cause the accident rate to increase on this section of road.	Neutral
	Security	road users slightly less vulnerable to crime as this option reduces need to stop vehicles or reduce speeds compared to existing routes. No impact on security of PT passengers	Slight Beneficial +
	Access to services	Scheme provides a new potential bus route (between the A465 and A49) but not one that better serves key local destinations in Hereford Town Centre	Neutral
	Affordability	Rerouting will impact on journey speeds and congestion on both A465 and A49 (north of the scheme), impacting positively on personal affordability of car users.	Slight Beneficial +
	Severance	Scheme option increases severance significantly for very low number hamlets but reduces severance slightly (by reducing traffic flows) through Belmont and Redhill residential areas in vicinity of A49 and A465	Slight Beneficial +
	Option and non-use values	No impacts identified	Neutral
Public Account	Cost to Broad Transport Budget	Indicative cost of SC9 proposal is circa £25.3M	
	Indirect Tax Revenues	N/A	

Other Issues	Technical and operational feasibility	Earthworks – Vertical alignment on the east side follows the rolling profile of the countryside but west of Grafton Lane it starts climbing on an 8.5m high embankment in order to pass over the railway line. The route cuts through Beech Grove in a cutting up to 4m deep before passing over Haywood Lane. It then continues on an 8m high embankment before eventually dipping down to the existing topography at the western end of the scheme. With very little cut the scheme would require significant importation of fill in order to create the two large embankments either side of Beech Grove. Furthermore, the need to cross over Haywood Lane is likely to cause difficulty in tying the lane back to existing levels either side of it, particularly to the north at its junction with Merryhill Lane. Design Standards – 60mph design speed and Departures from Standard unlikely. Opportunity for overtaking unlikely. Straighter crossing of railway will reduce the cost of the structure. Side access issues yet to be looked at as well as any drainage runoff storage provision. Physical features – being of a twisted nature the route manages to avoid many physical constraints except the northern section of Grafton Wood (not designated). It passes close to the wooded area between Grafton Lane and Withy Brook and the barn yard situated south-west of the Merryhill Lane junction with Haywood Lane. The route crosses the railway at a near perpendicular angle which should be beneficial in engineering and cost terms. The unique distinction between this route and others under consideration is that it goes through the middle of Beech Grove. To date it has not been confirmed whether the feature has archaeological relevance/significance or otherwise. Beech Grove does not appear as a specific record on the Herefordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) and is not listed as a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Grafton Enclosure (off Grafton Lane) on the other hand does appear on the HER and is believed to be a lost early medieval castle site. However, it is not affected by the alignment of Option SC9, the route passing well to the south of it. Utilities – the route clashes with existing overhead power lines located at the eastern and western ends of the scheme (including a 66kV) but generally avoids them within the central area. The route crosses Grafton Lane at grade (or thereabouts) where BT and water services are present. There is conflict with a concentration of overhead and buried services in/around Haywood Lane including BT, a water main and a sewer. Rail structure - route crosses over the existing railway line so reduced risk for Network Rail's operations.

Appendix B

Appraisal Summary Tables – SLR Options Including Sustainable Transport Package

Appraisal Summary Table Date Produced: 17/04/2014

Name of scheme:	South Wye Transport Package - **Option SC2 + Active Travel Improvements**
Description of scheme:	Option SC2 passes through the centre of Grafton Wood and continues westwards over Grafton Lane and Withy Brook. Thereafter, it straightens up immediately heading in a north-west direction to the A465. SC2 involves the construction of a new roundabout on the A465/B4349 Clehonger Road Junction.

	Impacts	Summary of Key Impacts	Qualitative Assessment
Economy	Business users & transport providers	Reduced congestion along the A465 Belmont Road due to diversion of traffic onto the Southern Link Road and modal shift therefore journey time savings for existing users of the A465. Longer journeys for those business users who divert to the Southern Link. Increased traffic along the A49 but level of delay at the A49/A465 junction proposed to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Reliability impact on Business users	Reduced congestion along the A465 provides greater journey time reliability for users of the A465. Journey times along the A49 are expected to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Regeneration	Southern Link Road provides direct connection to the Hereford Enterprise Zone (HEZ) from the A465. Improves the supply of employment land by allowing the planning conditions that presently limit development at the HEZ to be extinguished, therefore removing substantial barriers to inward investment relating to both residential and employment development. Regeneration benefits within Belmont enhanced due to greater accessibility to employment opportunities within the HEZ.	Major Beneficial +++
	Wider Impacts	Potential for greater agglomeration benefits across Hereford as a result of greater connections to the HEZ. Scheme will support the adopted economic growth of the Marches Sub-region.	Moderate Beneficial ++
Environmental	Noise	Significant increase in road traffic noise likely at properties close to the new road. Possible decreases in noise at properties adjacent to A465 and A49 (DEFRA Noise Action Planning Important Area on A465 between Tesco and Asda Roundabouts).	Major Adverse - - -
	Air Quality	Air quality along both Belmont Road and Ross Road is relatively poor but, at property facades, is currently just below the air quality objective. Traffic is expected to decrease on Belmont Road and increase on Ross Road. This will result in an improvement of air quality on Belmont Road and a deterioration on Ross Road. The deterioration in air quality could potentially lead to exceedance of the air quality objective. The option is not expected to affect the Hereford AQMA itself, since traffic flows across the river are not expected to be affected, although some changes at the A465/A49 junction may result in highly localised air quality impacts. Regional air quality is likely to show a slight adverse impact for all options, due to the greater distance travelled by vehicles diverting onto the Southern Link Road and the greater speed of travel. Any impacts on congestion relief on roads into Hereford cannot be assessed at present.	Moderate Adverse - - (local) Slight Adverse - (regional)
	Greenhouse gases	The option will have a slight adverse impact on greenhouse gas emissions due to the greater distance travelled by vehicles diverting onto the Southern Link Road and the greater speed of travel.	Slight Adverse -
	Landscape/Townscape	Route passes through fertile, undulating farmland with extensive arable fields, with low hedges and occasional woodland. Although most of the route is within the Herefordshire Lowlands character area, more typical of South Herefordshire. In terms of woodland, it cuts through the centre of Grafton Wood (not designated and low density of trees) but then is free of woodland for its entire length. This route brings the road closest to Haywood Lodge Farm and associated properties with a resulting increase in adverse visual effects. It avoids Newton Brook. A new roundabout on A465 and a short section of road connecting to B4349, introduces further built infrastructure. The landscape in this area would be classed as being of Medium sensitivity (good quality example of Herefordshire rural landscape). The magnitude of effect on the landscape resource is the least of all the routes, however with the additional sections of road, roundabout and proximity to residential properties, the magnitude is Moderate (loss of resource, but not affecting the integrity/ key characteristics of the rural scene). Kerb build outs, crossings and improved bus facilities on Belmont Road and Holme Lacy Road will lead to an improvement in the urban environment.	Moderate Adverse - -
	Historic Environment	Direct impact (minor) on the significance of the setting of a Grade II* and three Grade II listed buildings at Haywood Lodge; direct impact (minor) on the significance of the setting of the Grade II Clehonger Court buildings; direct impact (minor) on the significance of the setting of a Grade II listed milestone; direct physical impact (slight to moderate) on potential buried archaeological remains in four fields.	Slight - to Moderate Adverse -

	Biodiversity	Route Option SC2 passes through the centre of Grafton Wood, which supports a mature tree canopy. This Option is therefore likely to lead to the greatest extent of habitat loss/disturbance within Grafton Wood relative to other Route Corridor Options under consideration. All of the Route Corridor Options pass through extents of improved grassland and arable farmland, with fields separated by a network of hedgerows in varying condition. In terms of these habitats there is little to separate the different route corridor options or the species they are likely to support. The impacts of each Route Corridor Option on significant off-site receptors (for example receptors such as The River Wye SAC and bat roosts) are also likely to be broadly similar. East and west of the railway line, Route Corridor SC2 passes in close proximity (within 250 m) of a series of ponds. Initial surveys have confirmed the presence of great crested newts (a species receiving full protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, as amended) in several of these ponds. Route corridor SC2 could destroy terrestrial habitat and fragment habitats either side of the proposed road used by great crested newts. With suitable scheme design and targeted mitigation it is likely these impacts could be mitigated, and the project may be able to deliver enhancements via the creation of new/enhanced aquatic and terrestrial habitat. Route corridor option SC2 passes south of Newton Coppice/Hayleasow Wood which includes semi-natural ancient woodland and plantation on ancient woodland. Surveys conducted by Amey (Environmental Assessment Report, 2013) and Parsons Brinckerhoff have confirmed the ancient character of these woodland habitats. SC2 also passes upstream of currently open sections of Newton Brook, and hence has reduced potential for impacts on this watercourse upstream of Newton Coppice/Hayleasow Wood.	Moderate Adverse - -
	Water Environment	Assuming surface water management design and construction measures are implemented, the proposed alignment is likely to have low significance impacts on transport and dilution of waste products and biodiversity in Withy Brook and Newton Brook.	Slight Adverse -
Social	Commuting and Other users	Reduced congestion along the A465 Belmont Road due to diversion of traffic onto the Southern Link Road and modal shift therefore journey time savings for existing users of the A465. Longer journeys for those who divert to the Southern Link Road. Increased traffic along the A49 but level of delay at the A49/A465 junction proposed to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Reliability impact on Commuting and Other users	Reduced congestion along the A465 provides greater journey time reliability for users of the A465. Journey times along the A49 are expected to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Physical activity	Walking and cycling trips discouraged by severance of PROWs GF3 and HA7. Loss in rural amenity for recreational pedestrians using existing PROWs due to introduction of increased traffic noise and proximity to traffic.	Moderate Adverse - -
	Journey quality	Road users benefiting from improved views and reduced traveller stress resulting from more open route with rural landscape vistas, greater route certainty, and reduced fear of accidents. New road with associated earthworks will degrade views slightly from A49 and Haywood Lane. New A465 roundabout will add stress to travellers on this road. Connection of B4349 to SC2 at A465 will reduce driver stress compared to existing junction arrangement.	Moderate Beneficial ++
	Accidents	Southern Link Road designed to latest design standards. Reduction in traffic along A465 will reduce accident rate along this section of road, although the resultant increase in traffic along the A49 may cause the accident rate to increase on this section of road. Improved crossing facilities for vulnerable road users, improved cycle facilities, and reduction in dispersed accidents through 20mph limits. Increases in general cycle use have also been linked to overall increases in cycle safety.	Moderate Beneficial ++
	Security	Road users slightly less vulnerable to crime as this option reduces need to stop vehicles or reduce speeds compared to existing routes. No impact on security of PT passengers. Increased walking and cycling in Belmont and along Holme Lacy Road will increase the number of people on-street, increasing security. CSOs will also be available to help improve perceived and actual security at problem locations.	Moderate Beneficial ++
	Access to services	Scheme provides improved bus services on the A465, decreasing bus journey times on this route by up to 20 minutes. Improved walking and cycling facilities will also improve access to services.	Moderate Beneficial ++
	Affordability	Rerouting will impact on journey speeds and congestion on both A465 and A49 (north of the scheme), impacting positively on personal affordability of car users.	Slight Beneficial +

	Severance	Scheme option increases severance significantly for very low number hamlets but reduces severance (by reducing traffic flows) through Belmont and Redhill residential areas in vicinity of A49 and A465.	Slight Beneficial +
	Option and non-use values	No impacts identified.	Neutral
Public Account	Cost to Broad Transport Budget	Indicative cost of SC2 proposal is circa £16.5-£25M and is expected to make a return on its investment.	Moderate Beneficial ++
	Indirect Tax Revenues	N/A	N/A
Other Issues	Technical and operational feasibility	Earthworks – with some adjustment to the horizontal and vertical alignments this is the most likely option to achieve as near as possible a cut/fill balance. Vertical alignment in the main follows the rolling profile of the countryside. Design Standards – 60mph design speed and Departures from Standard unlikely. Opportunity for overtaking unlikely due to topography (vertical curvature). Straighter crossing of existing country lanes and railway. Side access issues yet to be looked at as well as any drainage runoff storage provision. Physical features – route goes through Grafton Wood (not designated). Utilities – route crosses existing overhead power lines a number of times (including a 66kV) but is located to the south of the main corridor of electricity cables running east to west. Route crosses Grafton Lane almost at grade where there is a concentration of services running north to south including HP gas, a trunk water main and a sewer. Rail structure – route crosses over the existing railway line so reduced risk for Network Rail's operations.	

Appraisal Summary Table Date Produced: 17/04/2014

Name of scheme:	South Wye Transport Package - **Option SC2A + Active Travel Improvements**
Description of scheme:	The SC2A option is identical to SC2, except that the new road section will pass under the railway line as opposed to passing over the top of it.

Impacts		Summary of Key Impacts	Qualitative Assessment
Economy	Business users & transport providers	Reduced congestion along the A465 Belmont Road due to diversion of traffic onto the Southern Link Road and modal shift therefore journey time savings for existing users of the A465. Longer journeys for those business users who divert to the Southern Link. Increased traffic along the A49 but level of delay at the A49/A465 junction proposed to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Reliability impact on Business users	Reduced congestion along the A465 provides greater journey time reliability for users of the A465. Journey times along the A49 are expected to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Regeneration	Southern Link Road provides direct connection to the Hereford Enterprise Zone (HEZ) from the A465. Improves the supply of employment land by allowing the planning conditions that presently limit development at the HEZ to be extinguished, therefore removing substantial barriers to inward investment relating to both residential and employment development. Regeneration benefits within Belmont enhanced due to greater accessibility to employment opportunities within the HEZ.	Major Beneficial +++
	Wider Impacts	Potential for greater agglomeration benefits across Hereford and as a result of greater connections to the HEZ. Scheme will support the adopted economic growth of the Marches Sub-region.	Moderate Beneficial ++
Environmental	Noise	Significant increase in road traffic noise likely at properties close to the new road. Possible decreases in noise at properties adjacent to A465 and A49 (DEFRA Noise Action Planning Important Area on A465 between Tesco and Asda Roundabouts).	Major Adverse ---
	Air Quality	Air quality along both Belmont Road and Ross Road is relatively poor but, at property facades, is currently just below the air quality objective. Traffic is expected to decrease on Belmont Road and increase on Ross Road. This will result in an improvement of air quality on Belmont Road and a deterioration on Ross Road. The deterioration in air quality could potentially lead to exceedance of the air quality objective. The option is not expected to affect the Hereford AQMA itself, since traffic flows across the river are not expected to be affected, although some changes at the A465/A49 junction may result in highly localised air quality impacts. Regional air quality is likely to show a slight adverse impact for all options, due to the greater distance travelled by vehicles diverting onto the Southern Link Road and the greater speed of travel. Any impacts on congestion relief on roads into Hereford cannot be assessed at present.	Moderate Adverse -- (local) Slight Adverse - (regional)
	Greenhouse gases	The option will have a slight adverse impact on greenhouse gas emissions due to the greater distance travelled by vehicles diverting onto the Southern Link Road and the greater speed of travel.	Slight Adverse -
	Landscape/Townscape	Route passes through fertile, undulating farmland with extensive arable fields, with low hedges and occasional woodland. Although most of the route is within the Herefordshire Lowlands character area, more typical of South Herefordshire. In terms of woodland, it cuts through the centre of Grafton Wood (not designated and low density of trees) but then is free of woodland for its entire length. This route brings the road closest to Haywood Lodge Farm and associated properties with a resulting increase in adverse visual effects. It avoids Newton Brook. A new roundabout on A465 and a short section of road connecting to B4349, introduces further built infrastructure. The landscape in this area would be classed as being of Medium sensitivity (good quality example of Herefordshire rural landscape). The magnitude of effect on the landscape resource is the least of all the routes, however with the additional sections of road, roundabout and proximity to residential properties, the magnitude is Moderate (loss of resource, but not affecting the integrity/ key characteristics of the rural scene). Kerb build outs, crossings and improved bus facilities on Belmont Road and Holme Lacy Road will lead to an improvement in the urban environment.	Moderate Adverse --
	Historic Environment	Direct impact (minor) on the significance of the setting of a Grade II* and three Grade II listed buildings at Haywood Lodge; direct impact (minor) on the significance of the setting of the Grade II Clehonger Court buildings; direct impact (minor) on the significance of the setting of a Grade II listed milestone; direct physical impact (slight to moderate) on potential buried archaeological remains in four fields.	Slight - to Moderate Adverse --

	Biodiversity	Route Option SC2A passes through the centre of Grafton Wood, which supports a mature tree canopy. This Option is therefore likely to lead to the greatest extent of habitat loss/disturbance within Grafton Wood relative to other Route Corridor Options under consideration. All of the Route Corridor Options pass through extents of improved grassland and arable farmland, with fields separated by a network of hedgerows in varying condition. In terms of these habitats there is little to separate the different route corridor options or the species they are likely to support. The impacts of each Route Corridor Option on significant off-site receptors (for example receptors such as The River Wye SAC and bat roosts) are also likely to be broadly similar. East and west of the railway line, Route Corridor SC2A passes in close proximity (within 250 m) of a series of ponds. Initial surveys have confirmed the presence of great crested newts (a species receiving full protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, as amended) in several of these ponds. Route corridor SC2A could destroy terrestrial habitat and fragment habitats either side of the proposed road used by great crested newts. With suitable scheme design and targeted mitigation it is likely these impacts could be mitigated, and the project may be able to deliver enhancements via the creation of new/enhanced aquatic and terrestrial habitat. Route corridor option SC2A passes south of Newton Coppice/Hayleasow Wood which includes semi-natural ancient woodland and plantation on ancient woodland. Surveys conducted by Amey (Environmental Assessment Report, 2013) and Parsons Brinckerhoff have confirmed the ancient character of these woodland habitats. SC2A also passes upstream of currently open sections of Newton Brook, and hence has reduced potential for impacts on this watercourse upstream of Newton Coppice/Hayleasow Wood. The route passes under the railway, and would therefore allow greater retention/enhancement of the habitat corridor along the railway line than the options involving overbridges.	Moderate adverse - -
	Water Environment	Assuming surface water management design and construction measures are implemented, the proposed alignment is likely to have low significance impacts on transport and dilution of waste products and biodiversity in Withy Brook and Newton Brook.	Slight Adverse -
Social	Commuting and Other users	Reduced congestion along the A465 Belmont Road due to diversion of traffic onto the Southern Link Road and modal shift therefore journey time savings for existing users of the A465. Longer journeys for those who divert to the Southern Link Road. Increased traffic along the A49 but level of delay at the A49/A465 junction proposed to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Reliability impact on Commuting and Other users	Reduced congestion along the A465 provides greater journey time reliability for users of the A465. Journey times along the A49 are expected to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Physical activity	Walking and cycling trips discouraged by severance of PROWs GF3 and HA7. Loss in rural amenity for recreational pedestrians using existing PROWs due to introduction of increased traffic noise and proximity to traffic.	Moderate Adverse --
	Journey quality	Road users benefiting from improved views and reduced traveller stress resulting from more open route with rural landscape vistas, greater route certainty, and reduced fear of accidents. New road with associated earthworks will degrade views slightly from A49 and Haywood Lane. New A465 roundabout will add stress to travellers on this road. Connection of B4349 to SC2A at A465 will reduce driver stress compared to existing junction arrangement.	Moderate Beneficial ++
	Accidents	Southern Link Road designed to latest design standards. Reduction in traffic along A465 will reduce accident rate along this section of road, although the resultant increase in traffic along the A49 may cause the accident rate to increase on this section of road. Improved crossing facilities for vulnerable road users, improved cycle facilities, and reduction in dispersed accidents through 20mph limits. Increases in general cycle use have also been linked to overall increases in cycle safety.	Moderate Beneficial ++
	Security	Road users slightly less vulnerable to crime as this option reduces need to stop vehicles or reduce speeds compared to existing routes. No impact on security of PT passengers. Increased walking and cycling in Belmont and along Holme Lacy Road will increase the number of people on-street, increasing security. CSOs will also be available to help improve perceived and actual security at problem locations.	Moderate Beneficial ++
	Access to services	Scheme provides improved bus services on the A465, decreasing bus journey times on this route by up to 20 minutes. Improved walking and cycling facilities will also improve access to services.	Moderate Beneficial ++
	Affordability	Rerouting will impact on journey speeds and congestion on both A465 and A49 (north of the scheme), impacting positively on personal affordability of car users.	Slight Beneficial +

	Severance	Scheme option increases severance significantly for very low number hamlets but reduces severance (by reducing traffic flows) through Belmont and Redhill residential areas in vicinity of A49 and A465.	Slight Beneficial +
	Option and non-use values	No impacts identified.	Neutral
Public Accounts	Cost to Broad Transport Budget	Indicative cost of SC2A proposal is circa £19.5-£29M and is expected to make a return on its investment.	Slight Beneficial +
	Indirect Tax Revenues	N/A	N/A
Other Issues	Technical and operational feasibility	Earthworks – Vertical alignment on the east side follows the rolling profile of the countryside but is forced deep in cutting to cross under the railway and Haywood Lane. This could give rise to groundwater and road drainage problems. Large amount of excess spoil generated. Design Standards – 60mph design speed and Departures from Standard unlikely. Opportunity for overtaking unlikely due to topography (vertical curvature). Straighter crossing of existing country lanes and railway. Side access issues yet to be looked at as well as any drainage runoff storage provision. Physical features – route goes through Grafton Wood (not designated). Utilities – route crosses existing overhead power lines a number of times (including a 66kV) but is located to the south of the main corridor of electricity cables running east to west. Route crosses Grafton Lane almost at grade where there is a concentration of services running north to south including HP gas, a trunk water main and a sewer. Rail structure - route crosses underneath the existing railway line so increased risk for Network Rail's operations.	

Appraisal Summary Table Date Produced: 17/04/2014

Name of scheme:	South Wye Transport Package - **Option SC5 + Active Travel Improvements**
Description of scheme:	Route Option SC5 passes through the northern part of Grafton Wood and in a north-westerly direction, crosses the densely wooded area between Grafton Lane and Withy Brook and a site of archaeological importance before turning west to cross underneath the railway line. The route continues through Merry Hill and under Haywood Lane towards the A465.

	Impacts	Summary of Key Impacts	Qualitative Assessment
Economy	Business users & transport providers	Reduced congestion along the A465 Belmont Road due to diversion of traffic onto the Southern Link Road and modal shift therefore journey time savings for existing users of the A465. Longer journeys for those business users who divert to the Southern Link Road. Increased traffic along the A49 but level of delay at the A49/A465 junction proposed to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Reliability impact on Business users	Reduced congestion along the A465 provides greater journey time reliability for users of the A465. Journey times along the A49 are expected to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Regeneration	Southern Link Road provides direct connection to the Hereford Enterprise Zone (HEZ) from the A465. Improves the supply of employment land by allowing the planning conditions that presently limit development at the HEZ to be extinguished, therefore removing substantial barriers to inward investment relating to both residential and employment development. Regeneration benefits within Belmont enhanced due to greater accessibility to employment opportunities within the HEZ.	Major Beneficial +++
	Wider Impacts	Potential for greater agglomeration benefits across Hereford and as a result of greater connections to the HEZ. Scheme will support the adopted economic growth of the Marches Sub-region.	Moderate Beneficial ++
Environmental	Noise	Significant increase in road traffic noise likely at properties close to the new road. Possible decreases in noise at properties adjacent to A465 and A49 (DEFRA Noise Action Planning Important Area on A465 between Tesco and Asda Roundabouts).	Major Adverse ---
	Air Quality	Air quality along both Belmont Road and Ross Road is relatively poor but, at property facades, is currently just below the air quality objective. Traffic is expected to decrease on Belmont Road and increase on Ross Road. This will result in an improvement of air quality on Belmont Road and a deterioration on Ross Road. The deterioration in air quality could potentially lead to exceedance of the air quality objective. The option is not expected to affect the Hereford AQMA itself, since traffic flows across the river are not expected to be affected although some changes at the A465/A49 junction may result in highly localised air quality impacts. Regional air quality is likely to show a slight adverse impact for all options, due to the greater distance travelled by vehicles diverting onto the Southern Link Road and the greater speed of travel. Any impacts on congestion relief on roads into Hereford cannot be assessed at present.	Moderate Adverse - - (local) Slight Adverse - (regional)
	Greenhouse gases	The option will have a slight adverse impact on greenhouse gas emissions due to the greater distance travelled by vehicles diverting onto the Southern Link Road and the greater speed of travel.	Slight Adverse -
	Landscape/Townscape	Route passes through fertile, undulating farmland with extensive arable fields, with low hedges and occasional woodland. Although most of the route is within the Herefordshire Lowlands character area, more typical of South Herefordshire. In terms of woodland, it cuts through the centre of Grafton Wood (not designated and low density of trees) and a dense copse near Withy Brook. It runs close to residential properties along Grafton Lane and involves the loss of a large commercial premises accessed from Haywood Lane. It avoids Newton Brook and Hayleasow Wood. A new roundabout on A465 and a separate short section of road connecting to B4349, introduces further built infrastructure. The landscape in this area would be classed as being of Medium sensitivity (good quality example of Herefordshire rural landscape). The magnitude of effect on the landscape resource is influenced by the loss of woodland, the route going through a large Site of Archaeological Importance, the proximity of residential properties, the loss of commercial premises, a new roundabout and additional sections of road. Therefore the magnitude of effect on the landscape resource would be Major (loss of resource and severe damage to key characteristics. Kerb build outs, crossings and improved bus facilities on Belmont Road and Holme Lacy Road will lead to an improvement in the urban environment.	Major Adverse ---
	Historic Environment	Direct impact (minor) on the significance of the setting of Grade II listed Merryhill Stables; direct impact (minor) on the significance of the setting of Grade II listed Haywood Lodge; direct physical impact (moderate) on site of medieval fortifications (10467); direct physical impact (minor) on two cropmarks in fields 10 and 34; direct physical impact (slight to moderate) on potential buried archaeological remains in four fields.	Slight - to Moderate -- Adverse

	Biodiversity	Route Corridor Option SC5 passes through Grafton Wood, slightly to the north of the most central alignments. It is therefore likely to lead to similar levels of Habitat Loss as Options SC2/2A, but more than option SC7. Grafton Wood supports a mature tree canopy. All of the Route Corridor Options pass through extents of improved grassland and arable farmland, with fields separated by a network of hedgerows in varying condition. In terms of these habitats and the species they are likely to support there is little to separate the different Route Corridor Options. The impacts of each Route Corridor Option on significant off-site receptors (for example The River Wye SAC, bat roosts etc.) are also likely to be broadly similar. This Route Corridor Option is further away from ponds known to support great crested newts than options SC2. Impacts on great crested newts, a European Protected Species, are therefore likely to be reduced relative to the more southern options. Route Corridor Option SC5 passes south of Newton Coppice/Hayleasow Wood including a buffer zone of approximately 50 - 100 m. Newton coppice/Hayleasow wood supports semi-natural ancient woodland and plantation on ancient woodland. Surveys conducted by Amey (Environmental Assessment Report, 2013) and Parsons Brinckerhoff have confirmed the ancient character of these woodland habitats. Route Corridor Option SC5 also passes upstream of currently open sections of Newton Brook, and hence has reduced potential for impacts on this watercourse relative to Routes passing through/adjacent to the woodland.	Moderate adverse - -
	Water Environment	Assuming surface water management design and construction measures are implemented, the proposed alignment is likely to have low significance impacts on transport and dilution of waste products and biodiversity in Withy Brook and Newton Brook.	Slight Adverse -
Social	Commuting and Other users	Reduced congestion along the A465 Belmont Road due to diversion of traffic onto the Southern Link Road and modal shift therefore journey time savings for existing users of the A465. Longer journeys for those who divert to the Southern Link Road. Increased traffic along the A49 but level of delay at the A49/A465 junction proposed to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Reliability impact on Commuting and Other users	Reduced congestion along the A465 provides greater journey time reliability for users of the A465. Journey times along the A49 are expected to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Physical activity	Walking trips discouraged by severance of PROWs GF3, HA7, CH9 and CH10. Loss in rural amenity for recreational pedestrians on PROWs due to introduction of increased traffic noise and proximity to traffic.	Moderate Adverse -
	Journey quality	Road users benefiting from improved views and reduced traveller stress resulting from more open route with rural landscape vistas, greater route certainty, and reduced fear of accidents. New roundabout will degrade views slightly from A465 New A465 roundabout will add stress to travellers on this road. New link between B4349 and A465, in addition to the new A465 roundabout will increase stress for drivers connecting between the B4349 and SC5.	Slight Beneficial +
	Accidents	Southern Link Road designed to latest design standards. Reduction in traffic along A465 will reduction accident rate along this section of road although the resultant increase in traffic along the A49 may cause the accident rate to increase on this section of road. improved crossing facilities for vulnerable road users, improved cycle facilities, and reduction in dispersed accidents through 20mph limits. Increases in general cycle use have also been linked to overall increases in cycle safety.	Moderate Beneficial ++
	Security	Road users slightly less vulnerable to crime as this option reduces need to stop vehicles or reduce speeds compared to existing routes. No impact on security of PT passengers. Increased walking and cycling in Belmont and along Holme Lacy Road will increase the number of people on-street, increasing security. CSOs will also be available to help improve perceived and actual security at problem locations.	Moderate Beneficial ++
	Access to services	Scheme provides improved bus services on the A465, decreasing bus journey times on this route by up to 20 minutes. Improved walking and cycling facilities will also improve access to services.	Moderate Beneficial ++
	Affordability	Rerouting will impact on journey speeds and congestion on both A465 and A49 (north of the scheme), impacting positively on personal affordability of car users.	Slight Beneficial +
	Severance	Scheme option increases severance significantly for very low number hamlets but reduces severance (by reducing traffic flows) through Belmont and Redhill residential areas in vicinity of A49 and A465.	Slight Beneficial +
	Option and non-use values	No impacts identified	Neutral
Public Accounts	Cost to Broad Transport Budget	Indicative cost of SC5 proposal is circa £24-£35M and is expected to make a slight return on its investment.	Neutral
	Indirect Tax Revenues	N/A	N/A

Other Issues	Technical and operational feasibility	Earthworks – Vertical alignment on the east side follows the rolling profile of the countryside but is forced into cutting after Grafton Lane in order to cross under the railway. 13m deep cutting through Merry Hill in order to cross under Haywood Lane which could give rise to groundwater and road drainage problems. Significant excess spoil generated. Design Standards – 60mph design speed and Departures from Standard unlikely. Opportunity for overtaking unlikely. Angled crossing of existing country lanes and railway will increase cost. Side access issues yet to be looked at as well as any drainage runoff storage provision. Physical features – route goes through Grafton Wood (not designated), a wooded area between Grafton Lane and Withy Brook, a site of archaeological importance and a barn yard situated south-west of the Merryhill Lane junction with Haywood Lane. Utilities – route crosses existing overhead power lines a number of times (including a 66kV) and is located partly within the main corridor of electricity cables running east to west. Route crosses Grafton Lane at grade where there is a concentration of services running north to south including HP gas, a trunk water main and a sewer. Conflict with a concentration of overhead and buried services in/around Haywood Lane including BT, a water main and a sewer. Rail structure - route crosses underneath the existing railway line so increased risk for Network Rail's operations.

Appraisal Summary Table Date Produced: 17/04/2014

Name of scheme:	South Wye Transport Package - **Option SC7 + Active Travel Improvements**
Description of scheme:	Route Option SC7 passes through the northern tip of Grafton Wood but avoids the southern extent of the dense wooded area between Grafton Lane and Withy Brook. It then runs to the south of Merryhill Lane before cutting through Merry Hill and under Haywood Lane. From this location the road heads in a westerly direction to the A465.

	Impacts	Summary of Key Impacts	Qualitative Assessment
Economy	Business users & transport providers	Reduced congestion along the A465 Belmont Road due to diversion of traffic onto the Southern Link Road and modal shift therefore journey time savings for existing users of the A465. Longer journeys for those business users who divert to the Southern Link Road. Increased traffic along the A49 but level of delay at the A49/A465 junction proposed to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Reliability impact on Business users	Reduced congestion along the A465 provides greater journey time reliability for users of the A465. Journey times along the A49 are expected to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Regeneration	Southern Link Road provides direct connection to the Hereford Enterprise Zone (HEZ) from the A465. Improves the supply of employment land by allowing the planning conditions that presently limit development at the HEZ to be extinguished, therefore removing substantial barriers to inward investment relating to both residential and employment development. Regeneration benefits within Belmont enhanced due to greater accessibility to employment opportunities within the HEZ.	Major Beneficial +++
	Wider Impacts	Potential for greater agglomeration benefits across Hereford and as a result of greater connections to the HEZ. Scheme will support the adopted economic growth of the Marches Sub-region.	Moderate Beneficial ++
Environmental	Noise	Significant increase in road traffic noise likely at properties close to the new road. Possible decreases in noise at properties adjacent to A465 and A49 (DEFRA Noise Action Planning Important Area on A465 between Tesco and Asda Roundabouts)	Major Adverse ---
	Air Quality	Air quality along both Belmont Road and Ross Road is relatively poor but, at property facades, is currently just below the air quality objective. Traffic is expected to decrease on Belmont Road and increase on Ross Road. This will result in an improvement of air quality on Belmont Road and a deterioration on Ross Road. The deterioration in air quality could potentially lead to exceedance of the air quality objective. The option is not expected to affect the Hereford AQMA itself, since traffic flows across the river are not expected to be affected, although some changes at the A465/A49 junction may result in highly localised air quality impacts. Regional air quality is likely to show a slight adverse impact for all options, due to the greater distance travelled by vehicles diverting onto the Southern Link Road and the greater speed of travel. Any impacts on congestion relief on roads into Hereford cannot be assessed at present.	Moderate Adverse - (local) Slight Adverse - (regional)
	Greenhouse gases	The option will have a slight adverse impact on greenhouse gas emissions due to the greater distance travelled by vehicles diverting onto the Southern Link Road and the greater speed of travel.	Slight Adverse -
	Landscape/Townscape	Route passes through fertile, undulating farmland with extensive arable fields, with low hedges and occasional woodland. Although most of the route is within the Herefordshire Lowlands character area, more typical of South Herefordshire. In terms of woodland, it cuts through the centre of Grafton Wood (not designated and low density of trees). It runs close to residential properties along Grafton Lane. It avoids Newton Brook and Hayleasow Wood. A new roundabout on A465 and a short section of road connecting to B4349, introduces further built infrastructure. The landscape in this area would be classed as being of Medium sensitivity (good quality example of Herefordshire rural landscape). The magnitude of effect on the landscape resource is influenced by the loss of woodland, the proximity of residential properties, a new roundabout with additional section of road. Therefore, the magnitude is Moderate (loss of resource, but not affecting the integrity/ key characteristics of the rural scene. Kerb build outs, crossings and improved bus facilities on Belmont Road and Holme Lacy Road will lead to an improvement in the urban environment.	Moderate Adverse -
	Historic Environment	Direct impact (minor) on the significance of the setting of Grade II listed Merryhill Stables; direct impact (minor) on the significance of the setting of Grade II listed Haywood Lodge; direct physical impact (minor) on cropmark in field 10; direct physical impact (slight to moderate) on potential buried archaeological remains in five fields.	Slight - to Moderate Adverse --

	Biodiversity	Route Corridor Option SC7 passes through the northern edge of Grafton Wood. Grafton Wood supports a mature tree canopy. SC7 has less impact on Grafton Wood relative to SC2/2A and SC5. All of the Route Corridor Options pass through extents of improved grassland and arable farmland, with fields separated by a network of hedgerows in varying condition. In terms of these habitats and the species they are likely to support there is little to separate the different Route Corridor Options. The impacts of each Corridor on significant off-site receptors (for example The River Wye SAC, bat roosts etc.) are also likely to be broadly similar. This Route Corridor Option is further away from ponds known to support great crested newts than options SC2/2A. Impacts on great crested newts, a European Protected species, are therefore likely to be reduced relative to the more southern options SC2/2A. Route corridor option SC7 passes south of Newton Coppice/Hayleasow Wood which includes semi-natural ancient woodland and plantation on ancient woodland, although it will be located close to the southern edge of the ancient woodland areas. Surveys conducted by Amey (Environmental Assessment Report, 2013) and Parsons Brinckerhoff (unpublished) have confirmed the ancient character of these woodland habitats. Route Corridor Option SC7 also passes upstream of currently open sections of Newton Brook, and hence has reduced potential for impacts on this watercourse relative to options passing through Newton Coppice/Hayleasow Wood. Route Corridor Option SC7 passes under the railway, and would therefore allow greater retention/enhancement of the habitat corridor along the railway line than the options involving overbridges.	Moderate / slight adverse - - / -
	Water Environment	Assuming surface water management design and construction measures are implemented, the proposed alignment is likely to have low significance impacts on transport and dilution of waste products and biodiversity in Withy Brook and Newton Brook.	Slight Adverse -
Social	Commuting and Other users	Reduced congestion along the A465 Belmont Road due to diversion of traffic onto the Southern Link Road and modal shift therefore journey time savings for existing users of the A465. Longer journeys for those who divert to the Southern Link Road. Increased traffic along the A49 but level of delay at the A49/A465 junction proposed to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Reliability impact on Commuting and Other users	Reduced congestion along the A465 provides greater journey time reliability for users of the A465. Journey times along the A49 are expected to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Physical activity	Walking trips discouraged by severance of PROWs GF3, HA14, HAF, CH9 and CH10. Loss in rural amenity for recreational pedestrians on PROWs due to introduction of increased traffic noise and proximity to traffic.	Moderate Adverse -
	Journey quality	Road users benefiting from improved views and reduced traveller stress resulting from more open route with rural landscape vistas, greater route certainty, and reduced fear of accidents. New road with associated earthworks will degrade views from A465, particularly where it is raised to bridge over Hayleasow Wood. New A465 roundabout will add stress to travellers on this road. New link between B4349 and A465, in addition to the new A465 roundabout will increase stress for drivers connecting between the B4349.	Minor Beneficial +
	Accidents	Southern Link Road designed to latest design standards. Reduction in traffic along A465 will reduce accident rate along this section of road although the resultant increase in traffic along the A49 may cause the accident rate to increase on this section of road. Improved crossing facilities for vulnerable road users, improved cycle facilities, and reduction in dispersed accidents through 20mph limits. Increases in general cycle use have also been linked to overall increases in cycle safety.	Moderate Beneficial ++
	Security	Road users slightly less vulnerable to crime as this option reduces need to stop vehicles or reduce speeds compared to existing routes. No impact on security of PT passengers. Increased walking and cycling in Belmont and along Holme Lacy Road will increase the number of people on-street, increasing security. CSOs will also be available to help improve perceived and actual security at problem locations.	Moderate Beneficial ++
	Access to services	Scheme provides improved bus services on the A465, decreasing bus journey times on this route by up to 20 minutes. Improved walking and cycling facilities will also improve access to services.	Moderate Beneficial ++
	Affordability	Rerouting will impact on journey speeds and congestion on both A465 and A49 (north of the scheme), impacting positively on personal affordability of car users.	Slight Beneficial +
	Severance	Scheme option increases severance significantly for very low number hamlets but reduces severance (by reducing traffic flows) through Belmont and Redhill residential areas in vicinity of A49 and A465.	Slight Beneficial +
	Option and non-use values	No impacts identified.	Neutral
Public Account	Cost to Broad Transport Budget	Indicative cost of SC7 proposal is circa £21-£31M and is expected to make a slight return on its investment.	Neutral
	Indirect Tax Revenues	N/A	N/A

Other Issues	Technical and operational feasibility	Earthworks – Vertical alignment on the east side follows the rolling profile of the countryside but is forced into cutting after Grafton Lane in order to cross under the railway. 13m deep cutting through Merry Hill in order to cross under Haywood Lane which could give rise to groundwater and road drainage problems. Large amount of excess spoil generated. Design Standards – 50mph design speed and Departures from Standard unlikely. No opportunity for overtaking due to the twisty alignment. Angled crossing of existing country lanes and railway will increase cost. Side access issues yet to be looked at as well as any drainage runoff storage provision. Physical features – being of a twisted nature the route manages to avoid many physical constraints but does go through the northern tip of Grafton Wood (not designated). Utilities – route crosses existing overhead power lines a number of times (including a 66kV) and is located largely within the main corridor of electricity cables running east to west. Route crosses Grafton Lane on a 3m high embankment where there is a concentration of services running north to south including HP gas, a trunk water main and a sewer. Conflict with a concentration of overhead and buried services in/around Haywood Lane including BT, a water main and a sewer. Rail structure - route crosses underneath the existing railway line so increased risk for Network Rail's operations.

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Name of scheme:	South Wye Transport Package - Option SC8
Description of scheme:	Option SC8 lies between the northern and southern options. The alignment is relatively straight over its entire length curving gradually north-west, west of the railway. It passes over the railway, underneath Haywood Lane and is at grade over Grafton Lane.

	Impacts	Summary of key impacts	Assessment Qualitative
Economy	Business users & transport providers	Reduced congestion along the A465 Belmont Road due to diversion of traffic onto the Southern Link Road and modal shift therefore journey time savings for existing users of the A465. Longer journeys for those business users who divert to the Southern Link. Increased traffic along the A49 but level of delay at the A49/A465 junction proposed to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Reliability impact on Business users	Reduced congestion along the A465 provides greater journey time reliability for users of the A465. Journey times along the A49 are expected to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Regeneration	Southern Link Road provides direct connection to the Hereford Enterprise Zone (HEZ) from the A465. Improves the supply of employment land by allowing the planning conditions that presently limit development at the HEZ to be extinguished, therefore removing substantial barriers to inward investment relating to both residential and employment development. Regeneration benefits within Belmont enhanced due to greater accessibility to employment opportunities within the HEZ.	Major Beneficial +++
	Wider Impacts	Potential for greater agglomeration benefits across Hereford as a result of greater connections to the HEZ. Scheme will support the adopted economic growth of the Marches Sub-region.	Moderate Beneficial ++
Environmental	Noise	Signficant increase in road traffic noise likely at properties close to new road. Possible decreases in noise at properties adjacent to A465 and A49 (DEFRA Noise Action Planning Important Area on A465 between Tesco and Asda Roundabouts)	Major Adverse
	Air Quality	Air quality along both Belmont Road and Ross Road is relatively poor but, at property facades, is currently below the air quality objective. Traffic is expected to decrease on Belmont Road and increase on Ross Road. This will result in an improvement of air quality on Belmont Road and a deterioration on Ross Road. The deterioration in air quality could potentially lead to exceedence of the air quality objective. The option is not expected to affect the Hereford AQMA itself, since traffic flows across the river are not expected to be affected although some changes at the A465/A49 junction may result in highly localised air quality impacts. Regional air quality is likely to show a slight adverse impact for all options, due to the greater distance travelled by vehicles diverting onto the bypass and the greater speed of travel. Any impacts on congestion relief on roads into Hereford cannot be assessed at present	Moderate Adverse - (local), Slight Adverse (regional)
	Greenhouse gases	The option will have a slight adverse impact on greenhouse gas emissions due to the greater distance travelled by vehicles diverting onto the Southern Link Road and the greater speed of travel	Slight Adverse
	Landscape/Townscape	Route passes through fertile, undulating farmland with extensive arable fields, with low hedges and occasional woodland. Although most of the route is within the Herefordshire Lowlands character area, more typical of South Herefordshire. In terms of woodland, it cuts through the centre of Grafton Wood, which is not designated and has a low density of trees. This route runs in close proximity to Haywood Lodge Farm and associated properties, with potential for visual amenity effects. It avoids Newton Brook. The alignment of the eastern half of the route runs in a straight line and cuts across the grain of the landscape. The route therefore fails to take into account the undulating topography and irregular field pattern. SC8 will require extensive works to create embankments to take the route over the railway line resulting in a visible central section (as it passes over the railway line) and will have engineered slopes that will be disruptive to the character of the local topography. The landscape in this area would be classed as being of Medium sensitivity (good quality example of Herefordshire rural landscape). The magnitude of effect on the landscape resource with the additional sections of road, roundabout and proximity to residential properties, is Moderate (loss of resource, at odds with the local pattern and landform, visually intrusive and will adversely impact on the landscape).	Moderate Adverse
	Historic Environment	Direct impact (minor) on the the setting of a Grade II* and three Grade II listed buildings at Haywood Lodge. Direct impact (minor) on the significance of the setting of the Grade II Clehonger Court buildings; direct impact (minor) on the significance of the setting of a Grade II listed milestone. Direct physical impact (slight to moderate) on potential buried archaeological remains in four fields.	Slight to Moderate Adverse

	Biodiversity	SC8 passes through the centre of Grafton Wood, which supports a mature tree canopy with some indicators of ancient woodland present. SC8 will likely to lead to the greatest extent of habitat loss / disturbance within Grafton Wood relative to other route options under consideration, with comparable impacts to SC2/2A and SC9. SC8 passes south of Newton Coppice / Hayleasow Wood which includes semi-natural ancient woodland and plantation on ancient woodland, although it will be located close to the southern edge of the ancient woodland areas. Recent surveys have confirmed the ancient character of these woodland habitats. SC8 also passes upstream of open sections of Newton Brook, and has reduced potential for impacts on this watercourse relative to route options passing through Newton Coppice / Hayleasow Wood. Consultation with Natural England has indicated that they would not prefer a route option that passes through ancient woodland areas. The National Planning Policy Framework identifies ancient woodland as an irreplaceable habitat, and it is unlikely to be possible to fully mitigate a Route Corridor Option that passes through the ancient woodland. SC8 is further away from ponds known to support great crested newts (GCN) than options SC2/2A. Impacts on GCNs, a European Pr+D25otected species, are therefore likely to be reduced relative to the more southern options SC2/2A. All of the route options pass through extents of improved grassland and arable farmland, with fields seperated by a network of hedgerows in varying condition. In terms of these habitats there is little to separate the different route corridor options or the species they are likely to support (other than GCN, see above). The impact of each route option on significant off-site receptors (e.g. River Wye SAC and bat roosts) are also likely to be broadly similar. SC8 would pass over the railway line, based on the current understanding of scheme-wide bat activity and design parameters (assuming the railway underpass would be unlit), SC8 would allow a wide underpass to be maintained under the new road alignment, subject to only infrequent train movements. Any overbridge would need to have wide vegetated margins in order to be as effective as an underpass.	Moderate adverse
	Water Environment	Assuming surface water management design and construction measures are implemented, the proposed alignment is likely to have low significance impacts on transport and dilution of waste products and biodiversity in Withy Brook and Newton Brook.	Slight Adverse
Social	Commuting and Other users	Reduced congestion along the A465 Belmont Road due to diversion of traffic onto the Southern Link Road and modal shift therefore journey time savings for existing users of the A465. Longer journeys for those who divert to the Southern Link. Increased traffic along the A49 but level of delay at the A49/A465 junction proposed to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Reliability impact on Commuting and Other users	Reduced congestion along the A465 provide greater journey time reliability for users of the A465. Journey times along the A49 are expected to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Physical activity	Walking and cycling trips discouraged by severance of PROWs GF3 and HA7. Loss in rural amenity for recreational pedestrians using existing PROWs due to introduction of increased traffic noise and proximity to traffic.	Moderate Adverse - -
	Journey quality	Road users benefiting from improved views and reduced traveller stress resulting from more open route with rural landscape vistas, greater route certainty, and reduced fear of accidents (compared to existing urban routes through Hereford town centre). New road with associated earthworks will degrade views slightly from A49 and Haywood Lane. New A465 roundabout will add stress to travellers on this roadConnecting of B4349 to SC8 at A465 will reduce driver stress compared to existing junction arrangement.	Moderate Beneficial ++
	Accidents	Southern Link Road designed to latest design standards. Reduction in traffic along A465 will reduction accident rate along this section of road although the resultant increase in traffic along the A49 may cause the accident rate to increase on this section of road. Improved crossing facilities for vulnerable road users, improved cycle facilities, and reduction in dispersed accidents through 20mph limits. Increases in general cycle use have also been linked to overall increases in cycle safety.	Moderate Beneficial ++
	Security	Road users slightly less vulnerable to crime as this option reduces need to stop vehicles or reduce speeds compared to existing routes. No impact on security of PT passengers. Increased walking and cycling in Belmont and along Holme Lacy Road will increase the number of people on-street, increasing security. CSOs will also be available to help improve perceived and actual security at problem locations.	Moderate Beneficial ++
	Access to services	Scheme provides improved bus services on the A465, decreasing bus journey times on this route by up to 20 minutes. Improved walking and cycling facilities will also improve access to services.	Moderate Beneficial ++
	Affordability	Rerouting will impact on journey speeds and congestion on both A465 and A49 (north of the scheme), impacting positively on personal affordability of car users.	Slight Beneficial +
	Severance	Scheme option increases severance significantly for very low number hamlets but reduces severance slightly (by reducing traffic flows) through Belmont and Redhill residential areas in vicinity of A49 and A465	Slight Beneficial +
	Option and non-use values	No impacts identified	Neutral
Public Account	Cost to Broad Transport Budget	Indicative cost of SC8 proposal is circa £26.5M	
	Indirect Tax Revenues	N/A	

Other Issues	Technical and operational feasibility	Earthworks – Vertical alignment of the option is similar at both the western and eastern ends of the route. The difference lies within the middle section either side of the railway line reflecting whether the route goes over or under it. To cross over the railway route Option SC8 requires the construction of an embankment up to 8m high. This could give rise to groundwater and road drainage problems. it may be possible to achieve a balanced earthworks scheme using alignment Option SC8. Design Standards – 60mph design speed and Departures from Standard unlikely. Although a much straighter route on plan, an opportunity for overtaking is unlikely due to topography (vertical curvature). Angled crossing of existing railway will increase cost but the crossing of Haywood Lane is relatively straight. Side access issues yet to be looked at as well as any drainage runoff storage provision. Physical features – the route skirts around the south-west corner of Newton Coppice (designated as Ancient Woodland), through the northern section of Grafton Wood (not designated), to the south of the wooded area between Grafton Lane and Withy Brook and to the south of the barn yard situated south-west of the Merryhill Lane junction with Haywood Lane. The route also passes to the south of Grafton Enclosure and Beech Grove (refer to commentary on Option SC9). Utilities – the route clashes with existing overhead power lines located at the eastern and western ends of the scheme (including a 66kV) but generally avoid them within the central area. Both routes cross Grafton Lane at grade (or thereabouts) where BT and water services are present. There is conflict with a concentration of overhead and buried services in/around Haywood Lane including BT, a water main and a sewer. Rail structure – route option SC8 (which crosses over the existing railway line) offers reduced risk for Network Rail's operations.

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Name of scheme:	South Wye Transport Package - Option SC8A
Description of scheme:	The SC8A option alignment is identical to SC8 except that it crosses underneath the railway line.

	Impacts	Summary of key impacts	Assessment Qualitative
Economy	Business users & transport providers	Reduced congestion along the A465 Belmont Road due to diversion of traffic onto the Southern Link Road and modal shift therefore journey time savings for existing users of the A465. Longer journeys for those business users who divert to the Southern Link. Increased traffic along the A49 but level of delay at the A49/A465 junction proposed to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Reliability impact on Business users	Reduced congestion along the A465 provides greater journey time reliability for users of the A465. Journey times along the A49 are expected to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Regeneration	Southern Link Road provides direct connection to the Hereford Enterprise Zone (HEZ) from the A465. Improves the supply of employment land by allowing the planning conditions that presently limit development at the HEZ to be extinguished, therefore removing substantial barriers to inward investment relating to both residential and employment development. Regeneration benefits within Belmont enhanced due to greater accessibility to employment opportunities within the HEZ.	Major Beneficial +++
	Wider Impacts	Potential for greater agglomeration benefits across Hereford as a result of greater connections to the HEZ. Scheme will support the adopted economic growth of the Marches Sub-region.	Moderate Beneficial ++
Environmental	Noise	Signficant increase in road traffic noise likely at properties close to new road. Possible decreases in noise at properties adjacent to A465 and A49 (DEFRA Noise Action Planning Important Area on A465 between Tesco and Asda Roundabouts)	Major Adverse
	Air Quality	Air quality along both Belmont Road and Ross Road is relatively poor but, at property facades, is currently below the air quality objective. Traffic is expected to decrease on Belmont Road and increase on Ross Road. This will result in an improvement of air quality on Belmont Road and a deterioration on Ross Road. The deterioration in air quality could potentially lead to exceedence of the air quality objective. The option is not expected to affect the Hereford AQMA itself, since traffic flows across the river are not expected to be affected although some changes at the A465/A49 junction may result in highly localised air quality impacts. Regional air quality is likely to show a slight adverse impact for all options, due to the greater distance travelled by vehicles diverting onto the bypass and the greater speed of travel. Any impacts on congestion relief on roads into Hereford cannot be assessed at present	Moderate Adverse - (local), Slight Adverse (regional)
	Greenhouse gases	The option will have a slight adverse impact on greenhouse gas emissions due to the greater distance travelled by vehicles diverting onto the Southern Link Road and the greater speed of travel	Slight Adverse
	Landscape/Townscape	Route passes through fertile, undulating farmland with extensive arable fields, with low hedges and occasional woodland. Although most of the route is within the Herefordshire Lowlands character area, more typical of South Herefordshire. In terms of woodland, it cuts through the centre of Grafton Wood, which is not designated and has a low density of trees. This route runs in close proximity to Haywood Lodge Farm and associated properties, with potential for visual amenity effects. It avoids Newton Brook. The alignment of the eastern half of the route runs in a straight line and cuts across the grain of the landscape. The route therefore fails to take into account the undulating topography and irregular field pattern. SC8A will require extensive works to create a cutting to take the route under the railwayand will involve engineered slopes that will be disruptive to the character of the local topography. The landscape in this area would be classed as being of Medium sensitivity (good quality example of Herefordshire rural landscape). The magnitude of effect on the landscape resource with the additional sections of road, roundabout and proximity to residential properties, is Moderate (loss of resource, at odds with the local pattern and landform, visually intrusive and will adversely impact on the landscape).	Moderate Adverse
	Historic Environment	Direct impact (minor) on the significance of the setting of a Grade II* and three Grade II listed buildings at Haywood Lodge, Grade II Clehonger Court buildings and a Grade II listed milestone. Direct physical impact (slight to moderate) on potential buried archaeological remains in four fields.	Slight to Moderate Adverse

	Biodiversity	SC8A passes through the centre of Grafton Wood, which supports a mature tree canopy with some indicators of ancient woodland present. SC8A will likely to lead to the greatest extent of habitat loss / disturbance within Grafton Wood relative to other route options under consideration, with comparable impacts to SC2/2A and SC9. SC8A passes south of Newton Coppice / Hayleasow Wood which includes semi-natural ancient woodland and plantation on ancient woodland, although it will be located close to the southern edge of the ancient woodland areas. Recent surveys have confirmed the ancient character of these woodland habitats. SC8A also passes upstream of open sections of Newton Brook, and has reduced potential for impacts on this watercourse relative to route options passing through Newton Coppice / Hayleasow Wood. Consultation with Natural England has indicated that they woould not prefer a route option that passes through ancient woodland areas. The National Planning Policy Framework identifies ancient woodland as an irreplaceable habitat, and it is unlikely to be possible to fully mitigate a Route Corridor Option that passes through the ancient woodland. SC8A is further away from ponds known to support great crested newts (GCN) than options SC2/2A. Impacts on GCNs, a European Protected species, are therefore likely to be reduced relative to the more southern options SC2/2A. All of the route options pass through extents of improved grassland and arable farmland, with fields seperated by a network of hedgerows in varying condition. In terms of these habitats there is little to separate the different route corridor options or the species they are likely to support (other than GCN, see above). The impact of each route option on significant off-site receptors (e.g. River Wye SAC and bat roosts) are also likely to be broadly similar. SC8A would pass under the railway line, based on the current understanding of scheme-wide bat activity and design parameters, SC8A would retain the rail corridor as a bridge, but with a 'drop-off' either side down to the road which is likely to lead to increased bat mortality / habitat fragmentation compared with SC8.	Moderate adverse
	Water Environment	Assuming surface water management design and construction measures are implemented, the proposed alignment is likely to have low significance impacts on transport and dilution of waste products and biodiversity in Withy Brook and Newton Brook.	Slight Adverse
Social	Commuting and Other users	Reduced congestion along the A465 Belmont Road due to diversion of traffic onto the Southern Link Road and modal shift therefore journey time savings for existing users of the A465. Longer journeys for those who divert to the Southern Link. Increased traffic along the A49 but level of delay at the A49/A465 junction proposed to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Reliability impact on Commuting and Other users	Reduced congestion along the A465 provide greater journey time reliability for users of the A465. Journey times along the A49 are expected to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Physical activity	Walking and cycling trips discouraged by severance of PROWs GF3 and HA7. Loss in rural amenity for recreational pedestrians using existing PROWs due to introduction of increased traffic noise and proximity to traffic.	Moderate Adverse --
	Journey quality	Road users benefiting from improved views and reduced traveller stress resulting from more open route with rural landscape vistas, greater route certainty, and reduced fear of accidents (compared to existing urban routes through Hereford town centre). New road with associated earthworks will degrade views slightly from A49 and Haywood Lane. New A465 roundabout will add stress to travellers on this roadConnecting of B4349 to SC8 at A465 will reduce driver stress compared to existing junction arrangement.	Moderate Beneficial ++
	Accidents	Southern Link Road designed to latest design standards. Reduction in traffic along A465 will reduction accident rate along this section of road although the resultant increase in traffic along the A49 may cause the accident rate to increase on this section of road. Improved crossing facilities for vulnerable road users, improved cycle facilities, and reduction in dispersed accidents through 20mph limits. Increases in general cycle use have also been linked to overall increases in cycle safety.	Moderate Beneficial ++
	Security	Road users slightly less vulnerable to crime as this option reduces need to stop vehicles or reduce speeds compared to existing routes. No impact on security of PT passengers. Increased walking and cycling in Belmont and along Holme Lacy Road will increase the number of people on-street, increasing security. CSOs will also be available to help improve perceived and actual security at problem locations.	Moderate Beneficial ++
	Access to services	Scheme provides improved bus services on the A465, decreasing bus journey times on this route by up to 20 minutes. Improved walking and cycling facilities will also improve access to services.	Moderate Beneficial ++
	Affordability	Rerouting will impact on journey speeds and congestion on both A465 and A49 (north of the scheme), impacting positively on personal affordability of car users.	Slight Beneficial +
	Severance	Scheme option increases severance significantly for very low number hamlets but reduces severance slightly (by reducing traffic flows) through Belmont and Redhill residential areas in vicinity of A49 and A465	Slight Beneficial +
	Option and non-use values	No impacts identified	Neutral
Public Account	Cost to Broad Transport Budget	Indicative cost of SC8A proposal is circa £38.6M	
	Indirect Tax Revenues	N/A	

Other Issues	Technical and operational feasibility	Earthworks – Vertical alignment of the option is similar at both the western and eastern ends of the route. The difference lies within the middle section either side of the railway line reflecting whether the route goes over or under it. To cross over the railway route Option SC8A requires the construction of a cutting up to 11m deep. This could give rise to groundwater and road drainage problems. The extensive cutting on Option SC8A is likely to generate a significant amount of surplus spoil. Design Standards – 60mph design speed and Departures from Standard unlikely. Although a much straighter route on plan, an opportunity for overtaking is unlikely due to topography (vertical curvature). Angled crossing of existing railway will increase cost but the crossing of Haywood Lane is relatively straight. Side access issues yet to be looked at as well as any drainage runoff storage provision. Physical features – the route skirts around the south-west corner of Newton Coppice (designated as Ancient Woodland), through the northern section of Grafton Wood (not designated), to the south of the wooded area between Grafton Lane and Withy Brook and to the south of the barn yard situated south-west of the Merryhill Lane junction with Haywood Lane. The route also passes to the south of Grafton Enclosure and Beech Grove (refer to commentary on Option SC9). Utilities – the route clashes with existing overhead power lines located at the eastern and western ends of the scheme (including a 66kV) but generally avoid them within the central area. The route cross Grafton Lane at grade (or thereabouts) where BT and water services are present. There is conflict with a concentration of overhead and buried services in/around Haywood Lane including BT, a water main and a sewer. Rail structure – route option SC8A offers increased risk for Network Rail's operations.

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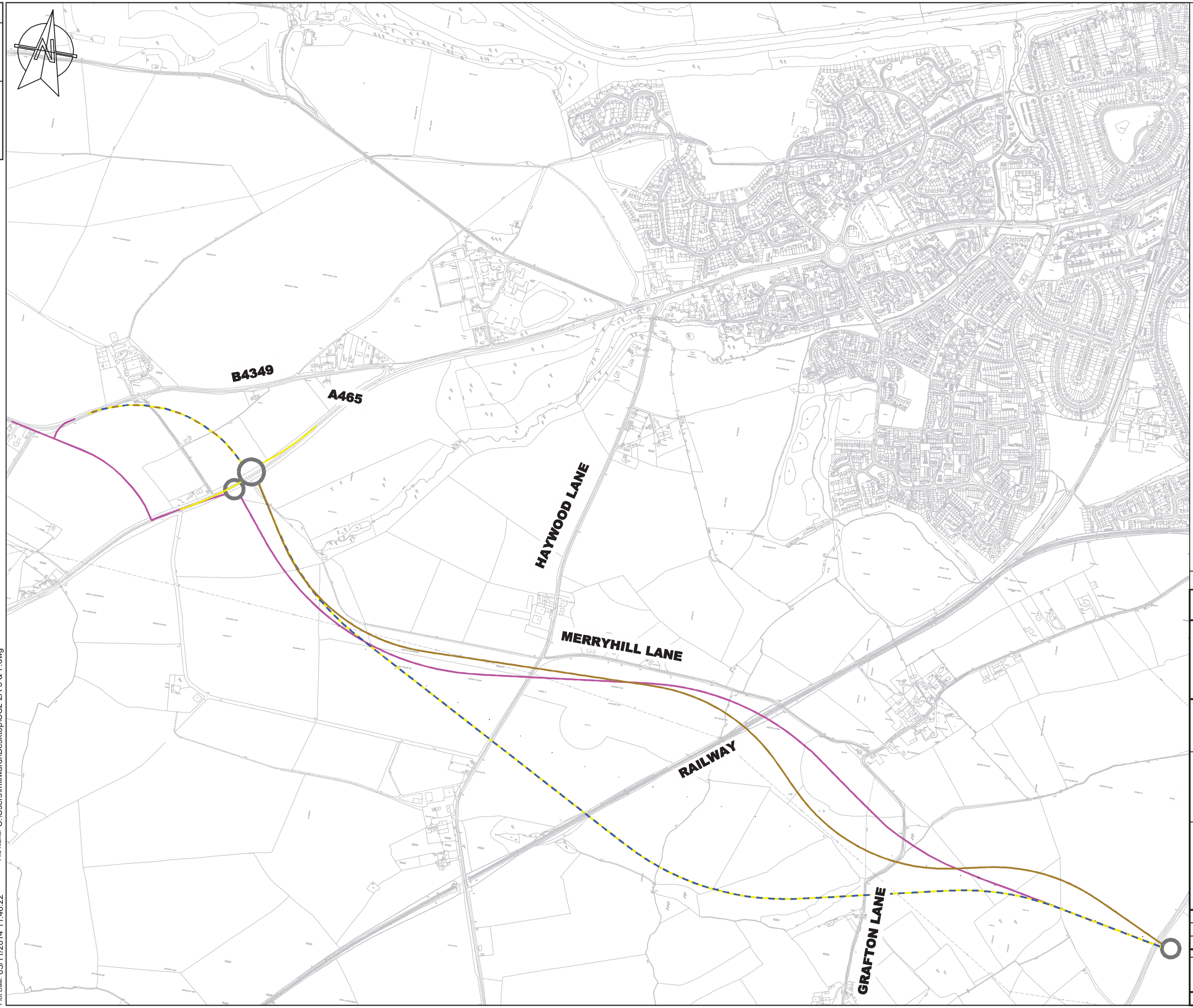
Name of scheme:	South Wye Transport Package - Option SC9
Description of scheme:	This route is based on the alignment of Options SC8/SC8A except that it has a shorter, more direct crossing over the railway. It is the only option under consideration that crosses over Haywood Lane and through Beech Grove. Consequently the alignment is more twisted than Options SC8 and SC8A.

Impacts		Summary of key impacts	Assessment Qualitative
Economy	Business users & transport providers	Reduced congestion along the A465 Belmont Road due to diversion of traffic onto the Southern Link Road and modal shift therefore journey time savings for existing users of the A465. Longer journeys for those business users who divert to the Southern Link. Increased traffic along the A49 but level of delay at the A49/A465 junction proposed to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Reliability impact on Business users	Reduced congestion along the A465 provides greater journey time reliability for users of the A465. Journey times along the A49 are expected to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Regeneration	Southern Link Road provides direct connection to the Hereford Enterprise Zone (HEZ) from the A465. Improves the supply of employment land by allowing the planning conditions that presently limit development at the HEZ to be extinguished, therefore removing substantial barriers to inward investment relating to both residential and employment development. Regeneration benefits within Belmont enhanced due to greater accessibility to employment opportunities within the HEZ.	Major Beneficial +++
	Wider Impacts	Potential for greater agglomeration benefits across Hereford as a result of greater connections to the HEZ. Scheme will support the adopted economic growth of the Marches Sub-region.	Moderate Beneficial ++
Environmental	Noise	Signficant increase in road traffic noise likely at properties close to new road. Possible decreases in noise at properties adjacent to A465 and A49 (DEFRA Noise Action Planning Important Area on A465 between Tesco and Asda Roundabouts)	Major Adverse
	Air Quality	Air quality along both Belmont Road and Ross Road is relatively poor but, at property facades, is currently below the air quality objective. Traffic is expected to decrease on Belmont Road and increase on Ross Road. This will result in an improvement of air quality on Belmont Road and a deterioration on Ross Road. The deterioration in air quality could potentially lead to exceedence of the air quality objective. The option is not expected to affect the Hereford AQMA itself, since traffic flows across the river are not expected to be affected although some changes at the A465/A49 junction may result in highly localised air quality impacts. Regional air quality is likely to show a slight adverse impact for all options, due to the greater distance travelled by vehicles diverting onto the bypass and the greater speed of travel. Any impacts on congestion relief on roads into Hereford cannot be assessed at present	Moderate Adverse - (local), Slight Adverse (regional)
	Greenhouse gases	The option will have a slight adverse impact on greenhouse gas emissions due to the greater distance travelled by vehicles diverting onto the Southern Link Road and the greater speed of travel	Slight Adverse
	Landscape/Townscape	Route passes through fertile, undulating farmland with extensive arable fields, with low hedges and occasional woodland. Although most of the route is within the Herefordshire Lowlands character area, more typical of South Herefordshire. In terms of woodland, it cuts through the centre of Grafton Wood, which is not designated and has a low density of trees. This route will be visible from Haywood Lodge Farm and associated properties, however it curves away in a NW direction after crossing the railway line. As it takes a NW direction it passes directly through a local landscape feature called Beech Grove. Similar to other more southerly routes, it avoids Newton Brook. The landscape in this area would be classed as being of Medium sensitivity (good quality example of Herefordshire rural landscape). The magnitude of effect on the landscape resource would be Major (is at considerable variance with the landform, scale and pattern of the landscape, is visually intrusive and will adversely impact on the landscape).	Major Adverse
	Historic Environment	Direct impact (moderate) on the significance of the setting of Grade II listed Merryhill Stables, Grade II* and three Grade II listed buildings at Haywood Lodge. Direct impact (minor) on the significance of the setting of the Grade II Clehonger Court buildings and a Grade II listed milestone. Direct physical impact (ranging from slight to substantial) on potential buried archaeological remains in five fields including the almost complete destruction of a feature of unknown date and function.	Moderate Adverse

	Biodiversity	SC9 passes through the centre of Grafton Wood, which supports a mature tree canopy with some indicators of ancient woodland present. SC9 is therefore likely to lead to the greatest extent of habitat loss / disturbance within Grafton Wood relative to other route options, with a level of immpactt comparable to SC2/2A and SC8/8A. SC9 passes south of Newton Coppice / Hayleasow Wood which includes semi-natural ancient woodland and plantation on ancient woodland, although it will be located close to the southern edge of the ancient woodland areas. Recent surveys have confirmed the ancient character of these woodland habitats. SC9 also passes upstream of currently open sections of Newton Brook, and hence has reduced potential for impacts on this watercourse relative to route options passing through Newton Coppice / Hayleasow Wood. Consultation with Natural England has detemrined that they do not prefer route options that passes through the ancient woodland areas. The National Planning Policy Framework identifies ancient woodland as an irreplaceable habitat, and it is unlikely to be possible to fully mitigate a route option that passes through the ancient woodland. SC9 is further away from ponds known to support great crested newts (GCNs) than SC2/2A. Impacts on GCNs, a European Protected species, are therefore likely to be reduced relative to the more southern options such as SC2/2A. All route options pass through areas of improved grassland and arable farmland, with fields seperated by a network of hedgerows in varying condition. There is little to separate the impacts of the different route options on these habitats or the species they are likely to support (other than GCN, see above). The impacts of each route option on significant off-site receptors (e.g. River Wye SAC and bat roosts) is also likely to be broadly similar. SC9 would pass over Haywood Lane via an overbridge, the only route option which does so. Haywood Lane could therefore provide an underpass for use by bats (providing this can be unlit), which may provide a more easily effective mitigation solution than having the proposed road passing under Haywood Lane. However, SC9 would directly affect several mature / veteran trees within hedgerows to the east of the railway (some of which have high bat roosting potential), which would not be affected by other route options.	Moderate Adverse
	Water Environment	Assuming surface water management design and construction measures are implemented, the proposed alignment is likely to have low significance impacts on transport and dilution of waste products and biodiversity in Withy Brook and Newton Brook.	Slight Adverse
Social	Commuting and Other users	Reduced congestion along the A465 Belmont Road due to diversion of traffic onto the Southern Link Road and modal shift therefore journey time savings for existing users of the A465. Longer journeys for those who divert to the Southern Link. Increased traffic along the A49 but level of delay at the A49/A465 junction proposed to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Reliability impact on Commuting and Other users	Reduced congestion along the A465 provide greater journey time reliability for users of the A465. Journey times along the A49 are expected to remain at existing levels.	Slight Beneficial +
	Physical activity	Walking and cycling trips discouraged by severance of PROWs GF3 and HA7. Loss in rural amenity for recreational pedestrians using existing PROWs due to introduction of increased traffic noise and proximity to traffic.	Moderate Adverse --
	Journey quality	Road users benefiting from improved views and reduced traveller stress resulting from more open route with rural landscape vistas, greater route certainty, and reduced fear of accidents (compared to existing urban routes through Hereford town centre). New road with associated earthworks will degrade views slightly from A49 and Haywood Lane. New A465 roundabout will add stress to travellers on this roadConnecting of B4349 to SC8 at A465 will reduce driver stress compared to existing junction arrangement.	Moderate Beneficial ++
	Accidents	Southern Link Road designed to latest design standards. Reduction in traffic along A465 will reduction accident rate along this section of road although the resultant increase in traffic along the A49 may cause the accident rate to increase on this section of road. Improved crossing facilities for vulnerable road users, improved cycle facilities, and reduction in dispersed accidents through 20mph limits. Increases in general cycle use have also been linked to overall increases in cycle safety.	Moderate Beneficial ++
	Security	Road users slightly less vulnerable to crime as this option reduces need to stop vehicles or reduce speeds compared to existing routes. No impact on security of PT passengers. Increased walking and cycling in Belmont and along Holme Lacy Road will increase the number of people on-street, increasing security. CSOs will also be available to help improve perceived and actual security at problem locations.	Moderate Beneficial ++
	Access to services	Scheme provides improved bus services on the A465, decreasing bus journey times on this route by up to 20 minutes. Improved walking and cycling facilities will also improve access to services.	Moderate Beneficial ++
	Affordability	Rerouting will impact on journey speeds and congestion on both A465 and A49 (north of the scheme), impacting positively on personal affordability of car users.	Slight Beneficial +
	Severance	Scheme option increases severance significantly for very low number hamlets but reduces severance slightly (by reducing traffic flows) through Belmont and Redhill residential areas in vicinity of A49 and A465	Slight Beneficial +
	Option and non-use values	No impacts identified	Neutral
Public Account	Cost to Broad Transport Budget	Indicative cost of SC9 proposal is circa £25.3M	
	Indirect Tax Revenues	N/A	

Other Issues	Technical and operational feasibility	Earthworks – Vertical alignment on the east side follows the rolling profile of the countryside but west of Grafton Lane it starts climbing on an 8.5m high embankment in order to pass over the railway line. The route cuts through Beech Grove in a cutting up to 4m deep before passing over Haywood Lane. It then continues on an 8m high embankment before eventually dipping down to the existing topography at the western end of the scheme. With very little cut the scheme would require significant importation of fill in order to create the two large embankments either side of Beech Grove. Furthermore, the need to cross over Haywood Lane is likely to cause difficulty in tying the lane back to existing levels either side of it, particularly to the north at its junction with Merryhill Lane. Design Standards – 60mph design speed and Departures from Standard unlikely. Opportunity for overtaking unlikely. Straighter crossing of railway will reduce the cost of the structure. Side access issues yet to be looked at as well as any drainage runoff storage provision. Physical features – being of a twisted nature the route manages to avoid many physical constraints except the northern section of Grafton Wood (not designated). It passes close to the wooded area between Grafton Lane and Withy Brook and the barn yard situated south-west of the Merryhill Lane junction with Haywood Lane. The route crosses the railway at a near perpendicular angle which should be beneficial in engineering and cost terms. The unique distinction between this route and others under consideration is that it goes through the middle of Beech Grove. To date it has not been confirmed whether the feature has archaeological relevance/significance or otherwise. Beech Grove does not appear as a specific record on the Herefordshire Historic Environment Record (HER) and is not listed as a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Grafton Enclosure (off Grafton Lane) on the other hand does appear on the HER and is believed to be a lost early medieval castle site. However, it is not affected by the alignment of Option SC9, the route passing well to the south of it. Utilities – the route clashes with existing overhead power lines located at the eastern and western ends of the scheme (including a 66kV) but generally avoids them within the central area. The route crosses Grafton Lane at grade (or thereabouts) where BT and water services are present. There is conflict with a concentration of overhead and buried services in/around Haywood Lane including BT, a water main and a sewer. Rail structure - route crosses over the existing railway line so reduced risk for Network Rail's operations.



KEY:

- SC2
- SC2A
- SC5
- SC7

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November 2014

SOUTH WYE TRANSPORT PACKAGE
REPORT ON CONSULTATION

Herefordshire Council

3512983B-HHR

Final

South Wye Transport Package
Report on Consultation

3512983B-HHR

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Appendices

Appendix A – Public Consultation Brochure
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Appendix C – Public Consultation Questionnaire
Appendix D – Public Exhibition Panels
Appendix E – Layout of Exhibition Panels
Appendix F – Question 7 Full Breakdown

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Parsons Brinckerhoff has been commissioned by Herefordshire Council to develop transport improvements for the South Wye Transport Package (SWTP) to overcome the transport problems within the South Wye area of Hereford. This work builds upon the initial work undertaken by Amey regarding highway improvements to the Belmont Area and option development for a Southern Link Road (SLR), which would link the A49 and A465.

1.1.2 Part of this study was to undertake a Public Consultation to obtain public opinion on the options developed for the SWTP. These options included improvements to encourage sustainable travel and also presented four route options for the SLR. These options were:

- SC2: a route located at the southern end of the previously identified SLR Route Corridor. The road crosses over the railway line and underneath Haywood Lane;
- SC2A: a variation on SC2 whereby the road crosses underneath the railway line;
- SC5: a route located further north of SC2/SC2A within the SLR Route Corridor and south of Merryhill Lane. The road crosses underneath the railway line and Haywood Lane.
- SC7: roughly similar to SC5 but more twisted in nature thereby avoiding a number of existing environmental constraints.

1.1.3 The consultation period was advertised for the six-week period from the 1 July 2014 to 8 August 2014. Public Consultation Exhibitions (PCEs) were held in Belmont between the 1 and 3 July 2014 at the Three Counties Hotel, Hereford. Exhibitions were also held on the 15 July 2014 at Belmont Library and on the 18 July 2014 at Hereford City Library.

2 GENERAL

2.1 Notices and Distribution of the Brochure and Questionnaires

2.1.1 Press releases regarding the exhibitions were issued ahead of the exhibitions on the 17 June 2014, and again afterwards on the 4 July.

2.1.2 A website describing the South Wye Transport Package and publicising the public exhibitions was accessible from the 1 July 2014 at the following web address https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/local-transport-plan-2013-2015/south-wye-transportation-package.

2.1.3 During the consultation, the public consultation brochure (see Appendix A) and advertising posters were left in local shops, offices, cafes and businesses in the study area from 1 July 2014. The locations where the brochures were displayed are illustrated in Appendix B.

2.1.4 Brochures were distributed to the public during the course of the consultation. To accompany these, questionnaires (Appendix C) were enclosed.

2.1.5 The questionnaire was also made available online via the following web address: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/75YCD7G. A link was also made available via the Council's website.

2.2 Social Media

2.2.1 Social Media was used to publicise the consultation and gather feedback from the community. The brochure and display panels included the Facebook address **www.facebook.com/HfdsCouncil** and Twitter handle **@HfdsCouncil** where respondents could provide their opinions.

2.3 Consultation Arrangements

2.3.1 The public exhibition was held at the Three Counties Hotel between the 1 and 3 July 2014.

2.3.2 An exhibition was also held at Belmont Library on the 15 July 2014 and Hereford City Library on the 18 July 2014.

2.3.3 The opening times of the exhibition were as follows:

Three Counties Hotel

- 1 July 2014 - 12:00 – 20:00
- 2 July 2014 - 12:00 – 20:00
- 3 July 2014 - 12:00 – 20:00

Belmont Library

- 15 July 2014 - 14:00 – 17:00

Hereford City Library

- 15 July 2014 - 15:00 – 19:00

2.4 Preview Evening

2.4.1 Herefordshire Council invited Council Members, other officials, and members of the public who had previously been invited to stakeholder events, to the evening preview on the 30 June 2014. The invitations were sent by letter on the 17 August 2014.

2.4.2 There were a total of 45 attendees to the preview, excluding staff.

2.5 Public Exhibition

2.5.1 The exhibition comprised 15 display panels that showed the development of the options and their resultant appraisal. Photos of the exhibition are shown on the following page.

2.5.2 The early panels in the exhibition illustrated the problems within the South Wye area, and summarised Council policy regarding economic development within Hereford.

2.5.3 Panels also described the development of the different elements to provide a package that best dealt with the existing problems and future opportunities.

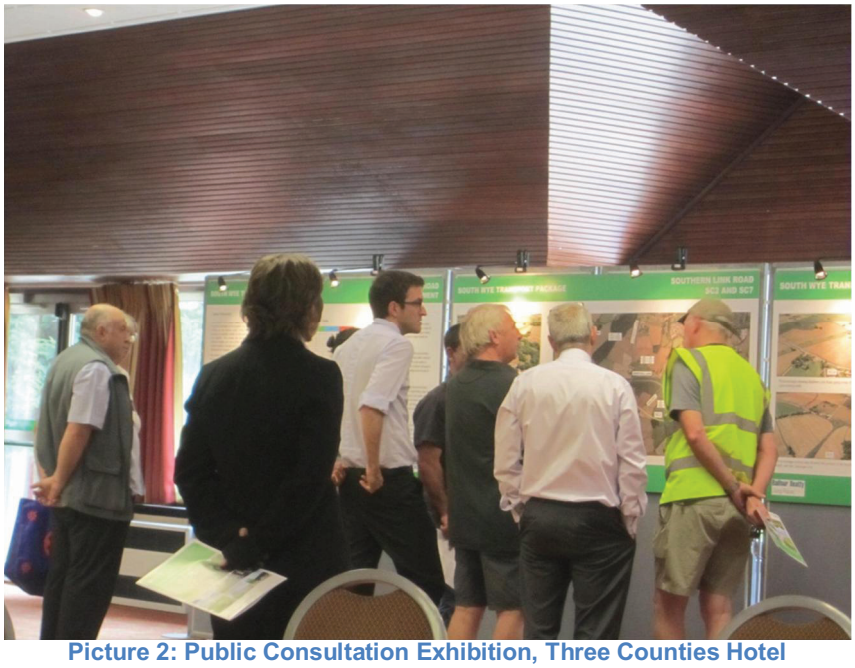
2.5.4 The Southern Link Road proposals were presented on panels overlaid on aerial photographs. Traffic flows for the Opening Year (2017) were also shown on these panels.

2.5.5 In order to assist visitors in gaining a visual appreciation of the options, photomontages of the different options were included on some of the panels.

2.5.6 Copies of the panels were also available on the layout tables at the Three Counties Hotel.



Picture 1: Public Consultation Exhibition, Three Counties Hotel



Picture 2: Public Consultation Exhibition, Three Counties Hotel

2.5.7 Due to the size of the two libraries, it was not possible to display full size panels. In this case, smaller versions of the panels were displayed.

2.5.8 The exhibition panels can be found in Appendix D. The layout of the panels at the exhibition is provided in Appendix E.

2.6 Brochure and Questionnaire

2.6.1 Additional brochures and questionnaires were on display and attendees were encouraged to take additional copies.

2.7 Attendance at the Exhibition

2.7.1 An attendance register was maintained at the Three Counties Hotel exhibition, with the number of attendees as listed below:

- 45 people attended the preview evening;
- 45 attended on Tuesday;
- 44 attended on Wednesday; and
- 65 attended on Thursday.

2.7.2 Due to their public nature, an attendance register was not used at the two libraries.

2.7.3 The latest census information for the South Wye area showed that it is a community of approximately 23,000 people. This suggests that nearly 1% of the local population attended the exhibition at the Three Counties Hotel.

2.8 Requests for Information

2.8.1 A 'tick' list of items which would be made available post-consultation was used at each of the exhibitions. The list included:

- Exhibition panels;
- Additional questionnaires;
- Brochure; and
- Other.

2.8.2 The public were asked to leave contact details and make their requests for these items on the list, with the assistance of members of staff.

2.8.3 During the exhibition, there were 26 requests for information. These requests were dealt with by the close of the consultation on 8 August 2014.

2.8.4 Formal representations were also made at the exhibition, which include queries, comments and suggestions, as well as more specific requests for information.

2.8.5 There were also 24 written letters of representation received following the public exhibition during the consultation period, some of which required direct responses.

3 COMMENTS RECEIVED

3.1 Questionnaires Returned

3.1.1 It was agreed with Herefordshire Council to accept returns of items to the Freepost address up to the 15 August 2014 to allow for postal delays. The final collection of items from the Freepost address and the online survey was made on the 18 August 2014.

3.1.2 By the 18 August 2014, **a total of 231 questionnaires** and **24 letters and submissions** had been received in response to the consultation. 86 of the questionnaire responses were received from the online survey.

3.1.3 221 sets of data from the postcodes provided in the questionnaire responses were plotted using GIS. This showed that 130 of the responses came from the South Wye area, 50 of which were within the 2011 Census Ward for Belmont, and 22 from St Martins and Hinton. 91 responses came from outside the South Wye area.

3.2 Petitions

3.2.1 One petition was received during the consultation period. This was a 73-name petition in support of Route Options SC2 and SC2A for the Southern Link Road.

4 ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRES AND COMMENTS RECEIVED

4.1 Questionnaire

4.1.1 The following section provides a summary of the key findings from each of the questions, followed by a more detailed numerical analysis of the 231 questionnaires received in response to the consultation. Each of the percentage figures given is calculated as a proportion of the total responses received to each of the questions unless otherwise directed, as not all of the questions were answered by each respondent.

4.2 Question 1

4.2.1 This question asked respondents whether they considered that the traffic conditions in the South Wye area needed to be improved. The consensus of opinion from this question was that the traffic conditions in the South Wye area need to be improved.

4.3 Question 2

4.3.1 In response to the question "What do you think are the current transport problems within the South Wye area?" the following items from the list were shown to be the biggest five problems (ranked in order in order of responses received).

1) Traffic congestion on the A465 (a)
2) Delays at the A49/A465 signalised junction (c)
3) Traffic congestion on the A49 (b)
4) Volume of heavy goods vehicles (k)
5) Poor walking/cycling infrastructure (f)

4.3.2 97 of the respondents identified 'Other' problems. Several of the responses covered more than one problem. The issues raised have been grouped and those with the higher percentages are presented below. The percentages shown are as a proportion of the total number of 'Other' responses received.

- Reiterated their views from the list 36% (35)
- Need for a new river crossing 13% (13)
- Traffic lights 11% (11)
- Lack of Park & Ride facilities 5% (5)
- Poor highway maintenance 5% (5)
- Performance of Tesco roundabout 4% (4)
- School traffic 4% (4)
- Rat running 3% (3).

4.4 Question 3

4.4.1 In this question, respondents were asked to select all those measures that they thought may provide a solution to the problems identified in Question 2. The majority opted for a Southern Link Road as being the strongest measure for relieving the transport problems. Increasing space for cyclists, increasing space for buses, and park & ride/park & share facilities also scored very highly. Increasing space for pedestrians achieved the lowest number of responses.

4.4.2 102 people answered the 'Other' category to the question. These have been grouped and are presented below.

4.4.3 Of the measures raised (136):

- 43% were reiterated from the items in the list
- 33% were in support of an additional bypass of Hereford;
- 11% were in support of improvements to the Asda junction;
- 11% wanted to reduce the amount of school traffic;
- 5% suggested rail improvements;
- 4% wanted improvements to the traffic signals across the city; and
- 3% were in support of improved highway maintenance.

4.5 Question 4

4.5.1 In response to this question, respondents were asked to rank the three most important factors in choosing an option. 1 indicated the most important and 3 the least important. In order of number of responses the results are described below.

- The response which received the most 1's was (e) less congestion in Belmont;
- The response which received the most 2's was (a) impact on residential property;
- The response which received the most 3's was (b) impact on landscape; and
- The factor (f) access for tourism, received the lowest number of responses.

4.5.2 39 respondents replied to the 'Other' part of Question 4. 14 of these ranked their response while 25 respondents provided further information. The responses have been grouped together and are presented below:

- 36% of all factors raised were reiterated from the list above;
- Poor noise and air quality was identified 3 times;
- School traffic was highlighted 3 times;
- A bypass was identified twice;
- Traffic conditions at Asda roundabout was identified twice;
- Cost was highlighted twice; and
- Impact upon farming was identified by one person.

4.6 Question 5

4.6.1 In the questionnaire, respondents were given the option to select their preferred option from the four presented on the consultation panels. The percentage preference is shown below.

a) SC2	35%	**b) SC2A**	23%	**c) SC5**	8%	**d) SC7**	8%	**e) No Road**	26%

4.6.2 This illustrates that there was a clear preference for option SC2.

4.6.3 134 respondents provided further information to explain their reasons for choosing an option. 122 comments were raised by respondents regarding their choice of a Southern Link Road. These have been grouped and are presented below.

Reason	SC2	SC2A	SC5	SC7
Affects fewer residents	16	17	0	0
Least impact on landscape	11	9	0	0
Least visually intrusive	4	9	1	0
Most logical	4	3	0	0
Most cost effective	4	1	0	0
Improves noise pollution	2	7	0	0
Best link between A465 and B4349	2	1	2	1
Improve congestion along A465	1	0	0	0
Best opportunity for improved pedestrian/cycle facilities	1	4	0	0
Prevent rat running	1	0	0	0
Most visual impact	1	0	0	0
New road is essential	2	0	0	1
Least worst option	3	4	0	0
Avoids Grafton Wood	0	0	0	3
Slower speed limit	0	0	0	1
Historically planned route	0	0	0	3
Least environmental impact	0	0	0	2

4.6.4 A further 60 comments were raised by respondents regarding their choice of 'No Road'. These have been grouped and are presented below.

Reason	Total
Will not solve current problems	17
Waste of money	11
Improve existing routes	6
No need for the road	11
Negative impact upon environment	3
Impact on rural farmland	1
Spend money on sustainable transport	3
Will increase traffic	3

Disruption during construction	2
Prefer other option	2
Route will encourage HGVs	1

4.6.5 Additional comments were also raised and are summarised below:

- Support for an additional bypass;
- Need to remove traffic signals from Asda roundabout;
- Dualling the A49 from Ross on Wye; and
- Support for bus lanes and sustainable transport.

4.7 Question 6

4.7.1 In response to this question, people were given the opportunity to identify their interests in the scheme. There were a number of choices and respondents were asked to tick all that applied.

4.7.2 The majority of the responses classified themselves as (g) a regular user of the A465. A large proportion of the remaining responses showed that respondents were (f) a regular user of the A49 or (a) a resident of Belmont.

4.7.3 83 people completed the 'Other' part of this question. The interests identified within these responses are summarised below

Interest	Total
Live in Grafton	15
Close to the proposed SLR	10
Walk/cycle in the area	5
Live in Clehonger	3
Live on Haywood Lane	2
Newton Farm	2
Rural area	2
Merryhill Lane	2
Advising local residents	2
Live in Hereford	1
Dinedor	1
Peterchurch	1
South West Herefordshire	1
Puton	1
Allensmore	1
Member of Council	1

4.8 Question 7

4.8.1 As an open question, the responses to this question covered a wide range of issues. These have been grouped or classified for ease of interpretation. There were 103 responses. However, most people covered a limited number of issues in their answers.

4.8.2 Of the issues raised, those categories that were identified the most are shown below. The full records are illustrated in Appendix E.

Total	Issue
26	Support for an alternative bypass of Hereford N-S
17	In support of sustainable transport package
15	In support of SC2A as it affects least people and has the least impact on environment
13	In support of SC2 as it affects least people and has the least impact on environment
12	Do not support bus lanes along the A465
12	Concerned about the cost
10	Support the SLR
9	Do not support a SLR as they do not believe it will work
8	Improvements to Asda roundabout
7	Support for cycle lanes along the A465
7	Congestion on the A465 including parked cars
6	Support for bus lanes along the A465
6	Support for tidal flow lanes along the A465
5	Support park and ride facilities
5	Remove school traffic
5	Impact upon the environment

4.9 Question 8

4.9.1 Respondents were asked whether they attended an exhibition venue. 43% of those who responded to this question attended an exhibition venue.

4.10 Question 9

4.10.1 This question related to the provision of the exhibition. The following is a summary of the results, as a percentage of the responses to each part of the question.

- Did you receive sufficient notification of the exhibition? 37% said yes;
- Did the exhibition meet your expectations? 73% said yes;
- Was the information displayed sufficient to answer any queries that you may have had? 61% said yes;

- Did the venue suit you? 85% said yes;
- Were the opening times sufficiently long? 79% said yes; and
- Were the staff sufficiently informed to answer your questions? 69% said yes.

4.11 Question 10

4.11.1 The responses to this question "How did you hear about the exhibition?" are shown below.

a) Brochure through letter box	b) Local poster	c) Local radio	d) Newspaper advert	e) Word of mouth	f) Other
15%	2%	6%	6%	24%	55%

4.11.2 There were 104 written responses to the 'Other' option. 17% stated that they were invited to the Preview Evening, 23% had obtained brochures from local deposit locations, 12% were notified by either social media or the internet, and 15% were notified by their local MP or Councillor.

4.11.3 10% of respondents said that they did not hear about the exhibition until the exhibition was closed.

4.12 Question 11

4.12.1 There were 76 responses to the question "Do you have any suggestions to improve future exhibitions?" In summary 46% wanted more advertising in advance of the exhibitions, 13% wanted more technical information, 11% wanted either longer opening hours or more locations, 4% were not aware of the consultation, 4% wanted more engaged staff, and 7% wanted refreshments to be made available.

4.13 Detailed Breakdown of Questionnaire Results

4.13.1 The following tables give a more detailed breakdown of the responses to each of the questions.

Question			All	Comments
1	Do you consider that the traffic conditions in the South Wye area need to be improved? (220)	Yes (209)	95%	219 people answered Question 1. % given is as a proportion of the responses received.
		No (11)	5%	

Question			All	Rank	Comments
2	What do you think are the current transport problems within the South Wye area? (Please rank in order with 1 being the most important and 14 being the least important) (221)	a) Traffic congestion on the A465 (211)	3.00	1	The most important current transport problem in the South Wye area was considered to be the traffic congestion on the A465. The least important was 'Other'.
		b) Traffic congestion on the A49 (206)	4.63	3	
		c) Delays at the A49/A465 signalised junction (202)	4.00	2	
		d) Lack of pedestrian crossing facilities (196)	8.73	11	Although 141 people ranked 'Other', only 97 wrote text answers in the available space.
		e) Poor access to public transport (197)	7.07	6	
		f) Poor cycling/walking infrastructure (198)	7.03	5	
		g) Community severance (where traffic inhibits access to goods, services or people) (192)	8.78	12	221 people ranked options in Question 2. 5 people misinterpreted the question and ticked the options they thought applied. 5 respondents did not answer at all.
		h) Poor air quality/noise along the A465 (196)	8.14	9	
		i) Poor air quality/noise along the A49 (194)	9.21	13	
		j) Poor public transport links to rural areas (202)	7.18	7	
		k) Volume of heavy goods vehicles (209)	6.73	4	The figures in the All column represent the Sum of the Responses (e.g. 1+2+3+2+3+1…) divided by the total number of responses (e.g. 211, 206, 202…)
		l) Dependency on car use (200)	7.29	8	
		m) Traffic delays at the A49/Holme Lacy Road/Walnut Tree Avenue junction (195)	8.24	10	
		n) Other. Please specify below. (141)	10.09	14	

Question			All	Comments
3	Which measures would you see as addressing the problems identified in Question 2? (Tick all boxes that apply) (222)	a) Increasing space for pedestrians (52)	23%	222 people answered Question 3. % given is as a proportion of the responses received.
		b) Increasing space for cyclists (94)	42%	
		c) Increasing space for buses (95)	43%	Of the 222 respondents, 9 people ranked the options. Option e) was ranked the highest.
		d) Southern Link Road (125)	56%	
		e) Park & Ride/Park & Share facilities (104)	47%	
		f) Other. Please specify below. (102)	46%	102 people wrote text answers in the available space for 'Other'.

Question			All	Rank	Comments
4	Rank the three most important factors in choosing an option. (1 being the most important; 3 being the least important.) (217)	a) Impact on residential property (106)	1.97	3	The most important factor in choosing an option was considered to be the removal of congestion from Belmont. The least important was access for tourism.
		b) Impact on landscape (101)	1.99	4	
		c) Impact on businesses (52)	2.25	8	
		d) Reducing traffic in communities (111)	2.02	5	39 people wrote text answers in the available space for 'Other'.
		e) Less congestion in Belmont (132)	1.50	1	
		f) Access for tourism (28)	2.46	9	
		g) Improved facilities for non-motorised users (82)	2.04	6	The figures in the All column represent the Sum of the Responses (e.g. 1+2+3+2+3+1…) divided by the total number of responses (e.g. 106, 101…)
		h) Improved access to employment opportunities (70)	2.14	7	
		i) Other. Please specify below. (14)	1.57	2	

Question			All	Comments
5	For the Southern Link Road, which option on the brochure map do you prefer if a new road were part of the solution? (Tick one box) (203)	a) SC2 (71)	35%	203 chose an option for Question 5. % given is as a proportion of the responses received.
		b) SC2A (46)	23%	
		c) SC5 (16)	8%	134 respondents (58% of all respondents) provided an explanation for their chosen option, including 10 people who did not chose an option.
		d) SC7 (17)	8%	
		e) No road (53)	26%	
		f) Please use the space below if you wish to explain your reasons for choosing an option above. (134)	58%	134 respondents provided further information.

Question			All	Comments
6	Which of the following best describes your interest in the study? (Tick those boxes that apply) (228)	a) I am a resident of Belmont (67)	29%	228 people answered Question 6. % given is as a proportion of the responses received.
		b) I am a resident of Lower Bullingham (9)	4%	
		c) I am a local resident of Redhill (5)	2%	
		d) I own land through which one of the routes would pass (8)	4%	
		e) I work at the Rotherwas Industrial Estate (11)	5%	
		f) I am a regular user of the A49 (97)	43%	
		g) I am a regular user of the A465 (137)	60%	
		h) I am a tourist or a visitor to the area (6)	3%	
		i) Other. Please specify below. (84)	37%	

Question		All	Comments
7	Please add any other comments you may have (103)	45%	103 people added further comments. % given is as a proportion of all respondents.

Question			All	Comments
8	Did you attend an exhibition venue? (222)	Yes (96)	43%	222 people answered Question 8. % given is as a proportion of the responses received.
		No (126)	57%	

Question			All	Comments
9	a) Did you receive sufficient notification of the exhibition? (175)	Yes (65)	37%	
		No (110)	63%	
	b) Did the exhibition meet your expectations? (101)	Yes (74)	73%	
		No (27)	27%	
	c) Was the information displayed sufficient to answer any queries that you may have had? (104)	Yes (63)	61%	
		No (41)	39%	
	d) Did the venue suit you? (108)	Yes (92)	85%	
		No (16)	15%	
	e) Were the opening times sufficiently long? (107)	Yes (85)	79%	
		No (22)	21%	
	f) Were the staff sufficiently informed to answer your questions? (95)	Yes (66)	69%	
		No (29)	31%	

Question			All	Comments
10	How did you hear about the exhibition? (Tick all boxes that apply) (190)	a) Brochure through letter box (28)	15%	190 people answered Question 10. % given is as a proportion of the responses received.
		b) Local Poster (4)	2%	
		c) Local Radio (12)	6%	
		d) Newspaper advert (12)	6%	
		e) Word of mouth (46)	24%	
		f) Other. Please specify (104)	55%	

Question		All	Comments
11	Do you have any suggestions to improve future exhibitions? (76)	33%	76 people added further comments. % given is as a proportion of all respondents.

4.14 Analysis of Community Views

4.14.1 Further to the feedback received from the questionnaires, comments have also been analysed from 24 letters and submissions received from local residents. These detailed submissions have been considered and are held on file. The responses received were many and varied, but a number of more common themes were evident. These are summarised below.

4.14.2 Various traffic problems along the A465 Belmont Road were highlighted, including cars parking, bus stops creating hold ups, and congestion at junctions, which is creating poor air quality and noise. Several people, however, mentioned that the Highway Agency have reported a reduction in traffic volume on the A49 in recent years.

4.14.3 Many of the letters from local residents supported funding the sustainable transport measures proposed in the SWTP as a way to tackle the congestion problems. Support was given to improving and widening footways, and making routes and crossings safer. Whilst it was recognised that there is existing cycle infrastructure in the South Wye area that had not been detailed in the exhibition panels, it was acknowledged that perhaps more was needed to encourage use of the routes, by making the routes safer and more welcoming.

4.14.4 Whilst there was some support for introducing a bus lane to the A465, a popular comment was the need to increase the bus services first. People wanted to see bus laybys, which would remove them from the carriageway when they are stopped to limit traffic from being held up. Concern was raised that creating a bus lane could make congestion worse for other road users, and perhaps the space could be used to create tidal flow lanes. There was, however, support for a park & ride scheme to be included in the package.

4.14.5 A common response involved the high level of traffic during school terms, when congestion is at its worst, and the recognition of this reducing during the school holidays. Suggestions therefore included encouraging parents to walk their children to school instead of using their cars.

4.14.6 With regards to the proposed Southern Link Road, some letters highlighted the impacts that need to be taken into consideration. These include the impact on farming and livelihoods given the rural location. The impact to biodiversity and the environment was highlighted as a worry. However, there was an examination of the status of Hayleasow Wood as an “Ancient Woodland”, as it was felled in the 1960s.

4.14.7 Concern was raised over the impact to the landscape and the blight on the countryside, which could reduce tourism. There was also concern over heritage assets, including the potential damage to the setting of Grade II* listed buildings. It was noted that there was not enough mention of mitigation measures, including reducing the visual impact of the road.

4.14.8 People were also concerned that not enough evidence had been provided to justify the potential cost of the new road, and debated whether it would solve the current congestion problems. People would have liked to have seen detailed traffic figures to show the predicted use of the new road. Some people would have preferred to see the money being spent on public transport and traffic management. Others considered that they could not be objective without a detailed breakdown of the costs associated with each route.

4.14.9 It was acknowledged that the assertion in the exhibition that the new road will unlock barriers to development of the Hereford Enterprise Zone (HEZ) and further housing development is misleading, as the location would never have been chosen and approved if significant barriers to development existed. Some also highlighted that the Rotherwas Relief Road was built for this purpose and is under-used. Some were also uncomfortable with the outcome that the new road would help unlock further housing development, as they felt more housing would make traffic worse.

4.14.10 There were mixed views regarding the process, with some stating that a wider choice of routes for the Southern Link Road should have been included at this public consultation, and others feeling that the process should have been further along with a preferred route already chosen. There is the opinion that there should "be more meetings, more publicity and more incentives for people who want to attend them", whilst others are "extremely anxious for this project to go ahead with no opportunity for legal delays".

4.14.11 The planning process was also considered. It was noted that the preferred routes included in this consultation differ from the historically established alignment.

4.14.12 It was also debated which road choice would affect residents the most, with most responses concluding that the alignments for SC2 and SC2A would affect fewer properties.

4.14.13 Questions over the methodology applied to the Appraisal Summary Tables used to score each alignment have been put forward.

4.14.14 Some local residents have requested that the proposed alignments be considered in relation to their land and properties, and therefore perhaps slightly tweaked in order to achieve a more preferable route.

4.15 Analysis of Social Media Responses

4.15.1 Two responses on Facebook highlighted the inconsistencies of the costs associated with the package that have been detailed at various stages throughout the process.

4.15.2 Opinions of the cause of the congestion problems in the South Wye area were also given, including an observation that traffic bottlenecks at the Greyfriars Bridge, with local vehicles wanting to cross from the south to the city centre, north of the river. The feedback includes the suggestion that there needs to be another way to cross the river.

4.15.3 Twitter was used to advertise the public exhibition, both by Herefordshire Council and local MP Jesse Norman. However, no members of the public used this website to provide feedback.

4.16 Analysis of Stakeholder Views

4.16.1 **Hereford City Council** has provided feedback on the proposals, and has commented that improving facilities for cyclists generally is highly desirable. It recognises that there may be some difficulties installing a cycle lane on the length of the Belmont Road, given the narrow width at points. If safe separation can be achieved without increasing congestion on an over-crowded road, then the Council would support such a plan. It has been acknowledged that local Councillors regard congestion in Belmont Road as a real concern, which they point out is echoed in the community consultation responses.

4.16.2 **The Highways Agency** has provided its views in writing. It acknowledges the commitment of £34.98 million towards the SWTP from the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) single growth fund settlement. It notes that the SWTP provides a series of complementary transport measures, which is welcomed in principle. It supports the proposed improvements to walking and cycling on the A465, but would like to understand the traffic implications to the A49 if a bus priority measure were to be included. The Agency notes that the route alignment options appear to reflect the need to consider local topography. It supports the location of the junction with the A49 at the roundabout with the Rotherwas Access Road in principle, provided assessments of capacity are undertaken. The Agency requests that the design standards and alignment of the scheme are considered with reference to the Western Relief Road, should the Council's Submission Draft Core Strategy be approved.

4.16.3 **English Heritage** has provided its views in writing. The outlined that they were not directly consulted on the recent consultation of the four options. They acknowledge that there are a number of heritage assets, both designated and undesignated that may be affected by the proposed routes. They outline that a more detailed assessment of the harm to the significance of the heritage assets, including their settings will be required. They also recognise that as a statutory agency they will be engaged through any future planning application and EIA stage, although they want to highlight that the Council should ensure that all the appropriate evidence base and assessment has been undertaken in identifying the preferred route in the first instance.

4.16.4 **Jesse Norman MP** has provided a written response to the consultation in his capacity as Member of Parliament for Hereford and South Herefordshire. He welcomes the objectives of the SWTP, and is broadly in favour of the measures proposed to improve accessibility and reduce congestion in Hereford. He does, however, have some caveats and concerns, including the need to have costings and detailed traffic modelling in order to appraise the effect of the Southern Link Road. He would like to see a detailed cost-benefit analysis before approval. He also recognises the need for sensitivity towards the environment and local residents, and urges that their concerns are listened to. He welcomes proposals to provide additional pedestrian crossings, and would like to see existing cycle infrastructure made safer and more welcoming. He has concerns over the proposed bus lane, for instance how it would be monitored, and if it is indeed necessary given the cuts to bus services.

4.16.5 All letters, submissions, and correspondence that have been received regarding the consultation have been considered and are held on file.

5 CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Effectiveness of Consultation

5.1.1 The total attendance at the exhibitions was 199 people, with a total number of responses to questionnaires of 231. 217 of the responses came from within the County of Herefordshire. 50 of these were from residents of Belmont, and 22 were from St Martins and Hinton.

5.1.2 It is considered that the consultation, which has followed the principles of the guidance outlined in WebTAG, has been effective in terms of the local coverage and attendance. Although a criticism by the public is that there should have been greater publicity in the run up to the Public Consultation Exhibition. It is clear from the consultation that, with such a large study area, affecting a combination of rural, urban, farming and industrial landscapes, the views are wide-ranging.

5.2 Outstanding Actions

5.2.1 Following issues raised during the consultation, members of the public have suggested alternative alignments to the Southern Link Road options. These alternative alignments have been reviewed, and are addressed within the South Wye Transport Package Preferred Option Report.

5.3 Summary of Public Consultation Results

5.3.1 The majority of those members of the public who completed and returned questionnaires to the consultation, considered themselves to be either regular users of the A465 or A49, or a resident of Belmont.

5.3.2 The responses showed that there was clear support for the opinion that the traffic conditions in the South Wye area need to be improved.

5.3.3 The public identified congestion along the A465, the A49 and at the A49/A465 junction as the main transport problems within the area. The amount of HGVs and accessibility to public transport were regularly mentioned as other key problems.

5.3.4 The overall theme which appeared to consolidate across the majority of the responses was that a Southern Link Road is necessary, with a combination of more cycling infrastructure and greater public transport provision.

5.3.5 It was possible to identify the likely preferred route in the opinion of the public who responded to the public consultation as SC2. This option was also supported by a 73-name petition, and 'scored' highly in the appraisal of the SLR options. The alternative 'No Road' option to the SLR received the second highest number of positive responses. The two SLR options that have a northern alignment, SC5 and SC7, received the lowest amount of support from the public.

5.3.6 There was also strong support for an alternative bypass via a second river crossing of the Wye, either to the west or east of Hereford, although this was not presented as an option during the consultation.

Appendix A

Public Consultation Brochure

Herefordshire Council

July 2014

South Wye Transport Package











PARSONS BRINCKERHOFF

Balfour Beatty Living Places

Welcome

Herefordshire Council is looking at ways to improve the transport conditions in the South Wye area of Hereford as part of the council's overall strategy for the city.

We would like your views on the transportation problems and options. Herefordshire Council is going to hold free public exhibitions which will explain these options in more detail. Information on these exhibitions is below and on the back of this brochure.

This brochure provides information on:

- The forthcoming public exhibitions in Hereford
- The development of the study and descriptions of the transport improvement options
- How you can make comments on the options
- What happens next

Exhibition times and venue

Date	Venue	Time
Tuesday 1 July 2014	Three Counties Hotel, Hereford	12:00 – 20:00
Wednesday 2 July 2014		
Thursday 3 July 2014		



Three Counties Hotel, Hereford

Purpose of the study

The aim of the South Wye Transport Package is to promote Herefordshire Council's and the Marches Local Enterprise Partnership's (LEP) aspirations for economic growth within Hereford while tackling the specific problems identified within the South Wye area. They aim to promote economic development by unlocking the barriers for both housing and economic growth, including land at the Hereford Enterprise Zone (HEZ).

Specific problems identified within the South Wye area have predominantly been caused by the level of congestion along the A465. This has resulted in poor levels of air quality, noise, and public transport usage which have resulted in large numbers of short distance trips being made by car. This in turn has led to less physical activity resulting in greater health problems.

Objectives for the study:

- Reduce congestion and delay
- Enable access, particularly to developments such as the HEZ
- Reduce the growth in emissions such as CO2, NOx and PM10s
- Reduce traffic noise
- Encourage physical activity
- Reduce accidents

The results of the appraisal to date are summarised in this brochure and will be available in more detail at the public exhibitions.

Future problems

If nothing is done we expect increased congestion along the A465 as a result of economic growth with the following consequences:

- Further severance within the community due to greater levels of traffic
- Lower accessibility to public transport and less use of roads for walking/cycling resulting in less physical activity
- Longer public transport journey times due to buses being stuck in greater queues
- An increase in heavy good vehicles creating more noise, air pollutants and further reduction in perceived pedestrian and cyclist safety
- Reduced network resilience as greater traffic flow is constrained to two routes
- Further social deprivation as a result of constrained economic and housing development

Package assembly

We have identified a number of possible elements that could address the problems and objectives of the study. These elements cover many different transportation modes, strategies and interventions. The elements have been grouped into three key approaches which are:

Traffic Max

This approach aims to generate maximum capacity for vehicles within the South Wye area by either widening the A465 to accommodate two lanes in each direction, grade separation of the A49/A465 junction or the removal of traffic signals from the A49/A465 junction.

Sustainable Transport Max

This approach aims to reduce the use of the private car through improvements to public transport, the introduction of bus lanes, segregated cycle routes and lanes, pedestrian crossings, the introduction of a tree line boulevard along the A465 or small localised improvements.

New Southern Link Road

This approach aims to generate additional capacity with new infrastructure to the south of Hereford.

Package of measures assessment

A high level qualitative assessment has been undertaken on the three approaches and is summarised below.

The assessment illustrates that none of the three approaches satisfies all of the study objectives. The 'Traffic Max' approach does not provide substantial benefit within the South Wye area nor does it satisfy any of the study objectives. Therefore this approach has not been deemed feasible and did not undergo further assessment

The 'Sustainable Max' and the 'New Southern Link Road' contribute to the delivery of the study objectives but do not satisfy all of the objectives in isolation. Therefore the recommendation for the South Wye Transport Package is to combine the 'New Southern Link Road' with elements of the 'Sustainable Transport Max' approach.

	Package approach			
Objectives	**Traffic Max**	**Sustainable Transport Max**	**New Southern Link Road (SLR)**	**Sustainable Transport Max and New SLR**
Reduce congestion and delay	–	–	✓	✓
Enable access, particularly to developments such as the HEZ	x	x	✓	✓
Reduce the growth in emissions such as CO2, NOx and PM10s	x	✓	–	✓
Reduce traffic noise	x	✓	–	✓
Encourage physical activity	x	✓	–	✓
Reduce accidents	–	–	✓	✓

x Does not meet objective
– Partially meets objective
✓ Fully meets objective

Sustainable Transport Max

The Sustainable Transport Max is shown schematically on page 6 and indicates the potential elements that could be used in a preferred Sustainable Transport Max option. It includes the inbound bus lane along the A465 as further appraisal has indicated that the element offers the greatest economic benefits, including time savings and greater service reliability for bus users. The bus lane could be used by bicycles, and improvements to crossing facilities on the A465 will offset any adverse severance impacts due to the widening of the carriageway. The bus lane would require the removal of some residents parking on the A465.

The scheme will also be complimented with a Personalised Travel Planning programme for both the Belmont and Holme Lacy Road areas.

New Southern Link Road

The Southern Link Road involves the construction of a new section of road between the A49 Ross Road/Rotherwas Access Road Roundabout to the A465 and the B4349 Clehonger Road. A link to Clehonger Road has been included to overcome the current poor visibility of the existing junction with the A465.

In total eight options were initially developed. As further detailed work and appraisal has been undertaken on these options, four routes have been identified as affecting the ancient woodland of Newton Coppice. National policy now considers ancient woodland as an irreplaceable habitat which is unlikely to be fully mitigated. These options are therefore not feasible.

The remaining options are described below and illustrated on page 7 of this brochure:

Route Option SC2

Involves the construction of a new roundabout on the A465. The road passes through the centre of Grafton Wood and continues westwards over Grafton Lane and Withy Brook. Thereafter, it straightens up immediately heading in a north-west direction to the A465.

Route Option SC2A

The alignment is identical to SC2, except that the new road section will pass underneath the railway line.

Route Option SC5

Passes through the northern part of Grafton Wood and in a north-westerly direction, crosses the densely wooded area between Grafton Lane and Withy Brook before turning west to cross underneath the railway line. The route continues through Merry Hill and under Haywood Lane towards the A465.

Route Option SC7

Passes through the northern tip of Grafton Wood but avoids the southern extent of the dense wooded area between Grafton Lane and Withy Brook. It then runs to the south of Merryhill Lane before cutting through Merry Hill and under Haywood Lane. From this location the road heads in a westerly direction to the A465.

All of these options would include a weight restriction on the A465 at the bridge of the Great Western Way, with supporting signage at either end of Belmont Road.



New Southern Link Road appraisal

To identify the overall success of the New Southern Link Road an appraisal has been undertaken on the four feasible options combined with Sustainable Transport Max. The appraisal process carefully considers all the impacts – positive and negative done by considering the scheme against a standard set of criteria, set out by the Department for Transport. This then enables the council to make an informed decision.

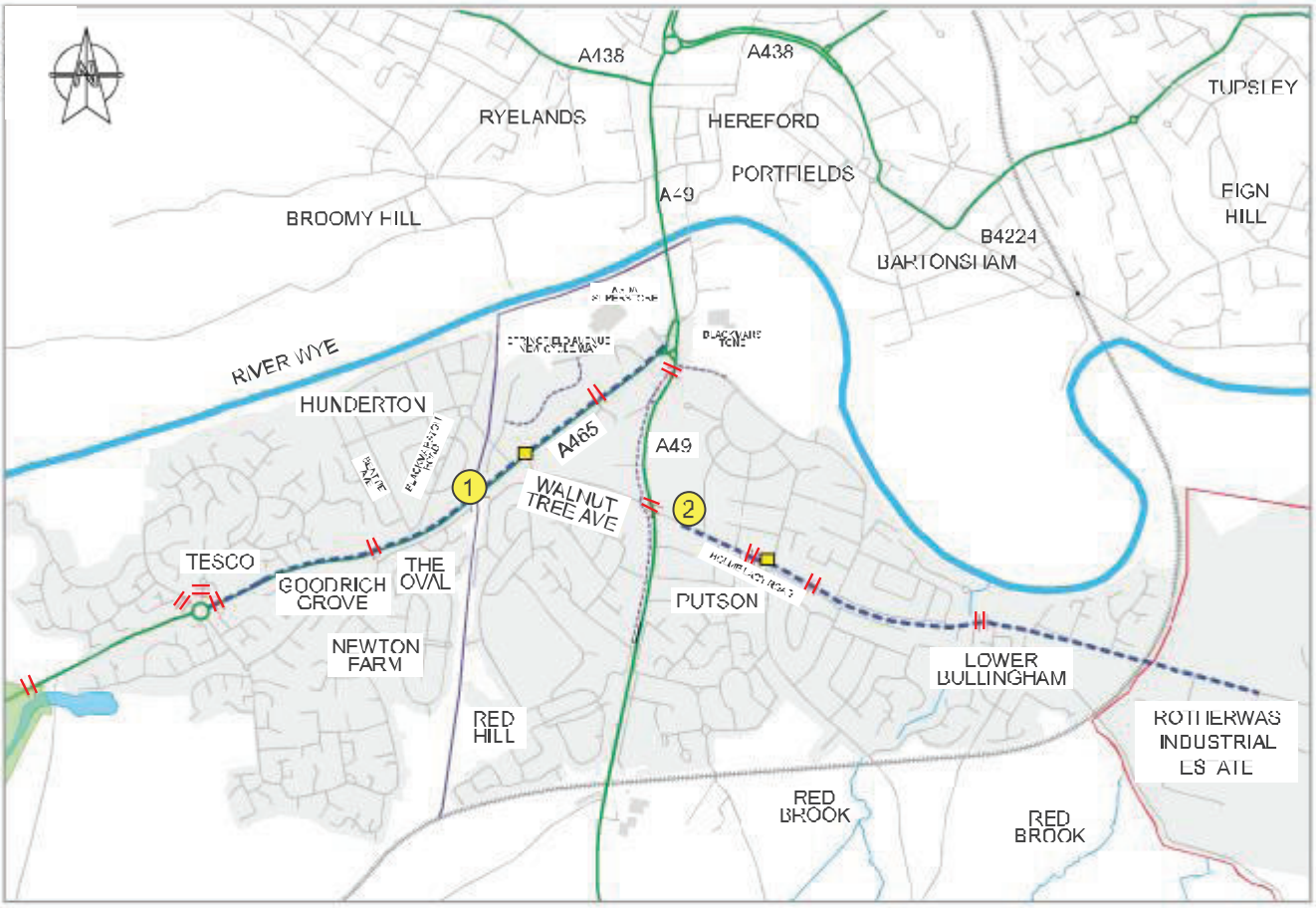
Appraisal criteria	SC2	SC2A	SC5	SC7
Economy				
Business users and transport providers	1	1	1	1
Reliability impact on business users	1	1	1	1
Regeneration	3	3	3	3
Wider impacts	2	2	2	2
Environment				
Noise	-3	-3	-3	-3
Air quality (LOCAL)	-2	-2	-2	-2
Greenhouse gases	-1	-1	-1	-1
Landscape/townscape	-2	-2	-3	-2
Historic environment	-1.5	-1.5	-1.5	-1.5
Biodiversity	-2	-2	-2	-1.5
Water environment	-1	-1	-1	-1
Social				
Commuting and other users	1	1	1	1
Reliability impact on commuting and other users	1	1	1	1
Physical activity	-2	-2	-2	-2
Journey quality	2	2	1	1
Accidents	2	2	2	2
Security	2	2	2	2
Access to services	2	2	2	2
Affordability	1	1	1	1
Severance	1	1	1	1
Option and non-use values	0	0	0	0
Public accounts				
Cost to broad transport budget	2	1	0	0
Indirect tax revenues	0	0	0	0
Total	**6.5**	**5.5**	**2.5**	**4**

Note: The scores are made up of criteria under the main headings of Economy, Environment, Social and Public Accounts. The range for the scores is from -3 (Major Adverse), to 0 (Neutral), to -3 (Major Beneficial).

The results of the appraisal show that all of the options provide many benefits to the economy by unlocking barriers to the development of the Hereford Enterprise Zone and further housing development. They all reduce congestion and improve journey times. There are also negative impacts to the environment, including increasing road traffic noise, reducing air quality and impacts to the landscape.

Overall the appraisal illustrates that **option SC2 is the best performing option for New Southern Link Road.**

Sustainable Transport Max



Key

- Proposed Bus and Cycle Way
- Proposed Cycle Way
- A Road
- Pedestrian/cycle crossing improvement
- Junction improvement
- Existing Cycle Way to be improved
- Rotherwas Industrial Estate

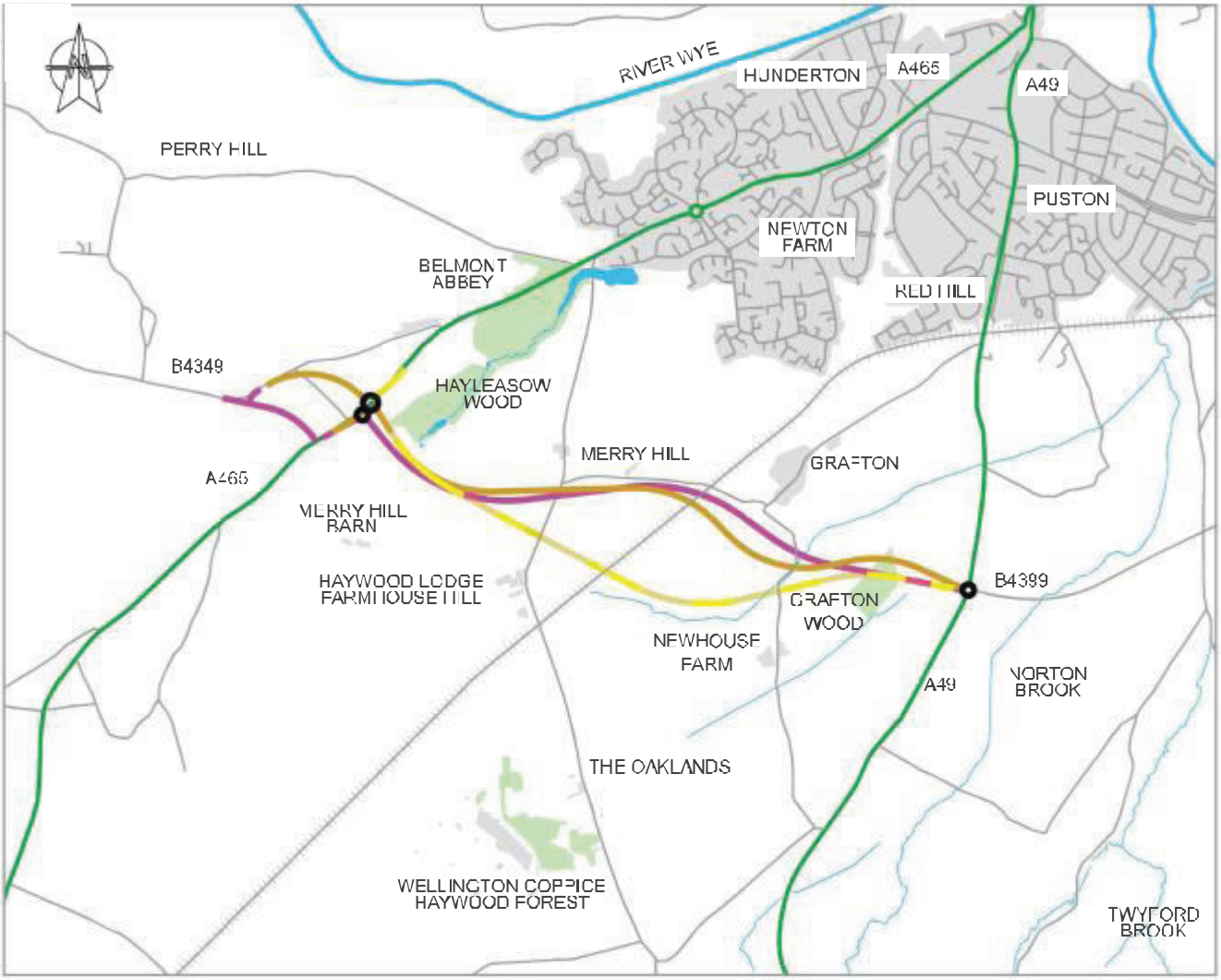


Photomontage illustrating a northbound bus lane on the A465



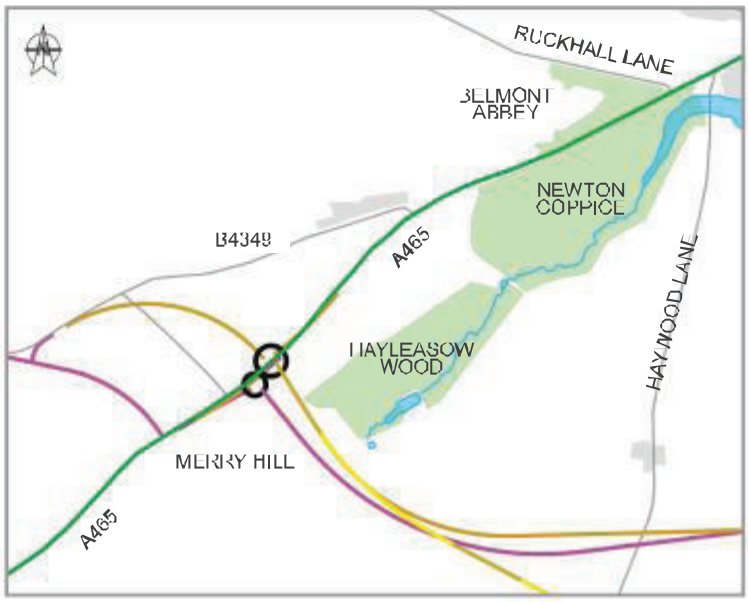
Photomontage illustrating a westbound bus lane along Holme Lacy Road

New Southern Link Road options



Key

- SC2
- SC2A
- SC5
- SC7
- RBT
- Woodland
- A Road
- B Road



Herefordshire Council

July 2014

South Wye Transport Package

How can you help?

You can give your views on the study by returning the enclosed questionnaire by 8 August 2014.

We recommend that you visit one of the public exhibitions where representatives from Herefordshire Council and their consultants will be available to answer your questions and explain the study in more detail.

Exhibition times and venue

Date	Venue	Time
Tuesday 1 July 2014	Three Counties Hotel, Hereford	12:00 – 20:00
Wednesday 2 July 2014		
Thursday 3 July 2014		

What happens next?

Completed questionnaires and any other comments received in response to this Public Consultation will be considered carefully by Herefordshire Council, Balfour Beatty Living Places and Parsons Brinckerhoff. A decision will then be made on a preferred route for the New Southern Link Road in early Autumn.

How to make an enquiry

Contact Herefordshire Council with your feedback or queries by:

- Attending one of the public exhibitions in Hereford
- Returning the questionnaire to the Freepost address

Access to information

Herefordshire Council will use the questionnaires and any further information from the public to provide evidence for developing ways to improve transport in the South Wye area. The questionnaire will be disposed of securely after it has served this purpose. A summary of the responses to the consultation will be published, a list comprising of names and postal towns (e.g. Mr A N Other, Hereford) of those who have responded will be included. If you do not wish to be identified, even as in the proposed example, you will need to advise us by including a note in your response or tick the required box on the questionnaire.

Herefordshire Council is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000, (FoI) and Environmental Information Regulations (EIRs) which means that this questionnaire may be released in response to a request for information. However, all personal data on your form will be treated in line with our obligations under the Data Protection Act, 1998.

If you are unable to attend the public exhibition, please visit **www.herefordshire.go.uk/south-wye-transport-package** from the 1 July 2014 for up to date information on the SWTP.

You can also join us on Facebook at **www.facebook.com/HfdsCouncil** and Twitter **@HfdsCouncil** where we will welcome your opinions and feedback.

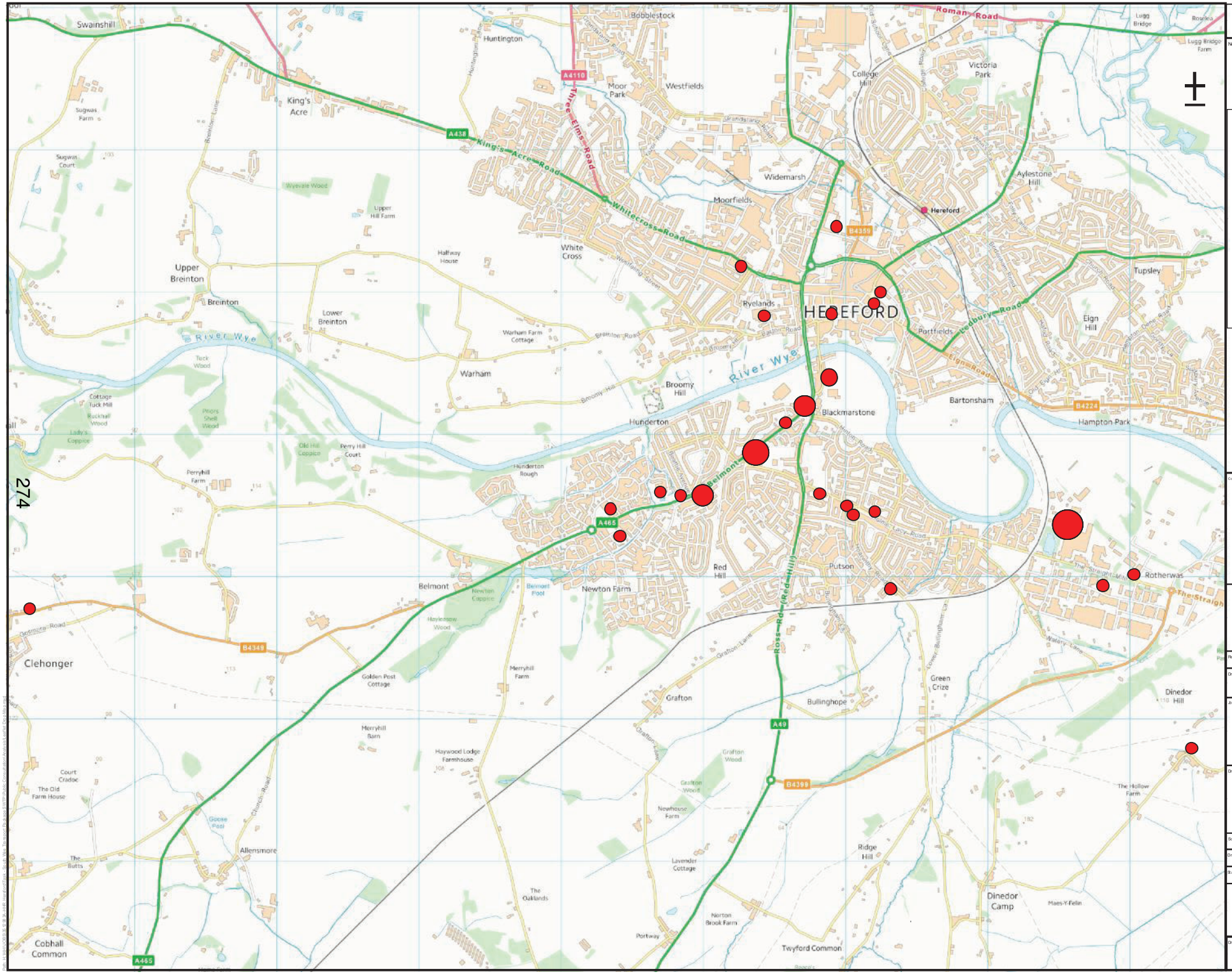
This brochure and supporting documentation is available in alternative formats on request.

PARSONS BRINCKERHOFF

Balfour Beatty Living Places

Appendix B

Leaflet Drop Locations



274

THIS DRAWING MAYBE USED ONLY FOR THE PURPOSE INTENDED AND ONLY WRITTEN DIMENSIONS SHALL BE USED

Notes

Key

Number of drop locations according to postcode

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

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2011

Revision Details	By	Date	Suffix
	Check		

Drawing Status

FINAL

Job Title

3512983A-HHR
South Wye Transport Package

Drawing Title

Leaflet Drop Locations

Scale at A1 1:24,000

Drawn	Approved
Alison Simpson	Jason Collins

Stage 1 check	Stage 2 check	Originated	Date
			19/09/2014

PARSONS BRINCKERHOFF

27-29 Cathedral Road,
Cardiff, CF11 9HA
Tel: 029 20 827000 Fax: 029 20 827001

Drawing Number: Leaflet Drop Map

Rev: A

Appendix C

Public Consultation Questionnaire

South Wye Transport Package

PUBLIC CONSULTATION QUESTIONNAIRE

We would like to know your views on the options for improving transport conditions in the South Wye area with a package of measures including a new Southern Link Road as part of the council's overall strategy for Hereford. The consultation brochure and the exhibition explain the options and their likely effects. Please complete the questionnaire below by marking the relevant boxes.

Your views will be treated in confidence and will be taken into account in making decisions about the scheme. Confidentiality, privacy and data protection issues are explained at the end of this questionnaire and in the consultation brochure in full under the heading Access to Information.

Name: ……

Address: ……
……
……

Please print your name, address and post code in CAPITALS.

Post Code: ……

<u>This is only required to check the geographical origin of responses</u>.

Question 1

	Yes	No
Do you consider that the traffic conditions in the South Wye area need to be improved?		

Question 2

What do you think are the current transport problems within the South Wye area? **(Please rank in order, with 1 being the most important and 14 being the least important)**

a) Traffic congestion on the A465	**a)**
b) Traffic congestion on the A49	**b)**
c) Delays at the A49/A465 signalised junction	**c)**
d) Lack of pedestrian crossing facilities	**d)**
e) Poor access to public transport	**e)**
f) Poor cycling/walking infrastructure	**f)**
g) Community severance (where traffic inhibits access to goods, services or people)	**g)**
h) Poor air quality/noise along the A465	**h)**
i) Poor air quality/noise along the A49	**i)**
j) Poor public transport links to rural areas	**j)**
k) Volume of heavy goods vehicles	**k)**
l) Dependency on car use	**l)**
m) Traffic delays at the A49/Holme Lacy/ Walnut Tree Avenue junction	**m)**
n) Other. Please specify below.	**n)**

……

……

……

……

Question 3

Which measures would you see as addressing the problems identified in Question 2? **(Tick all boxes that apply)**

a) Increasing space for pedestrians	**a)**	
b) Increasing space for cyclists	**b)**	
c) Increasing space for buses	**c)**	
d) Southern Link Road	**d)**	
e) Park & Ride / Park & Share facilities	**e)**	
f) Other. Please specify below.	**f)**	

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Question 4

Rank the **three** most important factors in choosing an option. **(1 being the most important; 3 being the least important.)**

a) Impact on residential property	**a)**	
b) Impact on landscape	**b)**	
c) Impact on businesses	**c)**	
d) Reducing traffic in communities	**d)**	
e) Less congestion in Belmont	**e)**	
f) Access for tourism	**f)**	
g) Improved facilities for non-motorised users	**g)**	
h) Improved access to employment opportunities	**h)**	
i) Other. Please specify below.	**i)**	

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Question 5

For the Southern Link Road, which option on the brochure map do you prefer if a new road were part of the solution? **(Tick one box)**

a) SC2	**b)** SC2A	**c)** SC5	**d)** SC7	**e)** No road

Please use the space below if you wish to explain your reasons for choosing an option above.

……..……..

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Question 6

Which of the following **best** describes your interest in the study? **(Tick those boxes that apply)**

a) I am a resident of Belmont	**a)**	
b) I am a resident of Lower Bullingham	**b)**	
c) I am a local resident of Redhill	**c)**	
d) I own land through which one of the routes would pass	**d)**	
e) I work at the Rotherwas Industrial Estate	**e)**	
f) I am a regular user of the A49	**f)**	
g) I am a regular user of the A465	**g)**	
h) I am a tourist or a visitor to the area	**h)**	
i) Other. Please specify below.	**i)**	

……..……..……..……..

Question 7

Please add any other comments you may have (continue on separate paper if necessary).

……

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……

We would appreciate your feedback on the exhibition.

Question 8

Did you attend an exhibition venue?

Yes	No

Question 9

	Yes	No
a) Did you receive sufficient notification of the exhibition?		
b) Did the exhibition meet your expectations?		
c) Was the information displayed sufficient to answer any queries that you may have had?		
d) Did the venue suit you?		
e) Were the opening times sufficiently long?		
f) Were the staff sufficiently informed to answer your questions?		

Question 10

How did you hear about this exhibition? **(Tick all boxes that apply)**

a) Brochure through letter box		**b)** Local poster		**c)** Local radio		**d)** Newspaper advert		**e)** Word of mouth		**f)** Other. Please specify	

f) Other ……

Question 11

Do you have any suggestions to improve future exhibitions?

……

Access to Information

Herefordshire Council and its consultants will use the questionnaires to provide evidence for developing ways to improve transport in the South Wye area. The questionnaires will be disposed of securely after they have served this purpose. A summary of the responses to the consultation will be published and a list comprising of names and postal towns (e.g. Mr A N Other, Belmont) of those who have responded will be included. If you do not wish to be identified, even as in the proposed example, please tick the following box. ☐

Herefordshire Council is subject to the Freedom of Information Act, 2000, (FoI) and Environmental Information Regulations (EIRs) which means that the questionnaires may be released in response to a request for information. However, all personal data on your form will be treated in line with our obligations under the Data Protection Act, 1998.

Alternative formats of this questionnaire are available upon request

FREEPOST: RTHL-BBZH-JATH,
Balfour Beatty Living Places,
Unit 3,
Thorn Business Park,
Rotherwas,
HEREFORD.
HR2 6JT

Please return the questionnaire and feedback by 8 August 2014

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE

Appendix D

Public Exhibition Panels

SOUTH WYE TRANSPORT PACKAGE

WELCOME

PUBLIC CONSULTATION EXHIBITION

Welcome to the Public Consultation Exhibition for the South Wye Transport Package.

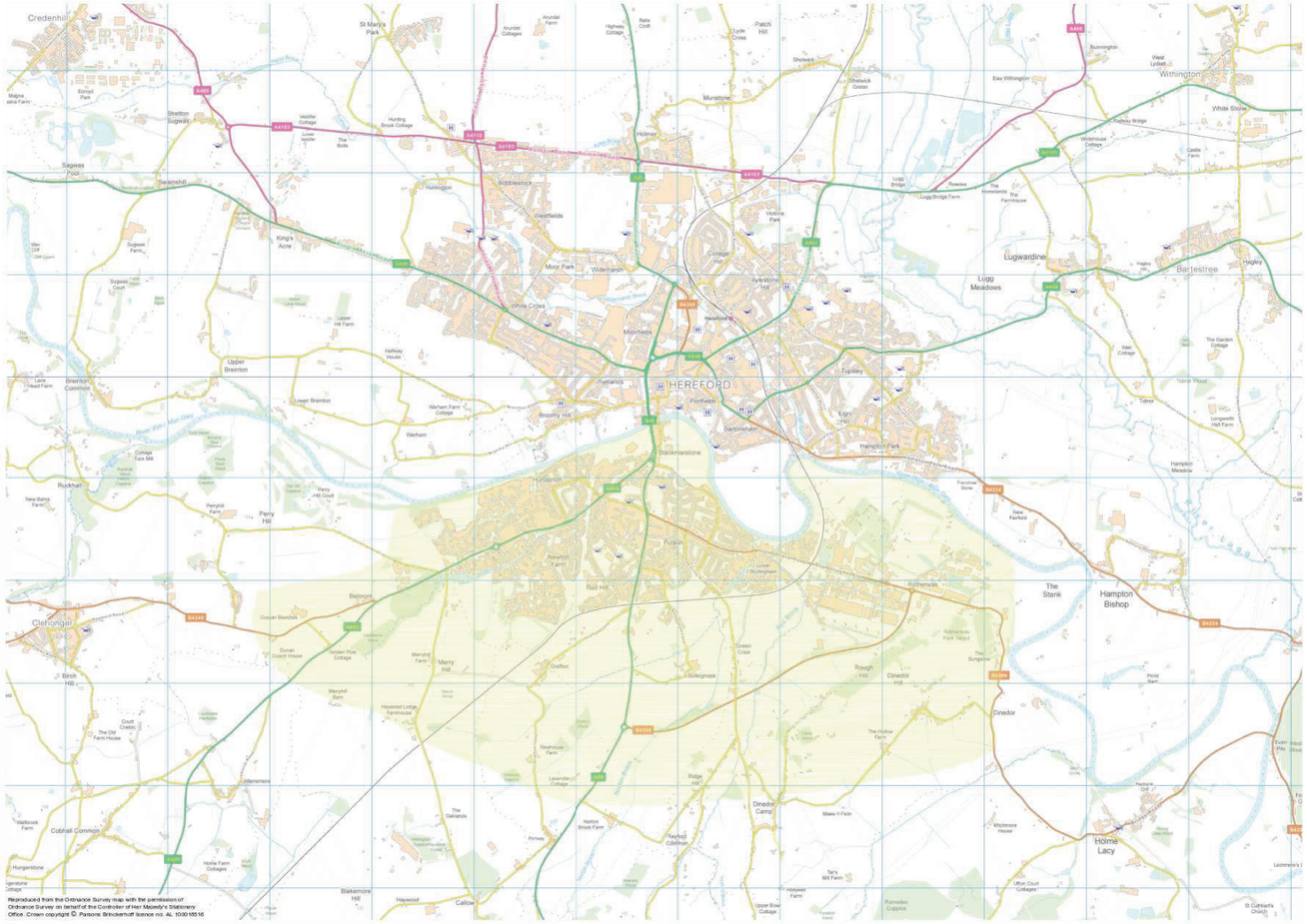
Herefordshire Council is studying ways to improve the transport conditions in the South Wye area of Hereford. The South Wye Transport Package could consist of a number of different elements, both sustainable use of the existing transport network and other new schemes such as a new Southern Link Road (SLR).

The process we have followed whilst developing the options presented in the consultation includes:

- Review of problems within the South Wye area;
- Assessment of council policy regarding economic development within Hereford;
- Appraisal of different elements to ensure that the package best deals with existing problems and future opportunities;
- Refinement and appraisal of SLR options; and
- Recommendation of a preferred option for the SLR, of which we are now seeking your views.

KEY

South Wye Transport Package Study Area



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To assist your understanding of the study, there are representatives from Herefordshire Council, Balfour Beatty Living Places, and Parsons Brinckerhoff available to answer your questions.

There is a questionnaire you can fill in whilst at the exhibition or alternatively, you can return it to us using the freepost address provided. There is also information on how you can comment further on the consultation on the final exhibition board. The consultation runs from **1st July** until **8th August 2014**. Your feedback is very important to us.

Thank you.



Balfour Beatty Living Places

In partnership with Herefordshire Council

PARSONS BRINCKERHOFF

HISTORY AND CONTEXT

Hereford is the main service centre and largest urban area in Herefordshire, with a population of 54,850, of which two thirds live south of the River Wye. The city of Hereford is the county's main centre for employment, administration, health, education and shopping.

The Marches Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Strategic Economic Plan sets out how the LEP aims to unlock growth and prosperity across the area. It sets out priorities in addressing areas of business need including transport, education and investment need whilst unlocking land for housing and employment growth.

Herefordshire Council's emerging Core Strategy has set objectives to promote:

- *social progress (supporting strong communities by meeting housing, education and health, transport and infrastructure needs) including the development of 1,000 homes at Bullingham;*
- *economic prosperity (supporting new jobs, area regeneration, business, tourism and retail); and*
- *environmental quality (addressing climate change, protecting and enhancing the environmental assets of the county).'*

A 'Hereford Relief Road' has been identified as a key strategic transport proposal to deliver the council's Core Strategy.



Herefordshire Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP) identifies that that efficient transport networks is essential and important for the county's economy, the ability to access services and maintain independence. The LTP therefore sets objectives which are to:

- *reduce short distance car based trips and the impact of car access;*
- *support regeneration and the successful investment in jobs at the Rotherwas Enterprise Zone;*
- *ensure that the County's highway network remains fit for purpose and is safe; and*
- *provide alternatives so that commuters could reduce their car use and adopt healthier lifestyles.*

Part of Rotherwas Estate was awarded Enterprise Zone status in 2011. This means the area will encourage the creation of new businesses and jobs. Improvements to existing infrastructure are therefore key to the delivery of the Hereford Enterprise Zone (HEZ).

The aim of the South Wye Transport Package is to facilitate the development of these objectives and unlock barriers to their success within the South Wye area.

EXISTING CONDITIONS AND PROBLEMS

Information on the existing transport conditions and problems within the South Wye area have been collected from a number of sources over the course of the study. These have identified the following:

- Large volume of traffic on the A465 and A49 causes severance within the community. People are reluctant to walk or cycle to services such as The Oval as they have to cross the A465 with the associated reduction in the perceived level of safety;
- High proportion of short distance trips being made by car which leads to less physical activity and obesity;
- Long journey times and unreliable service for public transport users as the services get stuck in queues of traffic;
- High levels of heavy goods vehicles make the road noisy and intimidating;
- Traffic congestion inhibiting further development of the Herefordshire Enterprise Zone (HEZ) and additional housing developments within the city;
- Large number of shunt type accidents as well as a number of other types of accident;
- Poor public transport links to rural areas, owing to high congestion on key routes;
- Low level of resilience in network to blockages on the River Wye crossing;
- Poor air quality resulting in an Air Quality Management Area along the A49 from the junction of the A465 junction into Hereford; and
- Worsening areas of social deprivation within the Belmont area.



Traffic congestion along A465



Congestion causes rat running through rural communities



Poor pedestrian crossing facilities along A465



Traffic congestion on approach to A465/A49 junction

Future Problems

If nothing is done, traffic flows on the A465 are forecast to increase over time as a result of the economic growth. We can therefore expect increased congestion along the A465 with the following consequences:

- Further severance within the community due to greater levels of traffic;
- Lower accessibility to public transport and the use of roads for walking/cycling resulting in less physical activity and higher levels of obesity and health;
- Longer public transport journey times due to buses being stuck in greater queues;
- Increase in heavy good vehicles creating more noise, air pollutants and further reduction in perceived pedestrian and cyclist safety;
- Reduced network resilience as greater traffic flow is constrained to two routes; and
- Further social deprivation as a result of constrained economic and housing development.

SOUTH WYE TRANSPORT PACKAGE

OBJECTIVES

The Marches LEP has identified Hereford as an Urban Powerhouse which will play a vital part in the accelerated growth for the LEP area. To enable this development, including land at the HEZ, will require the unlocking of land for both housing and employment growth. This is currently being constrained by the high levels of congestion across the city.

Herefordshire Council's emerging Core Strategy also aims to promote social progress, economic prosperity and environmental quality through regeneration, supporting strong communities whilst protecting and enhancing the county's environmental assets.

The Local Transport Plan outlines the strategy to support the economic growth and social inclusion within the county by providing an efficient transport network and improving accessibility to services.

Specific problems identified within the South Wye area have predominantly been caused by the level of congestion along the A465. This has resulted in poor levels of air quality, noise, and public transport usage which have resulted in large numbers of short distance trips being made by car. This in turn has led to less physical activity resulting in increased levels of obesity and greater health problems. These problems are then expected to increase if no action is taken.









The aim of the South Wye Transport Package is to promote the council's aspirations for Hereford and the wider region while tackling the specific problems identified within the South Wye area. Specific objectives have been identified for the study to provide key aims against which the different elements can be assessed.

These are:

- **Economic:**
  - *Reduce congestion and delay; and*
  - *Enable access, particularly to developments such as the HEZ*
- **Environmental:**
  - *Reduce the growth in emissions such as CO2, NOx and PM10s; and*
  - *Reduce traffic noise*
- **Health:**
  - *Encourage physical activity; and*
  - *Reduce accidents.*

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SOUTH WYE TRANSPORT PACKAGE

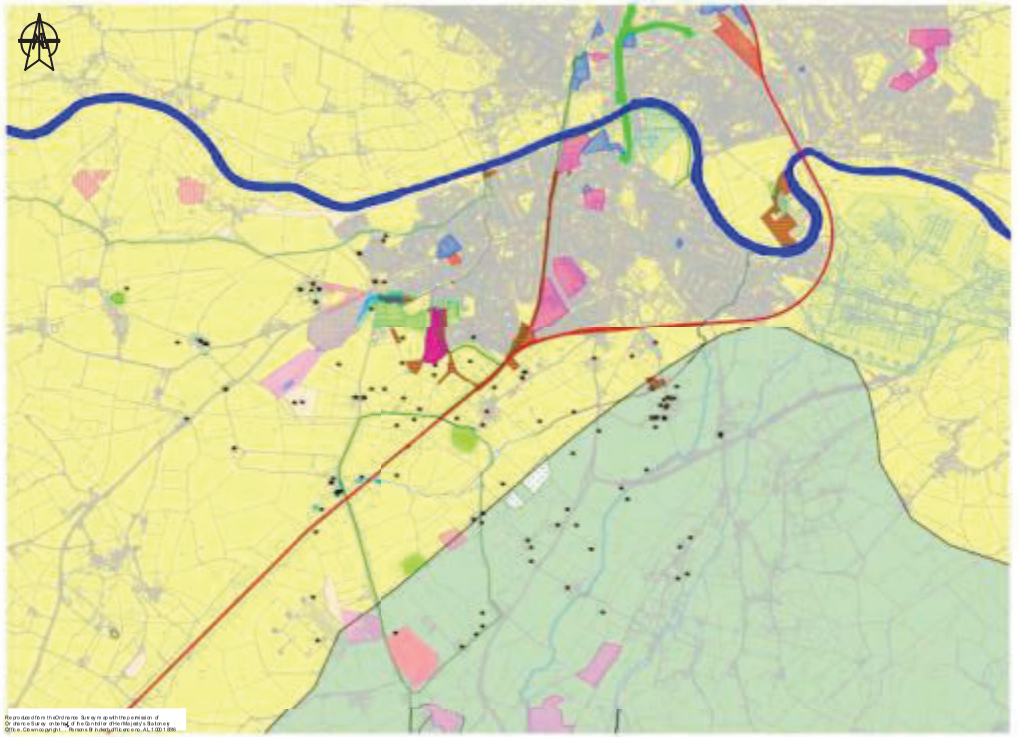
CONSTRAINTS PLAN

Constraints

The South Wye area is densely urbanised, criss-crossed by the heavily trafficked A465 and A49, whilst the South Wales to Hereford railway line dissects the study area. The existing highway has a number of services that run underneath, such as water, gas, electricity, and telecommunications. The A465 and A49 both have properties and businesses with direct frontages onto the highway, and over the northern section of the A465 there is on street parking.

The southern section is rural in nature and contains wooded areas, including the ancient woodland of Newton Coppice. The area also includes a number of ponds which have the potential to be inhabited by Great Crested Newts. 66kV overhead power lines run east to west across the area, whilst a trunk water main, a sewer and a high pressure gas main are also present.

A full illustration of the constraints within the study are summarised on the plan on this board.



KEY

- WOODLAND
- BELMONT HAYWOOD PARK (JUBILEE PARK)
- SPECIAL WILDLIFE SITE (SWS)
- BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN PRIORITY HABITAT
- LOCAL NATURE RESERVE (LNR)
- RIVER (WITH FLOW DIRECTION)
- SITE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE
- SITE OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE
- LISTED BUILDING
- NATIONAL CYCLE NETWORK
- ROTHERWAS INDUSTRIAL ESTATE
- PUBLIC LEISURE CENTRE
- SITE OF IMPORTANCE FOR NATURE CONSERVATION (SINC)
- ANCIENT WOODLAND
- SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST
- SPECIAL AREA OF CONSERVATION
- POND
- HEREFORDSHIRE LOWLANDS
- SOUTH HEREFORDSHIRE AND OVER SEVERN
- AQMA BOUNDARIES
- SUPERMARKET
- SCHOOL
- MEDICAL CENTRE
- RAILWAY LINE

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SOUTH WYE TRANSPORT PACKAGE

PACKAGE ASSEMBLY

Potential Package Approaches

Working within the constraints of the South Wye area we have identified a number of possible elements that could address the problems and objectives of the study. These elements cover many different transportation modes, strategies and interventions, some of which are complimentary or others that provide alternatives. The elements have been grouped into three key approaches which are:

Traffic Max - This approach aims to generate maximum capacity for vehicles within the South Wye area by improving existing junctions or roads.

Sustainable Transport Max - This approach aims to reduce the use of the private car through improvements to public transport, cycle routes and lanes, pedestrian crossings, traffic management, behavioural change activities and small localised improvements.

New Southern Link Road - This approach aims to generate additional capacity with new infrastructure to the south of Hereford to improve existing connections between the A465, A49 and the Rotherwas Estate.

The detail of these elements is now discussed in further detail.



Photomontage illustrating a tree lined boulevard along the A465 at the Great Western Way Overbridge.



Photomontage illustrating segregated cycleway along the A465 at the Great Western Way Overbridge.

Traffic Max Elements

These elements aim to reduce the amount of congestion along the A465.

- Widening of existing A465 to accommodate two lanes in each direction. This element does not reduce the level of traffic, and does not have a significant impact upon the level of congestion. Therefore maintains the level of noise and air quality problems while increasing severance due to the widened highway within the Belmont area.
- Grade separation of the A49/A465 junction. This element would be prohibitively costly and would have significant environmental implications due to the proximity of local properties and the River Wye Special Area of Conservation.
- Removal of traffic signals from the A49/A465 junction and remodelling of junction. This element would have substantial safety implications for both vehicles and pedestrians. The level of congestion would also be expected to increase as a result therefore maintaining the poor levels of noise and air quality.

These elements do not provide sufficient capacity to enable access to new developments such as the HEZ and the encouragement of physical activity by all ages.

Offline New Road Element

A new single carriageway road connecting the B4349, the A465 and the A49. This element is discussed in greater detail on later exhibition boards.

SOUTH WYE TRANSPORT PACKAGE

SUSTAINABLE PACKAGE ELEMENTS

The sustainable transport elements are centred within the Belmont and Holme Lacy Road areas and aim to reduce severance, promote physical activity through the use of walking and cycling for shorter distance trips, reduce accidents by reducing conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles, and reduce congestion through modal shift. Additionally there is a complementary behavioural change element, aimed at maximising awareness to encourage and support use of the improved sustainable travel offer. The example elements that could be developed are:

Bus Priority

- In-bound bus lane between the A465/Abbotsmead Road (Tesco) roundabout and the A49, and bus priority scheme from Hoarwithy Road to the A49 to improve public transport journey times.

Cycling

- In-bound and outbound cycle lanes between the A465/Abbotsmead Road (Tesco) roundabout and the A49 to promote cycle use along the A465;
- Residential cycle schemes including improved access to the Great Western Way from Ethelstan Crescent and Brampton Road,
- Segregated cycle route alongside Marlbrook Road, improved cycle provision on Walnut Tree Avenue, improving links between Belmont and the Enterprise Zone,
- Cycling contraflows on the road adjacent to The Oval and Springfield Avenue and;
- Cycle infrastructure improvements to provide off-road provision, and cycle routes on the remainder of Holme Lacy Road, cycle provision on Hoarwithy Road, conversion of Hinton Road pelican crossing to a toucan crossing, and further Connect 2 connections.



Photomontage illustrating a northbound bus lane on the A465 at junction of Beattie Avenue



Photomontage illustrating a northbound bus lane on the A465 looking south from Great Western Way

Walking

- An improved pedestrian crossing of Belmont Road between Ruckhall Lane and Haywood Lane, and at the A465/Abbotsmead Road (Tesco) roundabout. The aim is to promote more sustainable shorter distance trips through the reduction of severance by making it easier to cross the A465;
- Improvements to the pedestrian environment along Holme Lacy Road to encourage walking including improved crossings, to help improve the local walking environment;
- New crossing on Walnut Tree Avenue and Belmont Road, with signalisation of the junction to increase safe crossing opportunities of the A465 and;
- Kerb build outs and narrowing of residential streets would help improve local conditions for pedestrians;

Safety

- Possible extension of 20mph zones.

Behavioural Change

- Personalised Travel Planning programme for Belmont and the Holme Lacy Road areas, which could be used to make residents aware of transport improvements in the area and encourage more sustainable travel.

Townscape

- Removal of central hatching along the A465 and the introduction of a tree line boulevard along the A465 to improve the townscape character and encourage greater walking and cycling.

SOUTH WYE TRANSPORT PACKAGE

PACKAGE OF MEASURES ASSESSMENT

Package of Measures Assessment

To assess the success of the potential package approaches a high level qualitative assessment has been undertaken on them, and is summarised within the table on this board. The table also illustrates the assessment of combining the 'Sustainable Transport Max' approach with the 'New Southern Link Road'.

The assessment illustrates that all three approaches do not satisfy all of the study objectives in isolation. The 'Traffic Max' approach does not provide substantial benefit within the South Wye area nor does it satisfy any of the study objectives. Therefore this approach has not been deemed feasible and did not undergo further assessment

The 'Sustainable Max' and the 'New Southern Link Road' contribute to the delivery of the study objectives but do not satisfy all of the objectives in isolation. Therefore the recommendation for the South Wye Transport Package is to combine the 'New Southern Link Road' with elements of the 'Sustainable Transport Max' approach.

KEY

- Does not meet objectives
- Partially meets objectives
- Fully meets objectives

Objectives		Package Approach			
		Traffic Max	Sustainable Transport Max	New Southern Link Road (SLR)	Sustainable Transport Max & New Southern Link Road (SLR)
Economic	Reduce congestion and delay	Traffic along A465 not reduced, therefore no impact upon delay but a reduction in the level of congestion.	Modal shift reduces some existing congestion and delay.	Traffic diverts to use new road and therefore reduces traffic, congestion and delay along the A465.	Modal shift and diversion of traffic onto the new SLR reduces congestion and delay along the A465.
	Enable access, particularly to developments such as the HEZ	Does not provide any new additional links to developments.	Modal shift increases the capacity of some existing linkages into the HEZ but does not unlock the barrier of further development.	Unlocks the barrier to further development of the HEZ.	Unlocks the barrier to further development of the HEZ.
Environmental	Reduce the growth in emissions such as CO2, NOx and PM10s	Does not change the exising traffic flow profile along the A465 so no change.	Modal shift will reduce the growth of emmissions along the A465 and Holme Lacy Road.	Reduction of traffic along the A465 as a result of the new SLR, therefore reducing growth of emissions along the corridor. Some increases of emissions along the A49 and for properties along proposed route corridor.	Reduction of traffic as a result of modal shift and traffic diverting to the new SLR has an overall benefit in reducing the growth in emissions.
	Reduce traffic noise	Does not change the exising traffic flow profile along the A465 so no change.	Modal shift will reduce the amount of traffic noise along the A465 and Holme Lacy Road.	Reduction of traffic along the A465 as a result of the new SLR, therefore reduces traffic noise along the corridor. Some increase in traffic noise for properties along the A49 and the proposed route corridor.	Reduction of traffic as a result of modal shift and traffic diverting to the new SLR has an overall benefit in reducing traffic noise.
Health	Encourage physical activity	Increased severance as a result of widened road would therefore discourage physical activity. May also require the loss of footways along the A465.	Measures designed to promote increased physical activity.	Reduction of traffic along A465 would lower the perceived severance along the corridor, therefore slightly encouraging physical activity within Belmont.	Measures designed to promote increased physical activity and further benefit along A465 corridor as traffic diverted to new SLR.
	Reduce accidents	Potential reduction in accidents as traffic now displaced over greater area.	Modal shift would will reduce the amount of conflict between vehicles and other modes.	Traffic diverts to new SLR which is built to current design standards. Therefore expected reduction in vehicle accidents.	Traffic diverts to new SLR which is built to current design standards. Therefore expected reduction in vehicle accidents and further modal shift reduces the amount of conflict between vehicles and other modes.

SOUTH WYE TRANSPORT PACKAGE

SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT OPTION

Sustainable Transport Max Option

The high level qualitative assessment on the previous board illustrated that the provision of the Sustainable Transport Max approach provides sufficient benefits to the study objectives to be considered with all New Southern Link Road options.

The scheme shown schematically on this board indicates the potential elements that could be used in a preferred Sustainable Transport Max option. The scheme includes the inbound bus lane along the A465 as further appraisal has indicated that the element offers the greatest economic benefits, including time savings and greater service reliability for bus users. The bus lane could also be used by bicycles, and improvements to crossing facilities on the A465 will offset any adverse severance impacts due to the widening of the carriageway. The bus lane would require the removal of some residents parking on the A465

The scheme will also be complimented with a Personalised Travel Planning programme for both the Belmont and Holme Lacy Road areas.

Key

- Proposed Bus & Cycle Way
- Proposed Cycle Way
- A Road
- Pedestrian/cycle crossing Improvement
- Junction improvement
- Existing Cycle Way to be improved
- Rotherwas Industrial Estate





Photomontage illustrating a Northbound bus lane on the A465 at the Great Western Way bridge.



Photomontage illustrating the Westbound bus lane along Holme Lacy Road

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SOUTH WYE TRANSPORT PACKAGE

SOUTHERN LINK ROAD OPTIONS

Southern Link Road

The Southern Link Road involves the construction of a new section of road between the A49 Ross Road/Rotherwas Access Road roundabout to the A465 and the B4349 Clehonger Road. A link to Clehonger Road has been included to overcome the current poor visibility of the existing junction with the A465. In total eight options have been developed which are summarised below.

Route Option SC1 - involves the construction of a new roundabout on the A465/B4349 Clehonger Road junction. The road passes through the centre of Grafton Wood and continues westwards over Grafton Lane and Withy Brook, north-west around Merry Hill/Beech Grove and under Haywood Lane, before heading straight to the A465.

Route Option SC2 - involves the construction of a new roundabout on the A465/B4349 Clehonger Road junction. The road passes through the centre of Grafton Wood and continues westwards over Grafton Lane and Withy Brook. Thereafter, it straightens up immediately heading in a north-west direction to the A465.

Route Option SC2A - The alignment is identical to SC2, except that the new road section will pass underneath the railway line.

Route Option SC3 - From the existing A49 roundabout, this option heads north-west to the A465 terminating south-west of the A465/Clehonger Road junction. It crosses a dense wooded area between Grafton Lane and Withy Brook, before crossing underneath the railway line and Merryhill Lane.



Route Option SC4 - follows the same eastern alignment as Option SC3 until Newton Brook, where it curves to the north-west before intersecting the A465 in roughly the same location as Option SC1.

Route Option SC5 - passes through the northern part of Grafton Wood and in a north-westerly direction, crosses the densely wooded area between Grafton Lane and Withy Brook and a site of archaeological importance before turning west to cross underneath the railway line. The route continues through Merry Hill and under Haywood Lane towards the A465.

Route Option SC6 - This option passes to the north of Grafton Wood. It then heads in a north-westerly direction to pass under the railway, across Merryhill Lane before curving around Merry Hill and under Haywood Lane. It crosses Newton Brook between Newton Coppice and Hayleasow Wood. A new link to connect with the B4349 Clehonger Road is located further south-west of the new roundabout.

Route Option SC7 - passes through the northern tip of Grafton Wood but avoids the southern extent of the dense wooded area between Grafton Lane and Withy Brook. It then runs to the south of Merryhill Lane before cutting through Merry Hill and under Haywood Lane. From this location the road heads in a westerly direction to the A465.

All of these options would include a weight restriction on the A465 at the bridge of the Great Western Way, with supporting signage at either end of Belmont Road.

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SOUTH WYE TRANSPORT PACKAGE

SOUTHERN LINK ROAD OPTION REFINEMENT

Option Refinement

Since Autumn 2013, further detailed work and appraisal has been undertaken on the Southern Link Road options outlined on the previous board. During the appraisal process, we carefully consider all the impacts - positive and negative. This enables the council to make an informed decision and this is done by considering the scheme against a standard set of criteria, set out by the Department for Transport.

We consider the impact on the environment and on local communities as well as the safety and journey time benefits of the scheme. The cost of the scheme is also considered so we can make sure we deliver good value for money.

The results of the initial analysis and the appraisal of these options have shown that four of these options do not represent feasible solutions to the transportation problems. These routes have been identified as affecting the ancient woodland of Newton Coppice. The National Planning Policy Framework now identifies ancient woodland as an irreplaceable habitat which is unlikely to be fully mitigated. There are also clear alternatives to avoid this significant environmental constraint.

The summary of the appraisal of these four options is shown in the table on this board.

If you would like more explanation as to why these options have been discarded, please ask a member of staff who will be happy to help.

Appraisal Summary Table

Appraisal Criteria	SC1	SC3	SC4	SC6
ECONOMY				
Business users & transport providers	1	1	1	1
Reliability impact on Business users	1	1	1	1
Regeneration	3	3	3	3
Wider Impacts	2	2	2	2
ENVIRONMENT				
Noise	-3	-3	-3	-3
Air Quality (LOCAL)	-2	-2	-2	-2
Greenhouse gases	-1	-1	-1	-1
Landscape/Townscape	-2	-3	-3	-2
Historic Environment	-1.5	-1.5	-1.5	-1.5
Biodiversity	-3	-3	-3	-3
Water Environment	-1	-1	-1	-1
SOCIAL				
Commuting and Other users	1	1	1	1
Reliability impact on Commuting and Other users	1	1	1	1
Physical activity	-2	-2	-2	-2
Journey quality	2	2	1	1
Accidents	0	0	0	0
Security	1	1	1	1
Access to services	0	0	0	0
Affordability	1	1	1	1
Severance	1	1	1	1
Option and non-use values	0	0	0	0
PUBLIC ACCOUNTS				
Cost to Broad Transport Budget	1	1	1	1
Indirect Tax Revenues	0	0	0	0
Total	**-0.5**	**-1.5**	**-2.5**	**-1.5**

The scores are made up of criteria under the main headings of Economy, Environment, Social and Public Accounts. The Range for the scores is from -3 (Major Adverse), to 0 (Neutral), to +3 (Major Beneficial).

Option Appraisal Summary

Route Option SC1

This option would have negative impacts on the environment. This would include a significant increase in road traffic noise for local properties, plus cause deterioration in air quality in some local routes. This option would also have a major impact on biodiversity, including loss of habitats.

Route Option SC3

This option would have negative impacts on the environment. This would include a significant increase in road traffic noise for local properties, plus cause the deterioration in air quality in some local routes. This option would result in severe damage to key characteristics, including ancient woodland and an area of archaeological importance.

Route Option SC4

This option would have negative impacts on the environment. This would include a significant increase in road traffic noise for local properties, plus cause the deterioration in air quality in some local routes. This option would have the most severe impact on the landscape and biodiversity, as it has the greatest effect on Newton Coppice and Belmont Park due to the alignment at its western end.

Route Option SC6

This option would have negative impacts on the environment. This would include a significant increase in road traffic noise for local properties, plus cause the deterioration in air quality in some local routes. This option would have a moderate impact on the landscape, and a major impact on biodiversity, including woodland habitats.

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SOUTH WYE TRANSPORT PACKAGE

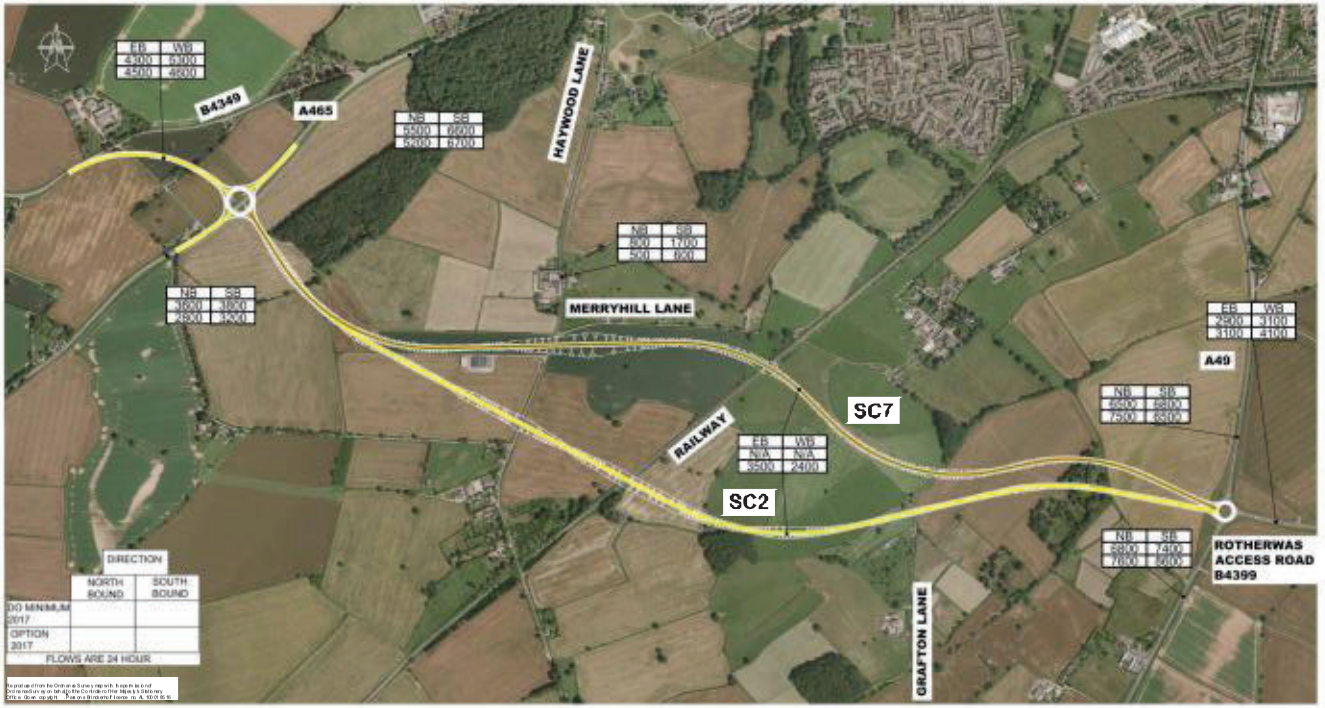
SOUTHERN LINK ROAD
SC2 AND SC7



Photomontage showing Southern Link Road going over the railway line and under Haywood Lane looking north



Photomontage looking West, showing Southern Link Road going under both the railway line and Haywood Lane looking west



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SOUTH WYE TRANSPORT PACKAGE

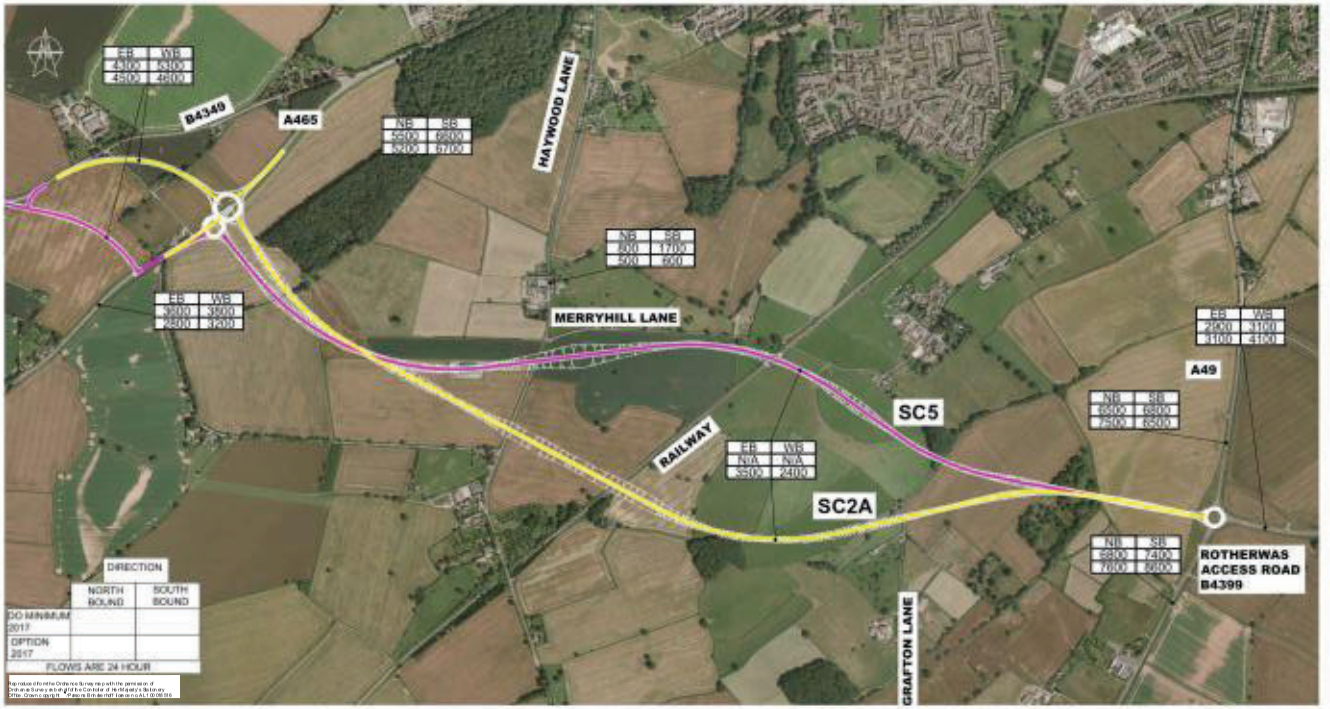
SOUTHERN ROAD OPTIONS SC2A AND SC5



Photomontage showing Southern Link Road going under the railway line and Haywood Lane looking north



Photomontage looking west showing the junction of the Southern Link Road and the A465, with the Clehonger Link



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Results of Appraisal

The same appraisal process undertaken during the option refinement process has been completed on the four remaining feasible options and Sustainable Max.

The summary of the appraisal of these options is shown in the table on this board.

The results of the appraisal show that all of the options provide many benefits to the economy by unlocking barriers to the development of the Hereford Enterprise Zone, and further housing development. They all reduce congestion and improve journey times. There are negative impacts to the environment, as a result of increasing road traffic noise, reducing air quality and impacts to the landscape.

Option Appraisal Summary

Route Option SC2

This option has many benefits to the economy, such as reducing congestion and improving journey times, as well as enhanced accessibility to employment opportunities in the HEZ. There are also some negative impacts to the environment, as a result of increasing road traffic noise, reducing air quality, but limiting the impact on woodland.

Appraisal Summary Table

Appraisal Criteria	SC2	SC2A	SC5	SC7
ECONOMY				
Business users & transport providers	1	1	1	1
Reliability impact on Business users	1	1	1	1
Regeneration	3	3	3	3
Wider Impacts	2	2	2	2
ENVIRONMENT				
Noise	-3	-3	-3	-3
Air Quality (LOCAL)	-2	-2	-2	-2
Greenhouse gases	-1	-1	-1	-1
Landscape/Townscape	-2	-2	-3	-2
Historic Environment	-1.5	-1.5	-1.5	-1.5
Biodiversity	-2	-2	-2	-1.5
Water Environment	-1	-1	-1	-1
SOCIAL				
Commuting and Other users	1	1	1	1
Reliability impact on Commuting and Other users	1	1	1	1
Physical activity	-2	-2	-2	-2
Journey quality	2	2	1	1
Accidents	2	2	2	2
Security	2	2	2	2
Access to services	2	2	2	2
Affordability	1	1	1	1
Severance	1	1	1	1
Option and non-use values	0	0	0	0
PUBLIC ACCOUNTS				
Cost to Broad Transport Budget	2	1	0	0
Indirect Tax Revenues	0	0	0	0
Total	**6.5**	**5.5**	**2.5**	**4**

The scores are made up of criteria under the main headings of Economy, Environment, Social and Public Accounts. The Range for the scores is from -3 (Major Adverse), to 0 (Neutral), to +3 (Major Beneficial).

Route Option SC2A

As with Option SC2, this option has many social and economic benefits to the economy, with a reduction in congestion, improvements to journey times, and an increase in accessibility to employment. Although there are still negative impacts to the environment.

Route Option SC5

This option has many benefits to the economy, and society as a whole. It will reduce congestion and improve journey times, as well as enhance accessibility to employment opportunities. There are some negative impacts to the environment, as a result of increasing road traffic noise, reducing air quality, and a significant impact to the landscape.

Route Option SC7

This option has many benefits, for instance reducing congestion and improving journey reliability, as well as enhanced accessibility to employment. This option has minimal impact on biodiversity and habitats. There are some negative impacts to the environment, such as increasing road traffic noise and reducing air quality. Due to the alignment the road would be subject to a 50mph speed limit.

The resultant appraisal has therefore highlighted that **option SC2 is the best performing option for New Southern Link Road.**

SOUTH WYE TRANSPORT PACKAGE

YOUR VIEWS

Thank you for coming to this Public Consultation Exhibition

How can you help?

You can give your views on the options by returning the questionnaire by 8 August 2014.

We recommend that you direct your questions to the staff at the exhibition. Representatives from Herefordshire Council and their consultants Balfour Beatty Living Places and Parsons Brinckerhoff are available to answer your questions and to explain the options in more detail.

What happens next?

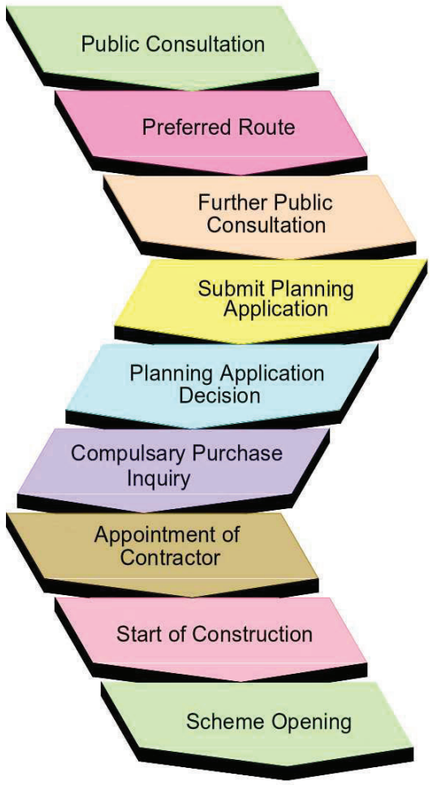
Completed questionnaires and any other comments received in response to this Public Consultation will be considered carefully by Herefordshire Council, Balfour Beatty Living Places and Parsons Brinckerhoff. A decision on a preferred route for the Southern Link Road will be made in early Autumn.

How to respond and to make an enquiry

Contact Herefordshire Council with your feedback or queries by:

- Attending one of the Public Exhibitions at the Three Counties Hotel
- Returning the questionnaire in the prepaid envelope or to the Freepost address
- Writing to FREEPOST: RTHL-BBZH-JATH, Balfour Beatty Living Places, Unit 3, Thorn Business Park, Rotherwas, HEREFORD HR2 6JT

The Procedure Outlined



Access to information

Herefordshire Council will use the questionnaires and any further information from the public to provide evidence for developing ways to improve transport in the South Wye area. The questionnaire will be disposed of securely after it has served these purposes. A summary of the responses to the consultation will be published. A list comprising of names and postal towns (e.g. Mr A N Other, Hereford) of those who have responded will be included. If you do not wish to be identified, even as in the proposed example, you will need to advise us by including a note in your response or by ticking the box on the questionnaire.

Herefordshire Council is subject to the Freedom of Information Act 2000, (FoI) and Environmental Information Regulations (EIRs) which means that this questionnaire may be released in response to a request for information. However, all personal data on your form will be treated in line with our obligations under the Data Protection Act, 1998.

The brochure and supporting documentation is available in alternative formats on request.

Please visit www.herefordshire.gov.uk/south-wye-transport-package for all of the up to date information on the South Wye Transport Package. You can also join us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/HfdsCouncil and Twitter @HfdsCouncil.

Thank you for your time

Balfour Beatty Living Places

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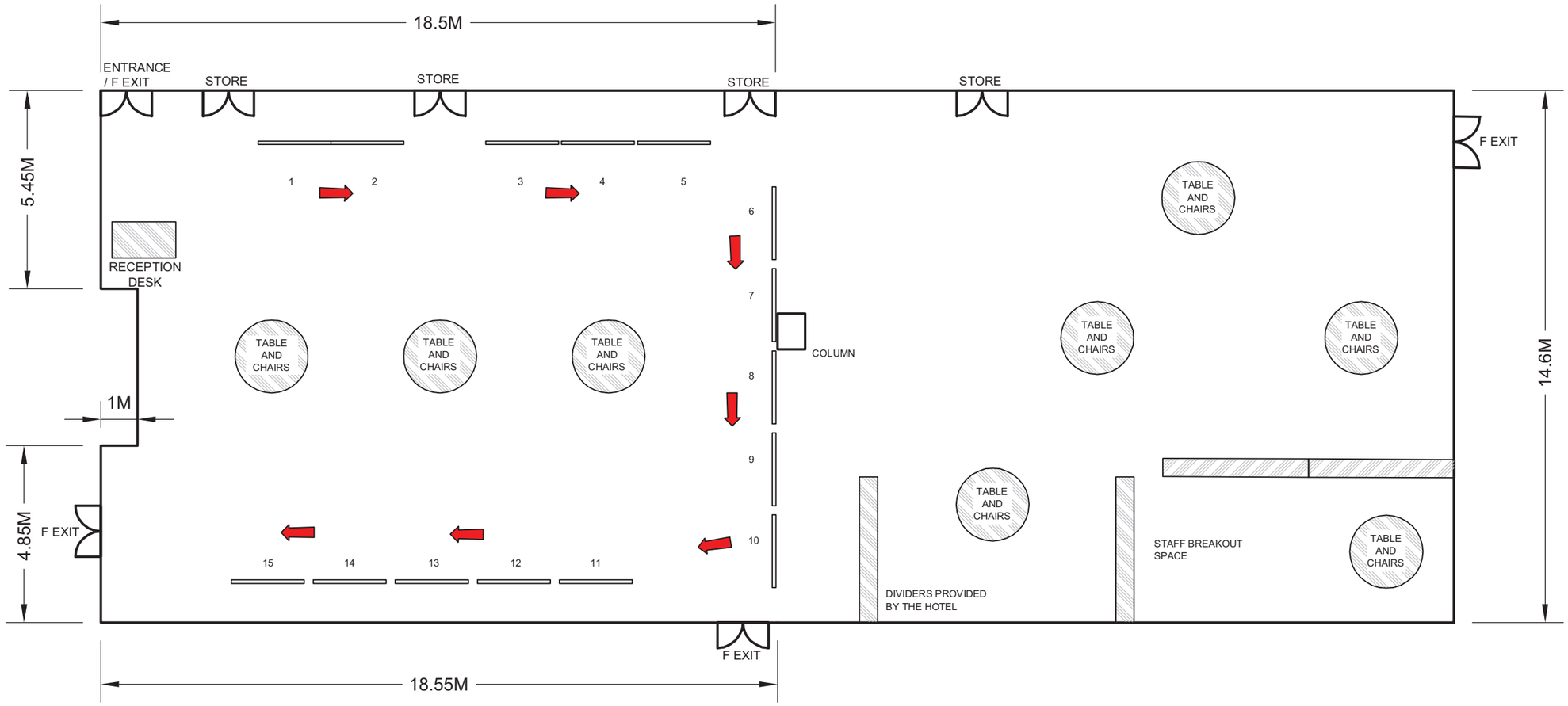
Appendix E

Layout of Exhibition Panels



NOTES

1. THIS IS A C.A.D. DRAWING AND SHOULD NOT BE AMENDED BY HAND.
2. ALL DIMENSIONS IN METRES UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED.

Rev	Date	Description	By	Chk	App

DRAFT

PARSONS BRINCKERHOFF
29 Cathedral Road
Cardiff
CF11 9HA
Tel: 44-(0)29-2082-7000
Fax: 44-(0)29-2082-7001

Client: Herefordshire Council

Site/Project: SWTP SOUTHERN LINK ROAD

Title: EXHIBITION PANEL LAYOUT PLAN

Drawn: GS			Checked:		
Designed: CN			Approved:		
Date: 23/06/2014	Scale: 1:200	A3	Sheet: 1 OF 1		
Project Number:			Drawing Number:		Revision:
3512983B-HHR			002		-

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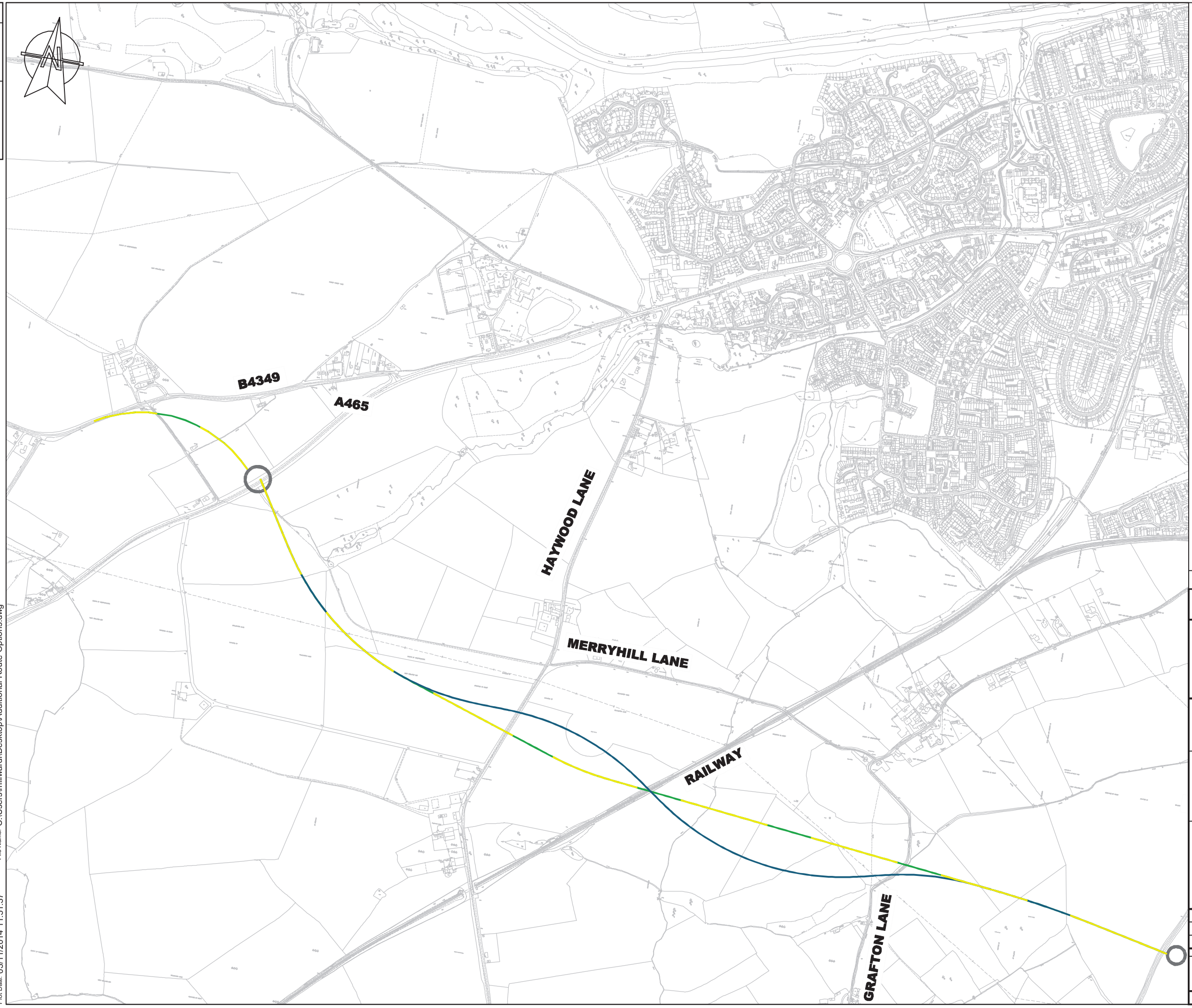
Project Number: 3512983B-HHR
Drawing Number: 002
Revision: -
Login: Smith, Geraint
Plot Date: 26/06/2014 13:05:58
File Name: H:\HHI\JOBS\3512983A-HHR Hereford\Task - South Wye Transport Package SWTP\Southern Link Road (SLR)\Acad\Drawings\3512983B-HHR\3512983B-HHR_002.dwg

Appendix F

Question 7: Full Breakdown

Total	Issue
26	Support for an alternative bypass of Hereford N-S
17	In support of sustainable transport package
15	In support of SC2A as it affects least people and has the least impact on environment
13	In support of SC2 as it affects least people and has the least impact on environment
12	Do not support bus lanes along the A465
12	Concerned about the cost
10	Support the SLR
9	Do not support a SLR as they do not believe it will work
8	Improvements to Asda roundabout
7	Support for cycle lanes along the A465
6	Congestion on the A465 including parked cars
6	Support for bus lanes along the A465
6	Support for tidal flow lanes along the A465
5	Support park and ride facilities
5	Remove school traffic
5	Impact upon the environment
4	Improvements to footways from Clehonger
4	Improvements to rail infrastructure including new station
4	Unpredictability of journey times
4	In support of SC7 as it affects least people and is the historically planned route
3	Oppose SC2 due to the impact upon the environment
3	Oppose SC5 due to the impact upon the community
3	Oppose SC7 due to the impact upon the community
3	Criticism of panels not showing current sustainable transport infrastructure
3	Lack of awareness of consultation
2	Relieve congestion on the A49
2	Improve the traffic signals city wide
2	Support weight restrictions along the A465
2	Do not support weight restictions along the A465
2	Do not support the SLR
2	Lack of highway maintenance
2	Criticised questionnaire design
2	Want a new route alignment
1	Support for traffic max
1	Support for cycle lanes along Holme Lacy Road
1	Do not support additional park and ride facilities
1	Impact on rural farming
1	Improve Madley/Bridge Sollars road
1	Redirect traffic into Madley

1	Do not support the Clehonger Link
1	Wanted a weekend exhibition
1	Wanted a different exhibition venue
1	Do not rush a decision



KEY:

- SC8
- SC8A
- SC9

Rev	Date	Description	By	Chk	Apl

PARSONS BRINCKERHOFF
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CF11 9HA
Tel: 44-(0)29-2082-7000
Fax: 44-(0)29-2082-7001

Client: Herefordshire Council

Site/Project: SOUTH WYE TRANSPORT PACKAGE

Title: ADDITIONAL ROUTE OPTIONS

Drawn: IM		Checked:	
Designed: IM		Approved:	
Date: 03/11/2014	Scale: 1:10,000	A3	Sheet:
Project Number:		Drawing Number:	Revisio
3512983A-HHR			

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Project Number: 3512983A-HHR
Drawing Number:
Revision:

309

Login: Millward, Ianto
Plot Date: 03/11/2014 11:51:37
File Name: C:\Users\millwardi\Desktop\Additional Route Options.dwg

Herefordshire Council

MEETING:	**CABINET**
MEETING DATE:	**13 November 2014**
TITLE OF REPORT:	**Local Account 2013/14**
REPORT BY:	**Director Adults & Wellbeing**

Classification

Open

Key Decision

This is not a key decision.

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To approve publication of the Local Account of Adult Social Care and Support 2013/14

Recommendation(s)

THAT:

(a) Cabinet approve the publication of the Local Account as attached at Appendix 1.

Alternative options

1 It is a Department of Health requirement that a Local Account be published. It would be possible to change the content and presentation but the draft complies with best practice guidance.

Reasons for recommendations

2 The reasons to approve the Local Account as attached are that:-

a. it meets the Department of Health's requirements

b. the content and layout reflect best practice recommendations from the regional Association of Directors of Adult Social Service (ADASS)

Performance network and national Local Government Association (LGA) conference

Key considerations

3 All councils with a remit for adult social care are required by government to produce an annual local account of services. This relates to the replacement of the role of the regulator, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in assessing council performance by a lighter-touch approach, which emphasises local accountability and sector and peer-led assessment. A peer challenge of adult social care was undertaken in June 2014 with the recommendations and action plan published and reviewed by Cabinet in October 2014.

4 The purpose of local accounts is twofold; to communicate with and promote accountability to the local community, and to support benchmarking, peer review and sector led improvement.

5 National guidance leaves the format and content to be determined locally. The approach agreed for Herefordshire is to address the challenges and requirements by:-

a. Producing the document as a web based PDF, available online but easy to print off hard copies;

b. Having a tone and style aimed at citizen audience;

c. Having the comprehensive underpinning data published separately and referenced, interwoven and analysed throughout the account. (e.g. statutory returns, user and carer surveys, complaints reports, CQC reports on providers, national census data)

d. Being balanced and therefore credible– good news **and** bad news, both in context and evidence based

e. Giving the context of national policy, financial challenges and the range of organisations that deliver social care

f. Having a structure based on the national performance framework (Adults Social Care Outcome Framework)

g. Consulting and involving a range of stakeholders during the production

Community impact

6 The final document and the process of producing it is an important element in ensuring local authorities make themselves accountable to their local communities.

The local account specifically gives a true and fair outline of key issues and performance to a general reader and reflects and refers to the detailed evidence available on the council's "Facts and Figures" webpages and in the wider public domain. The document will signpost people with detailed interest to the underlying

evidence base

Equality and human rights

7 The local account identifies how we support our vulnerable people with a range of tailored services.

Financial implications

8 There are no financial implications

Legal implications

9 All councils with a remit for adult social care are required by government to produce an annual local account of services. Local accounts are referred to in the Department of Health's "Transparency in Outcomes: a framework for adult social care" consultation paper (November 2010) in the context of localism and transparency, and in the subsequent Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework published in March 2011.

This guidance leaves format and content to be determined locally.

The attached local account fulfils this requirement.

Risk management

10 The proposal does not contain any specific / direct risk management implications

Consultees

11 During the production of this Local Account we have engaged with service users to include their opinions on service provision and some of these are included within our case studies within the report. Much of the content of the account is based on our annual survey of social care users and also the opinions of residential and nursing care service users, through the quality and review team survey. The Local Account will also be shared with the Making It Real board, and in future will be co-produced with members of this board as we develop and improve our engagement programme.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Local Account 2013/14

Background papers

None identified.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Paul Harris – Performance Lead (Adults & Wellbeing) on Tel (07792) 881832

Adult Social Care in Herefordshire 2013-14

Our Local Account



@HfdsCouncil
hfdscouncil

Herefordshire Council

Contents

Introduction – social care in a changing world 3

How care is provided in Herefordshire 4

Some of the things we have achieved in 2013-14 6

How are we doing?

1. Improving the quality of life for people with care and support needs 9
2. Delaying and reducing the need for support 11
3. Ensuring people have a positive experience of care and support 12
4. Keeping adults safe 14

Spending and service levels 17

Our plans and challenges for 2014-15 20

Our vision is: **"To enable residents to live safe, healthy and independent lives and to maintain service provision, to those with eligible need, within the available resources".**

Introduction - social care in a changing world

Herefordshire's elderly population is increasing at a faster rate than in many other areas. Although they are generally more affluent than the English average, their need for support is increasing.

Over the last few years we have had to rise to the challenges presented by reduced funding and changes to national policy. As well as caring for the elderly population, we have to meet the needs of future generations of older people and young adults with complex disabilities.

In addition, we have a duty to meet the support needs of a growing number of family carers.

During the past year we have worked with partners in the NHS, service providers, community groups, service users and their families, to make changes to the way services are provided. These changes were not just about managing our finances better, but about making sure that people who use our services have choice and control about their care and have a greater say in who provides that care.

Our aims are clear. We want to make sure Herefordshire residents:

- Are kept safe, healthy and able to remain independent for as long as possible
- Have choice and control with services that are affordable
- Are offered services that are integrated across health and social care
- Have access to supportive local communities
- Are able to access efficient and effective services that meet their support needs

This Local Account (2013-14) tells you our story so far and how we plan to continue our journey over the next few years. We have included case studies which illustrate how some of the changes made have had a positive impact on local people.

We would like to thank our service users, their families, our providers and all staff involved in the changes that have taken place, and that lie ahead, for their continued support.



Cllr Graham Powell
Cabinet member for health and wellbeing



Helen Coombes
Director of adults and wellbeing

How care is provided in Herefordshire

Friends and families

According to the 2011 census, 21000 citizens regularly provided at least one hour of care per week for someone with long term ill health, disability or frailty. 6700 of them reported giving over 20 hours of care per week[1].

The council

- Conducts community care assessments and helps people plan how to meet their needs
- Funds services for people whose needs are eligible (based on national guidance)
- Gives grants or contracts with other organisations for support services
- Gives support to carers
- Gives advice
- Provides some services itself, for example, handyman services, Blue Badges

The third sector (voluntary and community sector)

- Advice and information
- Practical support
- Day services
- Community transport
- Mutual support

The health service

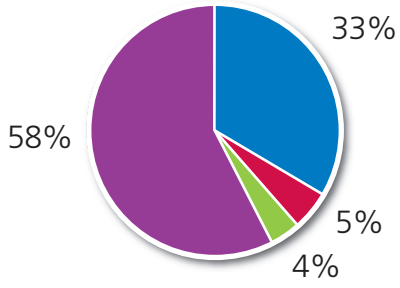
- Meets people's needs for health, social care and support often intertwine and local GPs and hospitals work closely with social care organisations, especially following a period in hospital
- Funds the nursing element of all nursing home costs and will meet the full costs where a person has overriding continuing health needs
- Through 2Gether NHS Trust undertakes social care assessments and care management of local people with significant mental health problems on behalf of the council as part of a wider mental health provision

Independent residential and nursing homes and homecare agencies

87 residential and nursing care homes and 40 care agencies worked with some of the most vulnerable people in the county, including people lacking in mental capacity, people with mental health problems, learning disabilities, and physical frailty and disability.

The majority of care home places in the county are not paid for by Herefordshire Council[2].

Who uses care home beds in Herefordshire?



Supporting carers

Herefordshire Carers Support is a local organisation commissioned by the council to offer advice, information and support specifically to unpaid carers of all ages. Over 4,500 carers are registered with the organisation and can receive help and support to make positive changes to their caring roles. For example, registered carers receive:

- Help with taking stock and planning for future needs on an individual basis and with others in regular support groups
- Information on taking a break from the caring role and looking after yourself
- Signposting to other services that provide information about specific conditions
- Training to help build skills knowledge and confidence
- Networking opportunities, to name a few

1 Details of carers can be seen in the strategic needs assessment called "Understanding Herefordshire" on the website http://factsandfigures.herefordshire.gov.uk/2205.aspx.
2 Data based on a snapshot at 31st March 2014, from the ASC-CAR return (available from http://factsandfigures.herefordshire.gov.uk), CQC and CSU

Challenges identified in our last Local Account	Progress in 2013-14
We aimed to:	What we achieved:
Provide sustainable, value for money services	Redesigned and recommissioned a range of services with new contracts taking effect 2014 - 15 Undertook an open book review of costs with independent sector care homes
Give clients more choice and control	Increased number of people signed up for personal budgets and direct payments
Work with partners and communities	Facilitated regular meetings with the Making it Real Board (see page 7) Agreed a joint action programme with local NHS for the Better Care Fund
Shift from high cost services such as residential care, to supporting people in their own homes for longer	Managed the increase in the number of clients supported in residential care

Other achievements

Continued to receive high levels of user satisfaction and quality of life

More vulnerable adults were kept safe from abuse than in the previous year

Managed to stabilise spending

Established an Adult and Wellbeing directorate within the council - bringing together adult social care and housing

Key highlights of the journey so far

2008
Herefordshire Council and Herefordshire Primary Care Trust establish a single management structure to become Herefordshire Public Services.

April 2011
Health and social care join forces to form Wye Valley NHS Trust – the first integrated provider of acute, community and social care in England.

2012
National reforms lead to primary care trusts being relaced by clinical commissioning groups.

Sept 2013
The council brings social care back into the council. It also changes the way some of the social care services is provided so that service users can use direct payments to buy these services.

Health services for people with learning disabilities is transferred from Wye Valley NHS Trust to 2gether Foundation Trust.

The council develops a new structure and Adults becomes a single directorate.

Council embarks on a programme of commissioning to bring new providers and a fresh approach to services in the county.

March 2014
The council extends arrangements for 2gether NHS Trust to provide mental health and substance misuse services pending a strategic review in 2014.

Some of the things we have achieved in 2013-14

Following national NHS reforms, we ended the agreement with Wye Valley NHS Trust in 2013 and took back the social care aspects of the service, such as initial contact, assessment, safeguarding and review, as well as welfare rights.

The council also decided that a number of other services would be reviewed and put out to tender. These included:

Day opportunities

We embarked on a series of conversations with existing users of day opportunities about how activities run in the council's day centres could be packaged together and put out to tender.

As a result of talking to service users and their carers, we put a membership-based scheme out to tender and appointed Aspire Living Ltd to deliver a new-style service.

Shared Lives

Ategi, a registered charity with extensive experience of supporting adults with learning disabilities, was appointed to manage the council's former Adult Placement service. Transition to the new arrangements was carefully managed to minimize disruption to service users. Ategi plans to expand the service and further develop the respite break service.



Norfolk House (sheltered housing scheme)

Working very closely with existing tenants, we appointed Reach (Supported-Living) to take over the management of Norfolk House. The closure of the kitchen service created a dilemma – we needed to save money but at the same time make sure residents continued to receive the services they need. Staff helped tenants to explore different options for purchasing a meal and the majority vote was to use a local pub to deliver lunches instead of providing an in-house kitchen facility.



Community Equipment Store

The council worked in partnership with Herefordshire's Clinical Commissioning Group to appoint NRS Healthcare to manage the county's Integrated Community Equipment Store. Community equipment stores provide equipment to adults and children to help them live safe, healthy and independent lives.

NRS Healthcare is an experienced contractor of these services and has a strong performance record. As the store will remain on the same site, the impact of the management changeover was minimal to service users.

Sensory Impairment

Vision Links was awarded the contract for providing sensory impairment services in Herefordshire. Disruption for service users was kept to a minimum as existing council staff were transferred across to the new provider and the service was delivered from the same locations.

We set up a Making it Real programme

We established a Making it Real programme to help make social care more personal for the people who use it.

This was part of a national campaign to encourage service users and their carers to become involved in helping local authorities agree priority areas for future developments. Age UK, Herefordshire Council, Herefordshire Disability United and Services for Independent Living registered with the programme and surveyed adults receiving adult social care using the Making it Real survey questions that were set nationally.

160 people responded to the questionnaire and feedback set the three priorities for Herefordshire as follows:

- To make good quality information available for prospective service users, their families and carers
- To make self-directed support from the council more widely understood and less complicated
- To promote active and supportive communities so that people feel valued, know about and can attend a wide range of activities.

Following the survey we appointed a principal social worker to work with the teams on improving practice and dealing with changes to systems and processes, both designed to provide better, more effective services to people.

We signed up to the Social Care Commitment

This means we promise to:

- Work responsibly
- Uphold dignity
- Work co-operatively
- Communicate effectively
- Protect privacy
- Continue to learn
- Treat people fairly

We published a policy, Community Care and Meeting Your Eligible Needs

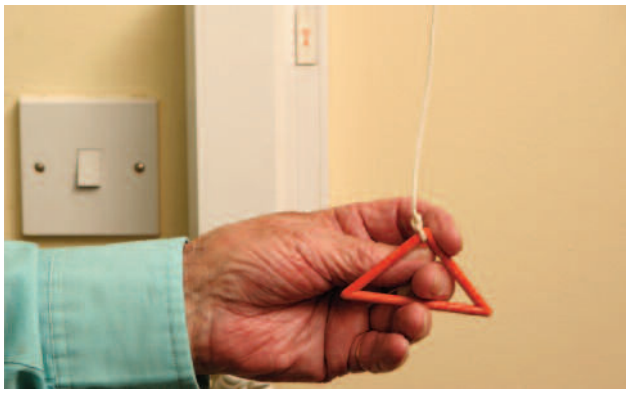
In March 2014 we published this policy, which sets out our vision for the next three years and pledges to actively ensure that Herefordshire residents:

- Are safe, healthy and are able to remain independent for as long as possible;
- Have choice and control with services that are affordable;
- Can access services that are integrated and joined up at the point of delivery across adult social care and health;
- Have access to supportive local communities;
- Are able to access efficient and effective services that meet their support needs.

The policy also explains what services are available to people needing help and support, how that support will be provided, how people's needs will be assessed and how funding will be allocated.

We launched a telecare service to help people live independently

Following a review in October 2013, we began a 12 month campaign to develop the use of technology to support our service users and carers. This involved setting up a training programme for all professionals across health and social care to help them understand what tools are available (such as telecare) and how individuals can be supported at home with this equipment. We also created a telecare adviser service in the council to help health and social care professionals find the right solution for individuals they are working with.



We reviewed Home and Community Support (domiciliary care)

Helping as many people as possible continue to live independently in their own homes is a major priority for health and social care. Home and community support (domiciliary care) helps to achieve this, and as a result, demand for the service is growing. As well as making sure we get good value for money, we also need to make sure we have good systems in place so that support is provided in a targeted way to those that need it most.

During 2013-14 we consulted with the organisations that provide this service in Herefordshire about reducing the rates the council pays. We also talked about a framework that providers could apply to be part of, and that service users could choose from, in order for the council to purchase their care needs. The framework includes electronic care monitoring and arrangements to make sure all care and support is linked to people's care plans.

We created new homes for people with learning disabilities

Working in partnership with the Sanctuary Housing Group, the development of 10 new homes for people with learning disabilities began at Coningsby Street, Hereford. The apartments are all self-contained but the development also has some communal areas (kitchen/living room/training rooms) to enable the residents to share and enhance their life skills to live independently. The homes are located in the city centre close to all necessary services including travel, shops, training and close proximity to other services for support.

Henffordd Gardens

Herefordshire Housing Ltd (HHL) opened their first assisted living scheme in Edgar Street, Hereford to provide accommodation for people over 50+ years. Henffordd Gardens provides 30 high quality apartments offering the very latest in assistive technology, providing telehealth and telecare support to individuals, fully supporting the principles of Homes for Life and responding to economic changes by bringing together housing care and support.

How are we doing?

1. Improving the quality of life for people with care and support needs

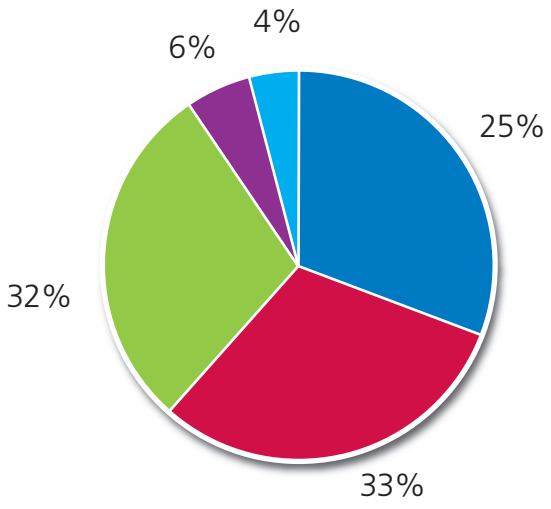
Social care service users report high quality of life

More personal budgets and direct payments making a difference

Work needed to improve how direct payments are managed

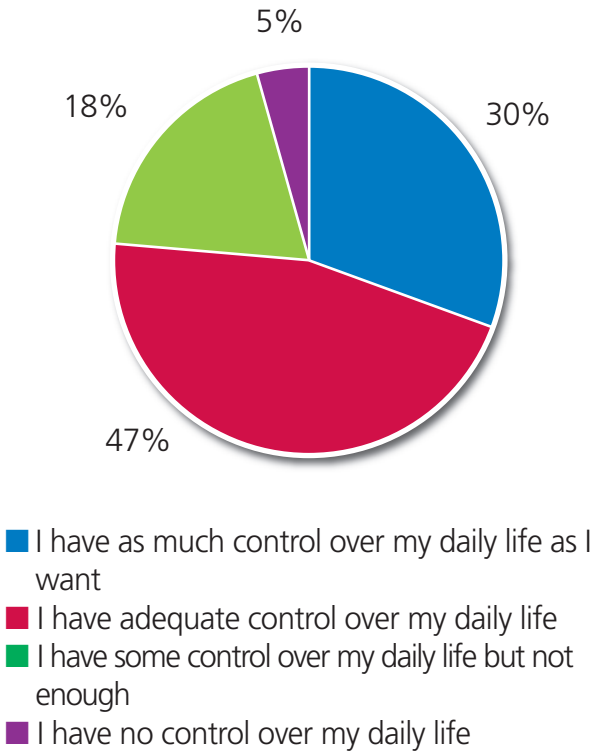
In a survey of service users funded by the council in 2014,[3] most people said they thought their quality of life was good.

Herefordshire - Thinking about all the different things in your life, good and bad, how would you say you feel about your life in general?



Most people also said that they had enough control over their lives.

Herefordshire - Which of the following statements best describes how much control you have over your daily life?



3 Full results and details can be found at Adult Social Care User Survey 2014 http://factsandfigures.herefordshire.gov.uk/1915.aspx

Direct payments

One way to increase people's control over their lives is to let them know how much money is available to pay for their support (personal budget) so that they can be more involved in planning their care. Greatest control can be achieved when clients choose to receive this budget in cash as a direct payment to use to purchase their own care.

The numbers of clients receiving personal budgets and direct payments rose in 2013-14 but is still just at or below the national average.[4]

Feedback from service users highlighted that many found the direct payment process too restrictive and complicated. We have now appointed direct payment advisers to help make the process less complicated and answer any questions people may have.

"15 years ago I had a Direct Payment and it gave me my life back"

"The direct payments process is cumbersome"

CASE STUDY

Direct payments - Jonathon's Story

28 year old Jonathon has learning difficulties, can't communicate verbally, is visually impaired, has mobility problems and has severe seizures. He uses a direct payment from the council to employ personal assistants to support him to enjoy a good quality of life by participating in activities that he enjoys. Thanks to his staff team, family, support from the local community and the direct payments, Jonathan has a rich and varied social life.

His mum, Rose, said: "Jonathan attended Barrs Court Special school when he was younger and we worried about what support he would have when he left.

"Without having the choice that direct payments provide us with, it is likely that Jonathan would have attended a day centre. We felt that wasn't the right option for him.

"Employing personal assistants has worked out really well for him. They all know and understand him well and make sure that he gets to do the things he enjoys doing and making the most of his life. He's also able to pay for occasional overnight and/or holiday care



which helps his family take a break from time to time. And I have been able to go back to work."

Emma is his lead personal assistant and she helps him with staffing, paying bills, organising holidays and regular activities. "I've worked with Jonathan for nine years now and although he can't communicate verbally, I know him well enough to understand what he enjoys doing," says Emma.

"I can tell by his body language and the sounds that he makes – he's very good at letting us know if he doesn't want to do something or wants to have a lie in!"

4 Data based on annual Adult Social Care Outcome Framework return, made available on http://factsandfigures.herefordshire.gov.uk

2. Delaying and reducing the need for support

Getting the right information at the right time is often what people and their carers need to continue living with maximum independence.

- over 40% of contacts made to the council's social care team received advice, information or were signposted to other organisations and did not need further assessment or support[5]
- 73% of council supported service users who looked for it, found information about services easy to find. This is similar to the English average and similar councils.[6]
- 758 people received advice and support during 2013-14 from the council's welfare benefits team, to help them claim all their benefits

It is almost impossible to count how much support voluntary groups give to keep people independent. There is a rich tapestry of support in Herefordshire for people who may need support but who do not meet the criteria for council support.

The council's reablement service worked with 640 referrals in the first half of 2013-14 to give short, planned programmes of help to reduce people's needs for long term support. The service was changed in the latter half of the year to focus more on giving rapid response to emergency situations while a new reablement service was designed to be contracted in 2014-15.

Some of the support provided by voluntary organisations is funded by the council and the organisations also raise money from charitable sources and grants. A lot of support is provided by people giving their time freely. Social workers will refer people to these support groups where appropriate.

Public Health became a council responsibility in 2013 and works with all age groups to promote healthy lifestyles. The focus in 2013-14 has been to help people make healthier lifestyle choices and work with partners and share intelligence to make a difference.[7]



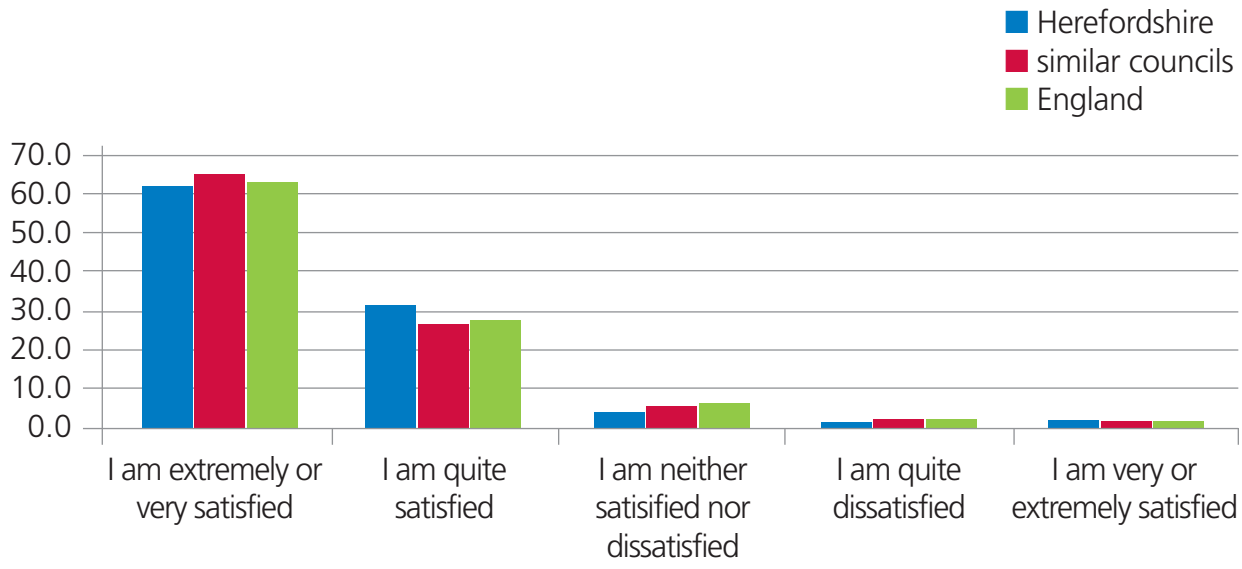
5 Data based on annual RAP return made available on http://factsandfigures.herefordshire.gov.uk
6 Data based on annual Adult Social Care Outcome Framework return made available on http://factsandfigures.herefordshire.gov.uk
7 Priorities and work to promote the health of Herefordshire's population is described in the annual report by the Director of Public Health. http://factsandfigures.herefordshire.gov.uk/2286.aspx To see data about Herefordshire's position follow the links on the page http://factsandfigures.herefordshire.gov.uk/health.aspx

3. Ensuring people have a positive experience of care and support

Most service users felt positive about the care they received most of the time, and the large majority of key services met national standards. However, some reported poor experiences and raised concerns over standards of care in some places.
Respondents to the annual survey of users reported similar high levels of satisfaction as in previous years.

- Over 60% said they were extremely or very satisfied with overall services.[8]
- Respondents scored their quality of life as 19 out of 24 based on factors such as their personal hygiene, comfort, nutrition, social contact. The national average was 19.1[9]

How satisfied are you with the care and support you have received?



Care homes: What did the regulators think?[10]

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) regulates care in England and inspected 84 of Herefordshire's 87 homes.

- 66 were compliant with all the national standards
- 18 were non-compliant in some respects and were required to make improvements
- The CQC issued formal warning notices in three cases
- This is slightly worse than last year when the CQC inspected 85 homes and found 14 of them non-compliant in some areas.

What the residents said about care homes

61 care home residents answered the annual user survey

- 69% said they were satisfied or very satisfied with their support and care
- 74% said their quality of life was good or very good
- 89 relatives responded to questionnaires from the council's quality team. 85% of these agreed that they were satisfied with the care provided for their relatives.

8 Data based on annual Adult Social Care Survey report made available on http://factsandfigures.herefordshire.gov.uk
9 Data based on annual Adult Social Care Outcome Framework return made available on http://factsandfigures.herefordshire.gov.uk
10 CQC inspection data available from the CQC website (www.cqc.org.uk)

Care home experience

CASE STUDY

In one care home, a quality assurance visit by the council identified that 18 out of 20 residents were satisfied with the overall quality of care. However, concerns raised by one resident included:

- Occasionally at busy times, I have to wait a bit long to be helped to the toilet.
- Sometimes I have to wait for assistance to get out of bed due to work load of staff and breaks they need.
- Plenty of activities but unsuitable for a blind person with osteoporosis
- Meals tend to be on the heavy side.
- Feel vulnerable and the care is not as good as I got in my own home with carers coming in.
- I have a large room with all my own things except the bed which is most uncomfortable.

"We know that this is a very suitable placement for our son in many ways. He is comfortable and happy, and he is part of a community. This is very important. He has shown a marked improvement in his life skills, and he has occupation and leisure activities that he enjoys and in which he excels. Pottery, for example, has been a source of great satisfaction to him and has revealed a serious talent and skill. His keyworker and most of the staff are doing a great job, but there have been issues: he was manhandled on the previous unit; one of the teams is inconsistent and unhelpful in their dealings with our son; and some staff are less than vigilant. The majority of staff are very professional and look after the residents in a professional, warm and dignified manner. Our son is happy."

Comments from a relative

Inspections

During the year the council had concerns with three care homes and worked with them to improve standards of care successfully.

Homecare agencies

There were 40 homecare agencies registered in the county in 2013-14.

The CQC inspected 25 of them.

- Four did not meet all the national standards and one of these achieved compliance within the year.
- Last year, the CQC inspected 25 agencies and found that two of them did not meet all requirements.

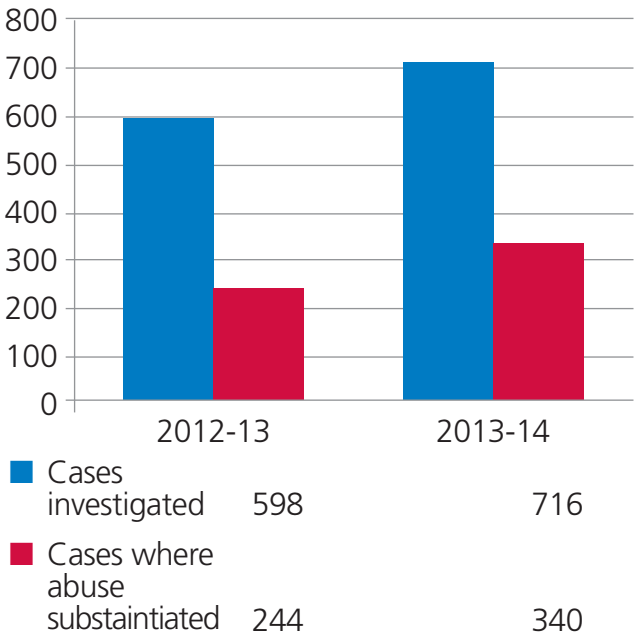


More vulnerable people protected in 2013-14

Safeguarding vulnerable adults from abuse in Herefordshire is led by the Herefordshire Safeguarding Adults Board which co-ordinates the responses of different organisations.[11] 716 safeguarding investigations were concluded in 2013-14[12]

- 47% of them were fully or partly substantiated

Safeguarding investigations and conclusions



- A larger number of concerns were raised, which were reviewed and judged to not need a safeguarding investigation
- Most concerns were raised by staff in social care or health care but also by police officers, relatives and friends
- Most abuse was alleged to occur in the user's own home (48%), followed by care homes (35%) and hospitals (8%)
- In 44% of cases the alleged perpetrator was known to the subject but not a care worker; in 43% of the cases the alleged perpetrator was a care worker. In 13% of cases the perpetrator was a stranger
- Most subjects of investigation were over 85, and in 36% of completed investigations some question was expressed about the person's mental capacity



11 Details of the board can be found at https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/adult-services/herefordshire-safeguarding-adults-board-(hsab)
12 Data based on annual Safeguarding Adults Return made available on http://factsandfigures.herefordshire.gov.uk

Keeping people safe from...

CASE STUDY

Domestic violence

Social workers were informed that Mrs Philip, an older lady receiving social care, had been taken to hospital following a suspected assault by a relative.

A social worker met with the police, social care staff, hospital staff, Mrs Philip and Mrs Philip's family to plan how she could return home safely. The police were able to prevent the suspected attacker coming near Mrs Philip; her relatives and care agency agreed a plan to give her extra support in the short term. In the longer term, with police advice, a security camera was installed at Mrs Philip's home.

Neglect

Nurses in a community hospital noted that Mr Ellis had pressure sores. Equipment and nursing care was put in place at once to relieve his condition and senior nurses investigated to see if his sores had arisen because of poor nursing. The conclusion in this case was that the pressure sores could have been avoided by following the hospital's nursing guidelines more closely. Extra training was given to the staff in the relevant wards to improve their practice and reduce the chances of other patients suffering. The incident was notified to the safeguarding board and recorded as a case of abuse by neglect.

When someone lacks mental capacity to consent to care or treatment, it is sometimes in their best interests to deprive them of their liberty to protect them from harm. Having mental capacity means being able to understand and retain information and being able to make a decision based on that information.

Where a person is at risk of deprivation of liberty within a care home or hospital, Herefordshire Council will arrange an independent assessment. In 2013/14, 83 cases were processed. Following a recent Supreme Court judgement, this number is expected to rise significantly in 2014/15.



13 Data based on annual Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards return made available on http://factsandfigures.herefordshire.gov.uk

An example of how our social workers keep people safe

CASE STUDY

Jane is an elderly lady who receives care in her own home. Reports are received claiming that she isn't being looked after properly. The social worker would typically think:

1. How can I find out about Jane's wishes and needs?
2. How can I find out more about the situation? Are the concerns justified?
3. Who do I need to involve? For example, Jane's relatives, her care agency?
4. Does Jane understand what is happening and can she make her own decisions about the situation? (Does she have mental capacity)?

If it turns out that Jane had suffered due to neglect

5. How can we stop this happening and reduce the risk of it happening again?

They would then use the procedures agreed by the Herefordshire Safeguarding Adults Board to arrange meetings, record what happened and work with others to put things right. In this case the outcome is likely to include agreeing improvements with the care agency, arranging regular visits by social workers and relatives to check that care had improved, and informing the Care Quality Commission (the Government body which inspects and regulates care agencies).



Types of alleged abuse

	Number	Percentage
neglect	294	32%
physical	227	25%
psychological and emotional	153	17%
financial	153	17%
institutional	47	5%
sexual	41	4%
discriminatory	9	1%
	924	100%

Examples of cases investigated included:

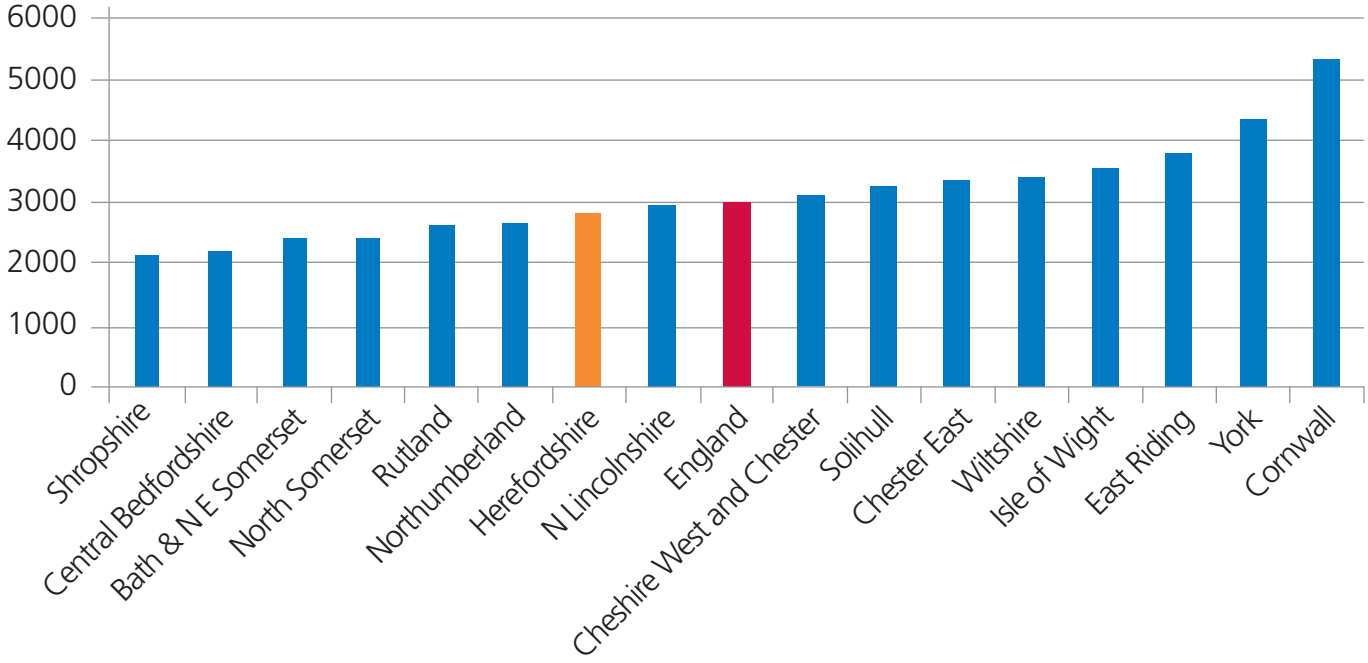
- allegations that patients had developed bed sores due to neglect or poor care
- concerns that staff members, strangers or family were using their position to benefit unfairly from the vulnerable person's money.
- physical and verbal abuse by carers or other service users

Spending and service levels

Does Herefordshire Council support more social care services users than elsewhere in the country?

Compared to similar councils, Herefordshire is 7th out of 16 and supports less than the English average.[14]

Herefordshire and similar councils.
Social care clients per 100,000 adult population



Like most councils in recent years Herefordshire has been targeting resources on people with most needs and consequently supports fewer people with more intensive services to enable a return to independence.

How dependent are the users of Herefordshire's adult social care services?
Do they have more needs than other areas?

Herefordshire's clients have significant disabilities:[15]

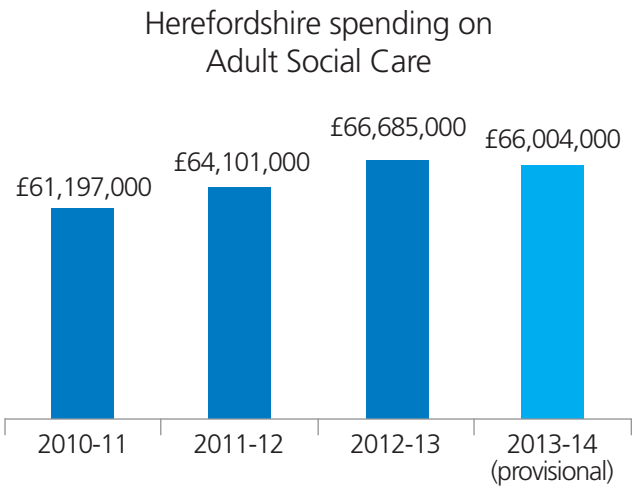
- 20% cannot get around indoors without help
- 23% cannot get in and out of bed or a chair without help
- 6% cannot feed themselves without help
- 66% cannot manage their finance and paperwork without help
- 47% cannot bath or shower without help
- 33% cannot dress or undress without help
- 23% cannot use the toilet without help
- 18% cannot wash their hands and face without help
- 27% do not go out of their home at all
- 61% report a degree of physical pain or discomfort
- 54% report a degree of anxiety or depression
- 19% report the design of their home meets a minority of their need

This is similar to the English average so Herefordshire clients do not appear to have significantly greater or lesser needs than clients in other counties.

14 Data based on annual RAP return made available on http://factsandfigures.herefordshire.gov.uk. Similar counties are identified by the Dept. Of Health and Professional Accountancy Associations
15 Data based on annual Adult Social Care Survey report made available on http://factsandfigures.herefordshire.gov.uk

How much does Herefordshire Council spend on social care?

The need for adult social care has risen in recent years and as a result spending has increased in Herefordshire.[16] Spending stabilised in 2013-14 and the council has a strategy to respond to the funding gap created by the cuts in government funding.[17]



The growth in need is caused by the increasing number of older people and the complex needs of some younger disabled people.



Herefordshire Council supports slightly fewer social care clients than the national average.

Clients have similar level of needs to the English average.

Spending was similar to 2012-13.

Plans are in place to respond to reductions in government funding and the council's new responsibilities.

16 The figures in the graph are the council's cost after accounting for income such as client contributions as shown in the statuory finance return PSSEX1 as "Gross expenditure including SSMS". Details of this return are published by the Dept of Health
17 The forward strategies are set out in the council's medium Term Financial strategy and Market Position Statement



How does Herefordshire's expenditure compare?[18] Although not among the highest spending authorities, Herefordshire does spend more than most similar councils. For comparison, 2012-13 is the latest year with national figures available.

	Spend per 10,000 population	Spend per service user
Herefordshire 2012-13	£4,475,000	£13,165
Average spend by similar councils in 2012-13	£4,205,000*	£11,902

*median of aca comparator group

Most of the money that Herefordshire Council spends on social care is spent on care homes or homecare agencies. 2012-13 is the latest year with national figures available for comparison Herefordshire paid less for an hour of homecare but more for residential and nursing care.

	Herefordshire (2012-13)	Similar councils (2012-13)
Cost of one hour of homecare	£15	£17
Cost for a week in a nursing home for an older person	£571	£470
Cost for a week in a residential home for an adult with a learning disability 18-64	£1,364	£1,274



18 Data based on annual PSSEX return made available on http://factsandfigures.herefordshire.gov.uk

Our plans and challenges for 2014-15

Helping you stay independent for longer

Our commitment to keeping people independent for longer will continue as we grow our telecare and assistive technology service and put it out to tender: simple technology can be used to remind people to take their medicine and to help monitor falls amongst other things. We will also develop short intensive programmes of support (known as reablement) to help people return to independence quickly following a period in hospital, illness or a crisis.

Direct payments

Working with service users we will develop a new direct payment policy which will be easier for people to understand and will offer people more flexible use of their payments.



Working closer with health

We will also be working much closer with our health colleagues to join up services better and help prevent admissions to hospitals and residential care. This is part of a national priority to integrate health and social care, and will help people in need of urgent care, have their care and support needs met more effectively.

Part of this includes changing the way people's needs are assessed so that they take place outside the intensity of the hospital environment and allow people to make better informed choices around their future care.

The Care Act (2014)

2014/15 will also see the biggest changes in social care legislation in 60 years with the introduction of the Care Act. This will have many implications for the local authority and a team of people will be working to ensure the council complies with its new statutory duties from April 2015.

Some of the key areas will focus around:

- Information, advice and guidance to ensure that people get the right care and support at the right time to maximise choice and control over their lives.
- Market shaping to ensure that services are available to meet the needs of Herefordshire residents.

Safeguarding

Keeping adults safe from harm is everyone's business. The council will review its safeguarding processes in 2014-15 and put plans together to improve our safeguarding services with a focus on better outcomes for service users.
We aim to make safeguarding personal so that people who need support are listened to and given choice over how that support is provided.

Involving you more

Over the next 12 months, we will continue to focus on putting individuals at the centre of their care planning and refresh our approach to personalisation. We will do this by working with an expert by experience: someone who has first-hand experience of using services themselves. This person will refocus our Making it Real Board and develop a toolkit to provide guidance and support for meaningful involvement and co-production. This will involve service users and carers and run across all adult social care projects. This will help improve the range of services available so that people can choose how their needs are met.







CASE STUDY

Andrew's personalisation story

How living with the Gilbert family has given him the confidence to make choices



Andrew has been living with the Gilbert family since 1997. Born with a learning disability and very little hearing which has had an impact on his speech, he came to live with the Gilberts when he was 31. He'd been in care all his life, and as a result, was quite institutionalised and lacked confidence.

When Andrew first came to live with the Gilberts, he used to go to a day centre each day, but as he began to build up his confidence, he went to Holme Lacy College to develop his literacy skills, horticulture and work with small animals. He did incredibly well there winning awards including Student of the Year and this, together with the support he received from living in a family environment, gave him the confidence to make choices for himself. Andrew likes to go to the Ryefield Centre once a week where he helps to cook in the café. He also goes to the Widemarsh Centre, works in the garden one day a week, goes out with his friends and family (he loves dancing) and works at Hereford Community Farm.

Sandra said: "A lot of people don't know about the Adult Placement Scheme which is now known as Shared Lives, but it's been going for years in Herefordshire. We think it's marvellous. It doesn't always work for everyone but can be a stepping stone to help people gain confidence, become more independent and make decisions about the way they want to live their lives."

Useful information

1. Access to adult social care
Adult social care enquiries: 01432 260101
ASCAdviceandReferralTeam@herefordshire.gcsx.gov.uk

2. Healthwatch Herefordshire
01432 364481
www.healthwatchherefordshire.co.uk

3. Care Quality Commission
The independent regulator of all health and social care services in England.
03000 616161
www.cqc.org.uk

Further Reading

1. Facts and figures about Herefordshire
www.factsandfigures.herefodshire.gov.uk

2. Making it Real
www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk/

3. Spotlight on adult and wellbeing
www.herefordshire.gov.uk/subscribe
Sign up to receive an email alert every time we publish a new edition of Spotlight on adult and wellbeing, our regular newsletter for people interested in adult social care

Feedback

This document has been produced by Herefordshire Council. We'd like to know what you think of this report and how you would like to get involved in developing future reports. Please complete our feedback form online at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/lafeedback

Alternatively you can email your views to adultscpip@herefordshire.gov.uk or you can use the form on the reverse of this page and return it to:

Adult social care performance team
Herefordshire Council, Nelson House, Whitecross road Hereford HR4 9DG
We will use your feedback to help shape the next Local Account (2014-15)

Feedback form

1. How did you find out about the Local Account?

Poster ☐ Website ☐ Newspaper ☐ Library ☐ Herefordshire Council website ☐

Other - please specify

2. What do you think of the:

Content with 1 being poor and 4 being excellent — Please select 1 2 3 4

Facts & figures with 1 being poor and 4 being excellent — Please select 1 2 3 4

Case studies used in the report with 1 being poor and 4 being excellent — Please select 1 2 3 4

Photographs used with 1 being poor and 4 being excellent — Please select 1 2 3 4

3. Overall, how would you describe this Local Account? Tick as many as necessary

Interesting ☐ Confusing ☐ Informative ☐ Boring ☐

Structured ☐ Not enough information ☐

Comments (to add further information or if you would like to be involved in future reports please fill in your email address in the box below)

4. If you have any ideas on how we can improve our Local Account, please tell us (i.e., design, more information, language used, etc.)

5. Are you a user of our adult social care services, or do you care for someone who does?

herefordshire.gov.uk

Herefordshire Council

MEETING:	**CABINET**
MEETING DATE:	**13 NOVEMBER 2014**
TITLE OF REPORT:	**LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME – 2015/16 EFFECT ON PARISH PRECEPTS**
REPORT BY:	**CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER**

Classification

Open

Key Decision

This is a key decision because it is likely to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising one or more wards in the county.

Notice has been served in accordance with Part 3, Section 9 (Publicity in connection with key decisions) of The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

This report explains the recommended approach to the funding changes as a result of the abolition of the council tax benefit scheme and the introduction of the council tax reduction scheme and the recommended funding allocation to parish councils.

Recommendation(s)

THAT:

(a) The leader recommends to Council that estimated council tax reduction support scheme grant funding of £289k is passed onto parishes in 2015/16 (as it was in 2014/15).

Alternative Options

1 Alternatively the £289k central government funding could be retained by the council as a contribution to its savings targets meaning parishes would either have to reduce

their budgets or increase their precept by an average of 10% (see appendix 1).

2 Some authorities have taken this course of action but it is being challenged by parishes so may be overturned. Changing the approach would cause problems for parishes at a time when the council wants them to take on more services.

3 Reduce the funding by an equivalent level to central grant reductions. Currently the revenue support grant that the council tax reduction scheme forms part of is being reduced by between 5% and 7% per annum.

4 Reducing the grant by an amount to reflect this reduction, say 10% makes very little difference (£29k).

Reasons for Recommendations

5 It is recommended that the governments Council Tax Support Scheme grant is allocated to parish and town councils as intended by the funding allocation.

Key Considerations

6 The government's council tax benefit scheme was abolished from 1 April 2013 and replaced by the locally controlled (Herefordshire) council tax reduction scheme. The result of this was a reduction in the council tax base on which Band D council tax is calculated and collected.

7 The reduction in the tax base has therefore caused a fall in council tax receipts. This is largely, but not entirely, funded through the Rates Retention Scheme through which councils receive central government support. The funding received is about 10% less than would have been received under the old council tax benefit system.

8 For 2013/14 the government estimated £289k of the additional funding included in the Rates Retention Scheme for 2013/14 related to town and parish councils. Whilst there is no legislative duty to pass on this funding, the council passed the grant to parishes. The basis of calculation to individual parishes was the number of dwellings in the parish that were previously in receipt of council tax benefit.

9 For 2014/15, the council will not be told how much council tax reduction grant is included in its financial settlement.

10 The impact on individual parish and town council's is attached as Appendix 1. This highlights: the impact on each parish of the grant, how the amount of grant varies by parish as a percentage of its total precept; from 1% in Hampton Bishop and Mathon to 19% in Kington and what effect the loss of grant would mean for each parish if it had to increase its precept to compensate for the loss. The average is 10% of the overall precept collected by parish and town councils of £2.9m PA.

11 In monetary terms the biggest loser if the grant was not passed on would be Hereford Town Council with the equivalent of 15,273 Band D properties, 23% of the number in the county that receives £93k PA, 13% of its precept.

Community Impact

12 The grant funding is intended to replace the lost receipts from the introduction of the

new council tax reduction scheme. This funding therefore reduces the community impact of an increased percept if the grant funding is not allocated as recommended.

Equality and Human Rights

13 This government funding supports individuals affected by the council tax reduction scheme.

Financial Implications

14 The council currently budgets to pass on the proportion of grant that relates to the council tax reduction scheme. If it changed its policy it would retain £289k PA of funding for use on other purposes.

Legal Implications

15 Since 1 April 2013 local authorities in England have been responsible for administering their own Council Tax Reduction Schemes, subject to the *Council Tax Reduction Schemes (Prescribed Requirements) (England) Regulations 2012*

The funding for council tax support schemes provided to billing authorities for 2013-14 included a sum in respect of the funding that would be lost to parish councils as a result of this decision. However, the Government did not oblige billing authorities to pass this sum on to parish and town councils.

From 2014-15, funding for council tax support schemes – and the sums intended for parish and town councils – will be rolled into the general local authority grant. It is therefore not now possible to identify a specific amount which is intended for use for council tax support schemes.

Risk Management

16 There is minimum risk identified; the funding is a set pass through from central government to parishes.

Consultees

17 All parishes have been consulted with and advised of the funding approach recommended. The leader has consulted with other group leaders.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Parish precepts for 2014/15

Background Papers

- None identified.

Parish Precepts 2014-15 **Appendix One**

Parish Council	Band D equivilant properties	Band D Precept £	Precept £	Govt Grant £	% of precept
Malvern Hills Conservators (Mathon)	156	29.29	4,558	32	1%
Mathon Parish Council	156	41.74	6,496	46	1%
Hampton Bishop Parish Council	192	87.74	16,827	174	1%
Hope Mansell Parish Council	135	12.39	1,669	31	2%
Linton Parish Council	449	13.10	5,877	124	2%
Aston Ingham Parish Council	202	17.90	3,623	77	2%
Richard's Castle (Herefordshire) Parish Council	124	28.74	3,572	77	2%
Little Birch Parish Council	95	27.72	2,642	58	2%
Allensmore Parish Council	247	13.83	3,419	80	2%
Longtown Group Parish Council	411	13.13	5,399	130	2%
Hatfield and District Group Parish Council	212	19.31	4,090	110	3%
Humber, Ford & Stoke Prior Group Parish Council	286	21.78	6,231	168	3%
Stretton Grandison Group Parish Council	214	9.11	1,946	54	3%
How Caple, Sollershope & Yatton Group Parish Council	156	37.43	5,836	164	3%
Pipe and Lyde Parish Council	142	15.92	2,265	64	3%
Llangarron Parish Council	464	11.52	5,344	158	3%
Wellington Heath Parish Council	220	32.65	7,183	216	3%
Acton Beauchamp Group Parish Council	172	16.92	2,910	90	3%
Ballingham, Bolstone & Hentland Group Parish Council	281	13.81	3,875	124	3%
Bartestree & Lugwardine Group Parish Council	815	28.52	23,236	763	3%
Bodenham Parish Council	442	31.10	13,733	461	3%
Avenbury Parish Council	110	35.19	3,867	133	3%
Titley and District Group Parish Council	224	19.09	4,271	147	3%
North Bromyard Group Parish Council	312	13.02	4,059	141	3%
Eaton Bishop Parish Council	175	33.09	5,796	204	4%
Eastnor & Donnington Parish Council	141	24.72	3,477	123	4%
Peterstow Parish Council	186	19.24	3,572	129	4%
Pyons Group Parish Council	343	20.80	7,135	264	4%
Breinton Parish Council	392	20.43	8,002	298	4%
Whitchurch & Ganarew Group Parish Council	480	50.25	24,098	901	4%
Yarpole Group Parish Council	326	41.40	13,490	511	4%
Lyonshall Parish Council	272	53.13	14,451	549	4%
Holmer & Shelwick Parish Council	660	11.68	7,713	294	4%
Weston-under-Penyard Parish Council	465	20.72	9,633	368	4%
Weston Beggard Parish Council	82	11.67	962	38	4%
Ashperton Parish Council	116	26.09	3,029	121	4%
Welsh Newton & Llanrothal Group Parish Council	141	44.61	6,279	251	4%
Huntington Parish Council	45	14.94	673	27	4%
Dorstone Parish Council	170	18.08	3,076	124	4%
Brilley Parish Council	116	54.03	6,243	257	4%
Monkland and Stretford Parish Council	80	49.37	3,937	163	4%
Garway Parish Council	168	60.40	10,152	422	4%
Brampton Abbots & Foy Group Parish Council	215	8.91	1,920	80	4%
Wellington Parish Council	403	51.14	20,621	877	4%
Clifford Parish Council	254	15.10	3,830	169	4%
Dinedor Parish Council	126	47.92	6,027	272	5%
Dormington & Mordiford Group Parish Council	304	46.95	14,279	645	5%
Luston Group Parish Council	358	34.71	12,431	567	5%
Yarkhill Parish Council	133	32.33	4,303	197	5%
Burghill Parish Council	679	20.90	14,184	655	5%
Cradley Parish Council	764	31.26	23,895	1,105	5%
Middleton-on-the-Hill and Leysters Group Parish Counc	168	19.86	3,344	156	5%
Sellack Parish Council	119	16.10	1,909	91	5%
Walford Parish Council	628	25.08	15,745	755	5%
St. Weonards Parish Council	146	23.72	3,460	171	5%
Abbeydore & Bacton Group Parish Council	155	44.24	6,861	340	5%
Marstow Parish Council	159	42.03	6,666	335	5%
Woolhope Parish Council	208	25.21	5,237	264	5%
Upton Bishop Parish Council	257	32.84	8,432	431	5%
Stapleton Group Parish Council	141	33.61	4,752	247	5%
Goodrich & Welsh Bicknor Group Parish Council	256	20.79	5,320	279	5%
Orleton Parish Council	337	43.15	14,532	768	5%
Much Marcle Parish Council	291	16.06	4,671	248	5%
Kinnersley and District Group Parish Council	237	14.01	3,321	179	5%
Eardisland Parish Council	220	67.83	14,939	811	5%
Pencombe Group Parish Council	191	42.14	8,053	448	6%
Callow & Haywood Group Parish Council	202	25.79	5,206	293	6%
Much Cowarne Group Parish Council	203	15.37	3,124	176	6%
Aymestrey Parish Council	153	22.64	3,462	198	6%
Dilwyn Parish Council	287	45.43	13,019	748	6%
Pixley & District Parish Council	220	24.73	5,434	315	6%
Colwall Parish Council	1,122	63.05	70,712	4,170	6%
Llanwarne & District Group Parish Council	260	7.27	1,888	113	6%
Birley with Upper Hill Parish Council	128	14.74	1,887	113	6%
Bishopstone Group Parish Council	179	22.56	4,038	245	6%
Whitbourne Parish Council	315	28.45	8,949	550	6%
Ocle Pychard Parish Council	255	10.53	2,684	166	6%
Much Dewchurch Parish Council	248	13.31	3,296	204	6%
Aconbury Parish Meeting	36	3.16	113	7	6%

Cusop Parish Council	169	47.30	8,003	498	6%
Ewyas Harold Group Parish Council	424	44.37	18,822	1,177	6%
Sutton Parish Council	371	48.75	18,097	1,151	6%
Bridstow Parish Council	380	12.93	4,913	313	6%
Brimfield and Little Hereford Group Parish Council	484	18.46	8,931	571	6%
Thornbury Group Parish Council	170	18.78	3,193	208	7%
Eardisley Group Parish Council	480	17.01	8,163	535	7%
Much Birch Parish Council	383	15.64	5,994	395	7%
Border Group Parish Council	293	24.78	7,269	481	7%
Madley Parish Council	397	33.05	13,123	879	7%
Kingsland Parish Council	448	20.93	9,369	633	7%
Wyeside Group Parish Council	298	20.41	6,083	417	7%
Marden Parish Council	520	31.50	16,375	1,124	7%
Vowchurch & District Group Parish Council	306	18.32	5,613	386	7%
Bredenbury & District Group Parish Council	156	32.04	5,012	348	7%
Kimbolton Parish Council	197	30.84	6,073	428	7%
Moreton on Lugg Parish Council	280	46.68	13,067	934	7%
Belmont Rural Parish Council	1,334	34.97	46,648	3,351	7%
Pembridge Parish Council	440	38.17	16,792	1,207	7%
Kilpeck Group Parish Council	196	51.18	10,025	724	7%
Fownhope Parish Council	408	45.72	18,649	1,353	7%
Withington Group Parish Council	587	25.39	14,898	1,101	7%
Stoke Lacy Parish Council	144	32.24	4,655	345	7%
Malvern Hills Conservators (Colwall Parish Council)	1,122	28.55	32,020	2,427	8%
Orcop Parish Council	165	39.51	6,507	494	8%
Kings Caple Parish Council	139	44.54	6,205	474	8%
Leintwardine Group Parish Council	431	34.49	14,858	1,141	8%
Kington Rural and Lower Harpton Group Parish Council	223	19.97	4,458	343	8%
Foxley Group Parish Council	162	10.01	1,622	128	8%
Brockhampton with Much Fawley Parish Council	89	37.47	3,336	264	8%
Holme Lacy Parish Council	183	75.81	13,886	1,114	8%
Bishop's Frome Parish Council	306	69.60	21,263	1,736	8%
Almeley Parish Council	246	27.21	6,687	562	8%
Bosbury and Coddington Parish Council	353	26.08	9,217	782	8%
Ross Rural Parish Council	408	6.77	2,761	238	9%
Credenhill Parish Council	622	25.56	15,906	1,395	9%
Brockhampton Group Parish Council	312	20.61	6,432	568	9%
Shobdon Parish Council	318	41.80	13,274	1,186	9%
Ross on Wye Town Council	3,213	75.58	242,866	21,783	9%
Wigmore Group Parish Council	336	39.61	13,305	1,194	9%
Lower Bullingham Parish Council	589	27.54	16,221	1,516	9%
Staunton-on-Wye and District Group Parish Council	190	12.87	2,442	233	10%
Little Dewchurch Parish Council	176	38.78	6,844	656	10%
Clehonger Parish Council	466	25.53	11,909	1,192	10%
Peterchurch Parish Council	382	34.60	13,231	1,331	10%
Ledbury Town Council	3,316	74.32	246,444	25,474	10%
Tarrington Parish Council	213	48.87	10,385	1,115	11%
Weobley Parish Council	430	29.05	12,495	1,469	12%
Putley Parish Council	100	44.67	4,458	542	12%
Hereford City Council	15,273	47.32	722,695	92,977	13%
Stretton Sugwas Parish Council	142	26.96	3,822	528	14%
Kingstone & Thruxton Group Parish Council	379	20.79	7,875	1,126	14%
Kentchurch Parish Council	100	56.61	5,634	866	15%
Lea Parish Council	224	39.99	8,965	1,385	15%
Hope under Dinmore Group Parish Council	138	23.22	3,203	496	15%
Leominster Town Council	3,439	72.65	249,862	40,361	16%
Bromyard & Winslow Town Council	1,317	122.10	160,802	26,153	16%
Kington Town Council	855	68.81	58,862	11,139	19%
Dinmore Parish Meeting	9	-	-	-	
Hampton Charles Parish Meeting	20	0.00	-	-	
Stoke Edith Parish Meeting (Chairman)	43	-	-	-	
Total	**66,219**		**2,833,151**	**288,969**	**10%**

Herefordshire Council

MEETING:	**CABINET**
MEETING DATE:	**13 November 2014**
TITLE OF REPORT:	**Capital support for federation of Aylestone Business and Enterprise College (ABEC) and Broadlands Primary School and Children's Centre.**
REPORT BY:	**Head of Education Development**

Classification

Open

Key Decision

This is a key decision because it is likely to result in the council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates.

And

This is a key decision because it is likely to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising one or more wards in the county.

NOTICE has been served in accordance with Part 3, Section 10 (General Exception) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) Regulations 2012.

Wards Affected

Aylestone

Purpose

To approve a capital scheme to support the federation of Aylestone Business and Enterprise College and Broadlands Primary school including co-location onto one site thus releasing a council asset for future disposal, avoiding long term maintenance costs and supporting a better use of school revenue funding. To also recommend to Council that provision be made in the capital programme to support this scheme.

Recommendation(s)

THAT:

(a) The relocation of Broadlands Primary School and Children's Centre onto the Aylestone Business and Enterprise College (ABEC) site be approved at a cost of £1.007m ; and

(b) It is recommended to council that provision of up to £1.007m is made in the capital programme and;

(c) Subject to completion of the scheme the Broadlands site be declared redundant and disposed of in accordance with council policy.

Alternative options

1 There is no additional capital expenditure. This would result in ABEC and Broadlands continuing on their existing sites. Thus the opportunity to release the capital asset of the Broadlands site would be lost and additional significant maintenance would be needed over the next three years. ABEC and Broadlands, would incur additional revenue costs linked to running larger than necessary sites and the federation arrangements between the two schools more challenging.

2 Spend in excess of £1.007m on capital works to make improvements at ABEC so it can accommodate Broadlands Primary School. The recommended capital expenditure provides sufficient resource to make suitable building changes so high quality provision can be made, without compromising any future options or change. The council is embarking on a comprehensive review of the school estate, which is in need of significant investment and is due to report in 2015. Without a clear agreed approach to investment in the whole school estate, spending beyond what is necessary may be considered inappropriate and deny opportunity to invest in different schemes.

3 Spend less than £1.007m on capital works. There would not be sufficient investment to make the buildings suitable for accommodating the Broadlands pupils.

4 Relocating ABEC on the Broadlands site. The site is not big enough.

5 Consider closing either or both of the schools. There is an identified need for the places the schools provide both now and projecting into the future.

Reasons for recommendations

6 The council is seeking to maximise the use of its assets. Investing in the relocation of the Broadlands Primary School onto the ABEC site would leave a vacant site which could, subject to Secretary of State approval, be sold.

7 ABEC and Broadlands Primary School require significant ongoing maintenance and repair work, which is costly for both the schools and the council. The schools have recently become federated and relocating onto one site would reduce the need for future expenditure. As single schools on separate sites both are incurring additional capital and revenue costs.

8 There is adequate space to accommodate both schools on the ABEC site but some

building work is required to ensure suitable and safe learning environments.

9 The council has a duty to support schools delivering the highest quality provision which will bring about the best outcomes for children and young people. The newly federated governors and managers are very clear that the learning environment for the pupils needs improvement and this proposal supports this.

Key considerations

10 ABEC and Broadlands are a local authority maintained schools and the council has responsibility for maintaining them.

11 ABEC and Broadlands schools occupy significant sites in the north of the city and the governors agreed to a formal federation from September 2014. ABEC has a roll of 478 and this is forecast to be approximately 400 into the future. Broadlands school has 169 pupils on roll and forecasts suggest it should be single form entry (30 pupils) giving a roll of 210. The ABEC site area is well in excess of that considered necessary for a 1000 place school. Broadlands has space for pupils and accommodates a nursery on site.

12 The immediate necessary and essential works at Broadlands and ABEC include roof repairs, fencing, replacement windows and repairs to boilers. If the schools did not co-locate, the cost of the essential necessary maintenance work at Broadlands over the next three years would be in excess of £360k.

13 A reasonable forecast of the likely cost of converting teaching blocks to make them suitable is £1.007m.

14 Both schools are incurring additional running costs linked to heating and lighting unused areas. Co-locating onto one site will reduce these revenue costs.

15 The estimated value of the Broadlands site as determined by the District Valuer is in excess of £2.2m less costs of £358k to enable the sale, net income of £1.84m

16 The scheme is to be funded through capital budgets of £647k and use of the £360k maintenance grant.

17 The project would be delivered through robust project management arrangements approved by the council. The project group would be responsible for determining the best procurement route for delivery of quality facility, to time and to budget.

18 The Secretary of State approves the disposal of all school sites and would be keen to be satisfied that there was not an opportunity for a future free school. Sport England would also a view about any loss or replacement of playing fields when it comes to disposal.

19 A comprehensive estates strategy for education across Herefordshire is being developed and is expected to be available in June 2015. Many of our schools have significant maintenance issues, rely on temporary buildings or will need work to make them more suitable in the short and medium term. The strategy will take a long term view (5 to 20 years). The proposals in this report do not compromise what might be in a Herefordshire Schools Estate Strategy and provide opportunity to demonstrate the type of initiative that will bring overall improvement to condition and suitability of schools.

20 The sooner a move could be made the greater the revenue cost savings. The time taken to design, commission and complete the work is a minimum of 6 months. All work would need to be scheduled to provide minimum interference to the working of the school. A good time to start in new buildings is the beginning of a term. The aspiration therefore would be to have the works completed by September 2015.

Community impact

21 The condition and suitability of a school may be a consideration parents and carers make when choosing a school. The ABEC and Broadlands governors have developed a clear vision for improving education in the area. The proposals are supportive of the federation's vision and will provide a much enhanced learning environment free from significant major building and maintenance works.

22 The proposals are supportive of the Councils corporate plan aim of ensuring children and families have access to excellent education and learning opportunities at all levels to improve outcomes for children and young people.

Equality and human rights

23 The proposals have been considered for all with protected characterises under equalities legislation. In particular regard to the impact on children and young people with disabilities has been considered. The new primary classrooms are across two storeys which may disadvantage children, staff and young people with mobility difficulties. The new arrangement does however bring additional space to accommodate people in wheelchairs. It is considered that reasonable adjustments could be made to accommodate a person with disabilities and they would not be disadvantaged by these proposals. An initial equalities impact assessment is attached. This will be amended as the building work design is progressed.

Financial implications

24 The cost of the works is £1.007m (details included in Appendix 1) this will be funded using £360k of maintenance budget and sale of the Broadlands site £2.2m less costs of £358k, providing a surplus fund of £1.195k. The timing of the building work and sale causes a short term cashflow issue.

25 The financial risk of the project is if the sale of the Broadlands site is not granted by Secretary of State, the capital costs of £647k (costs less the maintenance budget) would need to be funded by prudential borrowing. The cost of this is £39K pa over 25 years.

26 The combined site will enable both schools to reduce fixed overheads thus increasing spending in support of teaching and learning.

Legal implications

27 The council has a duty to provide and support places of education that are both fit for purpose and health and safety compliant. Broadlands is a maintained school, specifically a community school for which the council has responsibility for the land, buildings and relevant funding. Under Section 22 of the School Standards and

Framework Act 1998 the LA has a duty to maintain such schools and in relation to Community Schools that duty includes "(a) the duty of defraying all the expenses of maintaining it, and (b) the duty of making premises available to be used for the purposes of the school."

28 There is also a statutory obligation pursuant to section 14 of the Education Act to secure sufficient schools for the provision of primary and secondary education in the area. Such schools must be separate. Therefore whilst co-location is possible the schools themselves must be in separate buildings.

29 There are procurement risks that will need to be addressed before any scheme proceeds. Issues to be addressed include how the contractors for design and build will be sourced. A proper tender process will need to be followed unless use of an existing framework is feasible.

30 There are no guarantees that the Broadlands Site will be able to be sold. Sport England and the secretary of state will need to consent to a disposal for non-educational use. In addition legal will need to review the title for the site to ensure that there are no further matters preventing a sale taking place.

Risk management

31 Additional revenue costs incurred by schools which may jeopardise the school's ability to pay off a loan and/or the quality of teaching and learning.

32 The actual costs are in excess of the forecast costs of the work. This is always a risk as the final tender price is susceptible to market forces and the market at the time. The project management arrangements described in paragraph 17 would seek to mitigate this risk.

33 The costs overrun the tender price. These are to be managed through high quality project management. A contingency factor is built into the forecast figures and the project management arrangements described in paragraph 17 would seek to mitigate this risk

34 The Secretary of State refuses to allow the release of the Broadlands site for sale. In this eventuality the cost of the scheme would be borne by the capital programme. Herefordshire continues to have surplus school places so there is not foreseeable need to reserve the site for educational purposes. Having a clear estates strategy should further enhance this position.

Consultees

35 The governors and senior managers of the ABEC and Broadlands School have been consulted on proposals and are supportive. The wards members have been consulted and raised no objections. All parents/carers of pupils at Broadlands Primary school were invited to attend a meeting setting out the ideas and those that attended concluded it was a supportive and positive move for the school. Further communication with all parents and carers, and pupils are planned to take place during this process, with the full engagement of the schools.

Appendices

Appendix 1- Finance Schedule

Appendix 2 - Site plans of Aylestone and Broadlands

Appendix 3 - Initial Equalities Impact Assessment

Background papers

None identified.

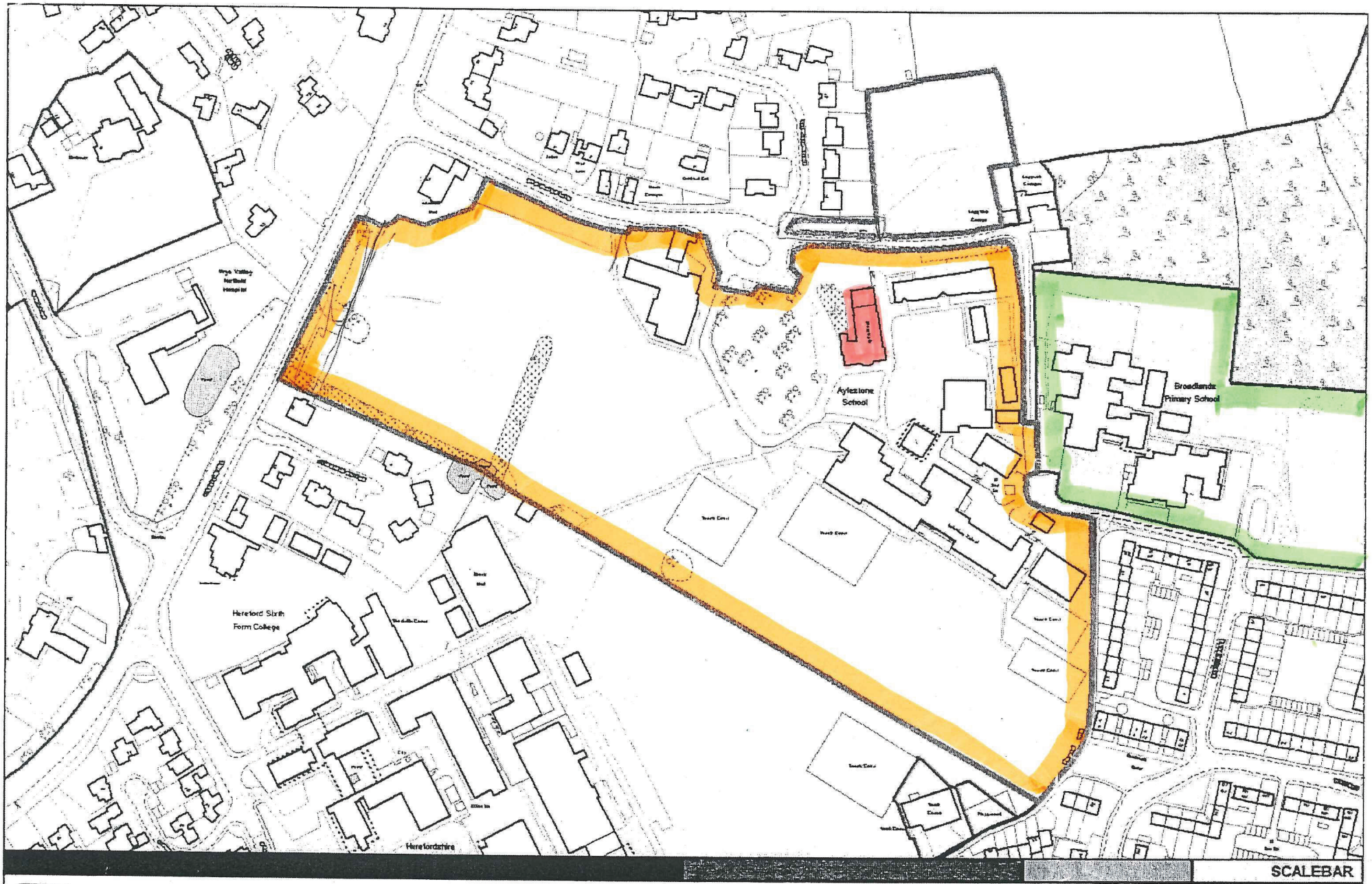
Appendix 1

Finances for the Aylestone and Broadlands project

This table shows the breakdown of income and expenditure for the project and the timings of the cashflow**.**

		Current	Year 1		Year 2	Total
		2014-15	2015-16	Total Costs	2016-17	Net
		£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Income Opportunities						
	Sale of Broadlands			-	2,200	2,200
	Broadlands - Maintenance Avoidance	240	120	360	-	360
		240	**120**	**360**	**2,200**	**2,560**
Expenditure						
	Relocation of Humanities Classes	64	64	128	-	128
	Art Mobiles	55	55	110	-	110
	Relocate Kiln	15	15	30		30
	Modify G Block WC's and Reception	25	25	50		50
	G Block Link	35	35	70		70
	Cottage Extension	55	55	110		110
	Cottage WC's and Kitchen Alterations	15	15	30		30
	Broadlands House reception	16	16	32		32
	Cottage Habitat and covered area	20	20	40		40
	Fencing and Gates	40	40	80		80
	New hard play	30	30	60		60
	General Decanting	5	5	10		10
	Surveys	6	6	12		12
	Fees	57	57	114		114
	Contingency @ 15%	66	66	131		131
	Works to enable the sale of Broadlands site				325	325
	District Valuer estimates 10%				33	33
Total Expenditure		**504**	**504**	**1,007**	**358**	**1,365**
Net Position		**(264)**	**(384)**	**(647)**	**1,843**	**1,195**

Valuation of the sale of the Broadlands site and costs of sale are provided by the district valuer.



EKAH: Hereford, Aylestone School

Object Area= 73258.65 sq m ; Easting: 352382.34m ; Northing: 240778.22m ; ScaleBar Width: 685.9m

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Equality Impact and Needs Assessment Form

A) Description

Name of service, function, policy (or other) being assessed

Capital work to support federation of Aylestone and Broadlands Primary school

Directorate or organisation responsible (and service, if it is a policy)

Children's Wellbeing, Education & Commissioning

Date of assessment

15th October 2014

Names and/or job titles of people carrying out the assessment

Andy Hough , Head of Education Development.

Accountable person

Director for Children's Wellbeing

What are the aims or main purpose of the service, function or policy? What does it provide and how does it provide it?

The aim of the work is to improve the quality and fabric of Aylestone and Broadlands schools such that they provide the best opportunity to deliver high quality education for all pupils.

Location or any other relevant information

Site plans , room schedules

List any key policies or procedures to be reviewed as part of this assessment.

Individual school risk assessments

Who is intended to benefit from the service, function or policy?

Children, parents, staff at Aylestone and Broadlands schools

Who are the stakeholders? What is their interest?

Children and young people who now and may in the future attend Broadlands and Aylestone schools.

B) Partnerships and Procurement

If you contract out services or work in partnership with other organisations, Herefordshire Council remains responsible for ensuring that the quality of provision/delivery meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, ie.

- Eliminates unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- Advance equality of opportunity between different groups

- Fosters good relations between different groups

What information do you give to the partner/contractor in order to ensure that they meet the requirements of the Act? What information do you monitor from the partner/contractor in order to ensure that they meet the requirements of the Act?

The contractors undertaking the work will be accountable under the Council procurement procedures to have due regard to the Act

Are there any concerns at this stage that indicate the possibility of inequalities/negative impacts? For example: complaints, comments, research, and outcomes of a scrutiny review. Please describe:

No

C) Information

D) Assessment/Analysis

Describe your key findings (eg. negative, positive or neutral impacts - actual or potential). Also your assessment of risk.

Strand/community	**Impact**
Broadlands School current condition and suitability.	The school is a single height building with adequate scope to support children with disabilities.
Aylestone School	The school is a large rambling site with a number of level changes. Reasonable adjustments have to be made to secure fair access for children and staff with disabilities.
The new combined site	Initial assessment suggests the situation will need reasonable adjustments to be made for a child attending Broadlands school as the school will be on two levels. Detail design will be further assessment to ensure quality..

E) Consultation

Did you carry out any consultation?

YES ☒ NO ☐

Who was consulted?

School leaders, council members, officers from property services and education.

Describe other research, studies or information used to assist with the assessment and your key findings.

N/A

Do you use diversity monitoring categories? Yes ☒ **No** ☐
(if No you should use this as an action as we are required by law to monitor diversity categories)
If yes, which categories?

☒ Race
☒ Sex
☐ Sexual Orientation
☒ Religion & Belief
☒ Disability
☒ Age
☐ Gender Reassignment
☐ Marriage & Civil Partnership
☐ Pregnancy & Maternity

What do you do with the diversity monitoring data you gather? Is this information published? And if so, where?

The school publish the approach to Equality duty and this is reviewed and endorsed by Governors

F) Conclusions

	Action/objective/target OR Justification	Resources required	Timescale	I/R/S/J
a)	Review specific actions and carry out EIA as required	Within existing	2014-17	I
b)				

(I) *Taking immediate effect.*
(R) *Recommended to Council/Directors through a Committee or other Report*.*
(S) *Added to the Service Plan.*
(J) *To be brought to the attention of the Herefordshire Equality & Human Rights Group.*

*Summarise your findings in the report. Make the full assessment available for further information.

NB: Make sure your final document is suitable for publishing in the public domain.

Herefordshire Council

MEETING:	**CABINET**
MEETING DATE:	**13 NOVEMBER 2014**
TITLE OF REPORT:	**PROPOSED CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2015/16 TO 2017/18**
REPORT BY:	**CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER**

Classification

Open

Key Decision

This is a Key Decision because it is likely to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising one or more wards in the County.

NOTICE has been served in accordance with Part 3, Section 9 (Publicity in connection with key decisions) of The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To agree proposals for additions to the capital investment programme for 2015/16 to 2017/18 inclusive for recommendation to Council on 12 December 2014.

Recommendation(s)

THAT:

(a) The additional capital schemes as detailed in appendix 1 of this report are recommended to Council for inclusion in the 2015/16 capital programme.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Peter Robinson, Chief Financial Officer on Tel (01432) 383519

Alternative Options

1 The capital schemes detailed below address critical needs and there are no alternative options that do not radically effect the provision of services.

Reasons for Recommendations

2 The schemes summarised in this report, and detailed in Appendix 1, are recommended for approval in order to support council priorities, the realisation of savings or the mitigation of corporate risk.

Key Considerations

3 The current capital programme approved by Council in February 2014 is as summarised below.

Total 3 year budget 2014/15 to 2016/17						
Scheme	***Spend in prior years £'000***	**14/15 Budget £'000**	**15/16 Budget £'000**	**16/17 Budget £'000**	**Sub Total £'000**	***Total Budget £'000***
Fastershire Broadband	*4,000*	7,600	6,200	2,400	16,200	*20,200*
Local Transport Plan	*n/a*	10,645	-	-	10,645	*10,645*
Corporate Accommodation	*9,673*	6,211	976	-	7,187	*16,860*
Link Road	*9,064*	10,708	7,228	-	17,936	*27,000*
Leominster Primary School	*4,451*	5,729	437	-	6,166	*10,617*
LED Street Lighting	-	5,655	-	-	5,655	*5,655*
Hereford Enterprise Zone	*n/a*	1,967	1,467	-	3,434	*3,434*
Others	*n/a*	2,090	667	-	2,757	*2,757*
Schools Basic Need	*n/a*	1,008	634	666	2,308	*2,308*
Solar photovoltaic panels	*293*	1,841	-	-	1,841	*2,134*
Destination Hereford	*2,207*	1,054	-	-	1,054	*3,261*
Masters House, Ledbury	*3,419*	606	-	-	606	*4,025*
Hereford City Surface Car Parking	*434*	566	-	-	566	*1,000*
Community Capacity Grant	*n/a*	483	-	-	483	*483*
Disabled Facilities Grant	*n/a*	462	-	-	462	*462*
Yazor Brook Flood Alleviation	*4,426*	450	-	-	450	*4,876*
Energy from Waste Plant	-	11,000	14,000	15,000	40,000	*40,000*
Road Infrastructure	-	15,000	5,000	-	20,000	*20,000*
Leisure Centres	*330*	2,000	3,300	3,370	8,670	*9,000*
Disabled Facilities Grant	-	200	-	-	200	*200*
Closed Landfill Sites	-	76	-	-	76	*76*
TOTAL		**85,351**	**39,909**	**21,436**	**146,696**	

Financed by;-						
Prudential Borrowing		*57,237*	*37,371*	*20,770*	*115,378*	
Local Transport Plan Grant		*10,645*	*-*	*-*	*10,645*	
Fastershire BDUK Grant		*6,100*	*-*	*-*	*6,100*	
Standards Fund Grant		*5,205*	*-*	*-*	*5,205*	
Destination Hereford Grant		*1,054*	*-*	*-*	*1,054*	
Schools Basic Need Grant		*1,008*	*634*	*666*	*2,308*	
Community Capacity Grant		*483*	*-*	*-*	*483*	
Other Capital Grants		*410*	*-*	*-*	*410*	
Capital Receipts Reserve		*3,209*	*1,904*	*-*	*5,113*	
TOTAL		***85,351***	***39,909***	***21,436***	***146,696***	

4 Proposed additions to this capital programme are summarised below and detailed in Appendix 1. The bulk of schemes represent investment to improve infrastructure, supporting the local economy, housing development and the creation of job opportunities.

	Cost £000	Funding £000	Net Cost £000
Self-Financing Schemes (From Grants, Business Rates & Other External Income)			
Economic Investment:			
- South Wye Transport Package	27,000	(27,000)	-
- Hereford Enterprise Zone	16,000	(16,000)	-
- Three Elms Trading Estate	2,600	(2,600)	-
Schools	1,280	(1,280)	-
Total	**46,880**	**(46,880)**	**-**
Essential Works Wholly or Partly Financed by the Council			
Financed centrally:			
Schools	7,630	(352)	7,278
Other Properties	910	-	910
Cemeteries	100	-	100
Financed by service areas:			
Equipment	268	-	268
Total	**8,908**	**(352)**	**8,556**
Investment to Support Cost Savings			
Financed centrally:			
Schools	500	(160)	340
Other Properties	78	-	78
Financed by service areas:			
Gritters	500	-	500

Total	**1,078**	**(160)**	**918**
Contingency (1% of programme)	1,467	-	1,467
Total Additional Expenditure	**58,333**	**(47,392)**	**10,941**

5 In addition to the self-financing expenditure included above, additional expenditure of approximately £10m per annum will be funded under the Local Transport Plan that will be confirmed in December 2014.

6 Including the contingency reserve, additions to the capital programme will total £58.3m of which £47.4m is funded by capital grants, business rates or revenue savings already identified. This leaves a balance of £10.9m to be financed by prudential borrowing. This will be added to our borrowing levels within our Treasury Management Strategy. The revenue implications are detailed in the financial implications section and are indicated as pressures in our current future year's budget

7 Of the £10.9m additional corporate investment needed, £6.5m relates to Colwall School and covers the estimated cost of a new school should it not be possible to rectify the school's damp problems. Alternative grant funding has been sought and, if successful, will reduce this borrowing.

forecasting.

Overall borrowing implications

8 The inclusion of the additional borrowing requirement is in accordance with our current Treasury Management Strategy which will be updated following approval to include the additional schemes.

9 Total gross outstanding debt was £168m as at 31/03/14. This is being repaid at £10m per annum.

10 Additional investment has already been approved in respect of the energy from waste plant, leisure centre improvements, road investment and Hereford link road which are all self-financing schemes.

11 Assuming the new investment need is approved and including all other capital investment approved to date would see an increase in our debt requirement from £168m as at 31/03/14 to £197m as at 31/03/18.

10 Herefordshire has a long term debt to asset ratio of 26%. This means a quarter of Herefordshire's assets are financed by long term debt. This is the average position for all unitary authorities and when comparing long-term debt balance and cost to net revenue budget Hereford is in the lower (better) half of the comparative authority debt positions.

11 The councils Net Book Value (NBV) of fixed assets compared to the level of its net borrowing is estimated to be as follows.

	31.03.14 Actual £m	31.03.15 Estimate £m	31.03.16 Estimate £m	31.03.17 Estimate £m	31.03.18 Estimate £m
NBV of Fixed Assets	465	534	577	600	601
Level of Debt	147	203	229	232	197
Total Net Debt to Asset Percentage	31.6%	38.0%	39.7%	38.7%	32.8%

The Net Book Value of fixed assets (as shown in the council's balance sheet) has been calculated assuming approval of the capital programme and including expected capital receipts.

Operational property and investments are revalued but all other assets are carried at their depreciated historic cost which may not reflect current value. For example, in the case of community assets they often do not have a recorded historic cost and so are carried at minimal value in the council's Balance Sheet (total value £1.9m at 31.03.14). Similarly roads and infrastructure were carried at an historic cost value of £158.8m at 31.3.14 whereas their actual value based on a depreciated replacement cost basis is estimated to be in excess of £2,500m. This valuation method will be implemented in 2015/16 and is not reflected in the above figures but will reduce the debt to asset ratio in 2015/16 onwards.

The table shows the council's debt to asset ratio increasing over the next few years before reducing in 2017/18.

Community Impact

11 The capital investment need supports the overall corporate plan and service delivery strategies in place. The overall aim of capital expenditure is to benefit the community through improved facilities and by promoting economic growth.

Equality and Human Rights

12 A full community impact assessment will be carried out prior to any scheme commencing. Current budget proposals are undergoing an Equality Impact assessment; this work will be completed in November.

Financial Implications

13 Most investment will be made on a self financing basis as detailed on Appendix 1. A separate Cabinet on the business case for new individual projects will also be approved before investment begins.

14 It is estimated that the phasing and cost of the £10.9m of prudential borrowing requirement will be as follows:

	Capital Cost	Cost of Borrowing
	£m	£m
2015/16	4.6	0.1
2016/17	5.7	0.4
2017/18	0.5	0.6
Future Years	0.1	15.2
	10.9	16.3

The additional borrowing costs will continue for 25 future years. These figures comprise both interest and debt repayment and have been included in the revenue budget proposals for 2015/16 to 2017/18 as a new budget pressure.

Legal Implications

15 No legal implications arise directly from this report. However, a number of the schemes in the programme will be undertaken, at least in part, to meet the council's legal obligations; for example, to keep its building in a safe state of repair. The individual schemes within the programme will all need to be procured lawfully and appropriate contract documentation executed to protect the council's interests.'

Risk Management

16 Monthly budget control meetings are chaired by the Chief Financial Officer to give assurance on the robustness of budget control and monitoring, to highlight key risks and to identify any mitigation to reduce the impact of pressures on the council's overall position.

Consultees

17 General Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered the proposals at their meeting on 4 November. Their comments will be published as a supplement to this agenda.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Proposed additions to the capital programme 2015/16 to 2017/18.

Background Papers

None identified.

SUMMARY OF CAPITAL SCHEMES 2015/16 - 2017/18								
		Capital Cost of Project						
Scheme Description	15/16	16/17	17/18	Future Years	Total Cost	Total Funding	*Net Cost*	Comments
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	*£'000*	
SELF-FINANCING SCHEMES:								
Economy - supporting economic growth and connectivity					-			
South Wye Transport Package - including new link road A49-A465	1,000	1,000	12,300	12,700	**27,000**	**(27,000)**	**-**	Ensure scheme delivery remains on programme. There will be a cashflow funding implication during the obtaining of planning permission following which grant funding drawn post spend will commence.
Hereford Enterprise Zone - intervention works to progress EZ	4,900	7,100	4,000	-	**16,000**	**(16,000)**	**-**	Failure to invest will stall the EZ expansion calling into question the EZ status. The assurance of self financing will be secured before investment is committed to.
Three Elms Trading Estate - purchase from HCA & site improvement works	1,850	400	350	-	**2,600**	**(2,600)**	**-**	Purchase will enable Council to release value from its adjoining land. Rental income to fund cost of borrowing
	7,750	**8,500**	**16,650**	**12,700**	**45,600**	**(45,600)**	**-**	
People - improving outcomes for children and young people								
Westfield Special school - extend to provide nursery education	120	-	-	-	**120**	**(120)**	**-**	If not funded school would fail in statutory duty to commission sufficient school places for special education needs. The be funded by 2 year old capital grant funding.
Staunton primary School - additional enclosed teaching/outdoor activities resource	80	-	-	-	**80**	**(80)**	**-**	Funding from Basic Need Funding 14/15.
Mordiford Primary School - 2 mobile classrooms	80	-	-	-	**80**	**(80)**	**-**	Basic Need Funding. Partial contribution by school yet TBC.
Marlbrook Primary School - additional reception class space and toilets	80	-	-	-	**80**	**(80)**	**-**	Basic Need Funding. Partial contribution by school yet TBC.
Relocation of Broadlands School - release current buildings and grounds, modify & adapt Aylestone school building to house extra pupils	800	120	-	-	**920**	**(920)**	**-**	Broadlands site will need ongoing and extensive maintenance work in the next 3 years costing over £370,000. Fund from: LA maintenance programme and £2.2m from release of Broadlands school, which exceeds investment cost.
	1,160	**120**	**-**	**-**	**1,280**	**(1,280)**	**-**	
TOTAL OF SELF-FINANCING SCHEMES	**8,910**	**8,620**	**16,650**	**12,700**	**46,880**	**(46,880)**	**-**	
ESSENTIAL WORKS:								
People - improving outcomes for children and young people								
Peterchurch Primary School - replace leaking roof & internal remodelling	1,000	-	-	-	**1,000**	**(300)**	***700***	Hall will be unusable for school lunches and PE, therefore not meeting statutory duty. Part funded from capital maintenance programme.
Colwall Primary School - build new school (due to water damage)	1,600	4,800	100		**6,500**	**-**	***6,500***	Estimated cost of a replacement school cost
Lady Hawkins Sports Hall - roof replacement	130	-	-	-	**130**	**(52)**	***78***	Council insurer's will no longer insure hall. Unplanned closure, loss of income to leisure operator. Lady Hawkins Academy to meet 40% of cost.
	2,730	**4,800**	**100**	**-**	**7,630**	**(352)**	**7,278**	
Resources - making the best use of resources available to us in order to meet the councils priorities								
Town hall roof replacement - phases 1 & 2 lead work, joinery & gutters	365	-	-	-	**365**	**-**	***365***	Closure of building if roof fails. Key services impacted being difficult and costly to relocate. Loss of income from room hire.

Scheme Description	Capital Cost of Project 15/16	16/17	17/18	Future Years	Total Cost	Total Funding	*Net Cost*	Comments
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	*£'000*	
Lease dilapidations	430	-	-	-	**430**	-	***430***	Repairs to satisfy safety and legislative requirements.
Courtyard Theatre - replacement of unstable lift shaft	85	-	-	-	**85**	**-**	***85***	Inaccessible to public, income loss and alternative premises have had to be hired.
Replacement of mechanical and electrical services to Shirehall - replacement to court and public areas	30	-	-	-	**30**	**-**	***30***	Essential works to reduce risk of fire and potential damage to building.
	910	-	-	-	**910**	**-**	***910***	
Hereford, Kington and Leominster Cemeteries - review current ground water levels and impact on burial areas	100	-	-	-	**100**	**-**	***100***	Risk of closure and income of new burials. Subsidence and collapse risk to both public and contractors. These does not impact on the pricing policy which is to inflate current charges by inflation only to continue providing a cost neutral service.
Pay and Display Machines - replace entire stock of 60 machines (10 per annum over 6 years), implement pay on exit & accommodate the changes to coins	40	41	43	144	**268**	**-**	***268***	Loss of income due to downtime on old machines around £30k pa. Risk of machine suppliers not providing cover as current machines are no longer manufactured.
	1,050	**41**	**43**	**144**	**1,278**	**-**	***1,278***	
TOTAL OF ESSENTIAL WORKS	**3,780**	**4,841**	**143**	**144**	**8,908**	**(352)**	***8,556***	
INVESTMENT TO SUPPORT COST SAVINGS:								
People - improving outcomes for children and young people								
Improvement to provision for Social, Emotional and Mental Wellbeing (Brookfield) - extend and improve buildings	**200**	**300**	**-**	**-**	**500**	**(160)**	***340***	Part funded from Basic Need Grant. Risk that children would be placed in more expensive out of county places.
People - people are able to take more responsibility for themselves								
Kington Wellbeing Centre - create a rural Hub to accommodate variety of services	**78**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**78**	**-**	***78***	This rural hub will accommodate a variety of joined up services to prevent and delay needs ahead of crisis point in support of the Care Act
Resources - making the best use of resources available to us in order to meet the councils priorities								
Purchase of gritters	**250**	**125**	**125**	**-**	**500**	**-**	***500***	Borrowing cost to be funded by winter service budget (C07215)
TOTAL OF SCHEMES REQUIRING FINANCE	**4,308**	**5,266**	**268**	**144**	**9,986**	**(512)**	***9,474***	
Contingency for unforeseens - 1% of capital programme	**854**	**399**	**214**	**-**	**1,467**	**-**	***1,467***	As approved in the councils capital strategy
TOTAL CAPITAL SCHEMES	**14,072**	**14,285**	**17,132**	**12,844**	**58,333**	**(47,392)**	***10,941***	