

Agenda

Cabinet

Date: **Thursday 28 March 2024**

Time: **2.30 pm**

Place: **Herefordshire Council Offices, Plough Lane, Hereford,
HR4 0LE**

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 Cabinet

Membership

Chairperson Councillor Jonathan Lester, Leader of the Council
Vice-Chairperson Councillor Elissa Swinglehurst, Deputy Leader of the Council

Councillor Graham Biggs
Councillor Harry Bramer
Councillor Barry Durkin
Councillor Carole Gandy
Councillor Ivan Powell
Councillor Philip Price
Councillor Pete Stoddart

Agenda

	Pages
<p>1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>To receive any apologies for absence.</p>	
<p>2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>To receive declarations of interests in respect of Table A, Table B or Other Interests from members of the committee in respect of items on the agenda.</p>	
<p>3. MINUTES</p> <p>To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 29 February 2024.</p>	11 - 22
<p>HOW TO SUBMIT QUESTIONS</p> <p><i>The deadline for submission of questions for this meeting is:</i></p> <p><i>5pm on 22 March 2024.</i></p> <p><i>Questions must be submitted to councillorservices@herefordshire.gov.uk. Questions sent to any other address may not be accepted.</i></p> <p><i>Accepted questions and the response to them will be published as a supplement to the agenda papers prior to the meeting. Further information and guidance is available at https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/getinvolved</i></p>	
<p>4. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC</p> <p>To receive questions from members of the public.</p>	
<p>5. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS</p> <p>To receive questions from councillors.</p>	
<p>6. REPORTS FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES</p> <p>To receive reports from the Council's scrutiny committees on any recommendations to the Cabinet arising from recent scrutiny committee meetings.</p> <p>Three reports from scrutiny committees:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee: Corporate Parenting Service and Corporate Parenting Board 2. Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee: The policy, prioritisation and delivery of section 106 funding 3. Scrutiny Management Board: Hoople Ltd 	
<p>6.1 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: CORPORATE PARENTING SERVICE AND CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD</p>	23 - 28
<p>6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CONNECTED COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: THE POLICY, PRIORITISATION AND DELIVERY OF SECTION 106 FUNDING</p>	29 - 36

6.3	RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD: HOOPLE LTD	37 - 42
7.	HEREFORDSHIRE AND WORCESTERSHIRE ALL AGE AUTISM STRATEGY 2024-2029 The purpose of this report is to approve the Herefordshire & Worcestershire All-Age Autism Strategy (2024-29).	43 - 124
8.	WYE VALLEY TRUST (WVT) INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP MODEL To agree an increase in value offered as an investment to Wye Valley Trust to enable the development of an Education Centre at Hereford County Hospital. To further explore options around a strategic investment partnership and bring a business case back to cabinet for approval in Autumn 2024.	125 - 132
9.	FOURTH OFSTED MONITORING VISIT FEEDBACK Report to follow.	To Follow
10.	OBJECTIVES FOR NEW HEREFORDSHIRE LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN Report to follow.	To Follow
11.	NEW ROAD STRATEGY FOR HEREFORD The report seeks Cabinet's agreement to the revised priorities within the Hereford Transport Strategy and to agree to draw down investment in new road infrastructure to improve network resilience and support the growth and development of Herefordshire in accordance with the current Local Transport Plan and Core Strategy policy frameworks.	133 - 250

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- Inspect background papers used in the preparation of public reports for a period of up to four years from the date of the meeting. (A list of the background papers to a report is given at the end of each report). A background paper is a document on which the officer has relied in writing the report and which otherwise is not available to the public.
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- Have access to a list specifying those powers on which the Council have delegated decision making to their officers identifying the officers concerned by title. Information about councillors is available at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/councillors
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The location of the office and details of city bus services can be viewed at:

<http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/file/1597/hereford-city-bus-map-local-services->

Guide to Cabinet

The Executive or Cabinet of the Herefordshire Council consists of a Leader and Deputy Leader and seven other Cabinet Members each with their own individual programme area responsibilities. The current Cabinet membership is:

Cllr Jonathan Lester (Leader)	Corporate Strategy and Budget
Cllr Elissa Swinglehurst (Deputy Leader)	Environment
Cllr Ivan Powell	Children and Young People
Cllr Harry Bramer	Community Services and Assets
Cllr Pete Stoddart	Finance and Corporate Services
Cllr Carole Gandy	Adults, Health and Wellbeing
Cllr Graham Biggs	Economy and Growth
Cllr Barry Durkin	Roads and Regulatory Services
Cllr Philip Price	Transport and Infrastructure

The Cabinet's roles are:

- To consider the overall management and direction of the Council. Directed by the Leader of the Council, it will work with senior managers to ensure the policies of Herefordshire are clear and carried through effectively;
- To propose to Council a strategic policy framework and individual strategic policies;
- To identify priorities and recommend them to Council;
- To propose to Council the Council's budget and levels of Council Tax;
- To give guidance in relation to: policy co-ordination; implementation of policy; management of the Council; senior employees in relation to day to day implementation issues;
- To receive reports from Cabinet Members on significant matters requiring consideration and proposals for new or amended policies and initiatives;
- To consider and determine policy issues within the policy framework covering more than one programme area and issues relating to the implementation of the outcomes of monitoring reviews.

Who attends cabinet meetings?

- Members of the cabinet, including the leader of the council and deputy leader – these are the decision makers, only members of the cabinet can vote on recommendations put to the meeting.
- Officers of the council – attend to present reports and give technical advice to cabinet members
- Chairpersons of scrutiny committees – attend to present the views of their committee if it has considered the item under discussion
- Political group leaders attend to present the views of their political group on the item under discussion. Other councillors may also attend as observers but are not entitled to take part in the discussion.

**The Seven Principles of Public Life
(Nolan Principles)**

1. Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

2. Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

3. Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

4. Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

5. Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

6. Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

7. Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Herefordshire Council

Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held at Herefordshire Council Offices, Plough Lane, Hereford, HR4 0LE on Thursday 29 February 2024 at 2.30 pm

Cabinet Members Physically Present and voting: Councillor Jonathan Lester, Leader of the Council (Chairperson)
Councillor Elissa Swinglehurst, Deputy Leader of the Council (Vice-Chairperson)

Councillors Barry Durkin, Philip Price and Pete Stoddart

Cabinet Members in remote attendance Councillors Graham Biggs and Harry Bramer

Cabinet members attending the meeting remotely, e.g. through video conferencing facilities, may not vote on any decisions taken.

Cabinet support members in attendance Councillors Dan Hurcomb

Group leaders / representatives in attendance Councillors Liz Harvey and Ellie Chowns

Scrutiny chairpersons in attendance Councillors Pauline Crockett, Louis Stark, Liz Harvey and Ellie Chowns

Other councillors in attendance:

Officers in attendance: Director of Resources and Assurance, Corporate Director - Economy and Environment, Director of Governance and Law and Corporate Director Community Wellbeing, Head of Environment Climate Emergency and Waste Services, Service Manager Built and Natural Environment, Senior Planning Officer, Head of Planning and Building Control, Interim Delivery Director Waste Transformation & Wetland Project, Head of Care Commissioning

86. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were apologies from Cabinet, Councillors Carole Gandy and Ivan Powell.

Apologies were also received from Councillors Toni Fagan, Bob Matthews and Terry James.

87. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None were declared.

88. MINUTES

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

89. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Pages 9 - 10)

Questions received and responses given are attached as appendix 1 to the minutes.

90. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS (Pages 11 - 12)

Questions received and responses given are attached as appendix 2 to the minutes.

91. REPORTS FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

There were two reports from Scrutiny Committees.

- (a) Recommendations of the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee:
Nutrient Management Board

*Recommendations of the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee:
Nutrient Management Board*

The chairperson for the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee (ESSC) confirmed the meeting in January 2024 looked at the Nutrient Management Board (NMB) from the perspective of the Council and not from partners and advised the recommendations should be viewed in that same light. The chair of the ESSC highlighted that history of the board, the terms of reference, the business objectives, the governance structure, key performance indicators, achievements, relevance and whether value for money were considered when forming their recommendations.

The cabinet member for environment thanked the committee and advised the recommendations will be noted and responded to in due course.

- (b) Community-based support services – recommendations from Health, Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

*Recommendations of the Health, Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee:
Community-based support services*

The chairperson of the Health, Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee (HC&WBSC) explained that community based support services were considered by the scrutiny committee to explore the value of the service and ensure the Talk Community programme was understood by all new ward members. The chairperson highlighted that Talk Community has been operating since 2020 and a review of Talk Community is being undertaken which will be completed in March 2024. Government provided £8.2m of investment in community support and Talk Community is central to underpinning the main priority of strengthening communities and ensuring that everyone lives well and safely together. The Chairperson invited Cabinet to join in strengthening the community strategy by endorsing the proposed recommendations.

The Leader thanked the committee for their work in forming the recommendations and confirmed that Cabinet are interested in working through them. It was advised that Cabinet will be working with all Councillors to ensure Cabinet are focused on what's best for Talk Community and Cabinet will provide a response in due course.

92. ADOPTION OF THE HEREFORDSHIRE MINERALS & WASTE LOCAL PLAN

The Cabinet member for environment introduced the report. It was confirmed that the Minerals & Waste Local Plan has proceeded through four rounds of consultation and the modifications that were put forward by the Examiner did not materially change the document. Outlined that the Plan considered the circular economy, reflected the waste hierarchy, there was consideration of anaerobic digesters and the impact they can have with consideration of nutrient neutrality and environmental impacts.

No comments were made from Cabinet members.

Group leaders gave the views of their groups. There was support for the Plan and it was commented that up until now the Minerals and Waste Local Plan had been in a poor state. The Plan was welcomed and noted that it recognised agriculture, how it effects

land use, development and the communities. It was queried what the term 'agricultural unit' meant as previous concerns were regarding the impact on transporting agricultural waste on the local community.

In response to the queries it was noted that an 'agricultural unit' adopts a common sense interpretation and it is the farm where the AD unit is located as the aim was to avoid lorries transporting waste on local country lanes. It was further discussed that farms in practice may not consider an 'agricultural unit' as just the farm and field's adjacent but may be across a range of places. If the interpretation of an 'agricultural unit' is defined to the farm then this would impact on how anaerobic digesters operate. It was clarified that existing anaerobic digesters wouldn't be effected as they had already passed planning, this was regarding future planning policy.

It was unanimously resolved that:

That Cabinet recommend to Council for approval:

- a) **The Herefordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan Inspectors' Report 1 (at appendix 1) be noted;**
- b) **The Herefordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan(2) , incorporating the main modifications (at appendix 2), be recommended to Council for adoption; and**
- c) **It be recommended to Council that delegated authority be given to the Head of Planning and Building Control to make any minor technical changes (e.g. typographical) to ensure that this development plan document is up to date at the time of adoption.**

93. Q3 BUDGET REPORT

The Cabinet member for finance and corporate services introduced the report. It highlighted that the 24/25 revenue budget approved by Council on 9 February included an additional £250k for the lengthsman scheme for the public rights of way together with £445k for drainage works. Details of how these schemes will operate will be released to Parish Councils by the end of March 2024. Noted that invoices for these schemes will be processed through the Council priority supplier programme.

The approved revenue budget is £193.3m which includes planned savings of £20m. At Quarter 2 the forecast overspend was £13.8m, as a result of management action alongside expenditure controls this had been reduced to £10.7m at Quarter 3. The Quarter 3 overspend variances were set out for each directorate and confirmed that each directorate were continuing with expenditure controls to support existing recovery actions in 23/24 and review of expenditure on goods and services, changes in staffing arrangements and increased rigor would continue for the rest of the financial year.

Highlighted that the management activity is expected to reduce the forecast overspend to £9.4m and each directorate will continue to identify further recovery action, options to mitigate their risk savings targets and develop recovery plans to manage delivery of services within the approved budgets. Noted there had been a saving of £0.7m within Children and Young People showing clear evidence that the directorate is turning a corner.

It was confirmed that Cabinet are fully committed to the delivery of savings to ensure that the 2023/24 outturn position is balanced and to prevent further pressures on future year's budgets. Noted that internal financial reporting had been strengthened to identify emerging pressures and key risks which will enable monitoring at monthly Cabinet meetings.

Council approved £14.1m directorate savings for 2023/24. A review of the status of the 23/24 savings has been undertaken and identified £6.5m of the target was at risk of in year delivery, these were outlined in Table 3 of the report. Progress on delivery of savings will be monitored and reported in the next budget monitoring report to Cabinet.

Noted the revised 2023/24 Capital budget of £147.8m had been re-profiled in line with expected delivery which had reduced the 2023/24 budget by £78.9m. The forecast position was now £53.2m which represented an underspend of £15.7m against a budget of £68.9m, the underspend breakdown was detailed.

There were no comments from Cabinet members.

Group leaders gave the views of their groups. The forecasted reduction in overspend was welcomed overall but concern was expressed regarding the assumptions that underpinned the projected savings and progress of the savings. Queried whether the 'capital development fund' could be unlocked as this was the second or third year where no monies have been spent from that fund. It was queried why the Home Upgrade Grant had an underspend of £1.5m and noted this was a repeating annual problem. It was requested for Cabinet to lobby for better funding from Government for this grant. Concern was raised regarding the lack of progress in shifting the balance between agency and permanent staff in Children's and Young People and the effect on staff costs. Noted that the savings in the Capital Programme are not truly reflective of the position due to money forecasted to be spent had been moved to be spent in future years which would be causing a delay in delivering infrastructure projects. It was also queried which earmarked reserves, that weren't specifically ring fenced, will be used to fund the £10m overspend.

In response to the points and queries raised it was confirmed that the Quarter 3 performance report provided a more reflective picture of how the Home Upgrade Grant is rolling out but noted the points regarding the criteria for these grants. It was confirmed that another scheme was coming forward which had a less restrictive criteria. In respect of agency staff in Children's and Young People it was confirmed that Appendix 2 showed there had been a reduction in cost pressure of £0.4m since Quarter 2. Lastly, regarding earmarked reserves it was confirmed that it has been normal practise for a review of earmarked reserves to be undertaken during Quarter 4 period and reported as part of the normal process. It was also clarified that Appendix 2 referred to was appendix A in the report.

It was unanimously resolved that:

Cabinet

- a) review the financial forecast for 2023/24, as set out in the appendices A-D, and identifies any additional actions to be considered to achieve future improvements;**
- b) Note the forecast revenue outturn position at Quarter 3 2023/24 of a £10.7 million overspend, before management action, and the potential impact of this overspend on the council's reserves;**
- c) Note the impact of the 2023/24 forecast outturn on the 2024/25 budget requirement and the future financial sustainability of the council;**
- d) Request that Scrutiny Management Board reviews the budget monitoring position and that relevant Cabinet Members provide explanation for key variances and actions identified to address key pressures; and**

- e) **Agree the continuation and strengthening of management actions to reduce the forecast overspend as identified in this report.**

94. Q3 PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Cabinet member for finance and corporate services introduced the report. It was highlighted that targets had been included in the appendix for greater transparency against the red, amber, green ratings. It was noted there had been a slight drop in the number of measures that remained on target in Quarter 3. The cabinet member highlighted that Midlands Engine and Midlands Connect visited the County and held positive conversations regarding inward investment in growing the local economy and infrastructure, refurbishment had been completed at Hillside Home, the number of people waiting home care services had significantly reduced, majority of staff in Children and Young People had undertaken the restorative practice training and there had been a reduction in the number of KSI casualties recorded on the Herefordshire road networks. Noted that the Office for Local Government (launched in July 2023) have highlighted performance measures in the Local Authority Data Explorer in Appendix B and its data will continue to evolve to provide meaningful comparisons between authorities.

Cabinet members commented that in respect of the Home Upgrade Grant 130 properties had been passed to the two contractors to be retrofitted and members will continue to see traction in this area.

Group leaders gave the views of their groups. The report was welcomed but clarification was sought as to why the Library, Museum and Art Gallery projects were marked as paused, why there had been slow progress regarding the Transport Hub, where projects had been delayed why they are showing as amber instead of red and why the money for the Highway Infrastructure Fund had not been signed off.

In response to the queries it was noted that neither of the projects highlighted were paused and they were progressing. It was acknowledged that better clarification was needed regarding the position. It was noted that assessment of risk can be subjective and further work was being carried out to create a more uniformed approach regarding assessment of risk for the next report. It was confirmed that Cabinet were not trying to sweep things under the carpet and will ensure there is better reporting in order to provide clarity on this issue to avoid any false impression that projects were stalling.

It was unanimously resolved that;

Cabinet

- a) **To review performance for Quarter 3 2023/24, and identify any additional actions to achieve future performance measures**

95. BLOCK CONTRACTED BEDS IN CARE HOMES

The Cabinet member for environment introduced the report in the absence of the Cabinet member for adults, health and wellbeing. It was highlighted that it would provide a better choice of care home beds at better value for money and reduce the need to spot purchase beds. It was highlighted that 30 beds would be obtained which would provide a saving of £870k over 5 years.

There were no comments from Cabinet members.

Group leaders gave the views of their groups. The proposal to block purchase beds was welcomed. It was queried if there will be an element of reduced utilisation to ensure availability at all times and if this had been included in the overall saving figure. Queried if the Council were considering to develop its own in house care capacity.

In response to the queries it was noted that the calculations have been based on what the Council currently spend on spot placements. It was confirmed the Council would look to fully utilise the block bed contract and would not be keeping spare beds available. It was also confirmed that a business case was being developed for the Council to provide its own in house care capacity and this would brought to the cabinet member in April / May 2024.

It was unanimously resolved that;

- a) Approval is given to progress with option 2 in Appendix 3 of this report to commission thirty block purchased care home beds across Herefordshire for a period of up to 5 years with a maximum spend up to £6.82million.**
- b) Delegated authority be given to the Corporate Director for Community Wellbeing to take all operational decisions required to implement the above recommendation including all contractual arrangement.**

96. PHOSPHATE MITIGATION STRATEGY

The Cabinet member for environment introduced the report and highlighted that the strategy helps loosen the housing moratorium in the Lugg through a pioneering approach of using constructed integrated wetlands to mitigate the phosphate of the proposed developments. It was noted that the cost will predominantly be met by the house builders who would purchase credits at a rate of £14,000 per kilogram. It was hoped that the Levelling up and Regeneration Bill would have provided legislative change to remove the need for further investment but that amendment was not successful. It was confirmed that the Water Act does not cover Hereford because the sewage undertaker is Welsh Water. It was noted that there are plans to progress additional wetlands at Tarrington and Titley alongside plans to retrofit a septic tank in the area. It was confirmed that the Council are supportive of private schemes provided they are compliant with the need for reasonable scientific certainty and can be guaranteed for the required period of 80 years. It was noted that the Council have been granted £1.76m capital and £173k revenue from DLUHC and this will be sufficient for the projects to begin progressing. It was highlighted that the figures for houses released from the moratorium were cautious, the wetlands in Luston would release 1,112 houses initially, proposed phase two would release 1,159 houses and proposed phase three would release 1,200 houses. It was noted that whilst this will bring some relief for the local house builders caught in the moratorium it did not address the reason for the moratorium in respect of the river.

Comments from Cabinet members. It was commented that agriculture was an area suggested to be at fault, it was raised whether not putting phosphate on agricultural land would be worth £14,000 per kilo. It was confirmed that the local community in Luston are delighted with the proposed wetlands and whether access for local residents could be considered in the plans when the wetlands are progressed.

Group leaders gave the views of their groups. That whilst the strategy was welcomed in respect of the wetland programme concerns were raised that it was not a strategy for dealing with phosphate pollution. It was queried why there hadn't been a progress report (which was due in July 2023) and why progress had been slow in addressing the bigger phosphate pollution problem. It was raised that the strategy didn't address the water industry's contribution to the pollution of the river or the pollution from agricultural runoff. It was also queried why it didn't cover the need for a water protection zone, the need for a legally binding framework to ensure action is taken by all sources of pollution and why there is no mention of lobbying Government and its Environment Agency to take action to enforce incidents of pollution. It was noted that the development industry contributes a minimum amount to the phosphate issue in the rivers and more should be done to ensure they can operate effectively.

In response to the queries it was noted the phosphate mitigation strategy is part of the phosphate action plan and this strategy is mitigating the impact of houses on the river. Confirmed the Council have been taking action on the wider phosphate pollution issue, the Council have been making the case with partners and stakeholders to ensure meaningful actions are taken and the principle within the report is now being taken forward by them. Conversations have been taking place with ministers and solutions are being explored that work for everyone especially farmers who are the frontline of this issue. It was confirmed that it is a complex issue and the Council are not in charge of all of it, however action is being taken in the areas it can.

It was unanimously resolved that;

- (a) To note the successful completion of Phase 1 of the Council's Nutrient Trading Phosphate mitigation scheme.**
- (b) To authorise the Section 151 Officer to accept the capital and revenue grants from the Department for Levelling up Homes and Communities outlined in this report.**
- (c) To authorise Phases 2 and 3 of the Council's Nutrient Trading Phosphate Mitigation scheme**
- (d) To delegate authorisation to proceed with Phases 2 and 3 of the Council's Nutrient Trading Phosphate Mitigation Scheme to the Corporate Director of Economy and Environment in consultation with the Cabinet members for Finance and Resources and the Cabinet member for Environment.**
- (e) To work with partner Council's to undertake a review of the future role of the Cabinet Commission**

The meeting ended at 3.57 pm

Chairperson

PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO CABINET – 29 February 2024

Question 1

John Harrington, Herefordshire.

To: Councillor Price, Transport and Infrastructure

Can the Cabinet Member confirm that the shelters at the Country Bus Station are being replaced, and if so what are the timelines involved for the redevelopment of that site - and what are the plans for that site considering the hub is supposed to accommodate buses? Finally, are the shelters able to be repurposed if needs be?

Answer: Cabinet Member, Transport and Infrastructure

The shelters at the Country Bus Station are being replaced with sedum roofed shelters as a part of the Hereford City Centre Improvement scheme. These replacement shelters will improve the biodiversity of the space and will provide an improved experience for users. As a part of the replacement programme, those shelters that still have useful life remaining will be re-installed at other locations across the city.

The redevelopment of the Country Bus Station and the surrounding area/s was being considered under the auspices of the Hereford City Masterplan. The development of the Hereford City Masterplan has been paused, to allow for the Local Plan, the New Hereford Road Strategy and the Local Transport Plan to be progressed. Once this work is complete, the council will be in a position to review the City Masterplan, ensuring Hereford is well placed to play its critical role in realising the ambitions of the county wider strategies. Further information will be available in due course on the process and timescales for stakeholder consultation and public engagement for the Hereford City Centre Masterplan

Supplementary question:

Thank you, although you must be aware that the plans for redeveloping the Country Bus Station were part of Conservative proposals prior to the Masterplan and linked to the HCCTP, whose genesis and gross overspends you oversaw. Or perhaps singular focus on reviving a supine equine in the form of a Western Bypass has tunnelled your vision a tad.

Regards river crossings, can you tell me why the appendices of the Aecom ERiC report are still not available? It is for the people of Herefordshire, through their properly informed elected members, not you alone, to decide whether continuing with a short crossing in the East, already furnished with a SOBC is the way forward or whether a Western bypass with no business case, no planning permission, no funding and no hope is something to have another crack at.

Supplementary response:

Thank you for your supplementary question, it has nothing to do with your original question but I am told that the SOBC for the Eastern River crossing was published in December and the appendices can be found by searching Eastern River crossing and Link road hyphen strategic outline case report and it's been on the Council website since 8th February.

COUNCILLOR QUESTIONS TO CABINET – 29 February 2024

No questions from Councillors were submitted.



Title of Report: Recommendations of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee: Corporate Parenting Service and Corporate Parenting Board

Meeting: Cabinet

Meeting date: 28th March 2024

Report by: The Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Classification

Open

Decision type

Non-key

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to notify the Cabinet of the recommendations from the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, made at its meeting on 12 March 2024, and to request a response from the executive.

Recommendations

- a) That the recommendations on the Corporate Parenting Service and Corporate Parenting Board, made by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 12 March 2024, be noted.
- b) That an executive response to the scrutiny recommendations be prepared for consideration by the Cabinet within two months.

Alternative options

None proposed; it is a statutory requirement for the Cabinet to be notified and consider reports and recommendations made by a scrutiny committee.

Key considerations

1. Scrutiny committees have statutory powers to make recommendations to the executive, and the executive (Cabinet) has a statutory duty to respond. They may also make reports and recommendations to external decision making bodies.
2. Scrutiny recommendations are addressed to the Cabinet, as the main executive decision making body of the council (or, where appropriate, an external agency).
3. Cabinet is being asked to note the scrutiny report / recommendations and that an executive response to the scrutiny recommendations be prepared for consideration by the Cabinet within two months.
4. The minutes of the meeting of the scrutiny committee provide the record of the scrutiny committee's consideration of the issue and the scrutiny recommendations made during the meeting.
5. The scrutiny committee will be notified of the executive response made in respect to the scrutiny recommendations and may track the implementation of the Cabinet decisions and any actions agreed. This enables the scrutiny committee to track whether their recommendations have been agreed, what actually was agreed (if different) and review any outcomes arising.

Corporate Parenting Service

6. The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee has raised concerns about the high rate of children looked after by Herefordshire Council. It sought to understand the causes of the high rate of looked after children in Herefordshire, and to scrutinise how the council ensures that the children that council's looked-after children thrive while in its care.
7. At the end of its consideration of this issue, the committee made two recommendations to the Cabinet, as set out at Appendix 1 to this report.

Procedure for Recommendations from Scrutiny Committees

8. Where scrutiny committees make reports or recommendations to the Cabinet, as soon as this has been confirmed, these will be referred to the Cabinet requesting an executive response. This will instigate the preparation of a report to Cabinet and the necessary consideration of the response, the technical feasibility, financial implications, legal implications and equalities implications etc.
9. Where scrutiny committees make reports or recommendations to full Council (e.g. in the case of policy and budgetary decisions), the same process will be followed, with a report to Cabinet to agree its executive response, and thereafter, a report will be prepared for Council for consideration of the scrutiny report and recommendations along with the Cabinet's response.
10. Where scrutiny committees have powers under their terms of reference to make reports or recommendations to external decision makers (e.g. NHS bodies), where they do this, the relevant external decision maker shall be notified in writing, providing them with a copy of the committee's report and recommendations, and requesting a response.

11. Once the executive response has been agreed, the scrutiny committee shall receive a report to receive the response and the committee may review implementation of the executive's decisions after such a period as these may reasonably be implemented (review date).

Community Impact

12. In accordance with the adopted code of corporate governance, the council is committed to promoting a positive working culture that accepts, and encourages constructive challenge, and recognises that a culture and structure for scrutiny are key elements for accountable decision making, policy development and review. Topics selected for scrutiny should have regard to what matters to residents.

Environmental Impact

13. There are no direct environmental impacts connected with this report or the outcomes it seeks to deliver.

Equality Duty

14. There are no specific equalities impacts.
15. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:
16. A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to –
 - a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
17. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.

Resource Implications

18. There are no resource implications arising from this report, however, fulfilling the recommendations and considerations outlined in the report may require investment from the council and wider partners.
19. Resource implications should be considered as part of the requested report to Cabinet on the Executive Response to the scrutiny recommendations.

Legal Implications

20. The council is required to deliver a scrutiny function.
21. There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

Risk management

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
There is a reputational risk to the council if the scrutiny function does not operate effectively.	The arrangements for the notification of recommendations from the scrutiny committees and agreement of an Executive Response should help mitigate this risk.

Consultees

The Chair of Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Recommendations of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee:
Corporate Parenting Service/Corporate Parenting Board

Background papers

[Corporate Parenting Service - report to Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee - 12 March 2024](#)

[Corporate Parenting Board - report to Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee - 12 March 2024](#)

Summary of recommendations to the executive and executive responses
Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
12 March 2024

Recommendation 1	Herefordshire Council to suggest proposals to make corporate parenting board meetings more accessible to elected members and the public			
Executive Response				
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress

Recommendation 2	Herefordshire Council to extend opportunities to write letters and cards celebrating the success of its looked-after children			
Executive Response				
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress



Title of Report: Recommendations of the Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee: The policy, prioritisation and delivery of section 106 funding

Meeting: Cabinet

Meeting date: 28th March 2024

Report by: The Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Classification

Open

Decision type

Non-key

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to notify the Cabinet of the recommendations from the Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee, made at its meeting on 27 February 2024, and to request a response from the executive.

Recommendations

- a) That the recommendations on the policy, prioritisation and delivery of section 106 funding, made by the Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 27 February 2024, be noted.
- b) That an executive response to the scrutiny recommendations be prepared for consideration by the Cabinet within two months.

Alternative options

None proposed; it is a statutory requirement for the Cabinet to be notified and consider reports and recommendations made by a scrutiny committee.

Key considerations

1. Scrutiny committees have statutory powers to make recommendations to the executive, and the executive (Cabinet) has a statutory duty to respond. They may also make reports and recommendations to external decision making bodies.
2. Scrutiny recommendations are addressed to the Cabinet, as the main executive decision making body of the council (or, where appropriate, an external agency).
3. Cabinet is being asked to note the scrutiny report / recommendations and that an executive response to the scrutiny recommendations be prepared for consideration by the Cabinet within two months.
4. The minutes of the meeting of the scrutiny committee provide the record of the scrutiny committee's consideration of the issue and the scrutiny recommendations made during the meeting.
5. The scrutiny committee will be notified of the executive response made in respect to the scrutiny recommendations and may track the implementation of the Cabinet decisions and any actions agreed. This enables the scrutiny committee to track whether their recommendations have been agreed, what actually was agreed (if different) and review any outcomes arising.

The policy, prioritisation and delivery of section 106 funding

6. At a work programme planning meeting of the Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee in July 2023, the committee agreed to request an overview report on the council's arrangements regarding the policy, prioritisation and delivery of section 106 funding.
7. The committee scrutinised the policy that enables the council to secure section 106 funding, the mechanisms for identifying projects to be incorporated into the legal agreements, and the delivery of section 106 funded schemes since Cabinet approved the delivery model on 2 March 2023.

Scrutiny Recommendations

8. At the end of its consideration of this issue, the committee made ten recommendations to the Cabinet, as set out at Appendix 1 to this report.

Procedure for Recommendations from Scrutiny Committees

9. Where scrutiny committees make reports or recommendations to the Cabinet, as soon as this has been confirmed, these will be referred to the Cabinet requesting an executive response. This will instigate the preparation of a report to Cabinet and the necessary consideration of the response, the technical feasibility, financial implications, legal implications and equalities implications etc.
10. Where scrutiny committees make reports or recommendations to full Council (e.g. in the case of policy and budgetary decisions), the same process will be followed, with a report to Cabinet to agree its executive response, and thereafter, a report will be prepared for Council for consideration of the scrutiny report and recommendations along with the Cabinet's response.

11. Where scrutiny committees have powers under their terms of reference to make reports or recommendations to external decision makers (e.g. NHS bodies), where they do this, the relevant external decision maker shall be notified in writing, providing them with a copy of the committee's report and recommendations, and requesting a response.
12. Once the executive response has been agreed, the scrutiny committee shall receive a report to receive the response and the committee may review implementation of the executive's decisions after such a period as these may reasonably be implemented (review date).

Community Impact

13. In accordance with the adopted code of corporate governance, the council is committed to promoting a positive working culture that accepts, and encourages constructive challenge, and recognises that a culture and structure for scrutiny are key elements for accountable decision making, policy development and review. Topics selected for scrutiny should have regard to what matters to residents.

Environmental Impact

14. There are no direct environmental impacts connected with this report or the outcomes it seeks to deliver.

Equality Duty

15. There are no specific equalities impacts.
16. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:
17. A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to –
 - a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
18. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.

Resource Implications

19. There are no resource implications arising from this report, however, fulfilling the recommendations and considerations outlined in the report may require investment from the council and wider partners.
20. Resource implications should be considered as part of the requested report to Cabinet on the Executive Response to the scrutiny recommendations.

Legal Implications

21. The council is required to deliver a scrutiny function.
22. There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

Risk management

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
There is a reputational risk to the council if the scrutiny function does not operate effectively.	The arrangements for the notification of recommendations from the scrutiny committees and agreement of an Executive Response should help mitigate this risk.

Consultees

The Chair of Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Recommendations of the Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee: The policy, prioritisation and delivery of section 106 funding

Background papers

[The policy, prioritisation and delivery of section 106 funding - report to Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee 27 February 2024](#)

Summary of recommendations to the executive and executive responses
Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee
27 February 2024

Recommendation 1	Review the future schedule of rates for section 106 as contained in the Supplementary Planning Document on Planning Obligations dated 1st April 2008 to ensure they reflect current costs, and are updated annually.			
Executive Response				
Action –	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress

Recommendation 2	Introduce interim arrangements for section 106 funding to ensure changes to schedules of rates can be updated rapidly, while a decision on adopting Infrastructure Levy is reviewed.			
Executive Response				
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress

Recommendation 3	Improve parish council, councillor and local resident engagement in updating community wish lists.			
Response				
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress

Recommendation 4	Invite parishes who do not currently have a neighbourhood development plan to submit a parish infrastructure development plan.			
Executive Response				
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress

Recommendation 5	Publish the community wishlist in a more accessible format.			
Executive Response				
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress

Recommendation 6	Consider using interest on banked section 106 contributions to help expedite delivery of the section 106 project backlog.			
Executive Response				
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress

Recommendation 7	Ensure that the costs of section 106 delivery are integrated into the S106 contributions collected to ensure that there is ongoing adequate capacity to enable prompt delivery of projects, both in terms of project management capacity and in terms of delivery capacity within the relevant service areas.				
Executive Response					
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress	

Recommendation 8	Clarify how delivery of section 106 projects will be managed once the PMO backlog project comes to an end.				
Executive Response					
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress	

Recommendation 9	Improve presentation of information on section 106 funding received and spent, including greater graphical representation of funding, to enable greater public understanding of the process.				
Executive Response					
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress	

Recommendation 10	Report back to the committee on the results of the section 106 benchmarking exercise within three months.			
Executive Response				
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress



Title of Report: Recommendations of the Scrutiny Management Board: Hoople Ltd

Meeting: Cabinet

Meeting date: 28th March 2024

Report by: The Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Classification

Open

Decision type

Non-key

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to notify the Cabinet of the recommendations from the Scrutiny Management Board, made at its meeting on 19 March 2024, and to request a response from the executive.

Recommendations

- a) That the recommendations on Hoople Ltd, made by the Scrutiny Management Board at its meeting on the 19 March 2024, be noted.
- b) That an executive response to the scrutiny recommendations be prepared for consideration by the Cabinet within two months.

Alternative options

None proposed; it is a statutory requirement for the Cabinet to be notified and consider reports and recommendations made by a scrutiny committee.

Key considerations

1. Scrutiny committees have statutory powers to make recommendations to the executive, and the executive (Cabinet) has a statutory duty to respond. They may also make reports and recommendations to external decision making bodies.
2. Scrutiny recommendations are addressed to the Cabinet, as the main executive decision making body of the council (or, where appropriate, an external agency).
3. Cabinet is being asked to note the scrutiny report / recommendations and that an executive response to the scrutiny recommendations be prepared for consideration by the Cabinet within two months.
4. The minutes of the meeting of the scrutiny committee provide the record of the scrutiny committee's consideration of the issue and the scrutiny recommendations made during the meeting.
5. The scrutiny committee will be notified of the executive response made in respect to the scrutiny recommendations and may track the implementation of the Cabinet decisions and any actions agreed. This enables the scrutiny committee to track whether their recommendations have been agreed, what actually was agreed (if different) and review any outcomes arising.

Nutrient Management Board

6. At a work programme planning meeting of the Scrutiny Management Board in December 2023, the committee agreed to request an overview report on the council's arrangements with Hoople Ltd.
7. Hoople was created in 2011 as a shared services company between Herefordshire Council, Wye Valley NHS Trust and the Primary Care Trust (since replaced by CCG's). Herefordshire Council is the majority shareholder with 80%, Wye Valley have a 17%, and Lincolnshire County Council became a shareholder in 2021 with a 3% shareholding. The strategic vision of Hoople is to support the objectives of the shareholders providing greater resilience and depth of expertise through working together. Hoople employs 609 staff (487 full-time equivalent), and has made a small amount of profit each year from its commercial activities. The customer base is predominately with the shareholders, also includes schools, CCG, GPs surgeries, Taurus, Halo, Rutland council, Haymarket, care homes, many local businesses.

Scrutiny Recommendations

8. At the end of its consideration of this issue, the committee made four recommendations to the Cabinet, as set out at Appendix 1 to this report.

Procedure for Recommendations from Scrutiny Committees

9. Where scrutiny committees make reports or recommendations to the Cabinet, as soon as this has been confirmed, these will be referred to the Cabinet requesting an executive response. This will instigate the preparation of a report to Cabinet and the necessary consideration of the response, the technical feasibility, financial implications, legal implications and equalities implications etc.

10. Where scrutiny committees make reports or recommendations to full Council (e.g. in the case of policy and budgetary decisions), the same process will be followed, with a report to Cabinet to agree its executive response, and thereafter, a report will be prepared for Council for consideration of the scrutiny report and recommendations along with the Cabinet's response.
11. Where scrutiny committees have powers under their terms of reference to make reports or recommendations to external decision makers (e.g. NHS bodies), where they do this, the relevant external decision maker shall be notified in writing, providing them with a copy of the committee's report and recommendations, and requesting a response.
12. Once the executive response has been agreed, the scrutiny committee shall receive a report to receive the response and the committee may review implementation of the executive's decisions after such a period as these may reasonably be implemented (review date).

Community Impact

13. In accordance with the adopted code of corporate governance, the council is committed to promoting a positive working culture that accepts, and encourages constructive challenge, and recognises that a culture and structure for scrutiny are key elements for accountable decision making, policy development and review. Topics selected for scrutiny should have regard to what matters to residents.

Environmental Impact

14. There are no direct environmental impacts connected with this report or the outcomes it seeks to deliver.

Equality Duty

15. There are no specific equalities impacts.
16. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:
17. A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to –
 - a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
18. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services.

Resource Implications

19. There are no resource implications arising from this report, however, fulfilling the recommendations and considerations outlined in the report may require investment from the council and wider partners.
20. Resource implications should be considered as part of the requested report to Cabinet on the Executive Response to the scrutiny recommendations.

Legal Implications

21. The council is required to deliver a scrutiny function.
22. There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

Risk management

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
There is a reputational risk to the council if the scrutiny function does not operate effectively.	The arrangements for the notification of recommendations from the scrutiny committees and agreement of an Executive Response should help mitigate this risk.

Consultees

The Chair of Scrutiny Management Board.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Recommendations of the Scrutiny Management Board: Hoople Ltd

Background papers

[Hoople Ltd - report to Scrutiny Management Board 19 March 2024](#)

Summary of recommendations to the executive and executive responses
Scrutiny Management Board
19 March 2024

Recommendation 1	That Herefordshire Council's shareholder committee consider a pathway to paying the Real Living Wage.			
Executive Response				
Action –	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress

Recommendation 2	That Herefordshire Council's shareholder committee explore with Hoople the potential to increase its commercial revenue, with a view to reducing the charges it makes to Herefordshire Council.			
Executive Response				
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress

Recommendation 3	Hoople's future gender pay gap reports should include a) comparison with previous years' performance, b) comparison with relevant comparator organisations, c) information on what action they are taking to address the gender pay gap, and d) information on the impact of past actions.			
Response				
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress

Recommendation 4	That Herefordshire Council's shareholder committee seeks to maximise opportunities for looked after children and care leavers through its relationship with Hoople.			
Executive Response				
Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress



Title of report: Herefordshire and Worcestershire All Age Autism Strategy 2024-2029

Meeting: Cabinet

Meeting date: 28 March 2024

Cabinet member: Carole Gandy, cabinet member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing

Report by: Corporate Director Community Wellbeing

Report author: Senior Commissioning Officer

Classification

Open

Decision type

Key Decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to approve the Herefordshire & Worcestershire All-Age Autism Strategy (2024-29).

Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet:

- 1. Approves the Herefordshire and Worcestershire All Age Autism strategy, and**
- 2. Delegated authority be given to the Corporate Director for Community Wellbeing and the Corporate Director for Children and Young People to take all operational decisions that fall within the responsibility of Herefordshire Council to complete, as set out within this strategy.**

Alternative options

- a) Do nothing. This is not recommended because the actions set out in the strategy require support from the Council to enable further progress to be made.

- b) Not to endorse the strategy. This is not recommended because the strategy has identified several important priority areas for work required to improve the lives of people with autism.

Key considerations

Legislative Context

1. The Autism Act 2009 [Autism Act 2009 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2009/38/section/1) is currently the only disability-specific legislation in England. The Act requires the Government to introduce and keep under review an autism strategy. The most recent National Strategy was published in 2021 [National strategy for autistic children, young people and adults: 2021 to 2026 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97422/national-strategy-for-autistic-children-young-people-and-adults-2021-to-2026.pdf).
2. The statutory guidance is aimed at supporting the NHS and local authorities in implementing the strategy in areas such as staff training, identification and diagnosis, transition planning when people move from children to adult services, employment, and criminal justice.
3. The [Special Educational Needs and Disability \(SEND\) Code of Practice](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/424227/special-educational-needs-and-disability-send-code-of-practice-2015.pdf) (2015), continues to place duties on local authorities, NHS organisations and schools in respect of autistic children and young people. There is also a duty to provide services to disabled children under section 2 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970.”
4. The Equalities Act 2010 sets out requirements to ensure that all public bodies play their part in making society fairer by tackling discrimination and providing equality of opportunity for all.
5. The Health and Social Care Act 2022 requires all CQC registered providers to undertake Mandatory Autism Training.

Background

6. In September 2022, initial work started to progress an all-age strategy, in line with the National Autism Strategy, for the Integrated Care System (ICS) in Herefordshire and Worcestershire.
7. Initial co-production work identified seven priorities listed below; six included in the national strategy and an additional priority of ‘Keeping Safe’:
 - I. Improving understanding and acceptance of autism within society
 - II. Improving autistic children and young people’s access into education and support positive transitions into adulthood
 - III. Supporting more autistic people into employment
 - IV. Tackling health and care inequalities for autistic people
 - V. Building the right support in the community
 - VI. Improving support in criminal and youth justice systems
 - VII. Keeping Safe
8. A workstream lead was identified for each of the seven priorities who led the co-production and collated the information for each priority. Workstream leads were from across the ICS including Herefordshire Social Care Commissioners, Head of Additional Needs for Herefordshire Council Children and Young people, Worcestershire Adult Social Care Commissioners, All-Age Disability Lead for Worcestershire Children’s First, NHS ICB Commissioners, and the Head of Criminal Justice for West Mercia Police.

9. The co-production included workshops, facilitated groups and a questionnaire. There were over 400 responses to the questionnaire from a range of different stakeholders. A summary of the responses is included in appendix 2.
10. This information has been collated with a short summary of “what we know” for each priority, high level aims and key actions included in the strategy.
11. Co-production work will continue through the development of annual implementation plans, progressing and monitoring the actions.
12. The version of the strategy document included in appendix 1 is currently with the ICB design team to make into a more attractive, user-friendly document. There will also be an easy read version.

Key Messages

13. There are a significant number of key findings and required actions set out in the strategy document. The strategy is ambitious, however it should be noted that a significant number of actions relate specifically to statutory duties according to the legislation set out in points 1-4.
14. The strategy sets out a description of each of the priorities, high level aims and actions in addition a number of themes which have been highlighted within each of the seven priorities.
15. At the ICS Learning Disability and Autism Programme Assurance Board in January 2024 it was agreed that cross cutting themes were the key points of the strategy to work on first: a) Support / advocacy b) Carers c) Mental health d) Reasonable Adjustments
 - I. Many Autistic People need **support/advocacy** to access mainstream services or navigate systems.
 - II. **Carers** have voiced concerns that there will be no support for their autistic child when they can no longer provide it. The need for support was clearly evidenced through work on all of the priorities and for people of all ages and their carers.
 - III. The plan is to continue the multi-agency approach taken with this strategy to plan the best way for carers to get the support that they need.
 - IV. Some Autistic people are not getting the right support for their **mental health** needs. The strategy sets out aims and actions around this in priority 4 but people talked about this in each priority.
 - V. Many people talked about feeling suicidal because of their situation. The intention is to use the strategy to tackle issues facing autistic people in Herefordshire and Worcestershire to **improve mental health and wellbeing and to reduce risk of suicide** and suicidal thoughts.
 - VI. Organisations need to make **reasonable adjustments**. A key action is to promote good practice examples of reasonable adjustments to all organisations in Herefordshire and Worcestershire and remind organisations of duties under the Equality Act 2010.

Implementation and Monitoring Progress

16. Work will commence in April 2024 with each priority lead working with stakeholders to co-produce an annual implementation plan based on the high level aims and actions identified within the strategy document. Implementation plans will need to identify any future resource implications for each of the organisations across the ICS and business cases will need to be developed where appropriate. Plans will also include details of how success will be evaluated.

17. Progress will be monitored at the ICS Developing Services for Autistic People Board (name and terms of reference to change with a dedicated focus on the autism strategy implementation) including all workstream leads, people with lived experience and carers and chaired by the ICS Autism Champion. This will report into the ICS Learning Disability and Autism Programme Assurance Board and annual reports will be presented to the Health and Wellbeing Boards in both counties.
18. In addition to the ICS wide governance, there will be additional oversight within Herefordshire, with regular progress updates reported into the Herefordshire Autism Partnership Board and the SEND Assurance Board.
19. A communications plan will include a bi-annual newsletter to be produced for all stakeholders to be distributed across all channels in the two counties.

Community impact

- 20 The autism strategy aims to deliver positive outcomes in a number of different areas across local communities which includes health inequalities, support into employment, support for people in the criminal justice system and building the right support for autistic people in the community.
- 21 Herefordshire's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2023-33 sets out how the Council and its local partners plan to address the health and wellbeing needs of its population and is a key jointly owned document that promotes collective action.
- 22 The key themes of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy align closely with priorities set out within the autism strategy. This includes enabling the best start in life for children and good mental wellbeing throughout life. Additional priorities addressed in both strategies include
 - I. Improve access to local services
 - II. Good work for everyone
 - III. Support for people with complex vulnerabilities

Environmental impact

23. Whilst this activity will have minimal environmental impacts, consideration has been made to minimise waste and resource use in line with the Council's environmental policy.

The Council provides a wide range of services for the people of Herefordshire. Together with partner organisations in the private, public and voluntary sectors, there is a shared strong commitment to improving the environmental sustainability and achieving carbon neutrality in Herefordshire.

Equality duty

- 25 The decision does not discontinue any service and has no detrimental impact to eligible service users under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010.
- 26 The Council is committed to equality and diversity using the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010) to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. An Equality Impact Assessment is attached at Appendix 4.
- 27 The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. All partners are aware of their statutory requirements in regards to equality legislation.
- 28 This proposal will contribute to providing support and improving the quality of life to autistic people of all ages and protected characteristics.

Resource implications

- 29 There is a training implication to ensure that all appropriate staff receive the Oliver McGowan mandatory training.
- 30 There is a resource implication in that all stakeholders will need to work together to achieve successful completion of the actions set out in the strategy. Workstream leads will need to continue to oversee and collate the work for their priority.
- 31 There are no financial implications associated directly with the approval of this strategy as the resources to take forward the strategy in relation to the development of implementation plans will be delivered within current revenue budget constraints. Any resource implications that are identified as part of implementation plan development will require the development of business cases, which will need to be approved by the relevant organisation(s) prior to proceeding.

Legal implications

- 32 The strategy has been developed to support compliance with the legislative framework, as set out above in sections 1 to 5 of this report.
- 33 The Autism Act 2009 states that there has to be a Government strategy which then places further statutory guidance on Local Authorities which must be followed. Failure to do so, without just cause, may lead to a judicial review or action by the Secretary of State.

Risk management

- 34 Further work to implement the strategy is required with support across the Council needed to ensure progress is made within Herefordshire communities.
- 35 Without consistent support and engagement from a wide range of public, voluntary and private sector partners, there is a risk that the Council will not be able to deliver the intended improvements and outcomes for autistic people and their carers.

Risk	Mitigation
Sufficient resources to implement the strategy are not available.	The next stages of the process will identify work already underway which will contribute; key resources; robust governance and further engagement across the Council
Key stakeholders do not engage productively with this strategy	We will mitigate this by building relationships between partners, through further engagement and priority area focussed working groups.

Consultees

- Herefordshire Autism Partnership Board
- Corporate Leadership Team

- Community Wellbeing Cabinet Member
- Community Wellbeing Corporate Director
- Children and Young People Corporate Director
- SEND Assurance Board
- Herefordshire Social Care Commissioners
- Head of Additional Needs for Herefordshire Council Children and Young people, Worcestershire Adult Social Care Commissioners
- Worcestershire Autism Partnership Board
- All-Age Disability Lead for Worcestershire Children’s First
- NHS ICB Commissioners
- Head of Criminal Justice for West Mercia Police.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Herefordshire and Worcestershire All Age Autism Strategy 2024-2029

Appendix 2: Survey Response Data 2023

Background papers

None

Report Reviewers Used for appraising this report:

Governance	John Coleman	Date 01/03/2024
Finance	Judith Tranmer Karen Morris	Date 28/02/2024 Date 29/02/2024
Legal	Samantha Evans, Community Wellbeing	Date 01/03/2024
Communications	Luenne Featherstone	Date 28/02/2024
Equality Duty	Harriet Yellin	Date 29/02/2024
Procurement	Lee Robertson	Date 28/02/2024
Risk	Jo Needs	Date 29/02/2024

Approved by	Hilary Hall	Date 08/03/2024
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Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.

- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Integrated Care System (ICS)

- National Health Service Integrated Care Board (NHS ICB)

Herefordshire and Worcestershire Joint All Age Autism Strategy 2024 - 2029

Glossary

Term	Definition
ADHD	
Advocacy (informal)	Where a person or organisation supports an individual to make choices/decisions and make their views known. They can support a person to take action to gain access to services or support that they are entitled to.
Autism Friendly Schools Standard	The Autism Education Trust (AET) School Standards are structured around eight key principles that provide the framework for the development of whole-school approaches (ages 5–16) to enhancing provision for autistic pupils and their families. These standards support School leaders to meet special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) policy and legal requirements and their equality duties whilst complying with the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (2021) and the Teacher Standards (2011). They also align with the Head Teacher Standards (2020).
All-Party Parliamentary Group on Autism (APPGA)	
Autism	A lifelong developmental condition that affects how people communicate and interact with the world. Often referred to as a spectrum condition because of the range of ways it can impact on people and the different level of support they may need across their lives.
Autism Partnership Board	Set up in each county to inform and shape a local autism strategy and action plan, monitor and review its progress and adherence with the Autism Act 2009. Has a membership made up of autistic people, family carers, professionals from health and social care and providers of services.
Autistic People	People of ALL ages who have a formal diagnosis of autism, self-identify as autistic or may be autistic and do not know.
Carer/s	A carer is anyone, who looks after a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction

	and cannot cope without their support. The care they give is unpaid.
Commissioners	Understand, plan and secure health and/or social care services for the local population.
Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)	EBSA can be used to describe the inability of a young person to attend school for long periods of time based on emotional factors. EBSA is not a mental health difficulty but rather a combination of lots of different factors. The combination of factors differs for each individual and there is no single cause although there is often an underlying presence of anxiety and/or emotional distress and no significant anti-social behaviour.
Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	An Education Health and Care Plan is for children and young people aged up to 25 who need more support than is available through special educational needs support. EHCPs identify educational, health and social needs and set out the additional support to meet those needs.
Education Health and Care Assessment/EHC Assessment	A needs assessment carried out by the Local Authority for children and young people who may need an EHCP.
Graduated Response	Special Educational Needs (SEN) support is also known as the Graduated Response.
Health and Wellbeing Boards	The Health and Wellbeing Boards bring together the organisations responsible for improving health and wellbeing and reducing health inequalities for each county.
Integrated Care System (ICS)	An integrated care system (ICS) is when all organisations involved in health and care work together in different, more joined-up ways. The focus is on providing care in a way that benefits patients. In April 2021, NHS England formally accredited Herefordshire and Worcestershire as an Integrated Care System.
Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board (ICB)	The Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board (ICB) is part of the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care System (ICS) and is responsible for improving health outcomes for our local population, reducing health inequalities, and supporting broader social and economic development.
H&W ICS Developing Services for Autistic People Programme Board	This Board leads on the development of services for autistic people across Herefordshire & Worcestershire

	and ensures that the developments proposed in the Learning Disability and Autism 3 Year Plan are delivered.
LeDeR strategy/programme	Learning from the lives and deaths - people with a learning disability and autistic people Herefordshire and Worcestershire Strategy 2022-2025 provides a strategic overview of who is involved in the LeDeR programme for Herefordshire and Worcestershire and how they work together. The strategy reflects what has been learnt so far, what it aspires to achieve to improve services and health outcomes for local people and how it plans to do this.
Looking to the future plan	This is a plan about planning for the future which starts from the earliest point; planning for skill development, choices and opportunities that lead towards a healthy and happy adulthood right from the start. A successful transition into school, making choices, access to the community, different types of transport, communication skills are all examples of planning that helps the child and/or young person as they move towards preparation for adulthood.
Masking (also referred to as camouflaging)	Where an autistic person hides their autistic traits and/or behaviours in certain social situations to better fit in with those around them. Masking can have a significant negative impact on the autistic person's mental health and wellbeing.
National Autism Prevalence Tool	A tool that helps understand the estimated population of autistic people in each county.
Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training (OMMT) Programme	<p>A mandated training programme that has been set within the Health & Social Care Act in 2022, as well as within a new national Code of Conduct. All CQC registered health and care delivery organisations for older people, adult and children's health and social care will be inspected to ensure they follow the code.</p> <p>It aims to ensure the health and social care workforce have the right skills and knowledge to provide safe, compassionate and informed care to autistic people and people with a learning disability (Taken from Health Education England).</p>
Reasonable adjustments	The Autism Act 2009 and the Equality Act 2010 place a duty on public services to take reasonable steps to enable disabled people/person to have access to the same service/s as non-disabled people. This can be through adapting the environment of a building or room, a change

	to a policy, or working practice or by providing extra support.
Reasonable Adjustment Digital Flag (RADF)	The Reasonable Adjustment Digital Flag is a national NHS initiative which puts a digital 'flag' on patients records so health professionals are aware that a person needs them to tailor support and make adjustments to help them engage with their care. To see an example of the digital 'flag' symbol on a health record click on this link: Reasonable Adjustment Flag case study (based on pilot version of the flag) - NHS Digital
Special Educational Needs (SEN) support	Support that is additional to or different from the support generally given to other children of the same age. The purpose of SEN support is to help children achieve the outcomes or learning objectives set for them by the school (taken from SENDIASS) .

Introduction from Herefordshire and Worcestershire Autism Champion

Welcome to Herefordshire and Worcestershire’s All Age Autism Strategy, which has been thoroughly co-produced across both Herefordshire and Worcestershire Autism Partnership Boards. We have been passionate in our commitment to getting the real-life experiences of autistic people and co-producing something practical and meaningful. This strategy is for and about people of any age, with a formal diagnosis of autism, as well as those who identify as autistic. It aims to look at how we can overcome existing barriers whilst also promoting what autistic people have to offer.

“Strengths of Autistic People need championing, support with barriers but promote their brilliance!!!”

To develop this strategy, we talked to autistic people, family carers, people who work in support services and anyone else living in our communities with an interest in autism. We ran workshops, facilitated groups and conducted a questionnaire. We wanted to hear as many autistic views as possible, so we spoke directly to as many people as we could.

There is a National Autism Strategy, so we also looked how we can implement this across our two counties. [The national strategy for autistic children, young people and adults: 2021 to 2026 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Quote from Bernadette Louise, Integrated Care System Autism Champion:

“As the ICS Autism Champion, I offer the autistic viewpoint to high level discussions. As a professional, autistic person and family carer, I have a strong vision of what is needed to best support autistic people in our community. As it happens, lots of the people we co-produced with had similar and varied life experiences, with equally strong opinions. I believe that in this strategy we have pulled together many of the aspects in life, that we have daily challenges with. I expect this strategy to provide us with the platform we need to not only elevate the profile of autism, but also see significant and meaningful change. It should

enable the system to support us without barriers, discrimination and with empathy and knowledge. I expect this strategy to hold weight and allow accountability so we can look back on the two counties and see real-life progression over time.”

About Autism

Autism is a lifelong developmental condition that affects how people communicate and interact with the world.

Autistic people see, hear and feel the world differently to other people. Autism varies widely and is often referred to as a spectrum condition, because of the range of ways it can impact on people and the different level of support they may need across their lives. Remember - if you have met one autistic person, you have met one autistic person. Autistic people will not look or present in the same way. Some autistic people will have a formal diagnosis, some people identify as autistic with no formal diagnosis, others will not be aware of their autism. You can find out more about autism diagnosis on the National Autistic Society website: [Diagnostic criteria \(autism.org.uk\)](https://www.autism.org.uk).

While autism is not a learning disability, [around 4 in 10 autistic people have a learning disability \(Autistica\)](#). We also have learning disability strategies for [Herefordshire](#) and [Worcestershire](#).

Autism is not a mental health problem but, like everyone else, autistic people can have good and bad mental health. Anxiety and depression are particularly common in autistic people, possibly due to difficulties with how to interact in a neurotypical world. The National Autistic Society has Autism and Mental Health Pages: [Mental health \(autism.org.uk\)](#).

More than 1 in 100 people are on the autism spectrum and there are more than 700,000 autistic adults and children in the UK, taken from: [What is autism](#) (National Autistic Society). It is likely that the true autistic population is much higher due to lack of awareness, the wait for diagnosis and national recording systems.

“An autistic person is first and foremost an individual, so no two people will have the exact same experiences...so each person must be seen holistically”.

As part of this strategy, we are going to collect people’s experiences in Herefordshire and Worcestershire. There are also a series of podcasts created by Worcestershire Children First with school age children describing their experiences: [Mind-boggling Conversations - YouTube](#).

You can also view experiences collected by the National Autistic Society on their webpage: [Stories from the spectrum \(autism.org.uk\)](#).

Our Vision in themes

Our Partnership Boards agreed the strategy should focus on the priorities within the National Strategy, with an additional priority around keeping safe. This is the vision for each of our themes:

- **Improving understanding and acceptance of autism within society.**
 We want to demonstrate that we have significantly improved public understanding and acceptance of autism, and that autistic people feel more included in their communities and less lonely and/or isolated. We want the public to have a better understanding of autism and to have changed their behaviour positively towards autistic people and their families.
- **Improving autistic children and young people’s access into education and support positive transitions into adulthood.**
 We want education settings to provide better and more inclusive support to autistic children and young people so that autistic people are better able to achieve their potential. We want more teachers and educational staff to understand the specific needs of their autistic pupils, ensuring that more school placements can be sustained. We also want to demonstrate that more autistic children have had their needs identified early on and that they are having positive experiences in educational settings. We want to ensure that we make improvements to support and prepare autistic children and young people for transition to adulthood to enable them to reach their full potential.
- **Supporting more autistic people into employment.**
 We want to make progress on closing the employment gap for autistic people. We want more autistic people who can and want to work to do so, and to ensure that those who have found a job are less likely to fall out of work. We also want to show that employers have become more confident in hiring and supporting autistic people, and that autistic people’s experience of being in work has improved.
- **Tackling health and care inequalities for autistic people.**
 We want to reduce the health and care inequalities that autistic people face throughout their lives, and to show that autistic people are living healthier and longer lives, ensuring timely access to needs-led health care. In addition, to have made significant progress on improving early identification, reducing diagnostic waiting times, improving diagnostic pathways and access to mental health support for children and adults, so autistic people can access a timely diagnosis and the support they may need across their lives.
- **Building the right support in the community.**
 We want all autistic people to have the opportunity to participate in their communities among friends and family. Autistic people should live in their own home or with people they choose to live with. We are clear that people should not be in inpatient mental health settings unless absolutely necessary for clinical reasons and will focus on providing good support at the right time to reduce incidence of crisis.
- **Improving support in criminal and youth justice systems.**
 We want to have made improvements in autistic people’s experiences of coming into contact with the criminal and youth justice systems, by ensuring that all staff understand autism and how to support autistic people. We want all parts of the criminal and youth justice systems, from the police to prisons, to have made demonstrable progress in ensuring that autistic people have equal access to care

and support where needed. In addition, we want autistic people who have been convicted of a crime to be able to get the additional support they may require to engage fully in their sentence and rehabilitation.

- **Keeping safe.**

We want to enable autistic people to feel empowered to keep themselves safe in the community; have a better and safer experience of everyday life and be well supported by services that help them feel safe and secure.

Cross cutting themes

Our work on the strategy has also identified some themes that cut across many of these priorities.

- **Public perception of autistic people**

We want to demonstrate that we have significantly improved public understanding and acceptance of autism and have good quality local resources to share. We have set out aims and actions around this in priority 1 but people talked about this in each priority.

- **Many autistic people need support/advocacy to access mainstream services or navigate systems. Carers are worried there will be no support for their autistic child when they can no longer provide it**

The need for support was clearly evidenced through work on all of the priorities and for people of all ages and their carers. We want to continue the multi-agency approach taken with this strategy to plan the best way for people to get the support that they need.

“Autistic people...do not know how they will live when their parents cannot help them. Someone needs to help them.”

- **Some autistic people are not getting the right support for their mental health needs**

We have set our aims and actions around this in priority 4 but people talked about this in each priority. Many people talked about feeling suicidal because of their situation. Autistic people are at a higher risk of suicide than non-autistic people. Figures show that as many as 11-66% of autistic adults had thought about suicide during their lifetime, and up to 35% had planned or attempted suicide ([Hedley, D., & Uljarević, M. 2018](#)). We want to use this strategy to tackle issues facing autistic people in Herefordshire and Worcestershire to improve mental health and wellbeing and to reduce the risk of suicide and suicidal thoughts. We want to explore opportunities for autistic people to feel connected to their local community, working to reduce isolation and loneliness. By providing opportunities to socialise and promote a sense of belonging and safety through a wide range of opportunities, we can work together with our partners to improve autistic people’s wellbeing and prevent suicide. The Autism Partnership Boards are working closely with the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Suicide Prevention Partnerships in order to achieve these aims.

- **Autistic people, particularly but not exclusively women and girls, are “masking” as an approach to fit in to a non-autistic culture**

Masking or camouflaging is where an autistic person hides their autistic traits and/or behaviours in certain social situations to better fit in with those around them. We want to use this strategy to improve understanding of autism and the different ways people present, developing a culture of acceptance and understanding where autistic people do not feel pressurised to hide who they are. We want to educate organisations about masking, so that we can improve the mental health and wellbeing of those who mask, as well as the families and carers who are supporting the exhaustion and burn out of a person who is masking.

“My daughter masks so well that others find it hard to accept [that she is autistic]. There is little understanding of how exhausting masking can be.”

- **Organisations need to make reasonable adjustments**

We want to promote good practice examples of reasonable adjustments to all organisations in Herefordshire and Worcestershire and remind organisations of their duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the Autism Act 2009.

Reading and using this Strategy

For each priority we have set out what we know, our high-level aims, and key actions.

We would like organisations in Herefordshire and Worcestershire to use these aims and actions in their own individual strategies and delivery plans so that together we are creating a great place to live for autistic people.

We hope you enjoy reading our strategy! We will issue regular newsletters setting out progress on our strategy.

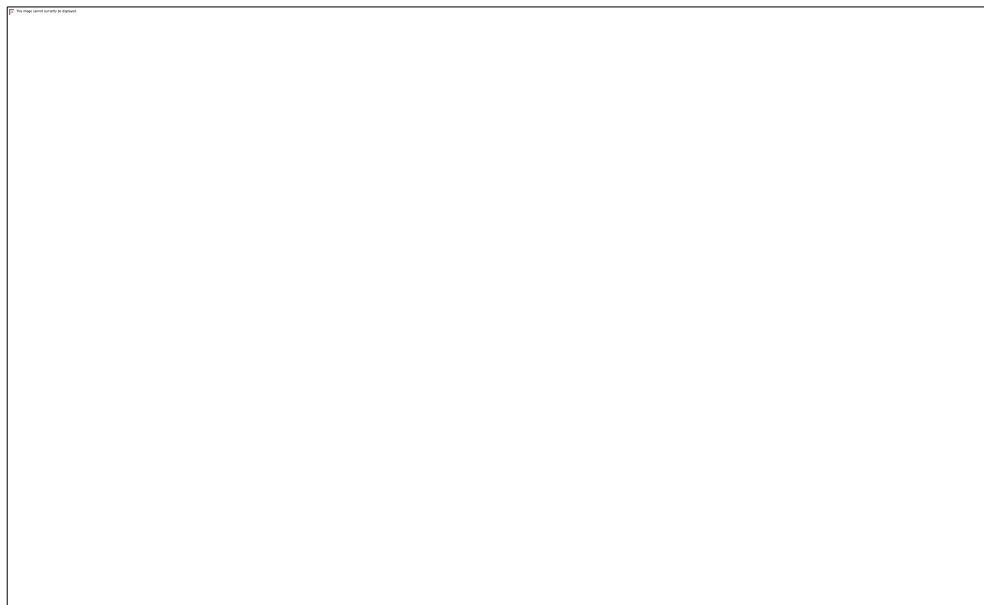
How will we monitor this strategy?

There is an identified lead for each priority who will work with partners, including autistic people and their families, to oversee the actions agreed. An annual action plan will be produced for each priority setting out areas of focus and how we will monitor success. Over the course of the strategy these workstreams may identify additional aims and actions, particularly if a new National Autism Strategy is produced. Progress will be discussed at Autism Partnership Boards and reported to the Integrated Care System (ICS) Developing Services for Autistic People Programme Board. An annual report will be taken to the Health and Wellbeing Boards in both counties. A bi-annual newsletter will be produced to keep everyone updated on progress.

Who was involved?

Autism Partnership Boards in both Herefordshire and Worcestershire (made up of people with lived experience, carers, health and social care professionals, representatives from the charitable, voluntary, provider and statutory organisations) co-produced a plan for the content of the strategy and the strategy engagement plan. A whole population survey was

conducted across both Herefordshire and Worcestershire in March 2023, receiving 442 responses from a wide range of people.



*Please note, respondents were able to tick more than one box for this question with carers and professionals also ticking autistic person.

A designated lead for each priority, led focus groups and meetings to discuss the findings from the engagement and co-produce high level aims and key actions.

We are proud of the co-production on this strategy. However, we know there are still many autistic people and families that we did not reach and we will strive to further increase engagement in action plans and delivery of the strategy.

Local data

We have used the National Autism Prevalance tool to estimate the numbers of autistic people in Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

Herefordshire

	Estimated population of autistic people in Herefordshire calculated at 1.1% of resident population			
	2020	2025	2030	2035
Total Population	2,120	2,170	2,210	2,230
Total Population - Children and Young People	400	410	400	390
Total Population - Adults	1,720	1,760	1,810	1,840

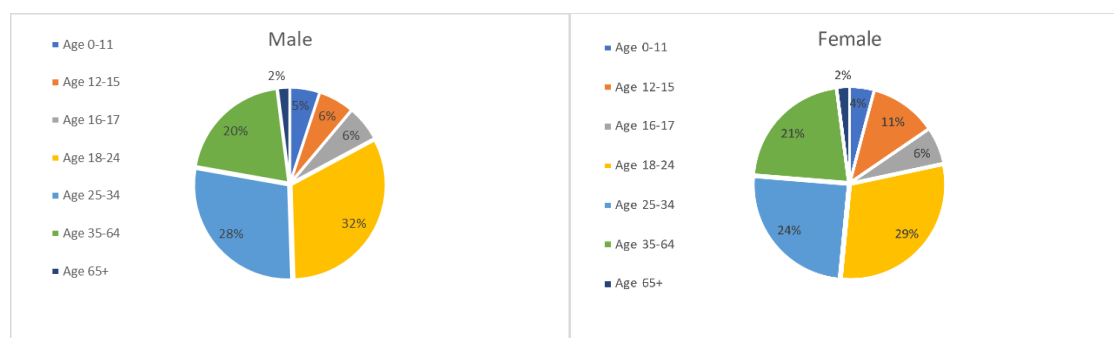
Worcestershire

	Estimated population of autistic people in Worcestershire calculated at 1.1% of resident population			
	2020	2025	2030	2035
Total Population	6,550	6,690	6,830	6,940
Total Population - Children and Young People	1,310	1,330	1,330	1,320
Total Population - Adults	5,240	5,360	5,500	5,620

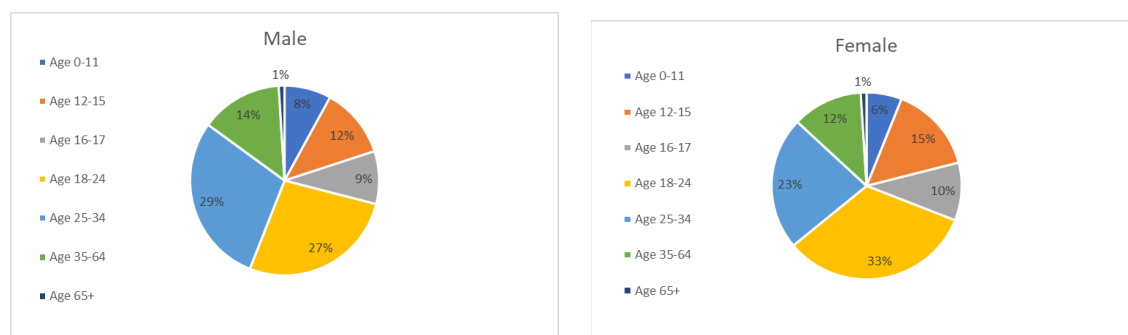
A review of our primary care data shows that in comparison with the national estimates of prevalence, only 40% of autistic people are currently recorded on the health system in Worcestershire and 29% in Herefordshire. This is likely to change over the lifespan of this strategy with national changes in NHS record systems. It is also worth noting that national prevalence data is likely to be an underestimate. Data in the United States is now showing that 1 in 36 children have autism: [Autism Statistics and Facts | Autism Speaks](#).

The tables below show the mix of sex and age within the autistic people recorded.

In Herefordshire:



In Worcestershire:



Over 90% of the individuals recorded are White British in both counties.

In Worcestershire, there are currently 294 autistic people known to adult social care where autism is recorded. Of these, 186 people also have a learning disability. Autism is not a specific category on the social care system so the actual numbers are likely to be higher.

As of the end of August 2023 (latest data) there are 1,176 Children with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and a primary need of autism in Worcestershire: 21% of children with an EHCP.

There are 503 carers known to Worcestershire's Carers Hub who are supporting an autistic person.

In Herefordshire

As of the end of August 2023 there were 1,463 children and young people with an Education Health and Care Plan maintained by Herefordshire 0-25 years of which 325 were recorded with a primary need of autism: 22% of children with an EHCP. This is significantly lower than national average and is thought to reflect the length of waiting list for a diagnosis of autism. Work is being done to update local authority records and improve accuracy.

Priority One - Improving understanding and acceptance of autism within society.

What do we know?

94% of respondents to our questionnaire felt that the general public had a poor understanding of autism.

"Understanding what autism is and that each person with a diagnosis is impacted on in different ways and in different scenarios. Just not assuming they are being difficult or awkward."

Autistic people told us about experiences in shops and public spaces. Some people welcomed quiet hours or specific autism events. However, the majority of people said staff working in shops and local services needed to have more understanding (through training) and empathy. They particularly need more awareness of sensory overload in public settings.

44% of autistic people had experienced barriers on public transport describing issues with noise, sensory overload and timetabling issues.

High Level Aims

- Everyone, including people who work in local shops, services and public transport should understand and accept autistic people, make sure they are included and treated with respect.
- Local organisations who provide services to the public should make reasonable adjustments, as set out in the Equality Act 2010 and the Autism Act 2009. These adjustments include ensuring that staff have appropriate training.

Key Actions

- Production and promotion of local autism resources to promote understanding and acceptance. To include voice recordings of autistic people describing experiences, posters, social media.
- Increase availability of autism training for people working in customer facing roles.
- Development of a sensory/autism audit tool for shops/public buildings and material explaining the need for a quiet hour.
- Engagement with local retailers to agree how to work together.
- Engagement with local transport services to agree how to work together.
- Development of a sensory/autism audit tool and autism material for local bus services.

“There is a real lack of positive images and stories of autistic people coping and enjoying fulfilling lives”.

Priority Two - Improving autistic children and young people’s access into education and support positive transitions into adulthood.

Herefordshire

What do we know?

New mainstream autism bases have recently opened, delivering 42 additional specialist placements locally. These are already demonstrating a positive impact on attendance, engagement and learning. However, there is still insufficient local provision: 21.8% of pupils with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) placed outside the state funded school and college sector have a primary need of autism. Autism remains a priority for special educational needs planning; both to respond to further increases in requirement, and to support children through phases of education and into adulthood.

50% of schools have accessed the West Midlands autism training and there is an improved early years’ offer. However, parents remain concerned for their children and this is reflected in the higher numbers of requests for EHC assessments in recent years. Feedback from the questionnaire demonstrated a lack of confidence in the targeted schools offer. Some autistic children and young people are still having poor experiences within school, are not reaching their potential and are struggling in the transition to adult life. Anxiety and other mental health concerns in children has increased in combination with neuro-diversity related needs since the Covid Pandemic; this is reflected in the profile of the more recent EHCP cohort.

Children and young people with autism often experience high levels of anxiety in school which places them at greater risk of Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA). Frequent sensory processing differences can make the world unpredictable for autistic children and young people. Stressful sensory experiences can heighten this anxiety for autistic children and young people in educational settings: this can include busy corridors, colourful displays and school uniforms in materials that they might find difficult to tolerate. Sometimes

behaviour caused by sensory and emotional distress can be confused with disobedience. This can result in autistic children and young people being particularly vulnerable to being excluded from school. To avoid this risk and reduce the long-term harm resulting from high levels of anxiety and sensory distress, parents may exercise their right to educate their autistic child at home.

We want to ensure that improvements are made to support and prepare autistic children and young people for transition to adulthood which allows them to reach their full potential. This success is dependent on autistic children having more settled, happy and comfortable experiences throughout their primary and secondary phases of education.

High Level Aims

- To ensure that all children and young people (including autistic children and young people) feel safe, loved and valued, and grow up with the confidence and skills to be the best they can be.
- An area wide accreditation and quality standards system and campaign for education and community settings.
- A “looking to my future plan” is in place and working from the earliest point so that transition and preparation for adulthood planning is part of the team around the child discussions from an early age.
- Parents and young people’s views and experiences shape all that we do so that resources are developed and targeted as effectively and efficiently as possible.
- Effective multi-agency early identification and pathways for support ensure that early and timely help addresses needs well.
- Sustainable and sufficient educational provision in mainstream and specialist settings ensures a local education offer for other than exceptional circumstances.
- Recruit and retain confident and skilled workforce so that the local education offer is viable and sustainable.

Key Actions

- To work with schools, early years and colleges to plan for workforce support and training and a network of professional opportunities across the area.
- To work with our SENCo network to map best practice in education across Herefordshire.
- To work with health, early help and early years settings to ensure a coordinated and effective pathway.
- To establish sufficient local educational placements and provision for children and young people with a primary need of autism so that the right child and the right provision is in place from the earliest point.
- To map community groups/organisations for children and young people across Herefordshire and use the map to improve links with local schools so that there are more schools and colleges who have a broader programme of community groups coming into the learning environment.
- To introduce a more comprehensive pathway to accreditation (autism quality mark) for education settings, staff and community providers.

- Schools to invite community groups in to build skills and confidence in the young people to try new groups and activities.
- To develop an area strategy and campaign to recruit support staff using young people's voices and case studies and other incentives to address recruitment and retention issues across the system.
- A passion for what autism inclusive looks like to include an area wide programme of events for autism acceptance week.
- There will be an expectation of a transition plan started and a named worker identified to facilitate that plan, from the earliest age. Others who are important to the child and to support the facilitator will be identified and share responsibility for the success of the plan.
- A resource bank of information and case studies will be available to support transition planning from the earliest age.
- The transition plan will focus on opportunities, experience and skill development to build confidence, self-advocacy and informed choice.
- A safety net approach will be in place to support young people who are at risk of self-excluding from a workplace when they first encounter barriers they see as insurmountable.
- All EHCP annual reviews to have a section on planning for my future including how I would like to/am accessing community activities.
- Specific guidance and support for inclusion of young people with autism in educational activities in personal and social education.
- Additional resources and support will be available to support young people with autism who need more personalised help with puberty and relationships.
- Link to existing workstreams to change and improve parent and young people's experience of meetings and planning with practitioners.
- Co-produce an accessible training module on reasonable adjustments for all education and community providers.
- Co-produce a more robust proforma/process for capturing parent views in the EHCP statutory processes.
- Multi-agency workshops co-facilitated by parents on personally appropriate outcomes for children and young people with autism.

Worcestershire

What do we know?

A growing number of children and young people are being diagnosed as autistic.

Some autistic children and young people are still having poor experiences within school, are not reaching their potential and are struggling in the transition to adult life.

Some autistic children find school environments overwhelming and evidence from the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Autism (APPGA) shows they often feel misunderstood or judged by their peers because of their behaviour, which can impact their ability to engage and succeed in education.

Children and young people with autism often face additional challenges in school which may make them anxious and experience Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA). Frequent sensory processing differences can make the world unpredictable for autistic children and young people. Sensory experience can impact on the anxiety of autistic children and young people in an educational setting, this can include busy corridors, colourful displays to school uniforms in materials that they might find difficult to tolerate. Sometimes behaviour associated with their autism can be confused with disobedience. This can result in autistic children and young people being particularly vulnerable to being excluded from school. As a result of this, parents may choose and have a right to educate their autistic child at home. This can be for various reasons including the child having sensory needs that make a school environment noisy, distracting or even painful to them.

It is also widely accepted that girls are often overlooked for an autism assessment or are commonly mis-diagnosed. It is known that autism often presents differently in girls and women and that the ability to mask and camouflage difficulties results in professionals missing identifiers.

Of the 5,737 Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) at the end of September 2023 maintained by Worcestershire, 1,216 children and young people have a primary need of autism (**21.1%**).

Since 2016 we have seen an increase year on year of those children and young people that are receiving SEN support at school or have an EHCP who have a diagnosis of autism.

A priority of the Worcestershire Strategy for children and young people with SEND 2023-2026 is to ensure that children and young people with autism achieve positive outcomes and the support required to enable this is in place.

High Level Aims

- To ensure that all children and young people with autism are truly seen and respected as individuals and are supported to be the best they can be.
- To assess and meet the needs of children and young people with autism, through the Graduated Response and Education Health and Care Needs Assessment for those who need it.
- Provide support and services that effectively meet needs and improves outcomes.
- To listen and work with children and young people with autism and their families to further improve and develop the delivery of support and services.
- To ensure we have effective provision which is timely.
- To strengthen the links between our approaches to early help and those children and young people to improve our identification and assessment of need.
- To ensure that transition points for children and young people are understood and smooth.
- To monitor and improve the waiting times for professional assessments.
- To develop the workforce.
- To increase supported internship and employment opportunities.

Key Actions

- Ensure that we better understand and overcome the barriers to children and young people with autism achieving good outcomes as active participants in their education.
- Engagement of parents/carers/children and young people in the multi-agency early help offers of help and support.
- Improving and clarifying the intervention pathway for children and young people with autism and emotional health and wellbeing needs across universal, targeted and specialist services.
- Working with schools and settings to support them to achieve the Autism Friendly Schools Standard to ensure they have a whole school approach to children and young people with autism.
- Ensure clear and effective support for early childhood diagnosis and support.
- Opening of the Free School in Malvern.

Priority Three - Supporting more autistic people into employment.

What do we know?

Evidence shows that there is currently a significant employment gap for autistic people. Data published by the Office for National Statistics for the first time in February 2021 shows that as of December 2020, 22% of autistic people aged 16 to 64 are in employment, in contrast to 52% of people with other disabilities, and 81% of non-disabled people. The National Autism Strategy outlines that there are many factors contributing to this gap, including struggling to get a job because of recruitment processes not being autism-friendly or difficulty accessing the support people might need to get into work or while in work.

Our local data showed that although many people did not experience work related barriers and some positive examples were shared with us, around 40% of respondents had experienced issues with all of the areas we asked about as follows:

Have you or the people you know/work with/support experienced any barriers or challenges with the following tasks?

	Yes	No	Not applicable
Applying for benefits	94	38	84
Searching for jobs	82 (39%)	38 (18%)	88 (42%)
Applying for jobs	87 (42%)	30 (14%)	90 (43%)
Going for job interviews	91 (44%)	22 (11%)	94 (45%)
Starting a new job	82 (40%)	22 (11%)	100 (49%)
Working with colleagues	91 (44%)	23 (11%)	95 (45%)
Getting support needed at work	85 (41%)	29 (14%)	95 (45%)

Getting reasonable adjustments needed at work	81 (39%)	28 (14%)	98 (47%)
Other (please specify)	16 (14%)	13 (12%)	83 (74%)

*Please note, not all respondents answered all questions.

A number of people also talked about their concerns about whether the person they care for would ever be able to enter the workplace. Also highlighted was the importance for the need for a diagnosis before they could access support into the workplace.

"My son has never had the opportunity to work, or even apply and be interviewed for work. He is facing a lifetime on benefits which is also a challenge to apply for and maintain eligibility."

The people we engaged with were clear that there needed to be greater understanding of autism amongst employers.

"People tend to assume all autistic people aren't literate, capable or very bright. When the spectrum is so wide, there are many super intelligent autistic people, very capable."

High level Aims

- Local employers and employees should better understand the strengths of and challenges facing autistic people.
- Local employers should make reasonable adjustments, as set out in the Equality Act 2010 and the Autism Act 2009. Including ensuring that staff have appropriate training.
- Autistic people should be able to access support if required for recruitment and retention.
- Autistic people should be able to access support and information regarding self-employment.

"The world has 8 billion unique individuals, difference should be embraced and celebrated. Took me 50 years to find that I'm on the autism spectrum. I told my manager, and she has been very supportive of me. For the first time in my 30 years of work, I wasn't ridiculed or belittled, but supported and that meant a lot to me."

Key Actions

- Drive improved employer awareness of autism across Herefordshire and Worcestershire.
- Promote better understanding of the benefits of employing autistic people.
- Promote use of Access to Work.
- Improve understanding and reduce the stigma faced by autistic employees from work colleagues.
- Encourage employers to provide coach/buddy/mentor support through the recruitment process and when in work.
- Encourage employers to provide clear information on the recruitment process and the expectations of the job.

- Raise awareness and provide information to support employers to make the adjustments needed to recruit and properly support autistic employees.
- Promote support and information around self-employment for autistic people.
- Promote mentorship and improve access to employment support programmes.
- Lead by example across Integrated Care System (ICS) organisations by employing autistic people and having good quality HR policies for neuro-diverse inclusion.

Priority Four - Tackling health and care inequalities for autistic people.

What do we know?

- Growing understanding about autism has led to a recent increase in demand for autism diagnostic assessments which currently exceeds capacity and has led to long waiting lists for children and adults.
- 0.4% of the GP registered population is recorded as autistic in Herefordshire and Worcestershire.
- 23% of people recorded as autistic also have a learning disability.
- It is estimated that autistic people have up to 16 years less life expectancy than the general population (Hirvikoski, 2015). The Herefordshire and Worcestershire LeDeR strategy established a mortality review process to enable services to learn from the lives and deaths of people with a learning disability and/or autism and make service improvements to address barriers or gaps in care.
- Almost 80% of adults and 70% of children with autism will experience a mental health difficulty, 40% will have at least two or more illnesses together such as anxiety or depression ([Simonoff, et al., 2008](#)).
- Young people with autism are at increased risk of suicidality ([Gadow et al., 2012](#); [Mayes et al., 2013](#)). 70% of young people experience suicidal ideation and 1 in 10 attempts suicide ([O'Halloran et al., 2022](#)).
- 34.2% of autistic people had experienced suicidal ideation, 21.9% had made suicide plans and 24.3% had actively made suicide attempts or demonstrated suicidal behaviours ([Newell et al., 2023](#)).

What local people told us

Autistic people and their carers often find it difficult to access health services due to concerns about different parts of the process. This included: anxiety created by communication prior to and during health appointments; environments and procedures being overwhelming due to sensory issues; uncertainty about what will happen in appointments; and/or how long they will be waiting to access a service/assessment. Whilst there were some examples of good experiences, for the majority of respondents accessing health services was very challenging. There was a strong sense that health professionals require better training to meet the needs of autistic people with 68% of respondents feeling that staff in doctors' surgeries and hospitals do not have enough training to understand and support autistic people.

Specific areas were identified which need significant improvements such as: reducing waiting times from autism diagnostic assessments and a lack of support for people waiting

for and receiving a diagnosis of autism. A recurring theme from people involved in this process was that they were:

“Battling alone to get a diagnosis, then left to deal with the outcome.”

Difficulty in accessing mental health services also came through strongly. The following quote illustrates some of the key issues:

“At times of a mental health crisis being told you'll be added to a list for something that doesn't work for you and saying, 'I'm sorry, there's nothing else I can offer' is not helpful and could be catastrophic for the person.”

Long waiting times were highlighted as unsuitable for a person in crisis whose mental health may deteriorate while they wait for a service. Thresholds to access services were reported as too high to get support or in many cases mental health support was declined because the person had autism and difficulties were attributed to this rather than mental health. Often when people did have access to mental health support, interventions were not adapted to meet the individual needs of autistic patients (with traditional therapies such as group sessions and CBT being unsuitable for autistic people). Significant work is therefore required to improve the accessibility of mental health services and the appropriateness of treatments for autistic people.

Specific feedback from parents of children and young people identified challenges about being disbelieved by health and education professionals as their child ‘masked’ behaviours demonstrated at home, thereby, delaying referral for an autism assessment. Support for parents and carers whilst waiting for assessment and post-diagnostic support was sparse. Parents feel left to manage issues such as: challenging behaviours; anxiety in attending school; and issues around food and sleep in isolation. This in turn affects parental mental health and sometimes their ability to maintain employment leading to further challenges.

High Level Aims

- Reduce waiting times for autism diagnostic assessments.
- All health professionals will have a minimum standard of training and skills in supporting autistic people to access services and pro-actively seek to make reasonable adjustments.
- A range of reasonable adjustment tools are routinely available within health services to enable autistic people to select how they access services and attend/interface with appointments based on their needs.
- Promote understanding of the mental health and well-being needs of autistic people.
- Child and Adult Mental Health professionals have inclusive practice and skills to adapt treatments to meet the individual support needs of autistic patients.
- Improving timely access to mental health services for autistic individuals.
- Improve pre- and post-autism diagnosis support for autistic children, young people and their families/carers which includes: 1:1; groups and peer support on understanding what autism means, developing skills and strategies to support daily lives and advocacy to navigate the system.
- Ensure the Autism Support Service is meeting the post-diagnostic needs of autistic adults.

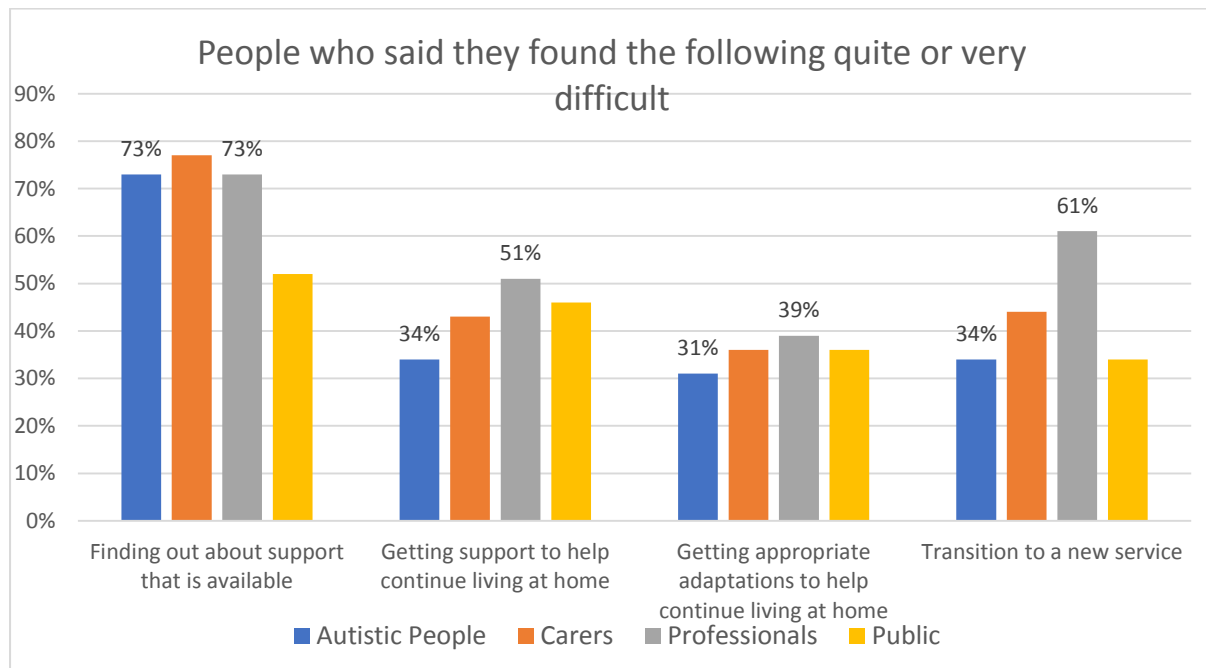
Key Actions

- Implement the Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training (OMMT) Programme for Learning Disabilities and Autism in all health service settings.
- Roll-out of Reasonable Adjustment Digital Flag from the beginning of April 2024.
- Participate in the national roll-out of Annual Health Checks for autistic people.
- All Health Services (inc. General Practices and Emergency Departments) are signed-up to the Sensory-Friendly Environments in Primary Care Initiative.
- Design a 0-25 years Neurodevelopmental Care Pathway including combined diagnostic assessment process for autism and ADHD.
- Review the current pre- and post-autism diagnostic support offer for children, young people and families/carers.
- Review the Autism Support Service for Herefordshire and Worcestershire to ensure that it is supporting the needs of autistic people to socialise in local communities, participate in activities, access information and advice/support.
- Review processes of assessing the mental ill-health of autistic children, young people and adults within mental health provision (including specialist services).
- Develop an effective system to record autism diagnosis across all health services.

Priority Five - Building the right support in the community.

What do we know?

Autistic people, carers, professionals and the public all identified that finding and getting support in the community was difficult.



Access to information and support in the local community

There is a new Autism Support Service for Herefordshire and Worcestershire, provided by Autism West Midlands.

The consultation identified a wide range of gaps in support for autistic people. There was a particular focus on the need for advocacy support; practical support to navigate systems; and, access mainstream services, with family largely taking on this role and concerns raised as to what will happen when they are no longer able to do this.

“A lot of the organisations/support was in the form of group meetings, which is one of the chief things he finds difficult. He then became increasingly isolated and suffered further mental health problems. What he needed/needs is one-to-one support from an individual he can trust and form an ongoing relationship with.”

Lack of support and fears for the future were often linked with mental health issues and references to suicidal thoughts.

Access to the right assessments and support from social care for autistic people and their carers.

Of those autistic people that felt they needed access to a social care assessment, only 15% of respondents found it very easy or quite easy getting an assessment. Over 70% of respondents said that they were not receiving the help they needed – this was even higher for autistic carers who struggled to get the help needed for themselves.

Through the engagement autistic people of all ages expressed a desire to learn life skills to live independently and a need for community-based support to develop these life skills and support with big life changes.

Herefordshire and Worcestershire have relatively small numbers of people with autism in Long Stay Hospitals. A dynamic risk register of individuals at risk of admission is held and monitored across the ICS, there are currently 75 autistic individuals on the register (flagged as Red and Amber), demonstrating that most of the work is focussed on admission avoidance to prevent people being admitted to a hospital.

There is a lack of specialist community provision in Herefordshire and Worcestershire to discharge individuals back into the community.

Commissioners are working to develop services to meet eligible social care needs and to support hospital discharge in both counties.

Appropriate housing/housing advice

Our strategy engagement found that the majority of autistic people were living at home with family.

73% of people were satisfied with their current housing. However, for those who were not satisfied the effects were far reaching.

Of the people who were dissatisfied with their current housing: loneliness, noise levels and the wrong location were the most common reasons why autistic people were dissatisfied. Whereas carers identified the lack of space as a major reason why current housing was unsatisfactory.

“Trying to convince the council the autistic child needed their own bedroom as he couldn't share with sibling.”

Individuals described challenges in accessing social housing and for those in social housing, finding the environment not appropriate for their needs and having adverse effects on their mental health.

“Where I live is massively unsuitable and causing me severe decline.”

High Level Aims

- Information about local services to be easily available to autistic people.
- Autistic people should have access to appropriate support in the community and to meet their social care needs if appropriate.
- Carers should have access to appropriate support.
- Appropriate training for people working with autistic people.
- Appropriate reasonable adjustments within housing processes and services to meet the needs of autistic people.
- Appropriate local therapy services to prevent hospital admission/support hospital discharge for autistic people.

Key Actions

- Ensure information about accessible services is available for autistic people.
- Develop a business case for an accessible Hub/s where autistic people can go in their local communities to socialise, participate in activities, get practical support, access information and advice. Specific support services that can meet the needs of autistic people that focus on developing skills and support with big changes.
- Support community inclusion to improve wellbeing and to prevent suicide.
- Raise awareness of Carer Assessments.
- Further analysis of carer feedback to jointly plan support available for families.
- Upskilling people that will come into contact with autistic people. Enable focus on the whole person/whole family approach. Reasonably adjusted assessments and support planning processes.
- Development of an Autism Social Work team in Worcestershire.
- Roll out the Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training (OMMT) Programme across the system.

- Continue to develop Supported Living and residential options for autistic people (including those that aim to avoid admission to hospital or can support hospital discharge).
- Dedicated point of contact to go for housing advice/support.
- Explore use of exemptions (bedrooms) and priority for general needs housing.
- Specialist local mental health and therapy services to avoid admission into hospital where appropriate and support discharge back into the community.

Priority Six - Improving support in criminal and youth justice systems.

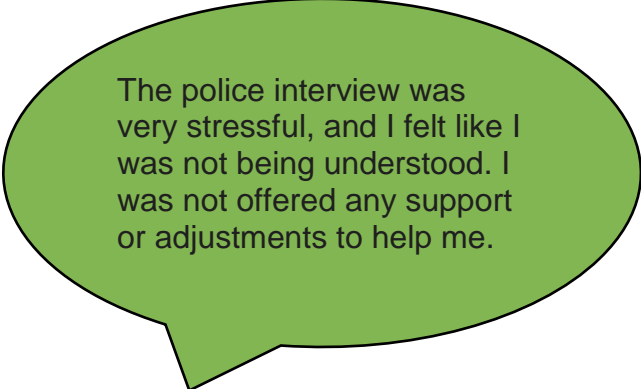
What do we know?

Our engagement showed that the most common challenges faced by autistic people in Herefordshire and Worcestershire were:


- Communication difficulties
- Lack of understanding of autism
- Lack of support services
- Negative experiences with the police
- Inappropriate adjustments

Autistic people who were victims of crime were less likely to be told about support services or have their needs met than other victims.

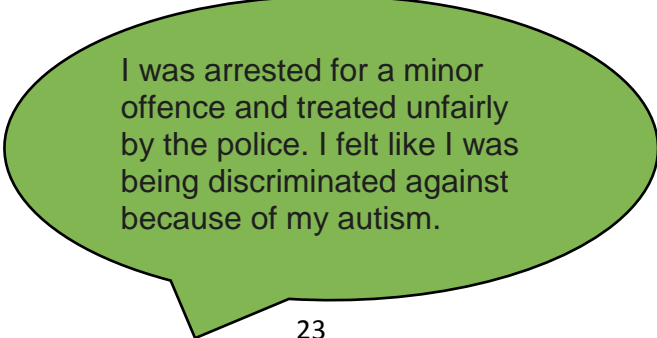
Autistic people who were suspects were more likely to experience negative experiences, such as being arrested for minor offences and being treated unfairly by the police.



The police interview was very stressful, and I felt like I was not being understood. I was not offered any support or adjustments to help me.



As a victim of crime, I felt like I was not taken seriously because of my autism. I was not told about my rights or support services.



I was arrested for a minor offence and treated unfairly by the police. I felt like I was being discriminated against because of my autism.

Respondents also identified two key issues with the way autistic people are treated by the police:

1. Autistic people are often handcuffed and detained in vehicles when experiencing a mental health crisis. This can be isolating and exasperating for autistic people and does not help to reduce the crisis.
2. Police officers need more training and understanding of autism. This would help them to better handle autistic people who are witnesses to crimes or incidents, or who are experiencing a mental health crisis.

Carers also found that autistic people who have had bad experiences with the police in the past are less likely to report crimes or contact the police if they become victims of crime. This is because they do not trust the police to help them or treat them fairly.

It is important to develop a positive relationship between autistic people and the police. This can be done by providing police officers with training on autism awareness and handling methods. It is also important to ensure that autistic people who are victims of crime have access to support services.

High Level Aims

- Everyone working in the criminal justice system should understand the strengths of and challenges facing autistic people.
- Appropriate reasonable adjustments within criminal justice services.
- Autistic people who are victims of crime should have access to support if they want it.
- Reduce the number of autistic people who are involved in the criminal justice system as suspects.

Key Actions

- Training for police officers, lawyers, judges and other professionals involved in the criminal justice system.
- Reasonable adjustment guidance for staff including providing quiet spaces for interviews, allowing autistic people to bring a support person with them, using plain language.
- Work with victim support organisations to develop specialised services for autistic people.
- Work to divert autistic people away from the criminal justice system for minor offences, by providing support to autistic people who are at risk of offending.

Priority Seven - Keeping Safe

What do we Know?

82% of respondents choosing to answer questions relating to 'Keeping Safe' felt more at risk related to autism. The key points are summarised below:

- Lack of understanding of autism and the presentation of autistic traits can mean that communication can be seen as rude or confrontational by neurotypical people.
- These differences in communication can put autistic people into difficult situations and leave them open to hate crimes and bullying. Autistic people also feel they are unable to recognise risky situations thereby leaving them open to exploitation.
- Some respondents noted that the lack of understanding amongst the wider population was often a source of misunderstandings or conflict. Sometimes this led to escalation of situations especially when dealing with official bodies such as the Police and Social Services.
- When asked about issues that worried them people cited using public transport, dealing with money, sexual violence, accessing health services, including mental health support.

People felt that support was needed to help autistic people feel safe through:

- 'Formal Support' (this was not always specified) and doing courses on things such as personal safety.
- Help, advice and guidance through things such as advocacy and being able to access justice where someone feels they are not getting a fair deal.
- Life-coach/peer support approach where support is to plan positively, rather than to wait for failure and give support in crisis.

"Having a line of support/someone who 'gets it' and is kind can help when things go wrong is important for us all and those who care for us."

"Some support should also be aimed at people with lower support needs, since they tend to slip through the cracks compared with people with high support needs. They still need support and sometimes in a more complex way."

High Level Aims

"We need to feel understood and not like we are being considered a nuisance and/or dismissed, which unfortunately, is often the case when we ask for a reasonable adjustment".

- Autism needs to be celebrated, promoting the positives and offer support strategies for the things people find difficult.
- We need to facilitate better understanding and awareness of the reasons autistic people may feel unsafe and ways to manage risks and help avoid harms and difficult situations arising in day-to-day life.
- We need to work to reduce incidents of hate crime and improve support provided to autistic people at risk.

- We need to identify resources and support to enable more accessible peer support groups and hubs with local communities to be developed.
- More autism specialist support and expertise around risks and personal safety within public services.

Key Actions

- Develop appropriate training in relation to keeping safe to be available to a wide range of people and organisations.
- Help for people to build a crisis plan, circles of support to build their confidence; resilience strategies; and, have a plan when things don't go to plan.
- Focus on work to reduce isolation and loneliness through support networks, facilitating connections in the community and establishing more opportunities for people to meet and socialise in safe spaces.
- Gather evidence of good practice in other areas and use this to develop ideas for implementation in relation to the key themes outlined within this priority area for example: training, peer and professional support aimed specifically at reducing risk and helping people keep safe.
- Continue with further consultation involving autistic people about what needs to happen within their own area according to different needs, choices and lifestyle.

Who needs to be involved in the change?

This is the list of people/organisations identified as partners in delivering this strategy and action plans. However this Autism Strategy is for everyone and this list is by no means exhaustive. We would like organisations in Herefordshire and Worcestershire to adopt the aims in their own individual strategies to support leading the change.

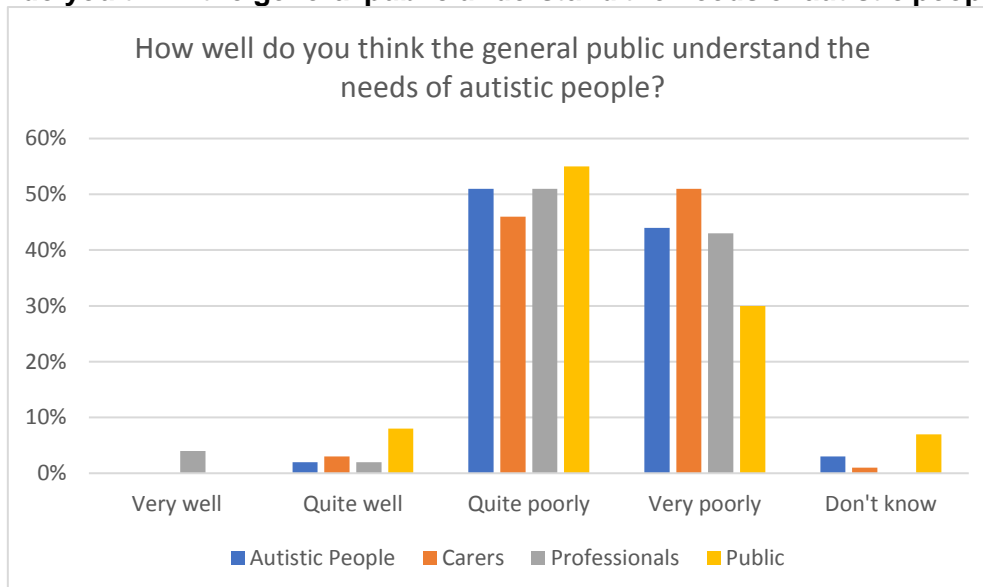
Autistic people and their families	Local Education Providers
Carers	Employers
Autism Partnership Boards	Careers services
Health Commissioners	Ambulance Services
Adult Social Care Commissioners	Department of Work and Pensions
Health professionals	Commissioners
Social care professionals	Schools/Colleges & Universities
Worcestershire Children First	ICS HR Directors
Councillors	Health care providers
Local communities	Social Care providers
Charitable organisations	District Councils
Voluntary organisations	Housing officers
Retailers	Landlords
Museums	Courts
Libraries	Victim Support Services
Leisure centres	
Cinemas	
Police	
Fire service	

Appendix – Survey Response Data

Priority 1 – Improving understanding and acceptance of autism within society

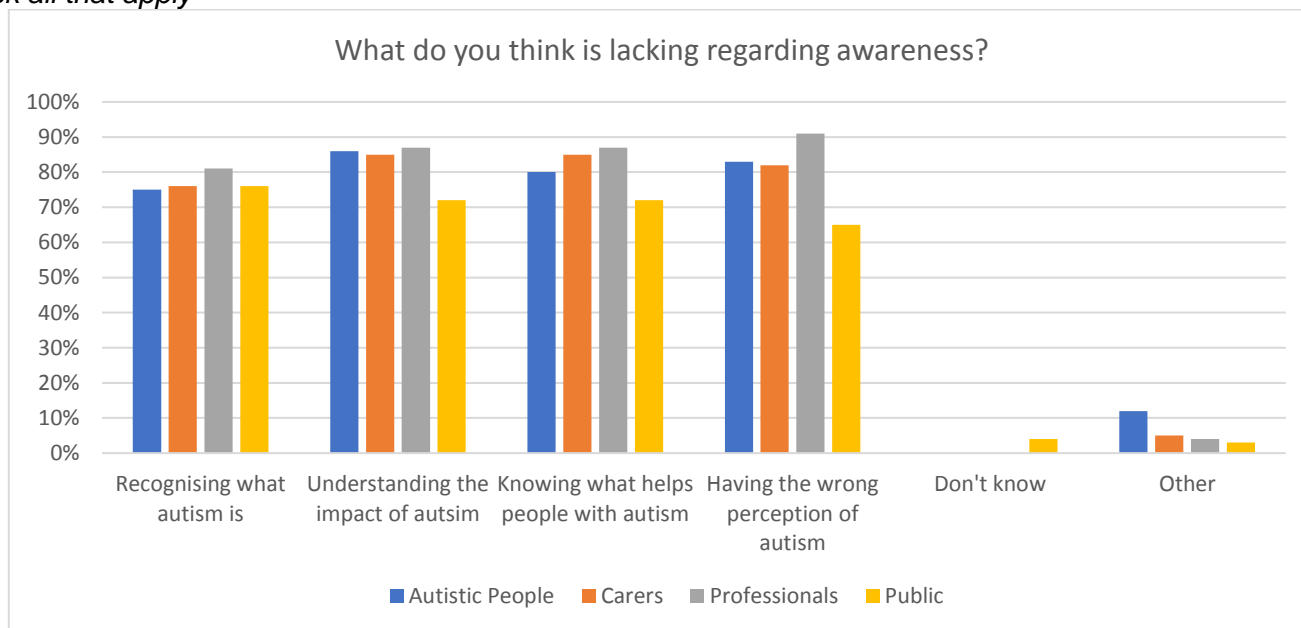
353 people said they wanted to answer questions about Priority 1

Q20 How well do you think the general public understand the needs of autistic people?



Q21 What do you think is lacking regarding awareness?

Tick all that apply



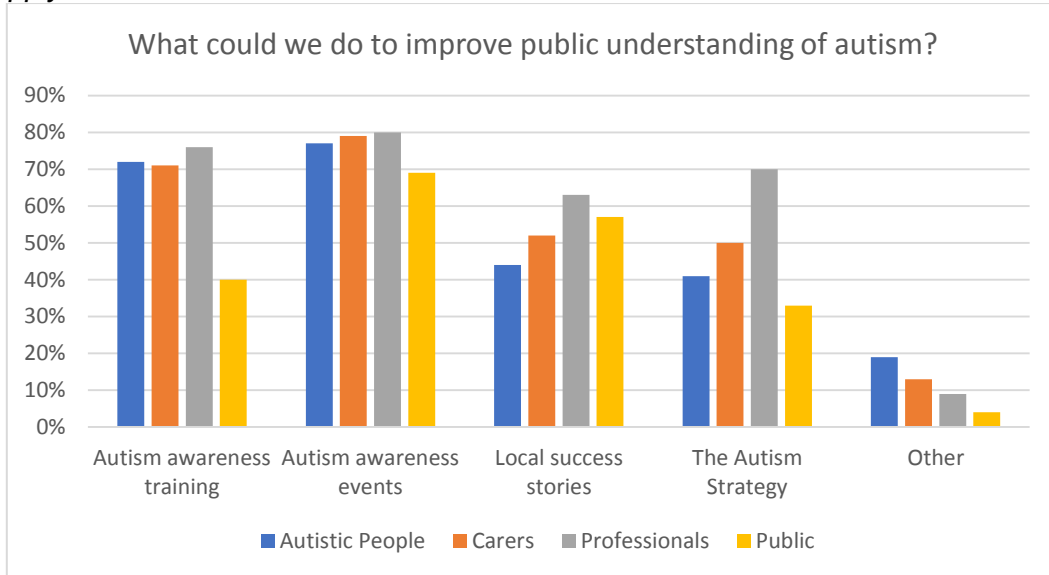
49 comments were made

Theme	Number of Comments
Each person is different and needs an individual approach - one size does not fit all	16
Society needs to be more informed/have training about what the spectrum is and more accepting and caring of autistic people and willing to change behaviours	11
Perception that autistic people are difficult, demanding, annoying, etc needs to be challenged	7
Lack of knowledge of what autism actually is and the different types - stereotypes in media do not help	6

How autism presents in women and girls	5
Recognition that autism is a different way of thinking and processing	4
Lack of understanding by professionals	4
Better training for professionals	3
Autistic people not supported to reach their full potential	2
Better understanding of what masking is and how stressful this is for the individual	2

Q22 What could we do to improve public understanding of autism?

Tick all that apply



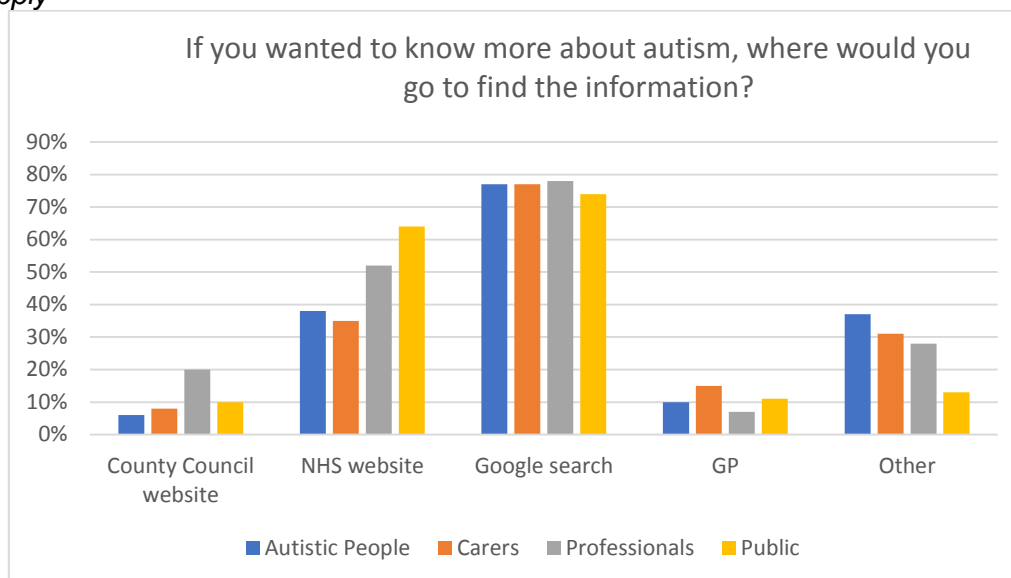
77 comments were made

Theme	Number of Comments
Case studies/autism ambassadors at events and training - people with diagnosis telling their stories and how they can be successful with the right support	15
Better understanding, support, (mandatory) training and toolkits and adjustments in the workplace	12
National emphasis e.g. TV programmes, characters with autism in soaps/drama, campaigns, training, events	9
Education reform, better integration, wider acceptance and opportunities in schools - don't hide autism, embrace it	9
Need to work on normalisation of autism within society, more work within schools about understanding, adaptations and support, etc	8
Better understanding and recognition of how autism presents and the referral process by professionals, teachers, SEN, doctors, health workers, etc	8
Better understanding of the autism community needs - listen to, engage with, respond to and involve us	8
Using the right media in local areas to access residents - e.g. local Facebook groups, local newspapers, news programmes, social media, video blogs, etc	7
More opportunities for work experience/employment	5
Recognition that autism not "one size fits all", different for individuals	4
Early diagnosis/assessment and comprehensive targeted positive support	4
Local focus on success is for high functioning autistics and distracts from others in different parts of the spectrum, especially learning disabled	4
Autism needs to be recognised within the wider diversity and inclusion agenda/field - acceptance	3
Problem of greater understanding of autism not easy to address as people who are not affected by it probably wouldn't be interested anyway.	3
Show the struggles as well as successes	3
SEN professionals need knowledge and training about laws around SEN and disability rights.	3

Teachers to have greater understanding and in-depth training about the varying degrees of autism	3
More awareness about how autistic needs can vary significantly day to day - some days fully functioning, the next not at all	2
Good/better education at school about autism	2

Q23 If you wanted to know more about autism, where would you go to find the information?

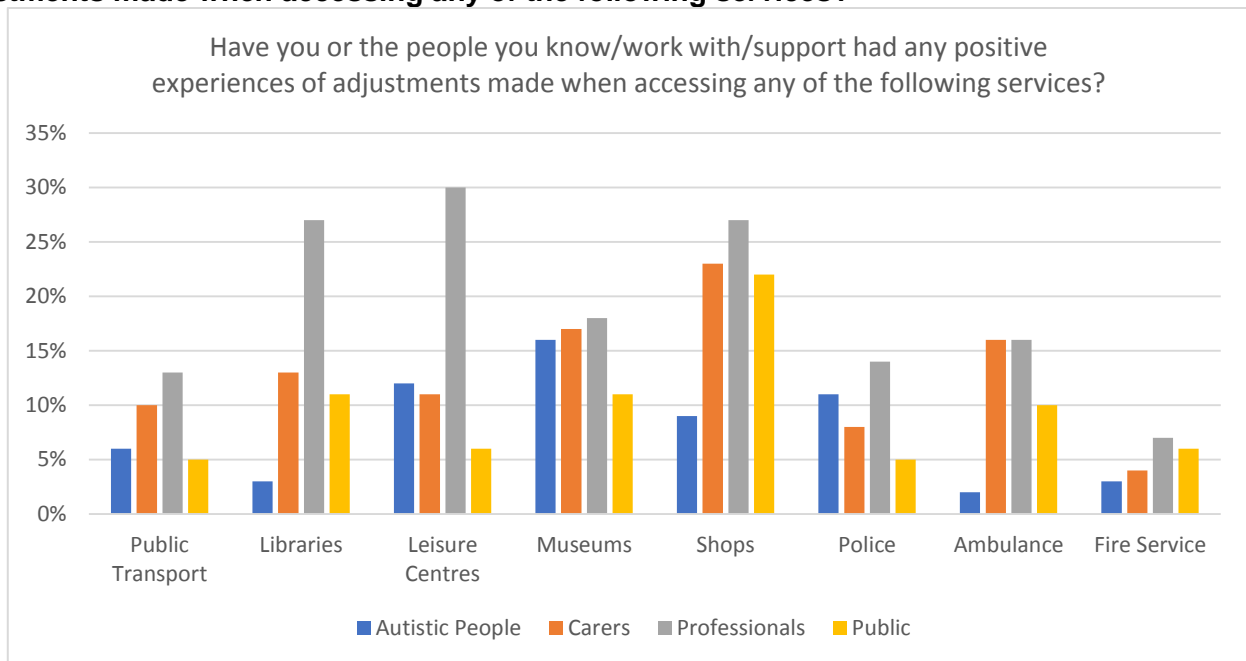
Tick all that apply



119 comments were made

Theme	Number of Comments
Online, websites, and support groups, e.g. Brightfire CIC, Easy Read	29
National Autism Society and NAS local groups	25
Dedicated social media - e.g. Facebook/Instagram/ Twitter/Tik Tok groups/TED Talks/YouTube and pages by autism advocates	19
Local and national autism support and self-help groups and charities	16
Autism West Midlands/Autism UK	15
Talk to people with autism/ neurodivergent individuals	12
Books/libraries	6
Friends, family and friends with autistic children	6
Dedicated voluntary organisations/charities	5
Other social media	4
Own research/knowledge	4
Other sources not proved to be useful, e.g. GP not knowing how/where to signpost to	4
Courses and information including those from autistic advocates	3
Person experience information	3
Registered professionals	3
Worcestershire Children First	2
TV programmes	2
Academic papers and research	2
No-one was interested in helping/process takes too long	2

Q24 Have you or the people you know/work with/support had any positive experiences of adjustments made when accessing any of the following services?



Q25 Please describe the positive experience on public transport

25 Comments were left

Theme	Number of Comments
Disability bus pass and those that allow free/reduced fare for carers	5
Drivers more understanding if explanation given, often offer additional help when they know the situation	5
Priority boarding at airports, daisy lanyard	4
Staff always understanding, knowledgeable, polite, and helpful	3
Offers of support or assistance at station/bus station	2
Being able to use accessibility waiting rooms at stations	2
More training for bus and train staff and better wheelchair accessibility	2

Q26 Please describe the positive experience in libraries

40 Comments were left

Theme	Number of Comments
Good/great staff who are welcoming, more aware/ have knowledge of autism and will listen, help and can explain	16
Quiet times and spaces	14
Library is a calm and safe space	4
Specific times in libraries for autistic students who can then explore without interruption	3
Use of and access to technology - noise cancelling headphones, accessible computers	3
Events and activities	3
Challenges identifies and adjustments made to enable easier borrowing and return of books	2
Range of facilities, resources and spaces	2

Q27 Please describe the positive experience in leisure centres

31 Comments were left

Theme	Number of Comments
Specific sessions/lessons for those with autism and other disabilities	7
Quieter times advertised and ability to use when not so busy	5
Providing explanation to staff gives better understanding and helpful reaction	4
Staff recognition of lanyard and provide positive response to non-standard behaviour	4
Ability of instructors to teach autistic individuals, SEN training	4
Awareness of noise, safe areas, private and open spaces	3
Discounted membership/concessions for support workers	2

Q28 Please describe the positive experience in **museums**

37 Comments were left

Theme	Number of Comments
Members of staff helpful, welcoming, provide assistance and willing/taking the time to engage with ASD	12
Quiet times/quiet environment	9
Use of technology, equipment and specialist kits - e.g. supply ear defenders, visual aids	5
Specific session/events provided - e.g. early opening	4
Discounted rates for autism - leaving early due to over stimulation	2
Recognition of lanyard and understanding of needs	2
Pre-booking time slot to avoid waiting in a queue/ allowed to avoid queueing	2
Nice places to be	2
Range of displays and rooms, low sensory	2

Q29 Please describe the positive experience in **shops**

65 Comments were left

Theme	Number of Comments
Quiet times and designated ASD/learning disability low sensory shopping times	30
Staff generally accommodating, patient and helpful when explanation given or see sunflower lanyard	17
Specific actions taken to help - e.g., dimming the lighting, turning off the music, etc	16
Designated member(s) of staff for ASD/learning disability	4
Offer assistance/help and understanding	4
Checkouts for those who need more time	3
Some people understand some do not	3
Positive experience in local shops that are visited regularly	2

Q30 Please describe the positive experience with the **police**

23 Comments were left

Theme	Number of Comments
Patient, sensitive, helpful and understanding	8
Evidence of specialist training for ASD	7
Showing concern and empathy for people/Taking time	5
Home visits to provide support, understanding and specialist equipment	3

Q31 Please describe the positive experience with the **Ambulance Service**

36 Comments were left

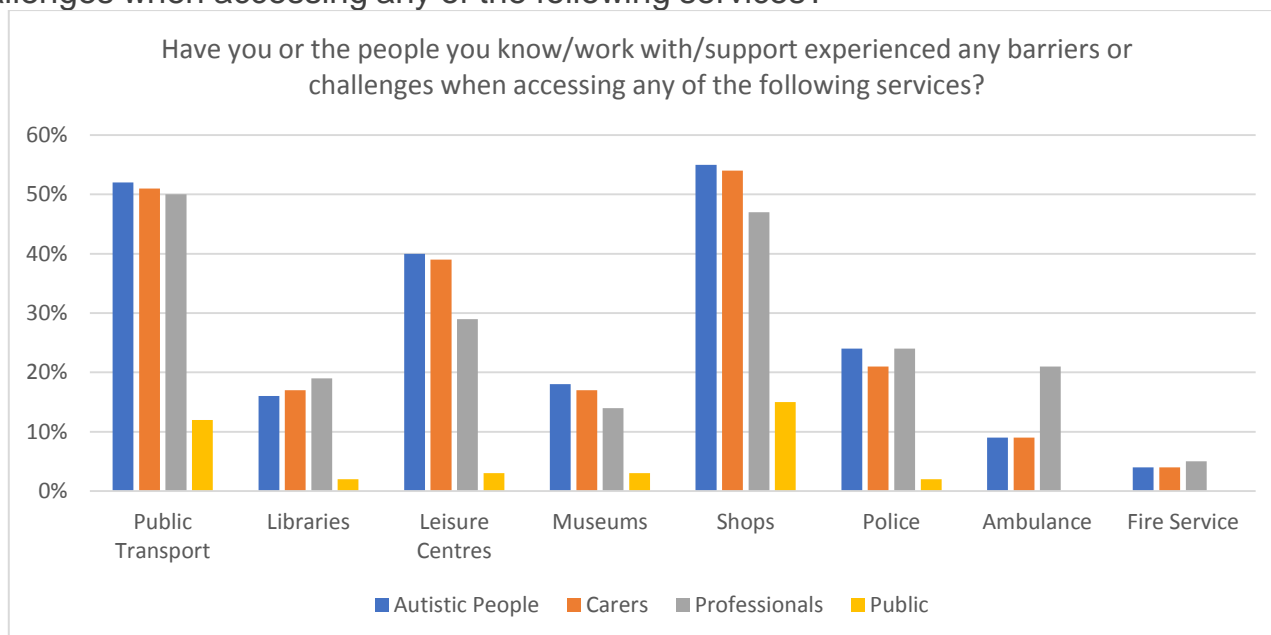
Theme	Number of Comments
Treated with kindness, understanding, patience, dignity and time	20
Staff are helpful, aware and make allowances	13
Training has been widened to include neurodivergent people	10
Clear instructions given	2
Staff don't make judgements	2

Q32 Please describe the positive experience with the **Fire Service**

11 Comments were left

Theme	Number of Comments
Helpful and positive	3
Show awareness and understanding	3
Fires safety checks and exit plans	2
Adapting behaviours and communication methods to put autistic person at ease	2

Q33 Have you or the people you know/work with/support experienced any barriers or challenges when accessing any of the following services?



Q34 Please describe the barriers experienced on **public transport**

116 Comments were left

Theme	Number of Comments
Too busy, too noisy, layout issues	32
Potential for sensory overload on all forms of public transport	31
Unclear information, timetables, late or no service	20
Timetables can be very difficult to read, unpredictable and subject to change at short notice	19
Little empathy and understanding from staff and public	18
Overcrowding on buses and trains	17
Lack of patience, understanding and need for communication by some bus drivers - e.g. school buses	17
Lack of assistance and need for increased time for processing information and getting on and off public transport	14
No dedicated person to ask for assistance	7
Lack of seating on overcrowded buses and trains	5
Travel card and companion travel card not always recognised - some travel cards have restricted time	4
Not sure how to pay, what the fare is and there is a need for card reader on buses and trains	3
Small print on notices	3
Reduction in local bus services	3
Staff not intervening when incidents occur	2

Q35 Please describe the barriers experienced in **libraries**

29 Comments were left

Theme	Number of Comments
Lack of staff training about autism and how to communicate effectively	9

Lack of understanding by other people using the library	7
Not enough appropriate signage	4
Some libraries can be echoey, noisy, busy, lighting too bright.	3
Some staff are knowledgeable and supportive	3
Need to have quiet areas and seating	2
Seating too close together	2
Not used library recently because of issue in the past	2
Need to be quiet can be off-putting to parents with ASD child	2

Q36 Please describe the barriers experienced in **leisure centres**

77 Comments were left

Theme	Number of Comments
Potential sensory overload - lights, noise, too many people	44
Lack of understanding of autism and how it presents	16
Need more and longer dedicated quiet times/sessions at convenient times	13
Staff and instructors need more understanding of how to communicate with neurodivergent children/adults	13
Limited staff trained in autism awareness	12
Need more family/accessible changing rooms & showers	7
Better signage and information within centres - how to use equipment/lockers	7
Need quiet spaces for when everything gets too much	4
More accessible information of opening times and when centres are less busy	2

Q37 Please describe the barriers experienced in **museums**

30 Comments were left

Theme	Number of Comments
Sensory issues - lighting levels, noise	13
Too crowded, queues	7
Lack of understanding and acceptance of autistic people by general public	6
Anxiety issues	3
Lack of suitable parking close to venue	2
Look but don't touch policy can be difficult for some ASD people	2

Q38 Please describe the barriers experienced in **shops**

117 Comments were left

Theme	Number of Comments
Sensory overload causing anxiety - lights, too busy, big echoey spaces	68
Lack of empathy and understanding of autistic behaviours by staff and general public	38
Lack of staff training/understanding - no specially trained member of staff	35
Store layout - height of shelves, cluttered isles, congestion at checkout, changing location of items	29
Lack of personal space, other people entering personal space and size of gangways	7
Need for quiet times with sensory triggers being reduced	7
Better/accessible signage within stores	7
Small shops can be difficult	4

Q39 Please describe the barriers experienced with the **police**

48 Comments were left

Theme	Number of Comments
Need more training on how to be aware of and understand autism, be more empathetic and how to communicate & support	19
Lack of understanding of the many different presentations of autism in different people	19

Fear or lack of understanding of challenging behaviours which can lead to further anxiety and conflict	12
Can appear to be aggressive, rude, uncaring and unsupportive	12
Not patient, don't listen, don't provide information	8
Potential for sensory overload - sirens, flashing lights, light levels in rooms, being handled by strangers	4
Don't understand that a parent/carer might be needed to attend	3
Use of inappropriate language and behaviour	2

Q40 Please describe the barriers experienced with the **Ambulance Service**

19 Comments were left

Theme	Number of Comments
Not understanding sensory disorders can cause problems - especially touch and dealing with strangers or unfamiliar places	8
Waiting times	4
Lack of/limited training and awareness	2
Wider understanding of why an ASD person might need a parent to go in an ambulance/A&E with them	2
Lack of understanding on how autistic people communicate and how to communicate with them	2
Not listening to what they are being told	2
Reception areas can be noisy, busy and too bright	2
Accessible ways to contact people with autism if they can't use telephone when anxious	2
Ambulances are confined, have a lot of equipment, are busy, noisy and bright	2

Q41 Please describe the barriers experienced with the **Fire Service**

7 Comments were left

Theme	Number of Comments
Sensory issues	3
Lack of understanding of how to communicate with ASD people effectively	2
Lack of training and awareness	2
Can't use the telephone	2

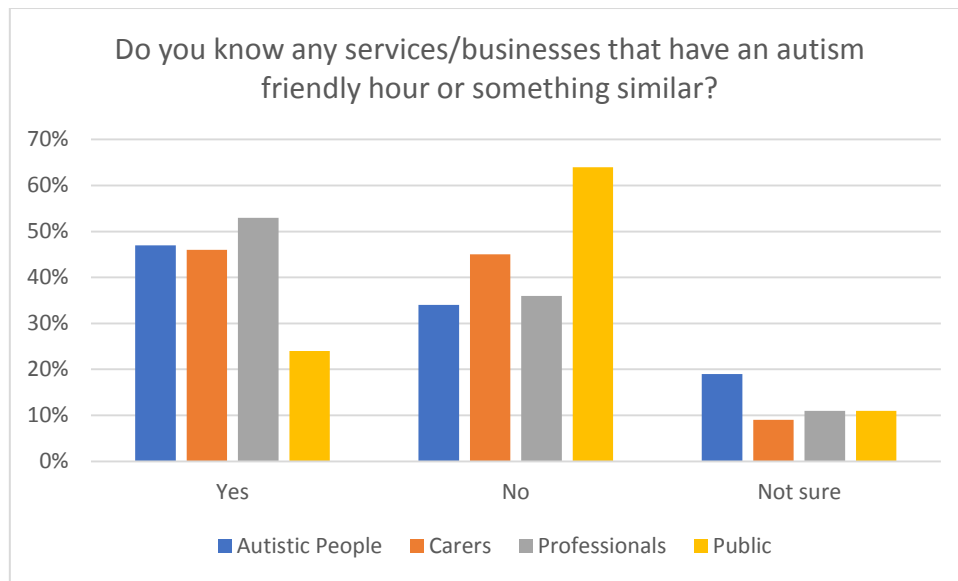
Q42 What would make accessing these services better?

199 Comments were left

Theme	Number of Comments
Better/more regular training for staff and professionals on autism awareness, how to communicate, provide help, giving time and safeguarding	73
Increasing awareness, knowledge, understanding, empathy kindness and acceptance of autism in general public and service providers	62
Provision of dedicated quieter/safe areas and times/sessions which bookable and are well publicised	45
Understanding of and ability to control or adjust sensory overload triggers	37
Better understanding that there is no "one size fits all" with autism and it is often a hidden disability	28
Having a dedicated member of staff or a system in place to help when needed	14
Improved and accessible signage & timetables, better communication of what services are or why services have altered or been removed	14
Making workplaces, shops, leisure centres, etc more autism and disability inclusive all of the time	10

More reliable transport services with more accessible dedicated seating	9
More listening to and involvement of autistic people and support groups - particularly with training	8
Better understanding on both sides - those with ASD and those without	7
More knowledge and understanding of disabilities in general	4
Don't know	3
Free travel passes for conditions which are shown on bus pass and also free travel passes for carers	2
Understanding of legal responsibility	2
Contacting methods - need ability to communicate with operator that person has autism - block out background noise	2
Already a lot being done	2

Q43 Do you know any services/businesses that have an autism friendly hour or something similar?

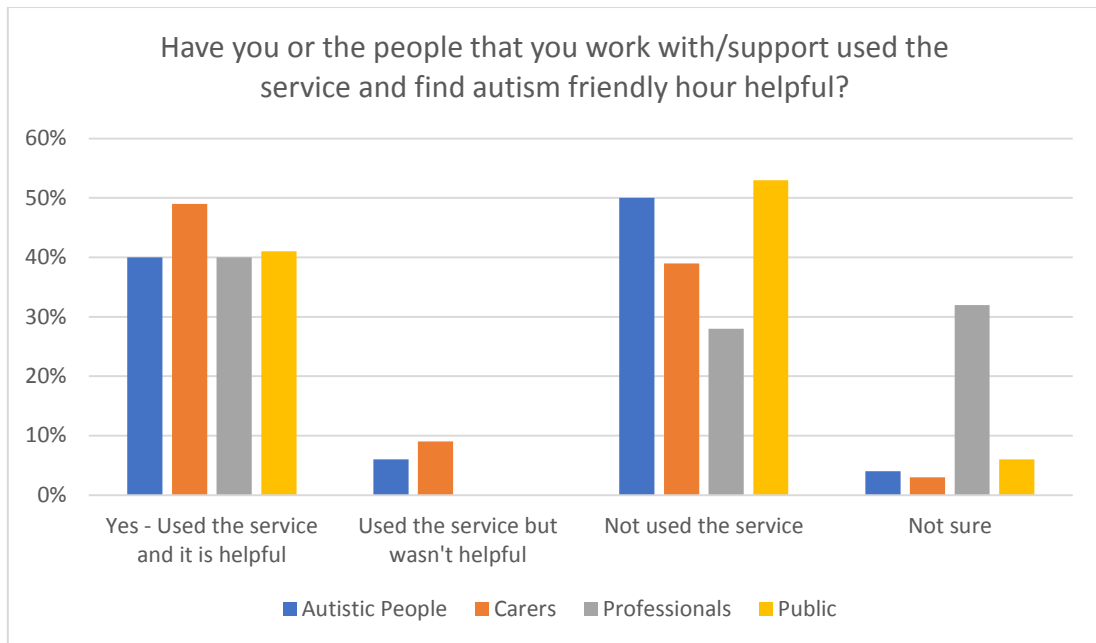


Please give details

147 Comments were left

Theme	Number of Comments
Supermarkets	83
Cinemas, arts centres and theatres	34
Specialist and soft play centres	17
Department stores and specialist retailers	15
Shops	11
Museums, attractions and historic buildings	11
Shopping centres and markets	4
Leisure centres	4
Shops to be made autism friendly all of the time	3
Other entertainment centres - e.g. bowling	3
Universities	2

Q44 Have you or the people that you work with/support used the service and find autism friendly hour helpful?



Do you have any comments about why this is or isn't helpful?

38 Comments were left

Theme	Number of Comments
Addressing sensory issues helps	12
Very Helpful	10
Quieter/calmer/less people	10
Timing of session can be awkward	7
Good to be with others who understand	2
Needs to be more than 1 hour	2

Q45 Does your workplace offer Autism Awareness Training?



Q46 If yes, please give details

76 Comments were left

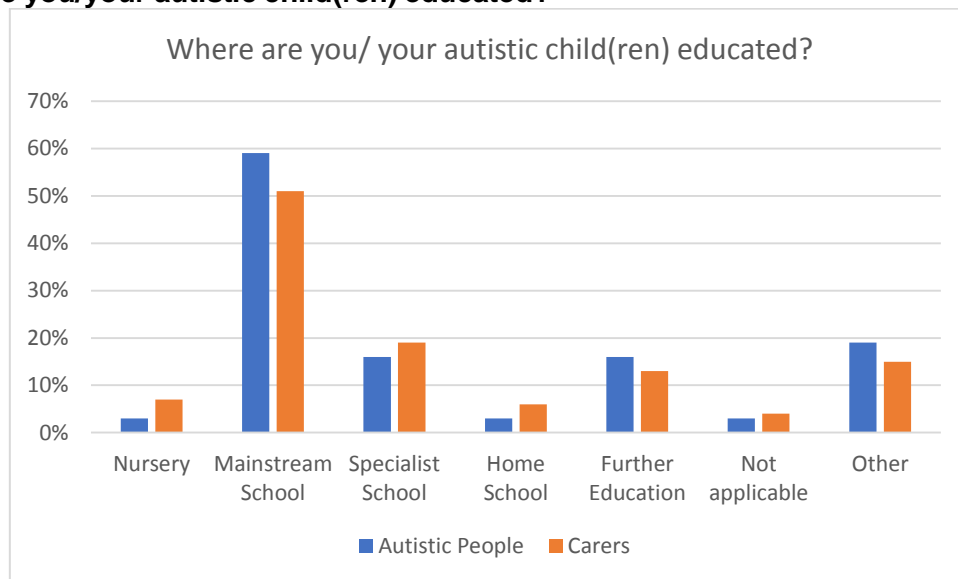
Theme	Number of Comments
Employer training and awareness provided	17
NHS Training	12

Schools/colleges/universities	11
Local Authority/Government Department	10
Online courses	8
Charities, youth trusts	5
Is a training provider	4
Training and awareness undertaken provider not stated	4
In person training courses	2
Training given to foster carers	2

Priority 2 - Improving autistic children and young people’s access to education and support positive transitions into adulthood

271 people said they wanted to answer questions about Priority 2

Q53 Where are you/your autistic child(ren) educated?

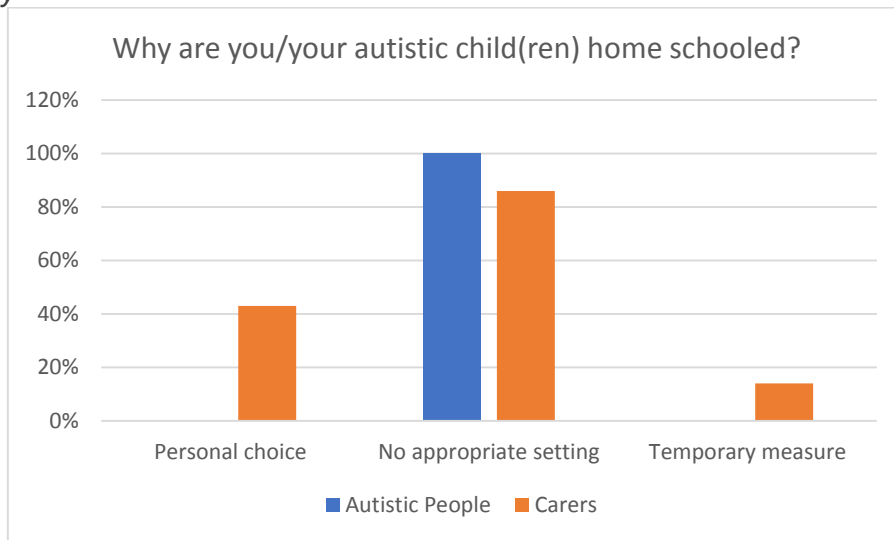


26 Comments were made

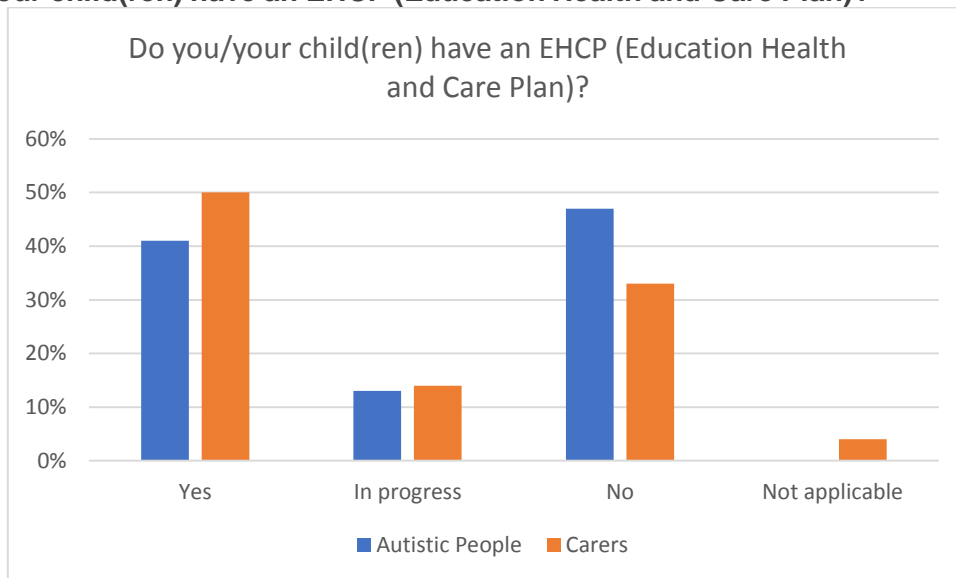
Theme	Number of comments
No Schooling	9
Private School	5
Sixth Form/ College	3
Alternative Provision	3
Home School	2
EOTAS	2
Online Education	1
Autism Base	1
MET/ Hospital School	1
Other comments	1

Q54 Why are you/your autistic child(ren) home schooled?

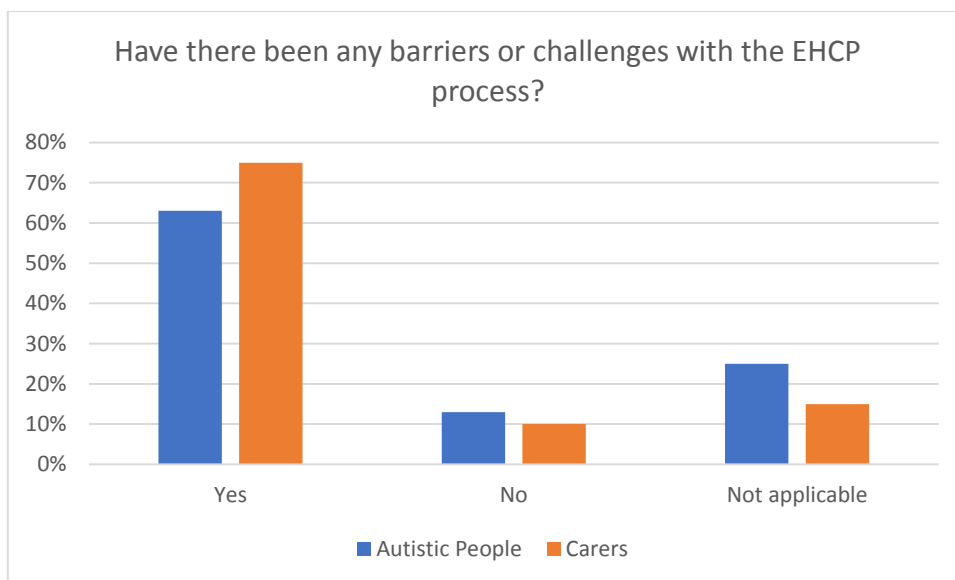
Select all that apply



Q55 Do you/your child(ren) have an EHCP (Education Health and Care Plan)?



Q56 Have there been any barriers or challenges with the EHCP process?

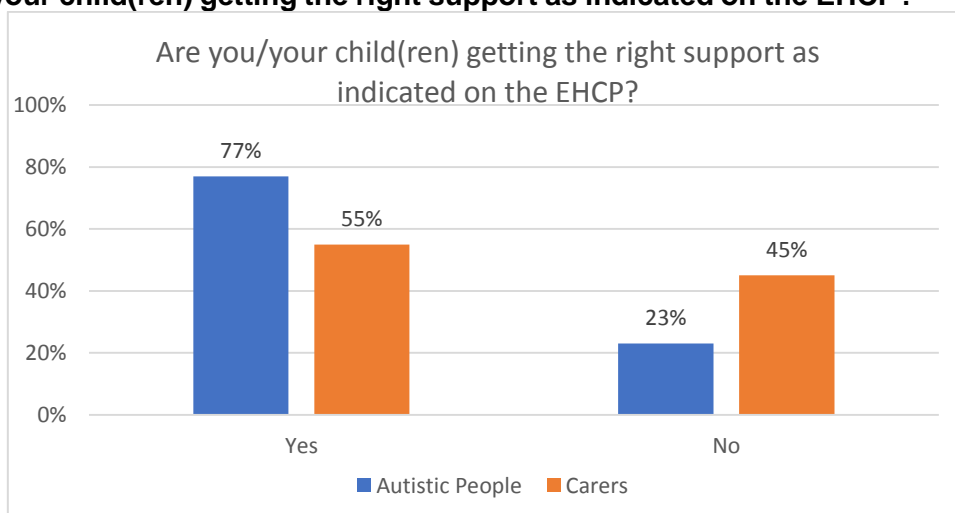


Q57 Please describe the barriers/ challenges.

86 Comments were made

Theme	Number of comments
Delays	33
Not able to access EHCP/ Assessment	14
School not recognising issues/ referring	12
Communication with caseworkers/ SEN etc.	12
Local Authority (legal duties not followed)	11
Had to fight for right support/ assessment	11
Getting appropriate setting	10
EHCP not updated	9
Poor EHCP	9
Other	9
School knowledge/ understanding	7
Plans not followed	5
Lack of, or delay to diagnosis	4
Lack of empathy or considering CYP views	4
School funding	3
Access to CAMHS	1

Q58 Are you/your child(ren) getting the right support as indicated on the EHCP?

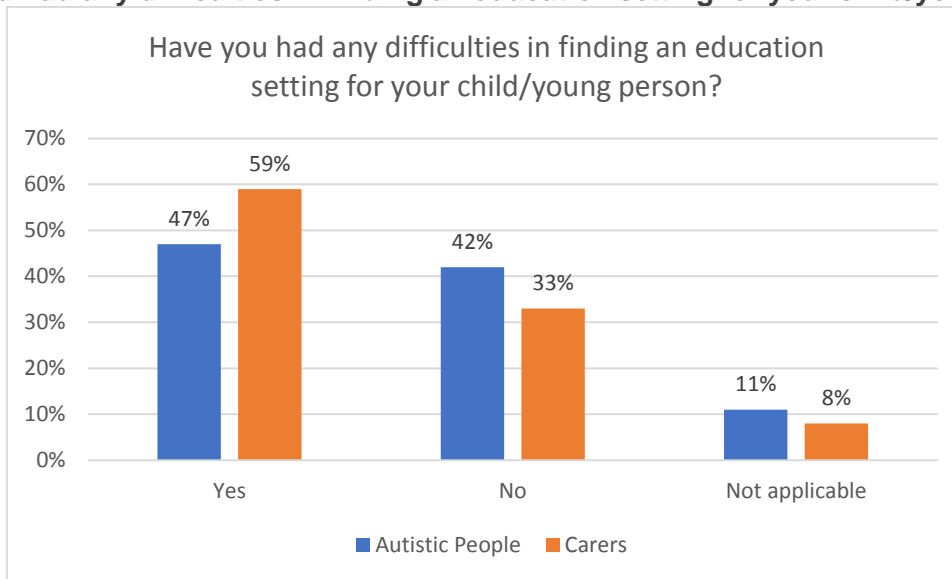


Q59 Please detail the barriers

23 Comments were made

Theme	Number of comments
Lack of appropriate setting	6
Full support not in place	6
Poor LEA SEND input	4
Lack of detail in the plan	2
Waiting for support	2
Other	2
Lack of school staff	1
Lack of staff care/ empathy	1
Funding not used for the child	1
Services not joined up	1

Q60 Have you had any difficulties in finding an education setting for your child/young person?



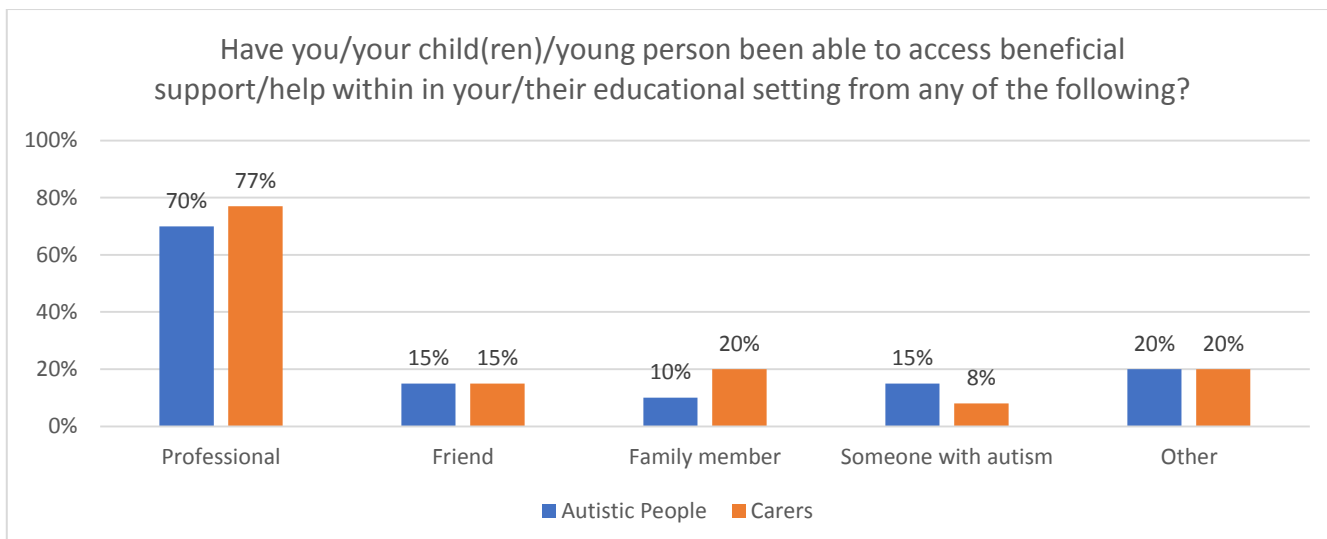
What would have made it easier?

63 Comments were made

Theme	Number of comments
LA Support	15
More places available	12
Other	11
School Support	6
Having an (appropriate) EHCP	6
More specialist settings locally	6
Speed up the process	5
Knowledge/ Understanding of autism	5
Smaller Settings	4
Academic focused appropriate settings	4
Meet child before recommending a setting	4
WCC/WCF budget	4
Flexible entry requirements	2
Mental health support	1
Local complex needs provision	1
Better post 16 options	1

Q61 Have you/your child(ren)/young person been able to access beneficial support/help within in your/their educational setting from any of the following?

Tick all who have supported in an educational setting

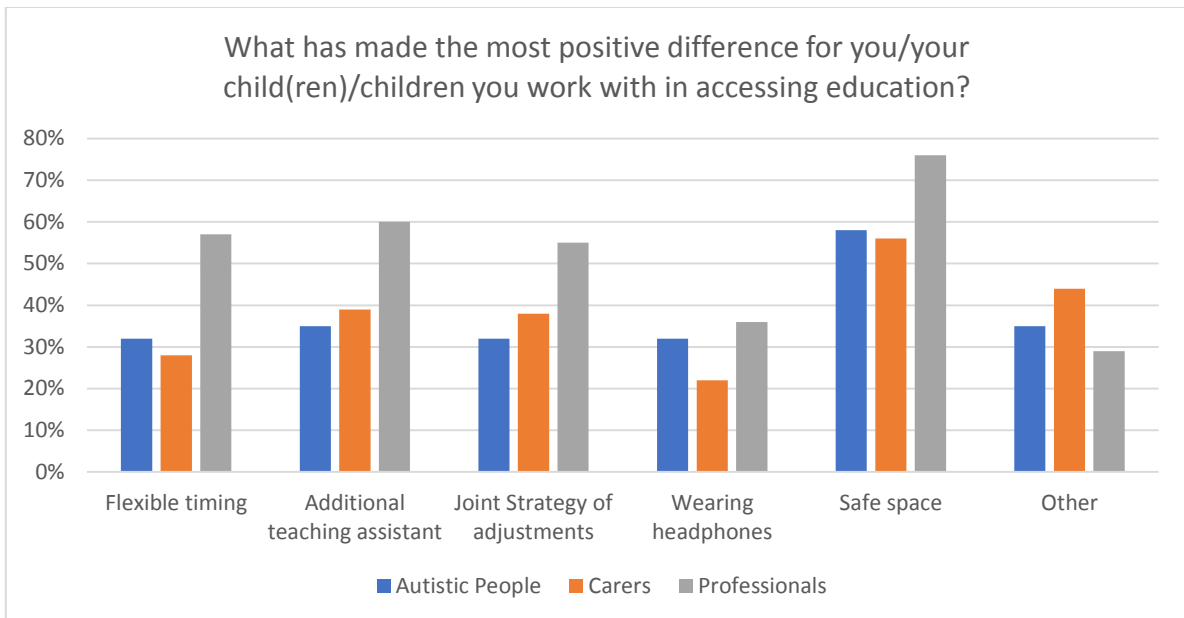


Q62 Would you like to give any more information about the beneficial support received in an educational setting?

63 Comments were made

Theme	Number of comments
Other school staff member	12
SENCO	8
Friends/ Siblings/ Other parents	7
Other	6
Teaching Assistant	4
Teacher	4
Professionals	3
SENDIASS	3
Mentor	3
Personal Tutor	2
Complex needs team	2
Disabled Students Allowance	1
Paid professional support	1

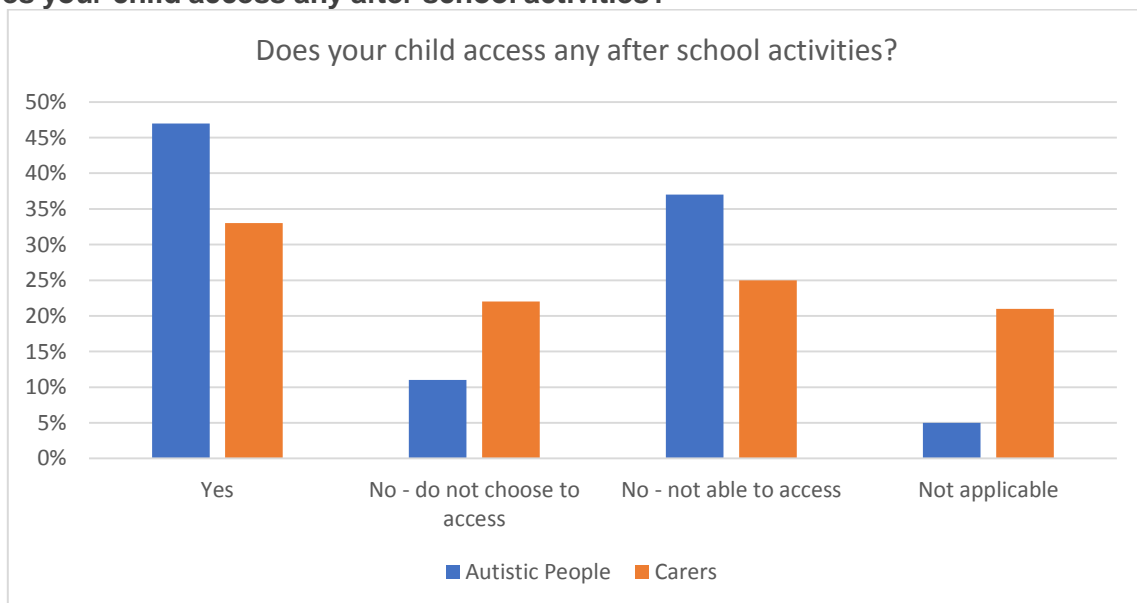
Q63 What has made the most positive difference for you/your child(ren)/children you work with in accessing education?



56 Comments were made

Theme	Number of comments
Trained/ Understanding Staff	15
Nothing	14
Other	10
Small Groups/ Classes	5
Home Education	4
Suitable Plan/ EHCP	4
Support from family/ community	3
1:1 Sessions	3
Appropriate setting	3
Equipment	2
Consistency of adjustments	2
Safe space	1
Flexible uniform requirements	1
Recognition/ diagnosis	1

Q64 Does your child access any after school activities?



What is working well?

32 Comments were made

Theme	Number of comments
Specific activities mentioned	12
Music	4
Staff listening/ making reasonable adjustments	4
Other	4
Organised activities/ routine	3
Small/ quiet groups	3
Residential placement	2
Safe space/ chill out area	2
Staff knowledge and training	2
Friendly atmosphere	1
Teaching assistant	1

What barriers are they facing?

26 Comments were made

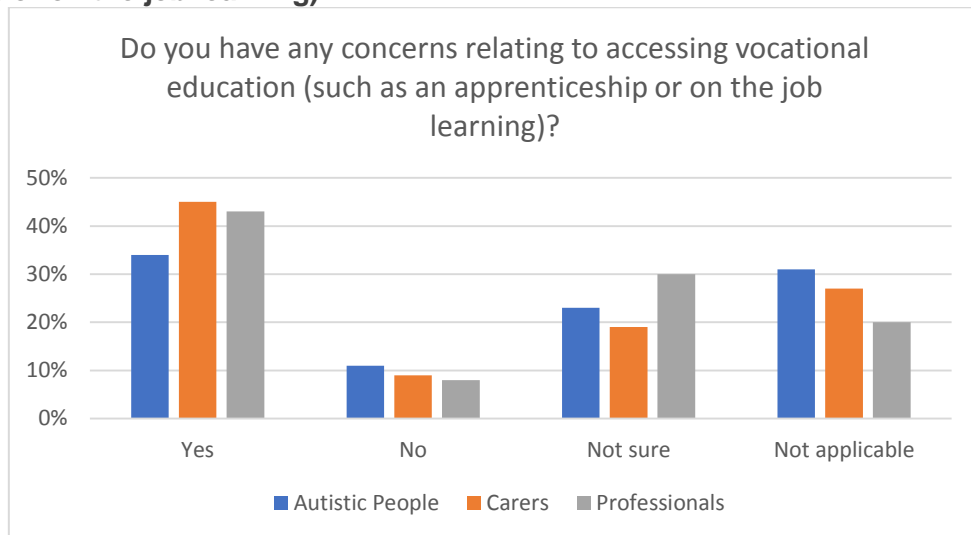
Theme	Number of comments
Not available	8
Anxiety/ Mental health	8
Other	8
Not allowed to attend/ excluded	3
Bullying or not being 'accepted'	3
Cost	1
Exhausted/ overwhelmed after the day	1
Would need additional support	1

Q65 What improvements could be made in the community which would enable your child/ young person to participate more than they currently do?

66 Comments were made

Theme	Number of comments
More local (specialist) activities	25
Other	12
Awareness of autism	11
More acceptance/ less judgement	10
More support	9
More trained staff	7
Less noise/ have quiet times	4
Funding	2
Help them to understand their autism and strategies to cope	2
Transport	1

Q66 Do you have any concerns relating to accessing vocational education (such as an apprenticeship or on the job learning)?

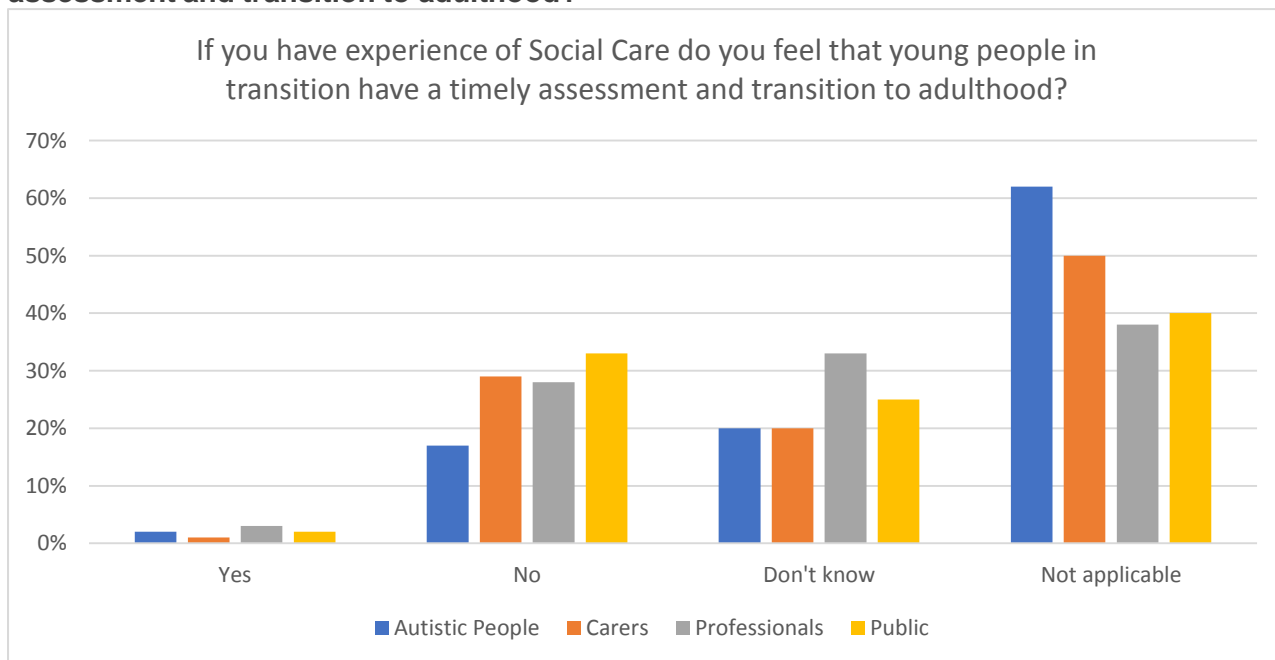


Please can you describe your concerns

62 Comments were made

Theme	Number of comments
Lack of opportunities	16
Don't make the required adjustments	15
Awareness of autism	14
Suitable support	13
Other	11
Careers help/ planning	9
Coping with a work environment	9
Getting grades/ qualifications to access	5
Discrimination	3
Transport	1

Q67 If you have experience of Social Care do you feel that young people in transition have a timely assessment and transition to adulthood?



Q68 Please describe this:

59 Comments were made

Theme	Number of comments
-------	--------------------

Other	16
No/ not enough transition support	11
Delays/ Timing	10
Need more support	9
Not enough staff/ resources/ funding	7
Support in adult system is lacking	6
Had to fight for assessment	4
General negative	4
Staff changes	4
Not enough time spent with the young person	2

Q69 What do you feel would improve the transitions of young people with autism and associated conditions to adulthood?

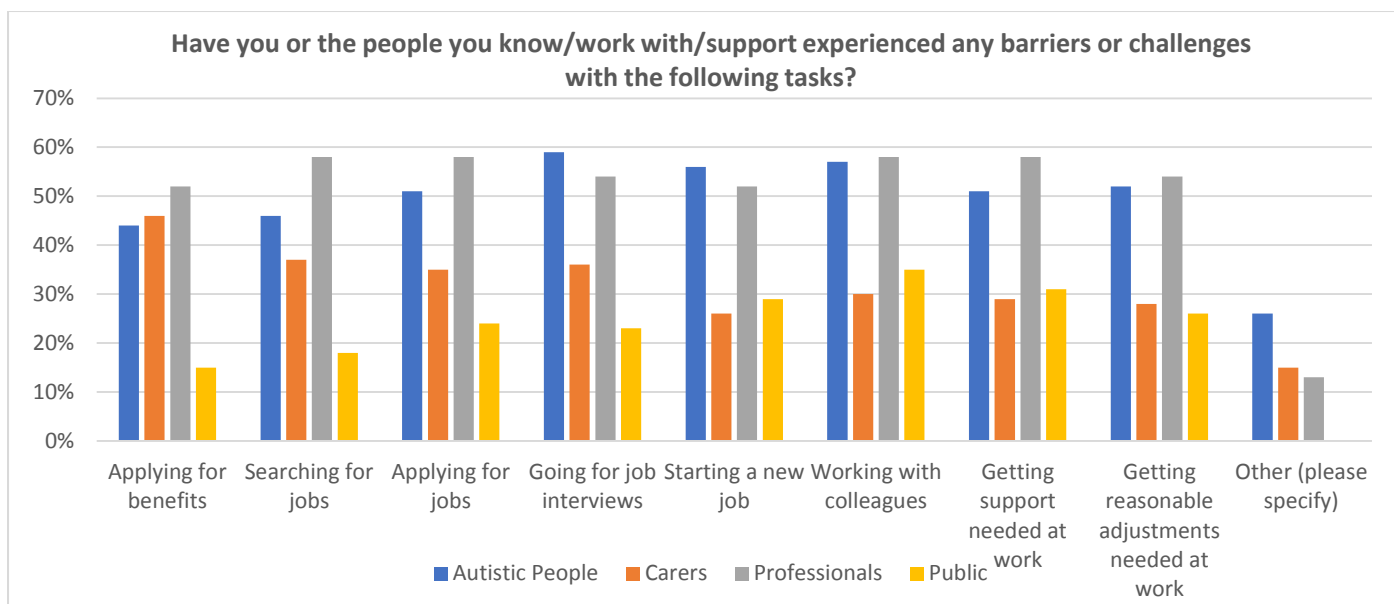
147 Comments were made

Theme	Number of comments
More/ better support	25
Better understanding/ awareness of autism	24
Early planning	22
Other	21
More professional involvement	17
Training/ information	13
Life skills	13
Consistency of worker	12
Early diagnosis	12
Make sure YP understands options available	10
Child & Adult services working together	8
Support in school	7
Housing support	7
Employment support	7
Appropriate school provision	5
More (specialist) college/ placements	5
Support after 16/18/25	4
Consistent documents to support access to services	3
Help for YP without EHCP	2
EHCP contains transition plans	2

Priority 3 - Supporting more autistic people into employment

248 people said they wanted to answer questions about Priority 3

Q70 Have you or the people you know/work with/support experienced any barriers or challenges with the following tasks?



28 Comments were made.

Themes	Number of comments
Other	10
Need a diagnosis	4
Fear will not be able to enter workplace	3
No support received	2
Not ready for work yet	2
Getting training	2
Discrimination/ Bullying	2
Applying for benefits	2
Positive adjustments/ support	1

Q71 What would make **applying for benefits** easier?

87 Comments were made

Themes	Number of comments
Dedicated support	38
Staff knowledge/ training	14
Adjustments to contact methods/ meetings etc.	12
Other	12
Benefits system that understands autism	9
Too much paperwork	8
Help to understand what can apply for	6
Help to understand the process	5
More time before reassessment	5
Caring staff	4
Easier to understand process	4
More time	2

Q72 What would make **searching for jobs** easier?

70 Comments were made

Themes	Number of comments
Support	26
Autism friendly employers	15
Easy, simple information in adverts	11
Other	8
Understanding of autism	4
Clearly defined roles	3
Understanding or trying out jobs	3
Work coach/ mentor	3

Single, quiet place to look for jobs	2
Peer support/ network	2

Q73 What would make **applying for jobs** easier?

72 Comments were made

Themes	Number of comments
Support	27
Appropriate type of assessment	12
Understanding of autism	7
Autism friendly employers	7
Other	7
Work/ job coach/ mentor	5
Reasonable adjustments	4
Job application/ interview training	2
Less reliance on grades	2
Information in appropriate formats	1

Q74 What would make **going for job interviews** easier?

77 Comments were made

Themes	Number of comments
Clear information in advance including photos/ questions	23
Support	14
Understanding of autism	13
Appropriate environment	12
Reasonable adjustments	9
Other	9
Accessible venue	7
Interview practise/ training	6
Employer training	5
Job/ work coach/ mentor	3
Job trial instead of interview	3
Autism friendly employer	2

Q75 What would make **starting a new job** easier?

66 Comments were made

Themes	Number of comments
Mentor/ support	20
Understanding of autism	18
Discussion about needs/ adjustments	13
Information about what to expect	11
Familiarisation with workplace	9
Other	7
Regular check ins with manager	4
No judgement	3
Trial period/ phased start	3
Friendly colleagues	2
Involving OT	1

Q76 What would make **working with colleagues** easier?

76 Comments were made

Themes	Number of comments
Understanding/ acceptance of autism	50
Mentor/ buddy/ work coach	10
Able to tell colleagues of diagnosis/ what helps	10
Tolerance/ less judgement	7

Friendliness	6
Other	5
Appropriate environment	3
Protection against bullying	3

Q77 What would make it easier to **get the support you need** at work?

69 Comments were made

Themes	Number of comments
Understanding of autism	21
Mentor/ buddy/ support	14
Guidance for employers	10
Supportive manager	8
Other	8
Clear communication	3
Ask what would help	3
Knowing what was available	3
Good HR department	2

Q78 What would make it easier to **get the reasonable adjustments needed** at work?

64 Comments were made

Themes	Number of comments
Understanding of autism	22
Accessible information about what is available	8
Adjustments in place in advance	7
Other	7
Autism friendly employer	4
No prejudice/ discrimination	4
Buddy/ mentor	4
Funding for adjustments	4
External help to get adjustments	4
Patience and no judgement	3
Acting on requests for adjustments	2
Ask what would help	2
Individual rather than general response	2
Incentives for employers	1

Q79 Have you/the people you support had any positive experiences of reasonable adjustments in the workplace in the following tasks to be more inclusive?

	Yes	No	Not applicable
Applying for jobs	12 (6%)	83 (42%)	104 (52%)
Going for job interviews	14 (7%)	80 (40%)	106 (53%)
Starting a new job	13 (7%)	76 (38%)	109 (55%)
Working with colleagues	24 (12%)	70 (35%)	104 (53%)
Getting support needed at work	35 (17%)	70 (35%)	97 (48%)

Q80 What were the adjustments made? **Applying for jobs**

12 Comments were made

Themes	Number of comments
Alternative application process	3
Support	2
Work/ job coach	2
Adjustments made to website/ job advert	2

Adverts indicate autism aware	1
Appropriate environment	1
Other	1

Q81 What were the adjustments made? **Going for job interviews**

14 Comments were made

Themes	Number of comments
Being able to prepare in advance	3
Accompanied to interview	3
Other	3
Alternative to formal interview	2
Flexibility	1
Kindness	1
Extra time	1

Q82 What were the adjustments made? **Starting a new job**

13 Comments were made

Themes	Number of comments
Personalised induction	4
Supportive employer	3
Gradual build of duties	3
Transport support	1

Q83 What were the adjustments made? **Working with colleagues**

23 Comments were made

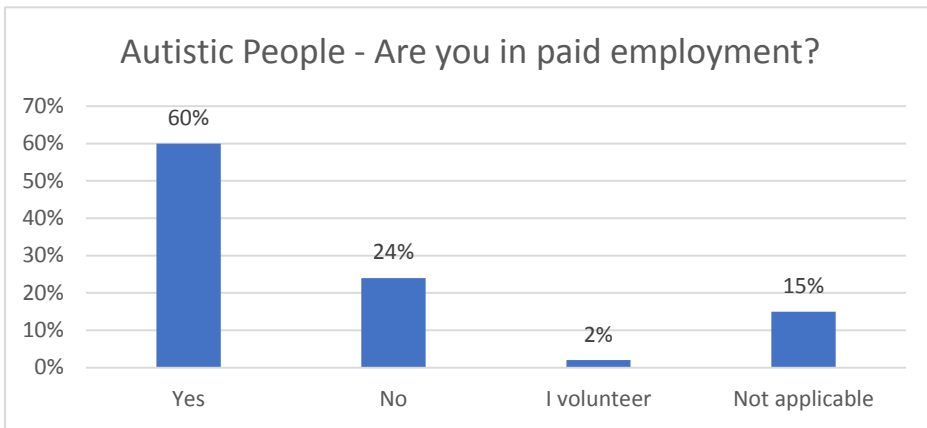
Themes	Number of comments
Supportive manager/ employer	5
Training/ autism awareness	4
Peer support	4
Making colleagues aware of adjustments and reasons	3
Supportive, friendly colleagues	3
Other	3

Q84 What were the adjustments made? **Getting support needed at work**

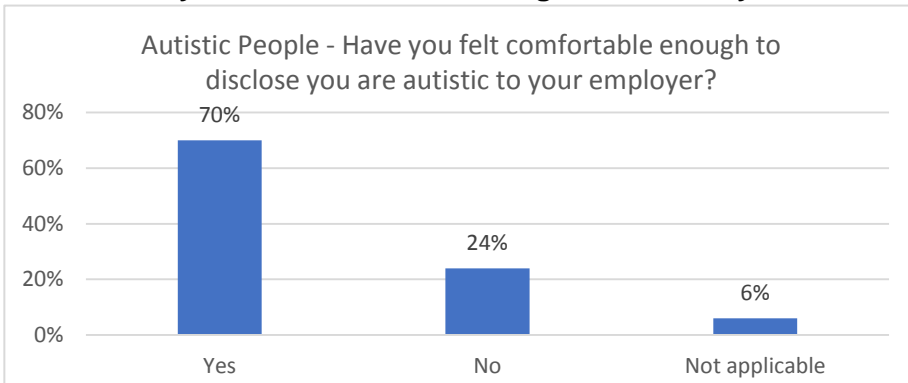
33 Comments were made

Themes	Number of comments
Mentoring/ coaching	5
Supportive manager	5
Other reasonable adjustments	5
Other	5
Access to Work	4
Asking what would help	4
1 to 1 time	3
Flexibility of targets/ timing	2
Working from home	2
Understanding of autism	2
Training to adjust to demands of the workplace	2

Q85 Are you in paid employment?



Q86 Have you felt comfortable enough to disclose you are autistic to your employer?

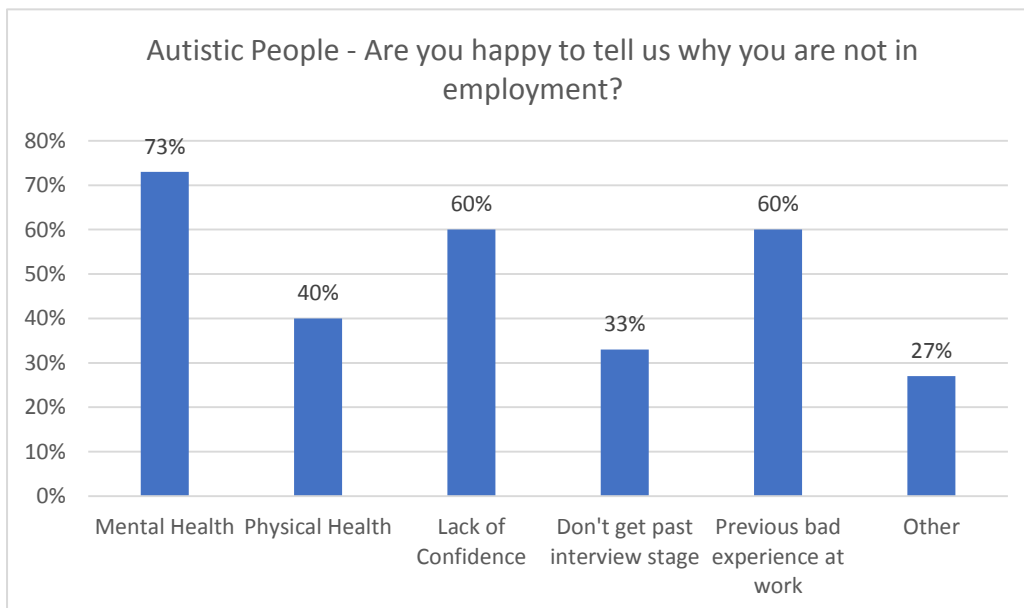


Q87 When were you last in employment?

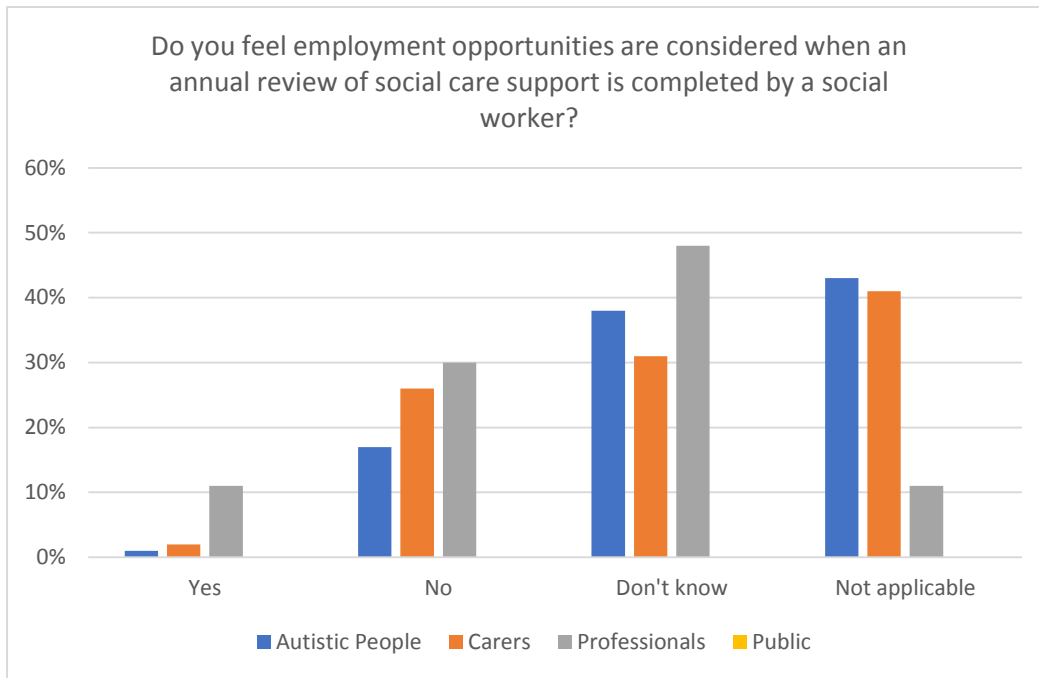
11 Comments were made

Themes	Number of comments
Longer ago	6
Last year	3
Never	2

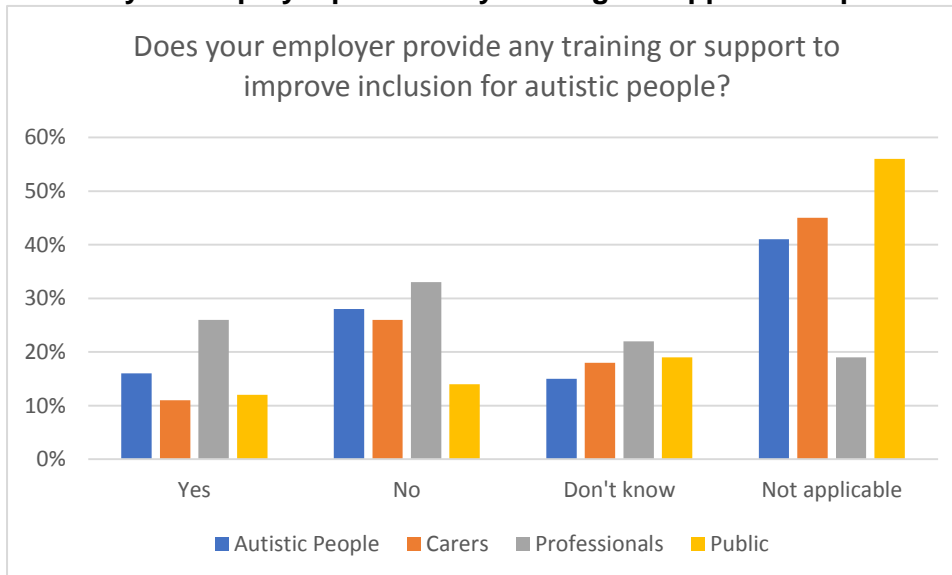
Q91 Are you happy to tell us why you are not in employment? Remember all questions are optional and you can leave any blank if you are not comfortable with them (*Tick as many as apply.*)



Q92 Do you feel employment opportunities are considered when an annual review of social care support is completed by a social worker?



Q93 Does your employer provide any training or support to improve inclusion for autistic people?

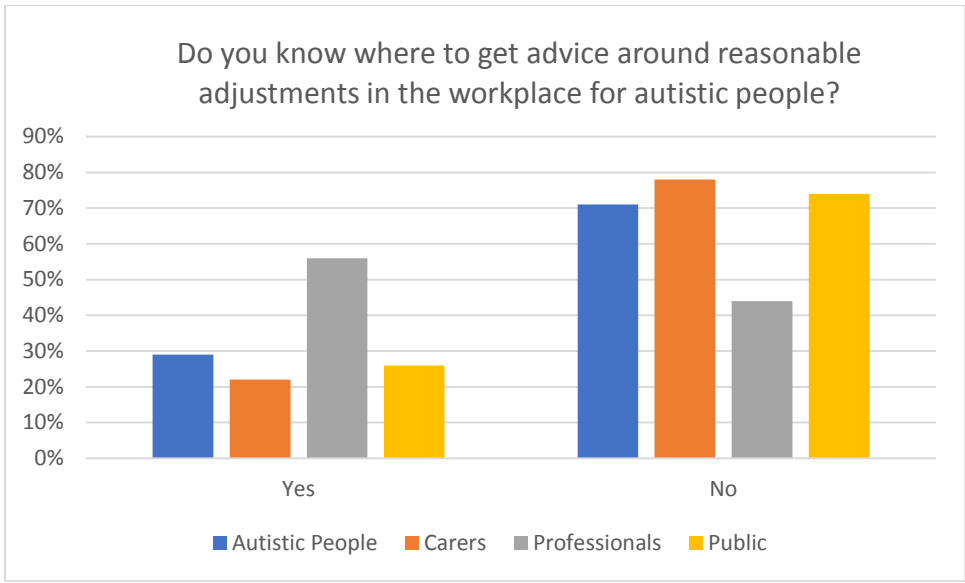


Q94 Please give details.

27 Comments were made

Themes	Number of comments
Training courses	6
School training	4
Disability/ inclusion	4
Other	4
Adjustments	3
NHS training	3
Own CPD	2
Basic/ not very good	2
Trust training	2
Voluntary training	1

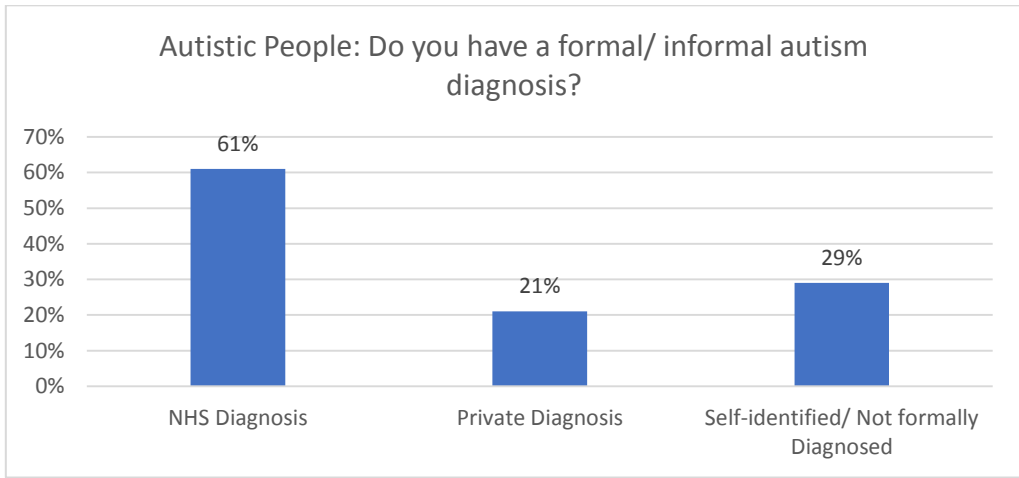
Q95 Do you know where to get advice around reasonable adjustments in the workplace for autistic people?



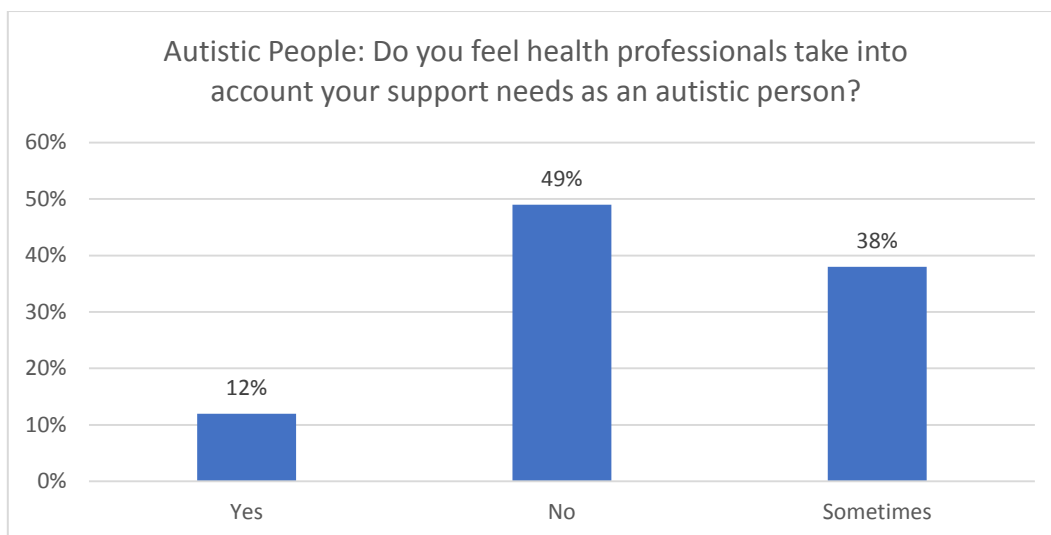
Priority 4 – Tackling health and care inequalities for autistic people

267 people said they wanted to answer questions about Priority 4

Q96 Do you have a formal/ informal autism diagnosis?



Q97 Do you feel health professionals take into account your support needs as an autistic person?



Q98 Can you tell us more about what is taken into account

27 comments were made

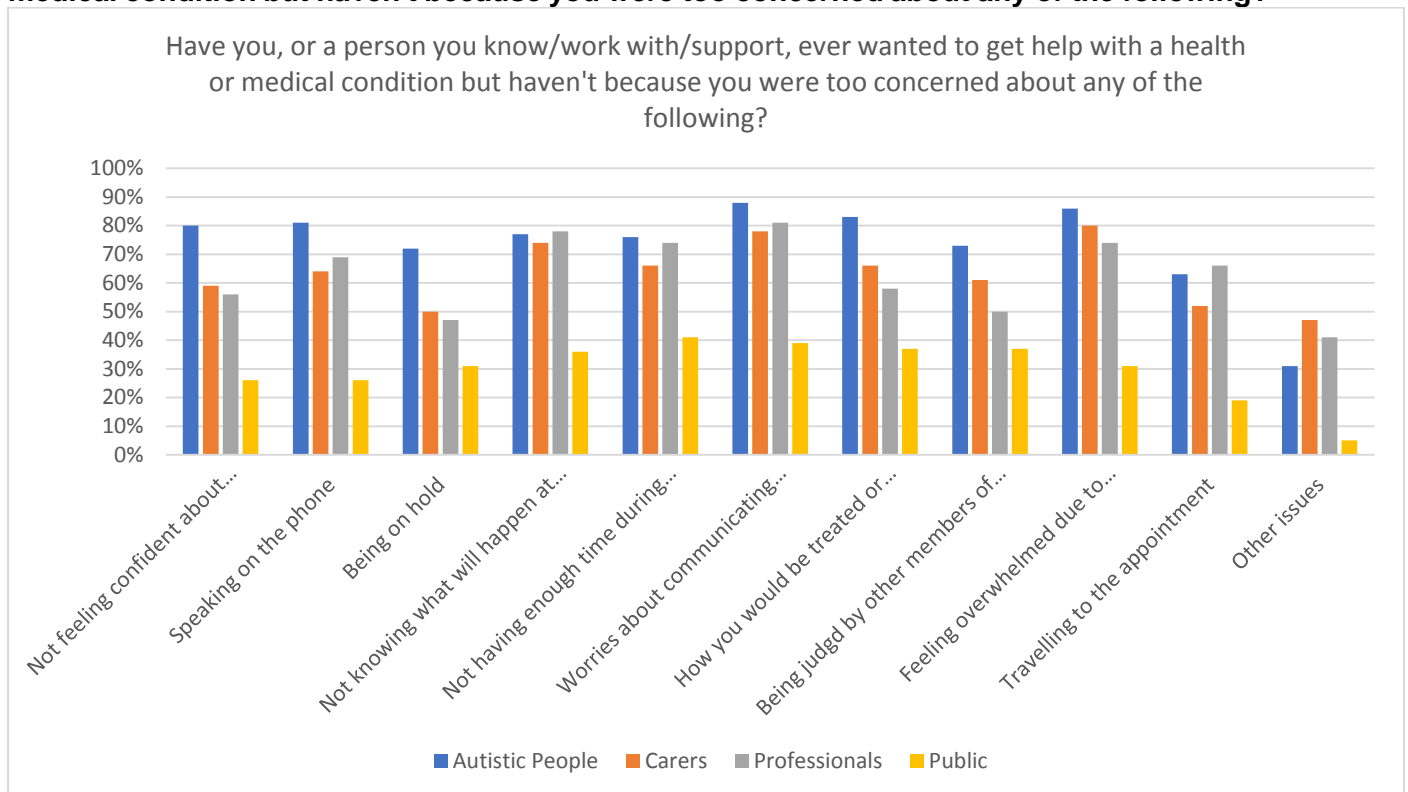
Themes	Number of comments
Other	9
Inconsistent adjustments	6
General positive experience	5
Using an alternative method of contact	4
Allow another person in appointment	3
Give time & check I understand	3
Good communication	1

Q99 Can you tell us more about what isn't taken into account

49 comments were made

Themes	Number of comments
Knowledge/ Understanding of autism	12
Timing and routine	10
Challenge of communicating clearly (face to face or phone)	9
Need clear communication from professionals	7
Understanding that something needs to be taken into account	7
Masking	6
Method of getting an appointment (requirement to use phone)	6
Mental Health	5
Sensory challenges	5
Other	4
Not told GP/ Health care professional about autism	3

Q100 Have you, or a person you know/work with/support, ever wanted to get help with a health or medical condition but haven't because you were too concerned about any of the following?



Please tell us what other concerns you have about going to health appointments

53 comments were made

Themes	Number of comments
Other	12
Anxiety	9
Not being taken seriously	7
Waiting/ waiting lists	7
Poor previous experience	6
Understanding of autism	5
Being able to understand/ remember information	5
Communicating with other people	5
Lack of support	5
Not being able to cope with tests/ procedures	4
Not seeing the same person every time	3
Process of getting an appointment	2
All of the above	2
Embarrassment	1

Q101 If you answered yes to any of the above, please tell us what would help you to make or attend health or medical appointments

184 comments were made

Themes	Number of comments
Better understanding of autism	48
Simple appointment booking process (esp. online)	42
More time/ Longer appointments	36
Appointments in a different format	25
Information (e.g. photos) about the appointment in advance	24
Other	24
Quiet area to wait	23
Support to attend appointments	18
Speak to same person each time	13

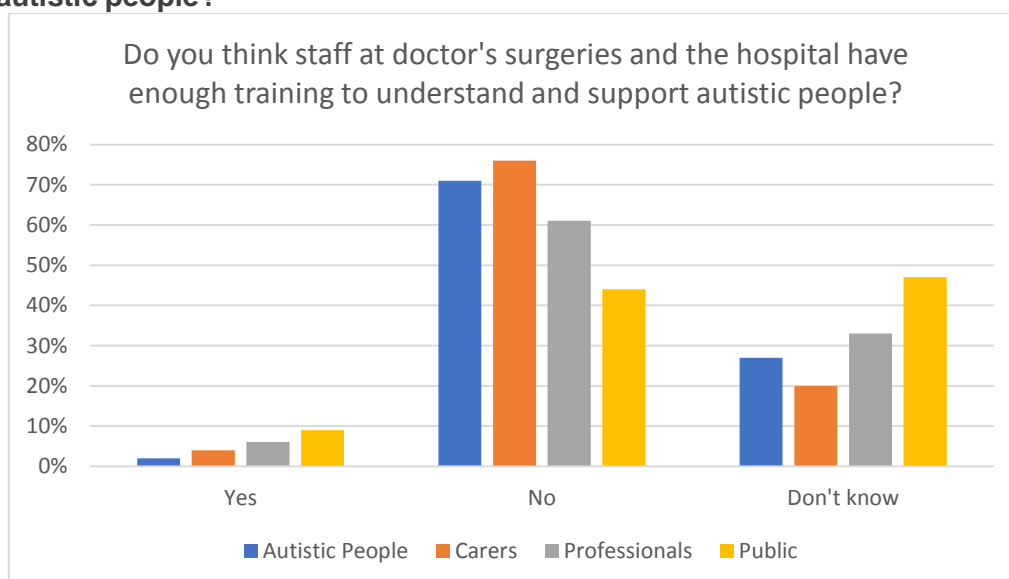
Someone allowed to talk to GP on behalf	12
Better timekeeping	12
Clear communication	10
Choice of appointment time/ location	9
Professional knows the person has autism in advance	8
Individual response (not all treated the same)	6
Appointment room/ environment	6
No music (on hold or in waiting room)	5
Help to find way around	4
Information in multiple formats	3
CAMHS to allow autistic people	2

Q102 Please tell us about any positive experiences or adjustments that have been made by health staff that have helped you or the people you know/work with/support.

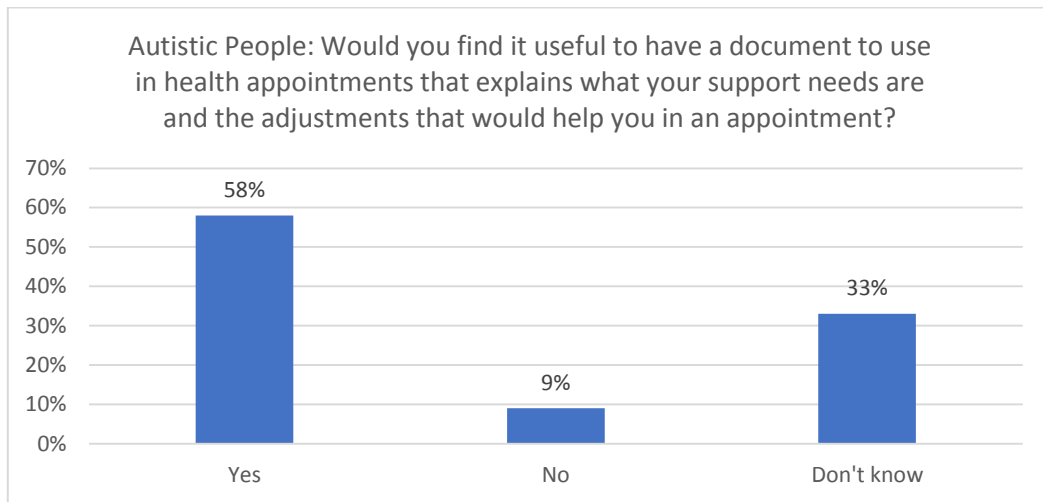
119 comments were made

Themes	Number of comments
General positive	26
Respectful/ Caring manner	19
None	19
Other	15
Taking extra time	13
Ask/ listen to what would help	11
Information given about what to expect	8
Clear communication	8
Understanding of needs	8
Flexible appointment location	7
Separate waiting room/ waiting room adjustments	5
Someone allowed to accompany or talk on behalf	5
Information given in different formats	3
Let child touch things and move around	3
Play therapy	3
General negative	3
Good timekeeping	2
Seeing same person each time	1

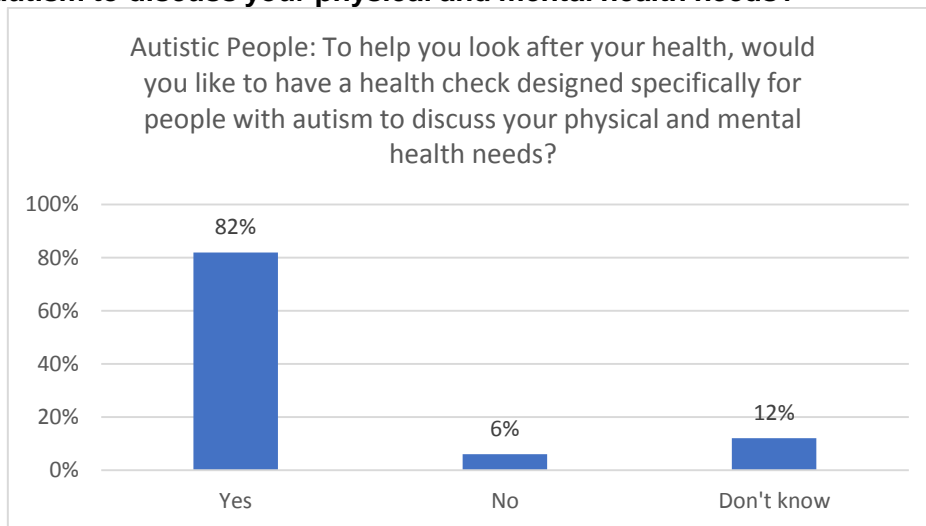
Q103 Do you think staff at doctor's surgeries and the hospital have enough training to understand and support autistic people?



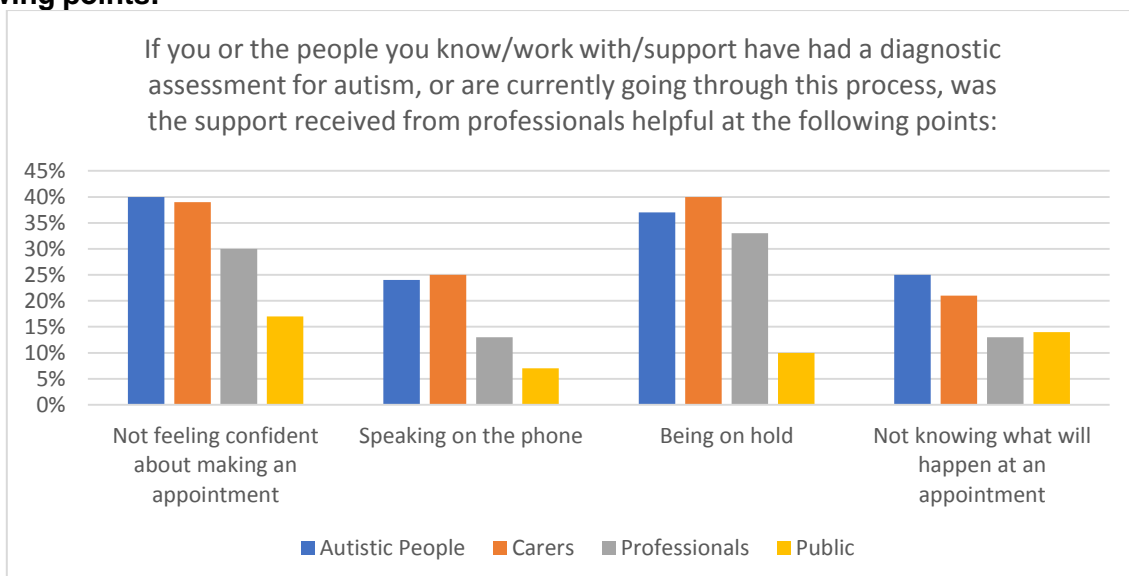
Q104 Would you find it useful to have a document to use in health appointments that explains what your support needs are and the adjustments that would help you in an appointment?



Q105 To help you look after your health, would you like to have a health check designed specifically for people with autism to discuss your physical and mental health needs?



Q106 If you or the people you know/work with/support have had a diagnostic assessment for autism, or are currently going through this process, was the support received from professionals helpful at the following points:



Q107 What support would have been useful when **the referral was being made?**

86 comments were made

Themes	Number of comments
Information to help understand the process/ criteria	25
Reasonable timing	15
Help to get a referral	14
Any support (none was given)	12
Being listened to	11
Other	11
Being kept informed	7
Someone/ named contact to talk to	4
School support	4
Comments about referral/ assessment	4
CAMHS/ MH support	3
Signposting	2

Q108 What support would have been useful while **waiting for the assessment?**

110 comments were made

Themes	Number of comments
Reasonable timescales	34
Kept informed	30
Knowledge of what to expect	17
Any support	15
Other comments	10
Support for parents	8
Mental health support	5
School support	5
Support from GP/ medical professional	5
Someone to talk to	2
Information about autism	2
Referral to other services e.g. SALT, OT	2

Q109 What support would have been useful **during the assessment?**

61 comments were made

Themes	Number of comments
Knowledge of the process	12
Any support	10
Kept informed	9
Other	9
Better communication	8
General positive	4
Assessment designed for adults	4
Being listened to	3
More time given to assessment	3
Assessment environment/ location	3
Information about autism	2
Peer support	2
School Support	1
Parent/ carers assessment	1

Q110 What support would have been useful **after the assessment?**

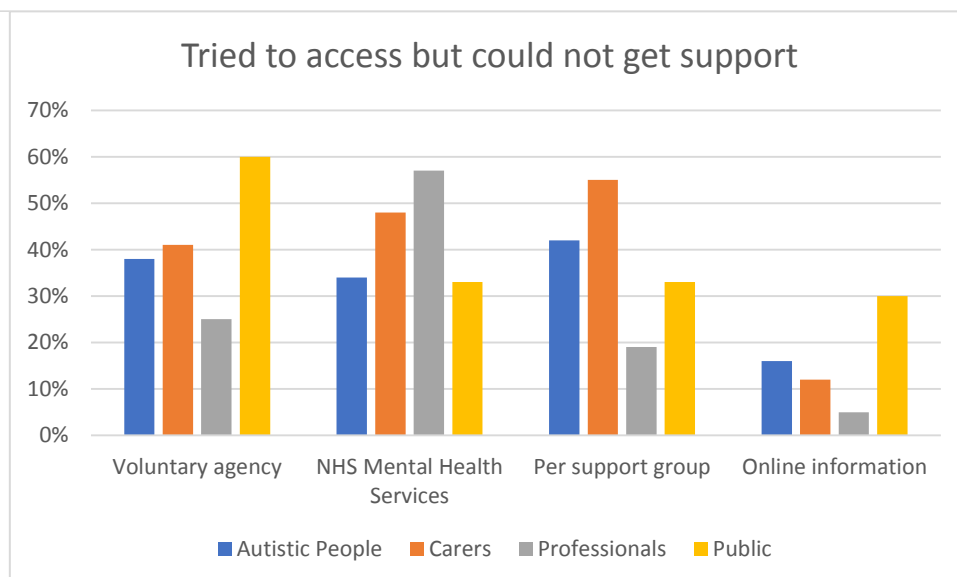
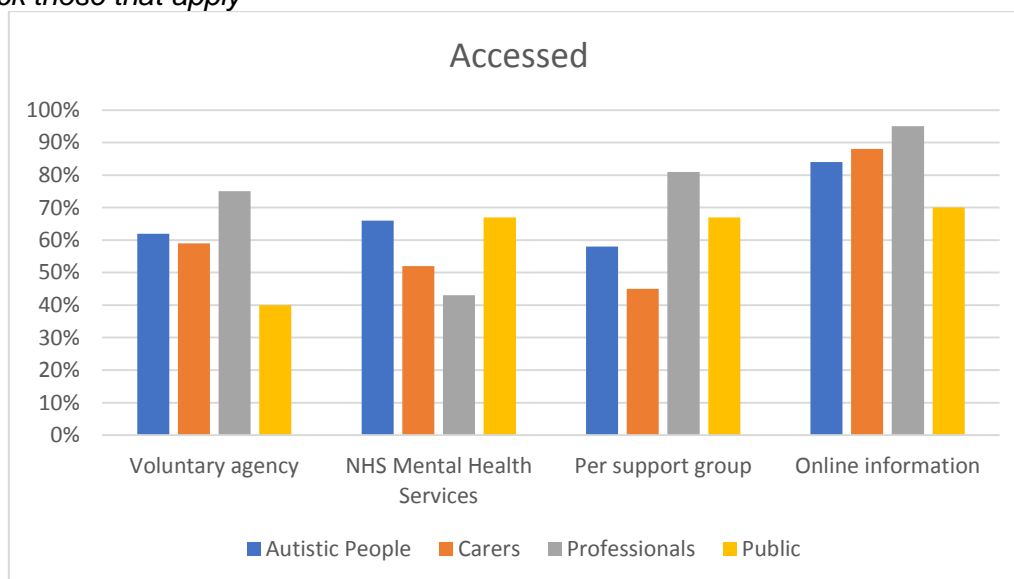
110 comments were made

Themes	Number of comments
Any support	40
Weren't offered any support	30
Mental health support/ counselling	16
Help to come to terms with the diagnosis	14
Strategies to manage the difficulties experienced	13

Help to understand autism	12
Support groups	11
Information on what is available	10
Other	10
Someone to talk to	9
Education support	9
Support for parents	8
Strategies for anxiety and behaviour	4
Community able to support (more knowledge/ understanding)	3
Medical support	2

111 If you or the people you know/work with/support have needed support with mental health/psychological issues, which of the following was accessed?

Please only tick those that apply



Q112 If you experienced any difficulties getting this support what would have made this better?

144 comments were made

Themes	Number of comments
Shorter wait times	31
Don't fit the criteria for a service	25
Adjustments to what/ how support is provided	23
Hard to get mental health support	16
Getting any support	15
There is no support	13

More resources for providers	11
Professionals having a better understanding of autism	10
Other	10
Family have to do/ pay for support themselves	7
Knowing what is available	6
Discharged too soon	6
Being kept informed	6
Being listened to	5
Information in different formats.	3

Q113 If you or someone you know/work with/support have needed to access urgent mental health/ psychological support, how responsive have services been?

123 comments were made

Themes	Number of comments
Poor/ unresponsive/ no support	67
Good/ responsive/ fairly quick	16
Didn't understand/ meet needs	16
Variable	10
Service was not suitable	10
Didn't meet the criteria	9
Other	7

Q114 Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the healthcare experiences of autistic people?

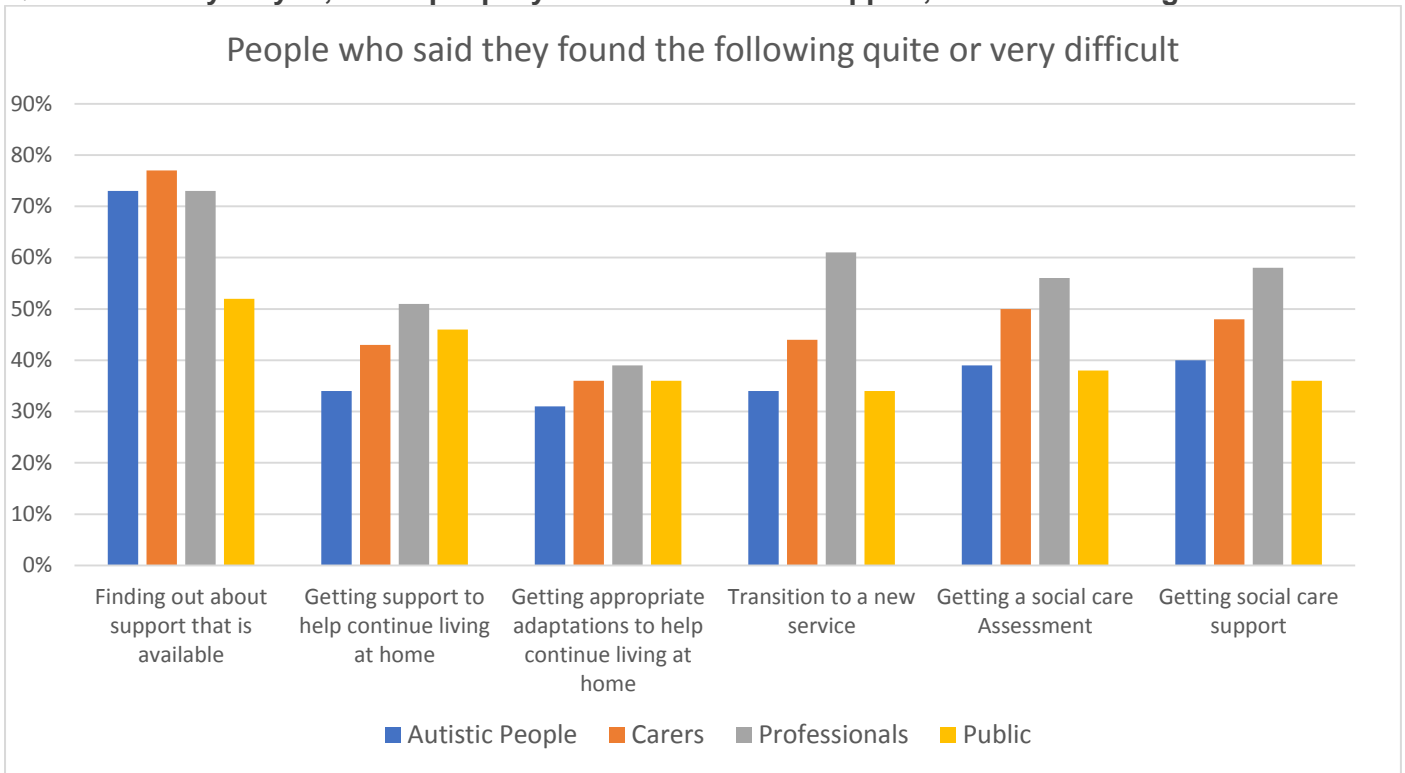
130 comments were made

Themes	Number of comments
Professionals' understanding/ knowledge of autism	35
Service was not helpful	19
Other	16
Need MH support for autistic people	14
Not been supported at all	11
Need an appropriate care environment (e.g. quiet)	11
Ask/ listen to what would help	10
Lack of individual approach	8
Lack of resources (funding, staff etc.)	6
Need to consider appropriate treatment	6
Inequality	5
Preventative support before reaching crisis	5
More care/ empathy	4
General positive	4
Variable experience	3
Advocacy/ parental/ peer support	3

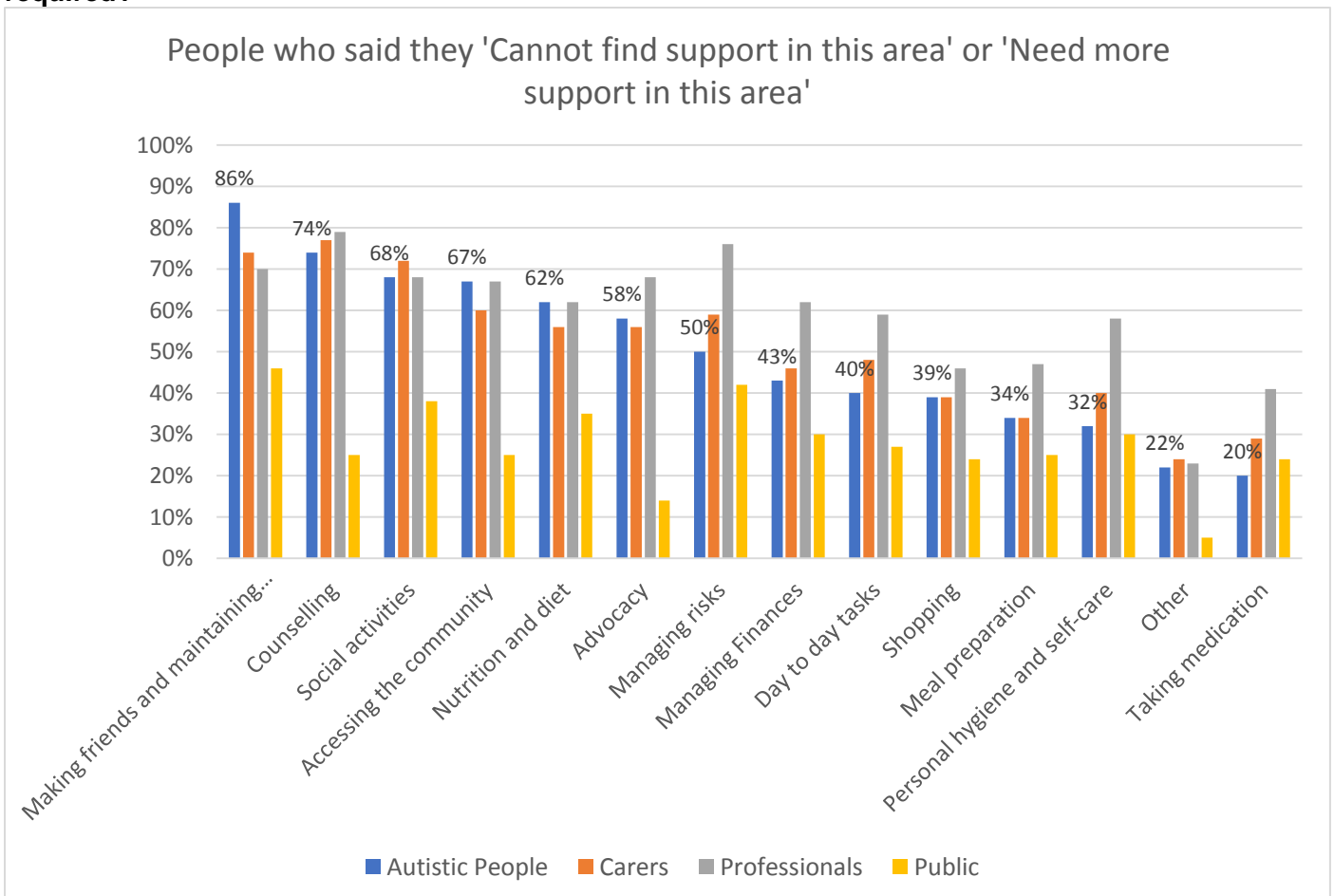
Priority 5 – Building the right support in the community

288 people said they wanted to answer questions about Priority 5

Q115 How easy do you, or the people you know/work with/support, find the following:



Q116 How well are you or the people you know/work with/support supported in the following areas if required?



29 Comments were made

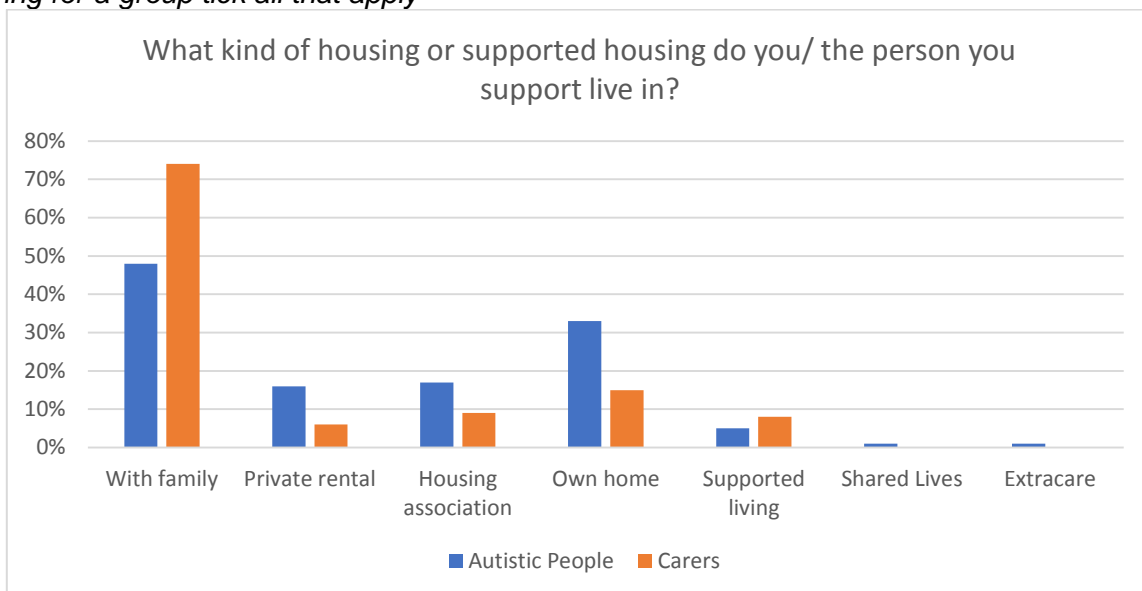
Theme	Number of comments
Parents/ family provide support	10
Other	5
More support needed	4
Housing	4
Worries as child gets older	3
Education/ career	2
Residential/ care home provide support	2
Health	2

Q117 Is there any other community support autistic people need that you/they are not currently able to get?

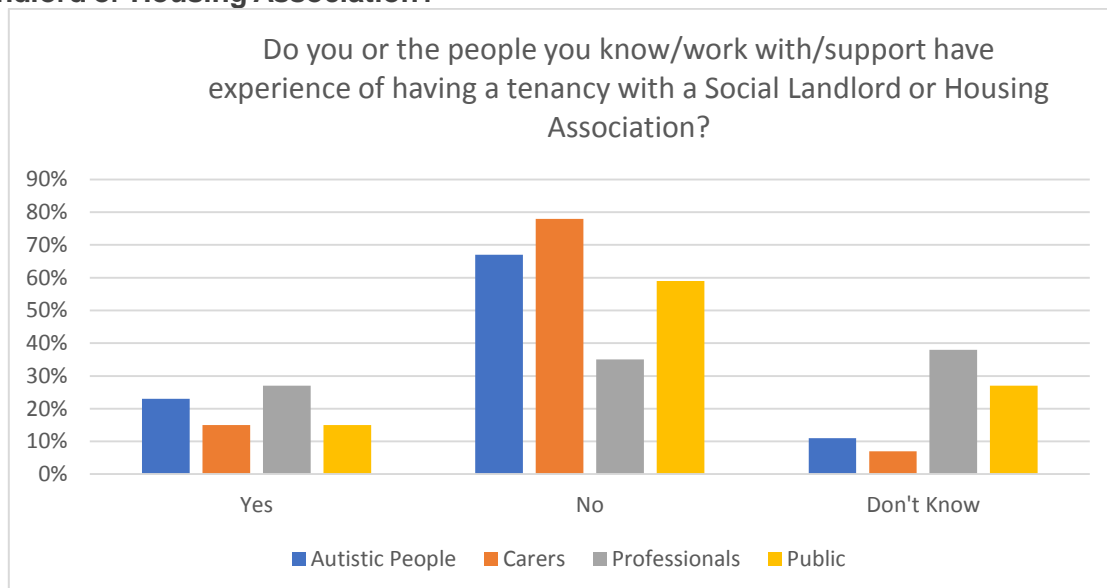
100 Comments were made

Themes	Number of comments
Make friends/ socialise	19
Other	11
Appropriate support groups	9
Clubs/ activities	9
More/ Any/ Lots of support	8
Way to find out what is available	8
Life skills (cooking, cleaning, budgeting)	7
Wider knowledge/ awareness/ acceptance of autism	6
Transition/ future planning	5
Mental health	5
Social care/ early help	5
Health	5
Housing	5
Specialist autism services	4
Transport	4
Counselling/ therapy	3
Employment/ mentoring	3
Respite	3
Safe spaces	3
Attend events	3
Timely diagnosis	3
Personal care	2
Sibling support	2
Advocacy	2

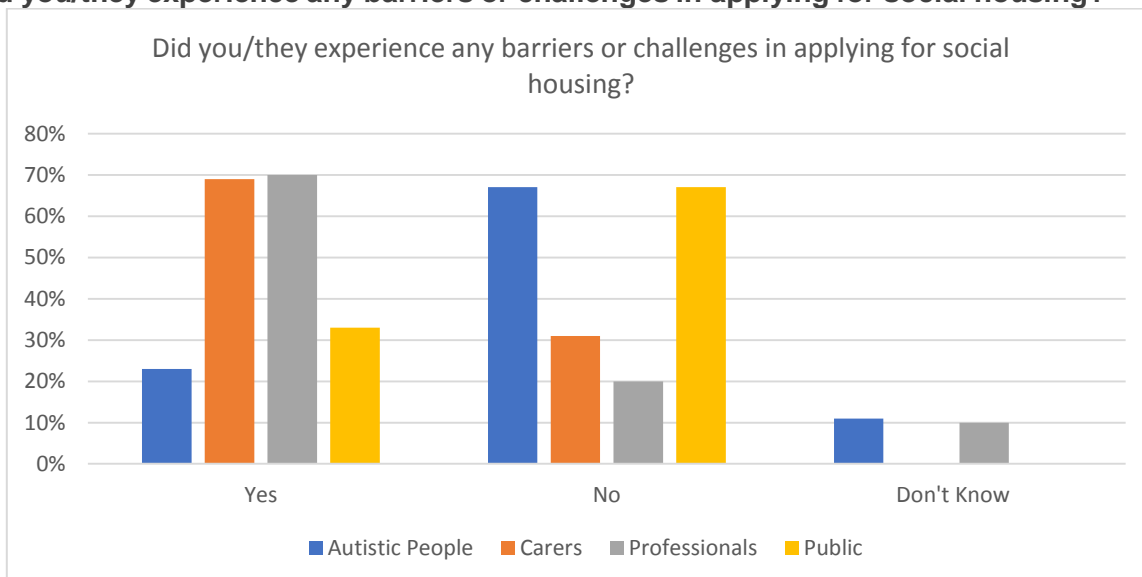
Q118 What kind of housing or supported housing do you/ the person you support live in?
If answering for a group tick all that apply



Q119 Do you or the people you know/work with/support have experience of having a tenancy with a Social Landlord or Housing Association?



Q120 Did you/they experience any barriers or challenges in applying for social housing?

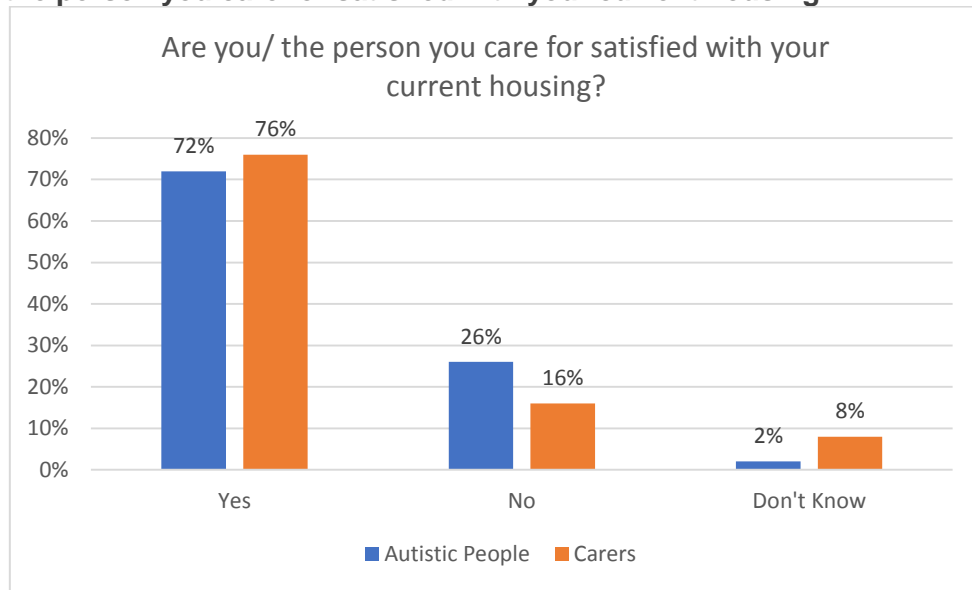


Q121 What barriers or challenges did you/they have?

26 Comments were made

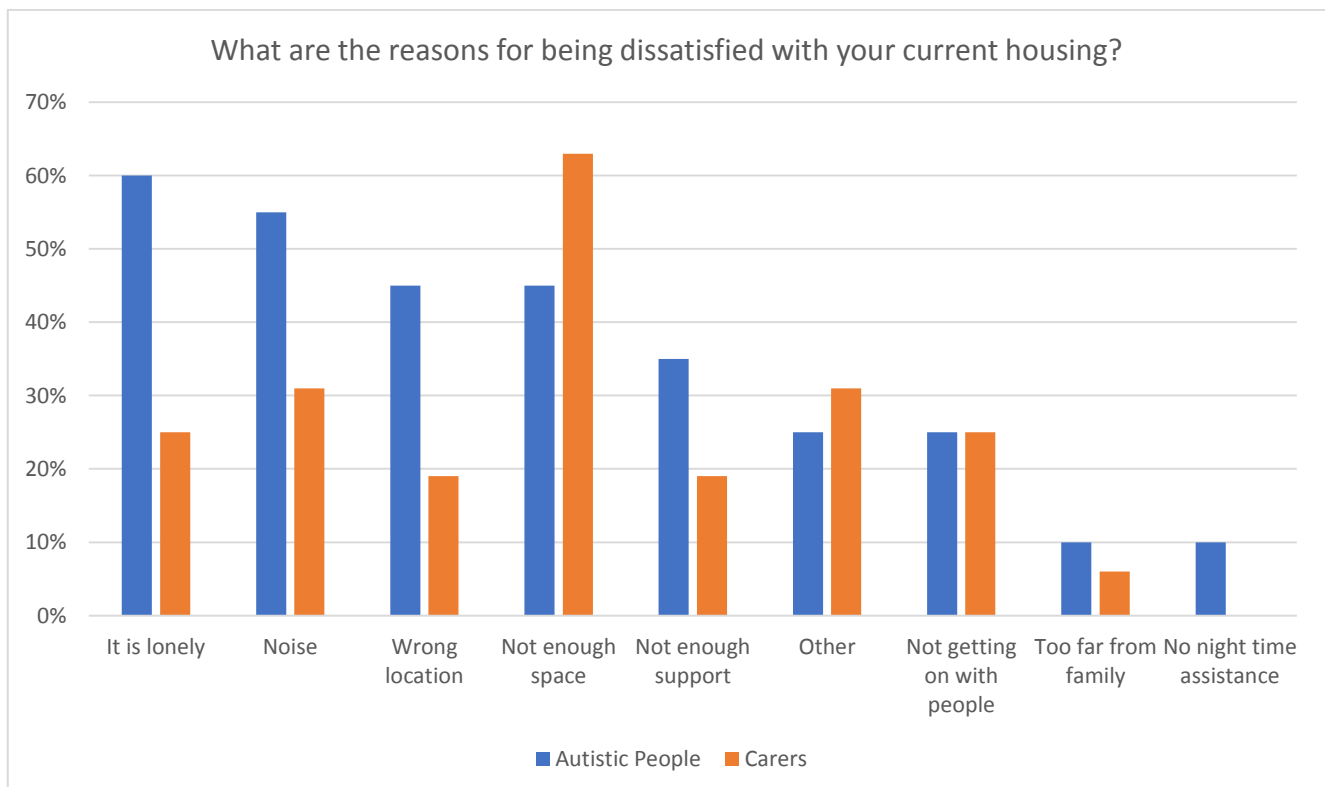
Themes	Number of comments
Knowledge/ understanding of autism	7
Need for reasonable adjustments	6
Application process/ communication is stressful/ difficult	6
Challenges related to system rather than autism	5
Lack of support	4
Other	4
Lack of communication	1
Waiting times	1

Q122 Are you/ the person you care for satisfied with your current housing?



Q123 What are the reasons for being dissatisfied with your current housing?

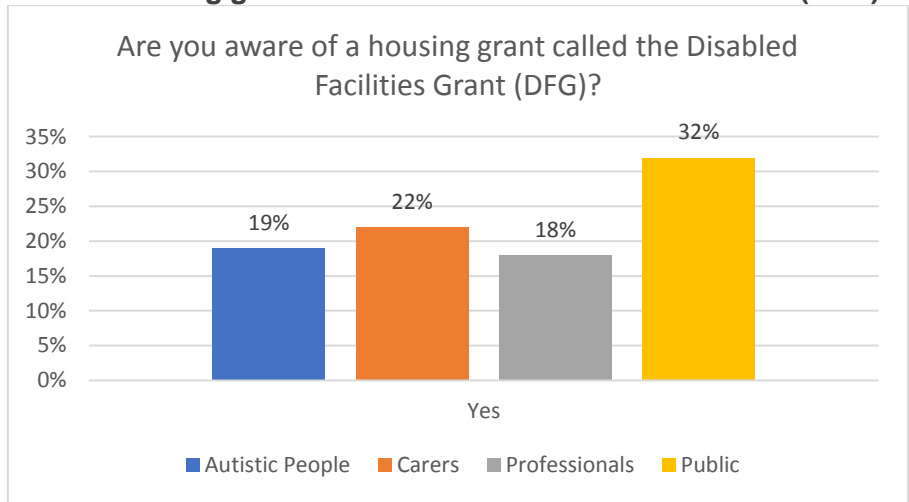
Tick all that apply



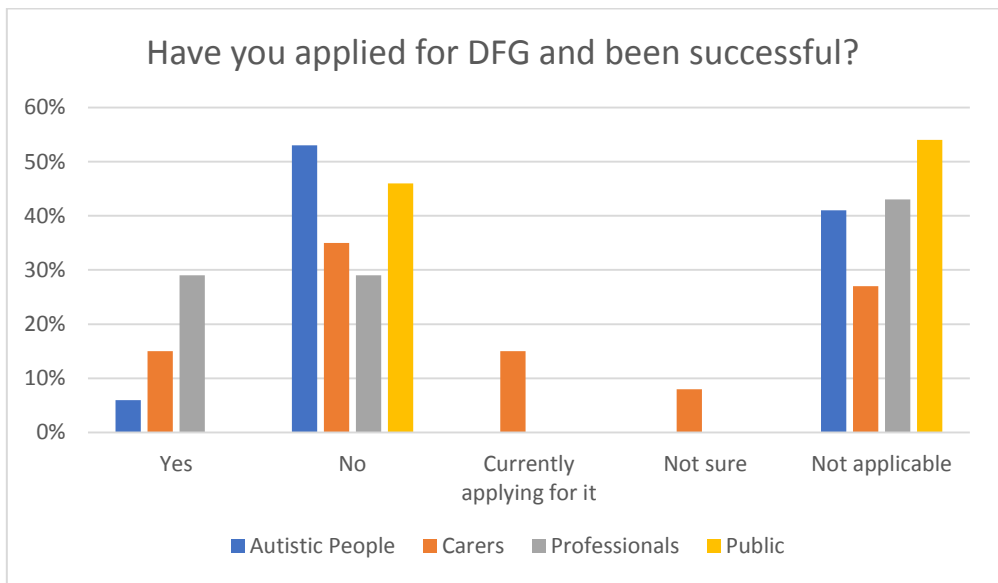
17 Comments were made

Themes	Number of comments
Want to live independently	4
Need adaptations	3
Issues with neighbours	3
Need repairs	2
Living with people don't want to	2
Cost	2
Location - isolated	2
Other	2
Want supported housing	1

Q124 Are you aware of a housing grant called the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)?



Q125 Have you applied for it and been successful?

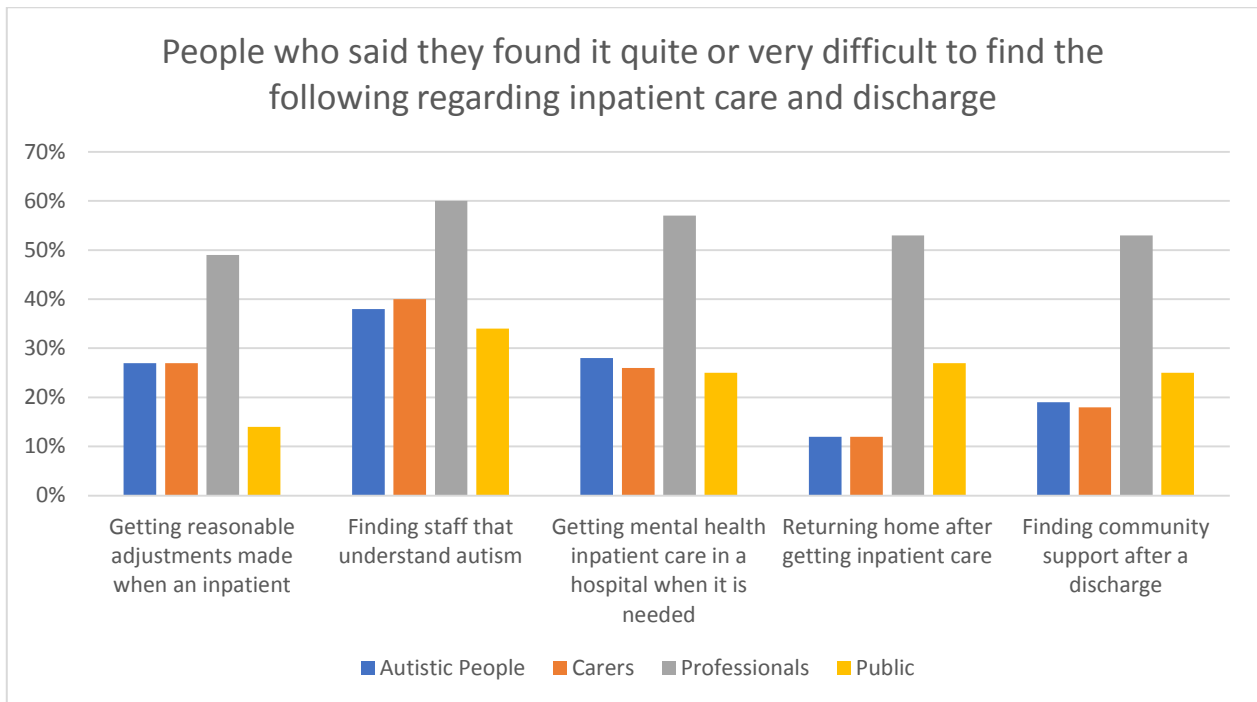


Q126 If you applied for it and were not successful, what was the reason?

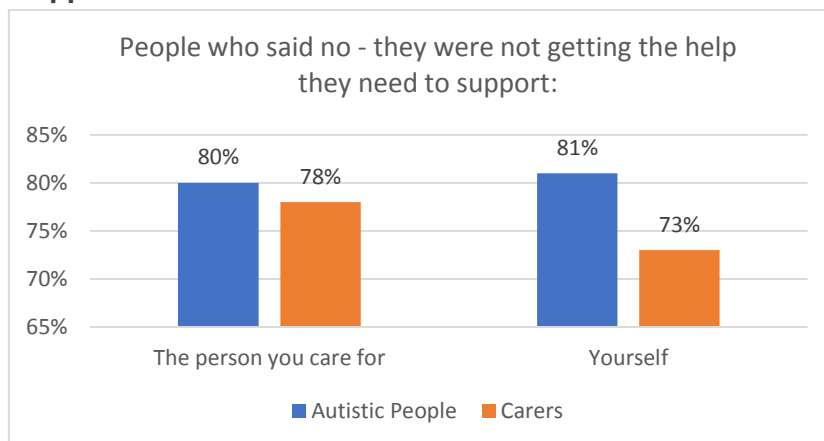
6 Comments were made

Themes	Number of comments
Wouldn't meet extent of need	3
Time	2
No-one cares	2
Cost	1
Other	1

Q127 How easy do you or the people you know/work with/support generally find the following regarding inpatient care and discharge?



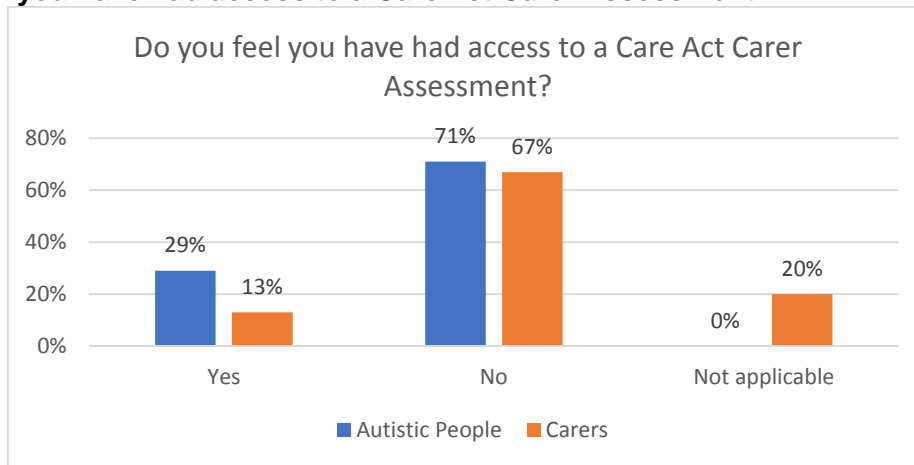
Q128 If you are a parent or carer of an autistic person, regardless of their age, do you feel you get the help you need to support:



Please give more information if you want to. 61 Comments were made

Themes	Number of comments
Not receiving support	20
Fight for support	12
Draining/ stressful to support family member	12
Other	11
Mental health	7
Expensive for families to fund support	6
Lack of care/ interest	4
Education system	3
Holiday clubs/ school holiday support	3
Lack of staff knowledge/ training	3
Proper funding for services	3
Not received what promised	2
Not receiving benefits that help	2
Training for families	2
Lack of opportunities for complex needs	1
Hard to access support without diagnosis	1
Positive comments	1

Q129 Do you feel you have had access to a Care Act Carer Assessment?



25 Comments were made

Themes	Number of comments
Not aware of this	12
Not offered one	5
Not helpful as no support available after	4
Other	4
Had one previously	1

Q130 Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the housing experiences of autistic people?

80 Comments were made

Themes	Number of comments
Other	10
Limited Support to find accommodation	9
Future planning	7
Difficult dealing with other people	6
Professional understanding of autism	6
Still live with family	5
Finding accommodation is difficult/ stressful	5
Accommodation is not suitable	5
Need more different housing options	5
Need to live on own	4
Need adjustments to social housing ranking	3
Hard to communicate	3
Noise issues	3
No suitable supported setting	2
Rejected from supported living	1

Q131 Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the community support experiences of autistic people?

80 Comments were made

Themes	Number of comments
Community support not available	16
Need more options (types and localities)	14
Other	12
General negative comments	9
Understanding of autism	5
Not received any support	4
Positive comments	3
Need youth groups	2
Need education support	2
Lack of funding	1

Q132 Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the social care experiences of autistic people?

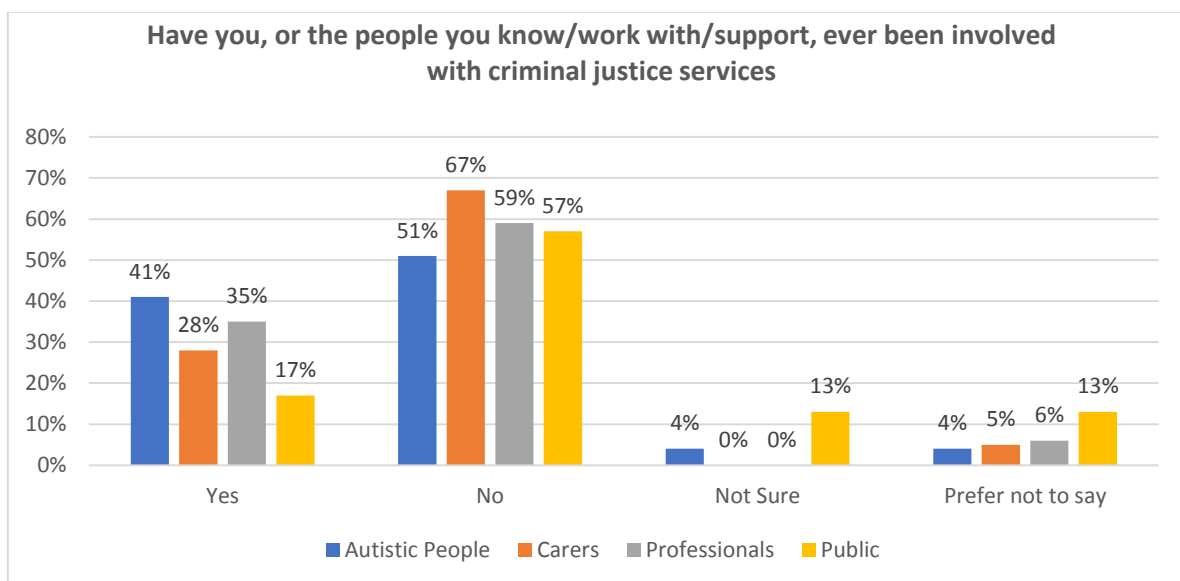
68 Comments were made

Themes	Number of comments
Other	13
Difficult to get support	7
Can't get any support	7
General negative comments	6
Caseload too high	5
Not enough support	3
Too much staff turnover	3
Understanding of autism	3
Lack of funding	2
Need a diagnosis first	2
More transition support	2
Inaccurate information/ reports	2

Priority 6 – Improving support in criminal justice and youth justice systems

138 people said they wanted to answer questions about Priority 6

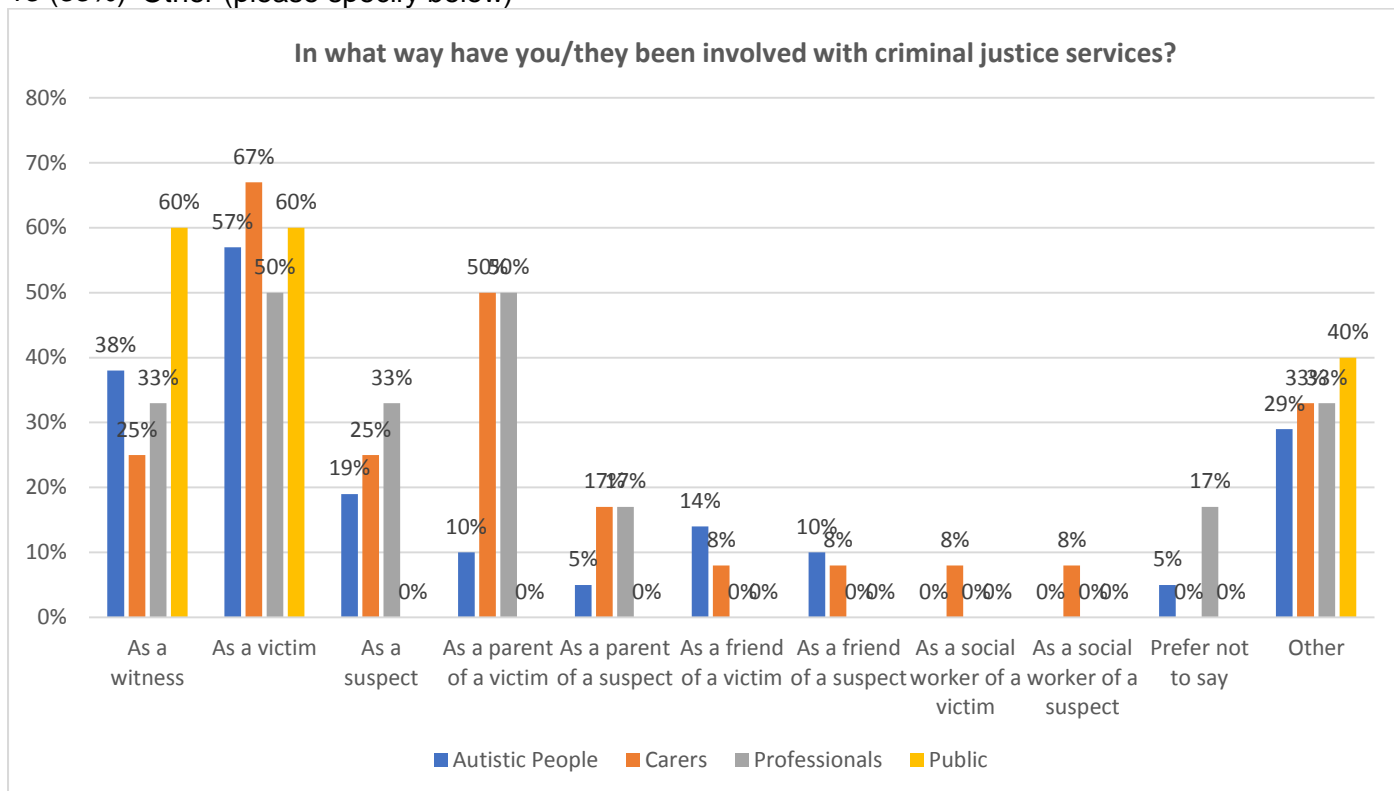
Q133 Have you, or the people you know/work with/support, ever been involved with criminal justice services (e.g. police, court, witness, victim of crime)?



Q134 In what way have you/they been involved with criminal justice services?

Please select all that apply

13 (33%) Other (please specify below)

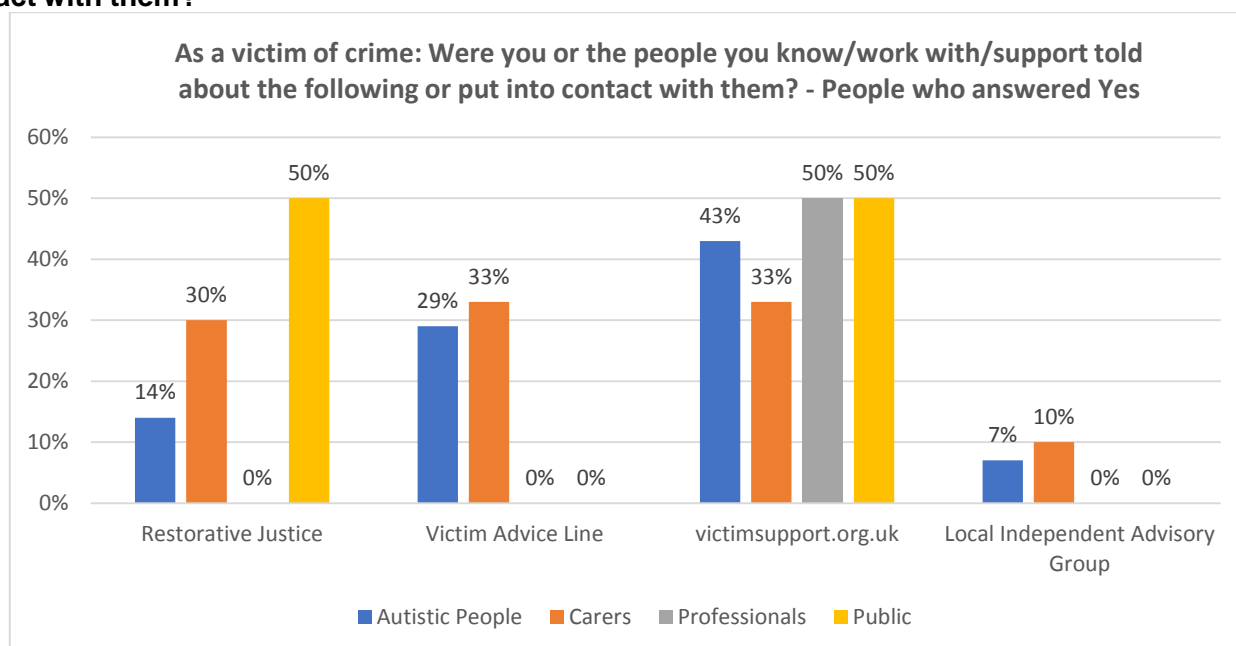


11 comments were made

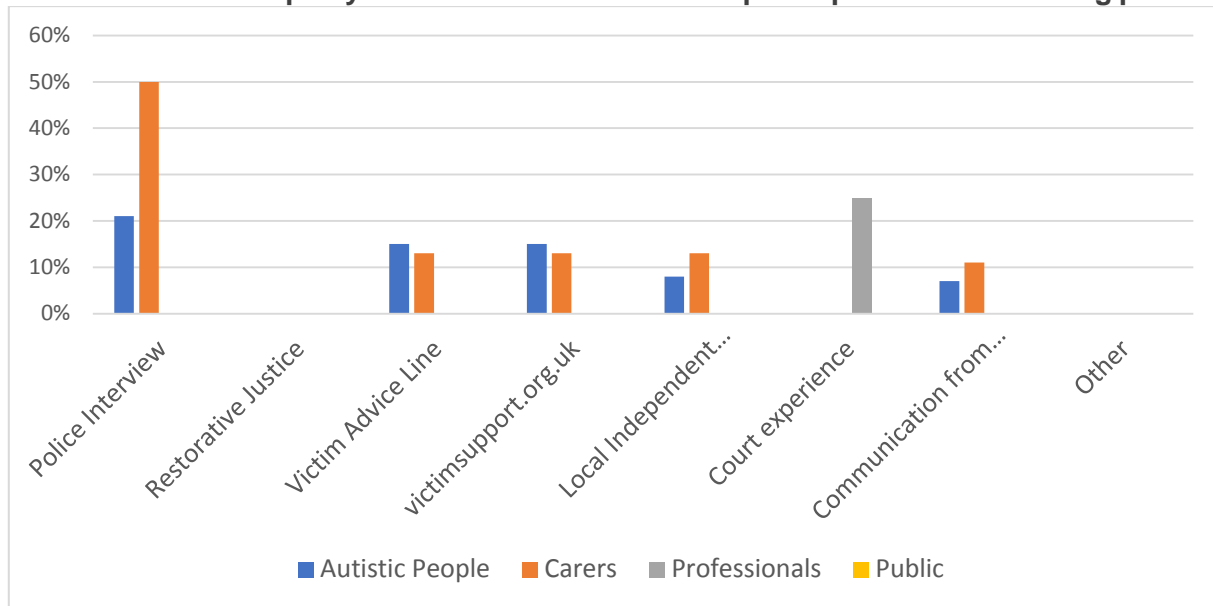
Theme	Number of comments
Other professional capacity	5
Police involvement related to safety	2
Mental Health	2
Other	3

As a victim of crime:

Q135 Were you or the people you know/work with/support told about the following or put into contact with them?



Q136 Have you, or the people you know/work with/support, had any positive experiences of adjustments made that helped you/them to understand and participate in the following processes?

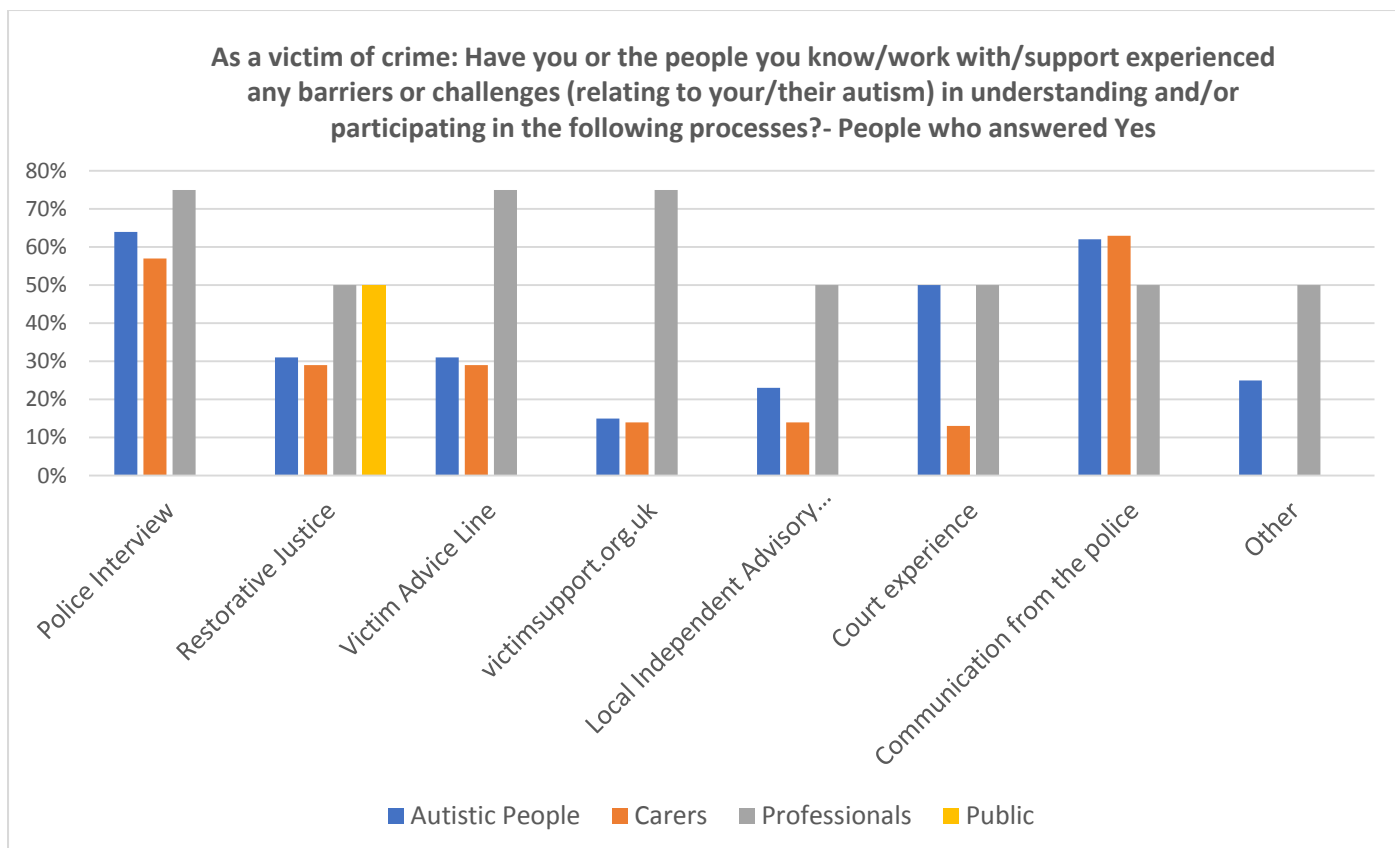


Q137 Please outline any positive experiences

6 comments were made

Themes	Number of comments
Supportive	3
Good communication	2
Refer to support	1
Appropriate adjustments	1

Q138 Have you or the people you know/work with/support experienced any barriers or challenges (relating to your/their autism) in understanding and/or participating in the following processes?



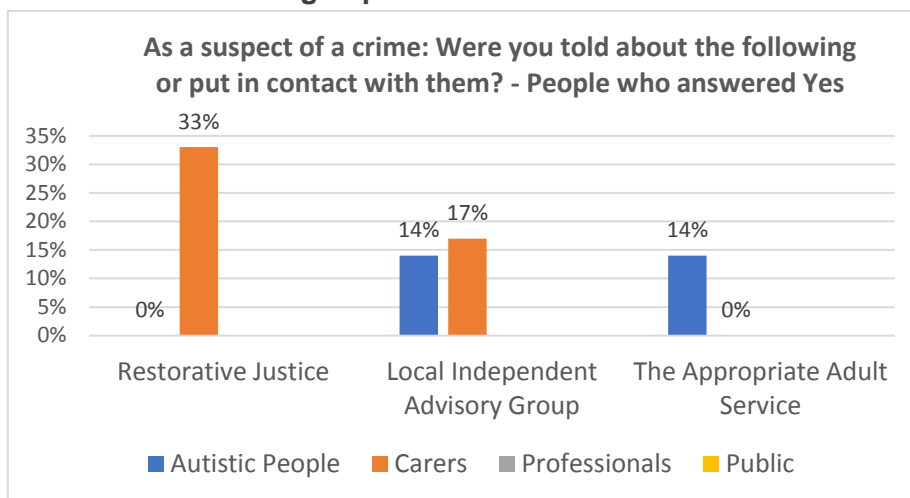
Q139 What could have made it better?

15 comments were made

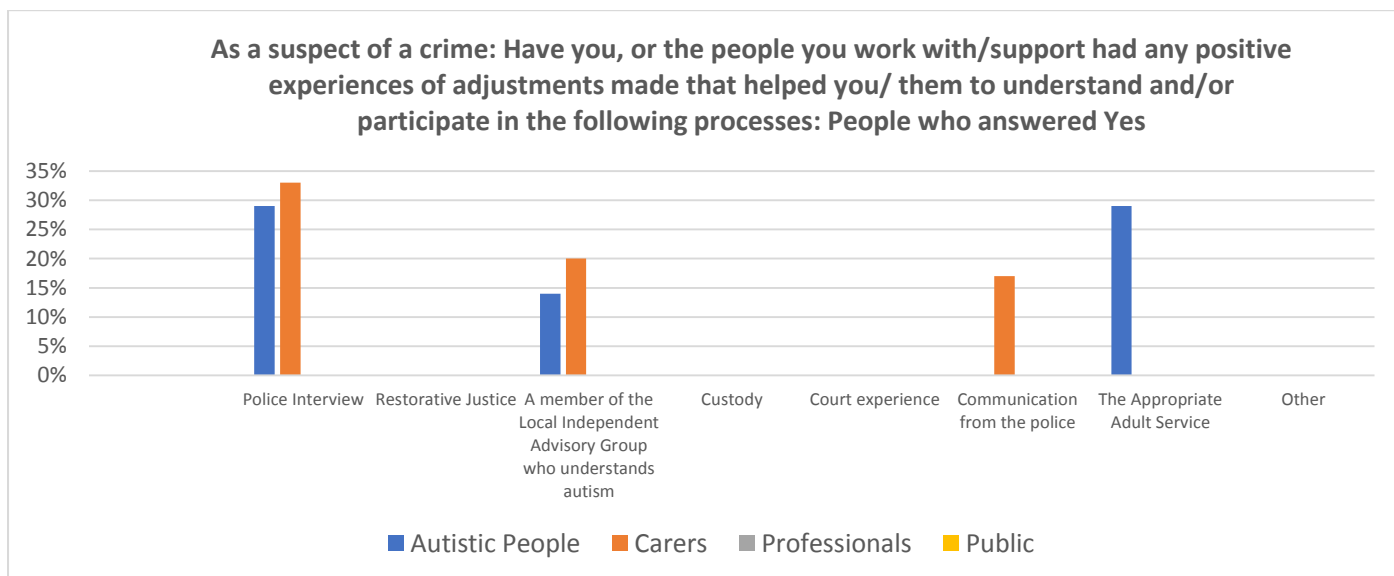
Themes	Number of comments
Better communication	6
Being more understanding	4
Appropriate adjustments	4
More knowledge of autism	3
Other	2

As a suspect of a crime:

Q140 Were you told about the following or put in contact with them?



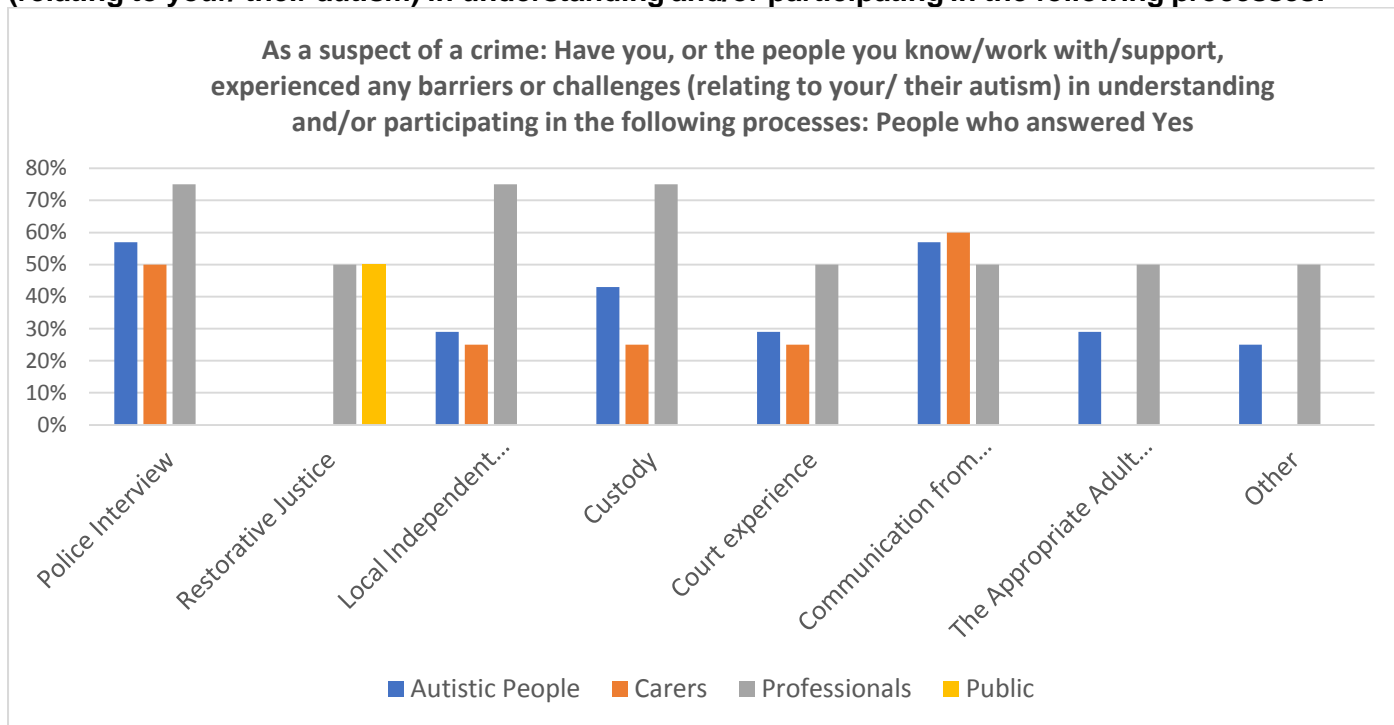
Q141 Have you, or the people you work with/support had any positive experiences of adjustments made that helped you/ them to understand and/or participate in the following processes:



Q142 Please give details

3 comments were made

Q143 Have you, or the people you know/work with/support, experienced any barriers or challenges (relating to your/ their autism) in understanding and/or participating in the following processes:



Q144 What could have made it better?

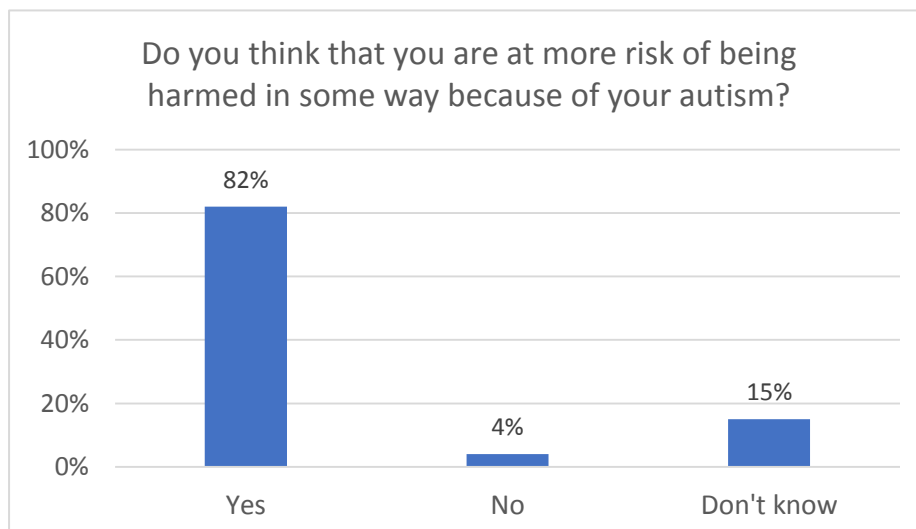
7 comments were made.

Theme	Number of comments
Better communication	2
Other	2
Appropriate adjustments	1
More knowledge/ understanding of autism	1
Faster processes	1

Priority 7 – Keeping Safe (this section only contains questions for autistic people)

55 people with autism said they wanted to answer questions about Priority 7.

Q145 Do you think that you are at more risk of being harmed in some way because of your autism?



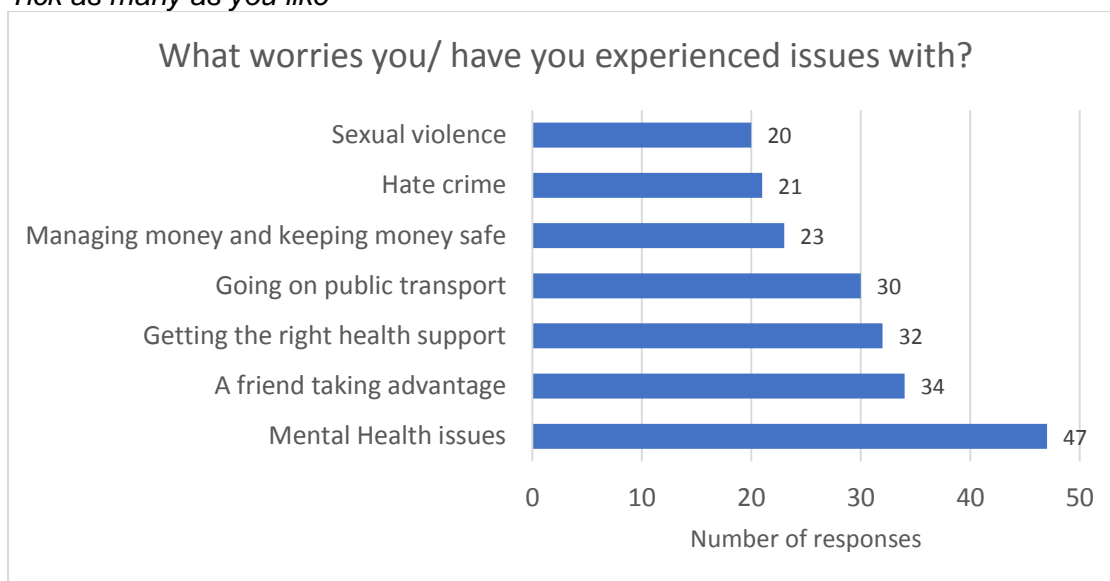
Q146 If yes, please give details?

37 Comments were left.

Theme	Number of comments
Makes me (seem) more vulnerable	14
Naïve/ Trusting/ Gullible	8
Easy Target	6
Hard to recognise risky situations	5
Hate Crime/ Bullying	4
My reaction can put me in difficult situations	4
Trouble understanding social cues/ body language	3
Others' understanding of autism	3
Can appear rude/ confrontational	2
Domestic abuse	2
Fight response – at risk of breaking law	2
Other	1

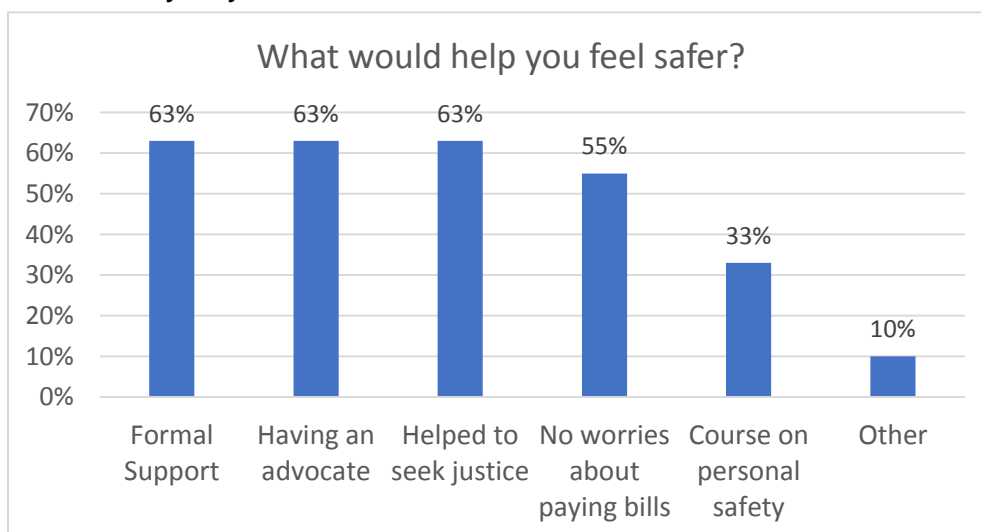
Q147 What worries you/ have you experienced issues with?

Tick as many as you like



Q148 What would help you feel safer?

Tick as many as you like





Title of report: Wye Valley Trust (WVT) Investment Partnership Model

Meeting: Cabinet

Meeting date: Thursday 28 March 2024

Report by: Cabinet member economy and growth

Report by: Director of Resources and Assurance

Report author: Head of Chief Executive's Office

Classification

Open

Decision type

Key

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

Central;

Purpose

To agree an increase in value offered as an investment to Wye Valley Trust to enable the development of an Education Centre at Hereford County Hospital. To further explore options around a strategic investment partnership and bring a business case back to cabinet for approval in Autumn 2024.

Wye Valley Trust produced a cost plan in July 2023 which has been uplifted to reflect an estimate of price increases applicable to the scheme in order to arrive at a realistic assessment of total costs. Based on these costs at this point in the process WVT have anticipated they would require a loan of £15million from Herefordshire Council.

Recommendation(s)

That:

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Joni Hughes Email: joni.hughes@herefordshire.gov.uk

- a) **Cabinet to note progress on the development of the business case to enable the development of an Education Centre at Hereford County Hospital and the potential increase of the capital investment up to £15million subject to final approval of business case and funding.**

Alternative options

1. Do nothing option (Business As Usual) – If Herefordshire Council decide not to loan Wye Valley Trust the funds required to build the Education Centre it would delay the project considerably whilst the Trust sourced other funding opportunities.

Key considerations

2. In July 2023, [cabinet](#) agreed the principle of Herefordshire Council investing in a project where the council is in partnership with Wye Valley Trust (WVT) to enable the development of an Education Centre at Hereford County Hospital. At this time cabinet authorised the Director of Resources and Assurance in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Growth to sign heads of terms for both parties to agree the principles and to further explore options around a strategic investment partnership and bring a business case back to cabinet for approval. The business case is currently in development and expected to come back to cabinet in September 2024.
3. Herefordshire Council has a strong interest in the positive success of this project as we want to maximise learning opportunities for learners across all sectors and services. We believe that by enabling WVT to achieve the building of this centre through a loan agreement we will contribute towards state of the art teaching facilities, increased capacity for multi-professional education, equitable training and development opportunities and space and facilities for community wellbeing programmes. WVT is committed to providing this Education Centre which in turn will play a critical role supporting the recruitment and retention of staff.
4. The Education Centre is set to fulfil the following aims:
- a) Deliver high quality multi professional education, supported by one integrated team
 - b) Make education accessible to all staff, from our most junior students across all sectors and services
 - c) Provide access to equitable, high quality support for all learners, aligned with current education programmes. Plus, ensuring adequate preparation for the future healthcare careers
 - d) Maximise the passion, expertise, strengths and commitment of the education infrastructure and wider partnership networks
 - e) Provide essential education, training, support and services to benefit the whole of the Hereford Community.
5. In July 2023 the known estimated costs were £6million, due to inflation and construction pressures, the loan figure required from Herefordshire Council is now £15million. The total cost for the scheme is £17.5m, this is proposed to be made up from £15m from Herefordshire Council, £2.5m from Charitable Funding. This is subject to potential changes if more funding becomes available to WVT through other sources of funding.

6. A number of options have been modelled to reflect the cost of loan financing which allow for variables relating to loan value, duration and interest rate to be included in calculations.
7. WVT aim to make the Trust a destination for students and staff for high-quality education, a lasting positive experience and to support the recruitment and retention of staff. The proposed development is to expand and enhance the education delivered by building a dedicated education and training facility on the County Hospital site.
8. The Trust is set a capital financing limit known as Capital Departmental Expenditure Limit (CDEL) which governs the maximum amount of investment that the Trust can make from its own resources. Wye Valley Trust are currently completing work around this to inform the business case.
9. Under the current rules, funding obtained from other sources (such as local authorities) is counted against the Trust's CDEL limit. The Trust is currently engaged with NHS England to evaluate options around the Trust to borrowing from this source on the basis that it can demonstrate capacity to repay the loan. The business case will demonstrate this viability.
10. The overall project viability will also be linked to a successful planning application which will be completed in due course running parallel to the business case development. Cabinet will be kept inform of this progress.
11. A further cabinet decision will be taken on the business case in September 2024 and funding submission following full approval from the Wye Valley Trust Board.

Community impact

12. Wye Valley NHS Trust aim to make this facility available to the local community in order to encourage and foster mutually beneficial links with a wide range of community groups, including other Herefordshire education providers, patients, and the public.

Environmental Impact

13. This decision / proposal seeks to deliver the council's [environmental policy commitments](#) and aligns to the following success measure in the County Plan.

- **Work in partnership with others to reduce county carbon emissions**

14. Herefordshire Council provides and purchases a wide range of services for the people of Herefordshire. Together with partner organisations in the private, public and voluntary sectors we share a strong commitment to improving our environmental sustainability, achieving carbon neutrality and to protect and enhance Herefordshire's outstanding natural environment.

The development of this project will seek to minimise any adverse environmental impact and will actively seek opportunities to improve and enhance environmental performance.

Equality duty

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

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

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
16. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. Our providers will be made aware of their contractual requirements in regards to equality legislation.

Resource implications

17. WVT has a dedicated corporate Project Team which was set up in February 2021 with the Trust Chief Strategy and Planning Officer as Senior Responsible Office (SRO). This team meets fortnightly and encompasses all of the major stakeholders in the scheme. This project reports into the Trust Capital Programme Board chaired by the Trust Managing Director.

Title	Role
Chief strategy and planning officer	SRO and Chair
AMD Education and Consultant Paediatrician	
Associate Director of Education/OD and Workforce Transformation, Education and Development	
Chief People Officer	
Capital Projects Manager	
Head of Business Development	Project Manager/Support & Business Case
Senior Finance Manager – Capital and Planning	Finance - Capital
Senior Finance Manager, Corporate, Estates & Consolidation	Finance - Revenue
Fundraising Campaign Director, Corporate	Fundraising
Senior Manager for Learning and Development, Training & Education (Hoople Ltd)	
Architectural Lead – IT Services (Hoople Ltd)	
Communications & Engagement Manager	Communications lead

18. Any council project resources and legal requirements will be absorbed within the council's revenue budgets.

Capital Cost	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Future Years	Total
Loan to WVT		£15,000,000		£000	£15,000,000
Total		£15,000,000		£000	£15,000,000

Funding streams (indicate whether base budget / external / grant / capital borrowing)	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Future Years	Total
HC Prudential Borrowing		£15,000,000	£000	£000	£15,000,000
TOTAL		£15,000,000	£000	£000	£15,000,000

19. The Full Business Case will be brought to Cabinet in autumn 2024 after full approval from the Wye Valley Trust Board subject to getting agreement around the CDEL cover.
20. The current profiling is based on the known information to date – this could change pending the full business case submission and funding approvals.
21. The interest on prudential borrowing loan will be fully repaid over the repayment terms following sign off of the business case.

Legal implications

22. The full business case produced by WVT will need to be considered at that time and legal advice provided as part of the future decision making.
23. The further decision making will require a decision by cabinet and will include commitments such as the development model/loan financing to be used together with guarantees/security from WVT.
24. In addition, where an economic actor receives a financial benefit that other operators in that market have or will not receive (such as interest rates not available on the open market) then the council will need to consider the application of the Subsidy Control Act 2022 and where necessary, publish details of any subsidy.

Risk management

25. Risks relating to the recommended action (and alternative options), their consequences and mitigating actions.

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
Project cannot be financed sustainably	Discussion for finance options held with HC Accountants
Unable to get planning consent on new centre	Pre-app advise has been undertaken to mitigate risks
Design does not meet client requirements	Establish a considered project brief, budget, outcomes. Use proven designers. Appoint WVT internal design and use group.
Increasing costs during construction	Contractual terms with Main Contractor to limit cost variation. Allow sufficient contingency. Use cost consultant / PM
Delays to construction programme	Thorough procurement process appoints highly competent Contractor, comprehensive design and programme preparation, clear outcomes, high quality Project Management
Compliance with Building Regulations	Thorough procurement process appoints highly competent Contractor, comprehensive design and programme preparation, clear outcomes, high quality Project Management
Main contractor stops trading	Thorough ProCure23 process includes contractor finances. WVT to consider insuring risk.

Consultees

26. The principle of Herefordshire Council investing in an initiative where the council is in partnership with Wye Valley Trust (WVT) was agreed at the July 2023 Cabinet. Cabinet members discussed the report and it was noted that:
- a. The heads of terms would be agreed on the basis that there are no revenue budget pressures on the council and the investment model would be prepared as part of that business case.
 - b. The arrangement would be revenue neutral and no risks had been identified at this early stage, as the proposal develops the risks would be assessed and addressed in the business case.
 - c. Group leaders generally welcomed the report, positivity was drawn to the reduction in patients needing to travel out of the County to specialist hospitals for treatment and skills development and investment in the Health Service

27. Cllr Graham Biggs, Cabinet Member Economy and Growth, said: "One of the Council's priorities is to strengthen and expand our partnership working across the county as an enabler for economic growth and improving our local base of professional skills. This development, if it comes to fruition, will provide an exemplar facility which will facilitate partnership working across patient and service user groups, public service and education, as well as the charity and voluntary sector. The proposals are very exciting, and would lead to the creation of a vibrant learning space and community hub for Herefordshire. It is my pleasure to approve the preparation of a business case, and I look forward to hearing more once this business case has been prepared."
28. The Wye Valley Trust Board have been consulted reference the content of the paper and the council are working closely with the Chief Strategy and Planning Officer. Both are in full support of the proposals.
29. Councillor Stoddart, Cabinet member for Finance and Corporate Services was consulted with at a cabinet member briefing and he was satisfied with the proposals.

Appendices

None

Background papers

20th [July Cabinet](#) 2023

[Education Centre Brochure](#)

Report Reviewers Used for appraising this report:

Governance	John Coleman	Date 12/03/2024
Finance	Judith Tranmer	Date 08/03/2024
Legal	Luke Coughlan Emma-Jane Brewerton	Date 08/03/2024 Date: 08/03/2024
Communications	Luenne Featherstone	Date 02/03/2024
Equality Duty	Harriet Yellin	Date 08/03/2024
Procurement	Carrie Christopher	Date 11/03/2024
Risk	Kevin Lloyd	Date 04/03/2024
Approved by	Andrew Lovegrove	Date 14/03/2024

Glossary

CDEL – Capital Departmental Expenditure Limit

WVT – Wye Valley Trust

HC – Herefordshire Council

NHS – National Health Service

Title of report: New Road Strategy for Hereford

Meeting: Cabinet

Meeting date: Thursday 28 March 2024

Cabinet member: Philip Price, Cabinet Member Transport and Infrastructure

Report by: Corporate Director, Economy and Environment,

Report author: Head of Transport and Access Services,

Classification

Open

Decision type

Key

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 concerned. A threshold of £500,000 is regarded as significant.

This is a key decision because it is likely to be significant having regard to: the strategic nature of the decision; and / or whether the outcome will have an impact, for better or worse, on the amenity of the community or quality of service provided by the authority to a significant number of people living or working in the locality (two or more wards) affected.

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

(All Wards);

Purpose

The report seeks Cabinet's agreement to the revised priorities within the Hereford Transport Strategy and to agree to draw down investment in new road infrastructure to improve network resilience and support the growth and development of Herefordshire in accordance with the current Local Transport Plan and Core Strategy policy frameworks.

Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet:

- a) **Agrees to recommence progress within the existing policy frameworks of the Hereford Western Bypass linking the A49 north and south of the city. Consisting of the Southern Link Road as Phase 1 and the Western Bypass as Phase 2 to realise the county's strategic housing and employment land growth critical to the Herefordshire economy, as set out in the report;**
- b) **Acknowledges the Strategic Outline Case report for the Eastern River Crossing and Link Road;**
- c) **Agrees to draw down and spend £10.3m of approved capital funding for Phase 1 of the Hereford Western Bypass (HWB) and £760,000 of revenue funding for Phase 2 of the HWB as included in this report at para 102 to 107; and**
- d) **Delegates authority to take all operational decisions during the development of the schemes to the Corporate Director for Economy and Environment in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure and the Section 151 Officer.**

Alternative options

1. Continue with the Eastern River Crossing and Link Road. This is not recommended, while offering a possible option by providing a second river crossing and some city centre traffic reductions, does not have the same merits as the Hereford Western Bypass for a number of reasons, including the ability to detrunk the existing A49, levels of traffic reduction and the associated benefits, support for proposed housing and employment development sites. Further details are set out elsewhere in the report.
2. A do-nothing option is not considered a practical alternative to progressing a bypass of Hereford. This is not recommended. Traffic congestion and delays in the city have led to the designation of an Air Quality Management Area centred on the A49 corridor, makes everyday journeys for local people unreliable, and places local businesses at a competitive disadvantage. Lack of capacity on the current road network is limiting the development of key housing and employment sites around the city.
3. Options for transport initiatives to address traffic and transport issues in Hereford were last considered as part of the Hereford Transport Strategy Review produced in November 2020. The review considered several packages of road and non-road measures that were assessed against a set of objectives covering the climate emergency, the economy, the environment and society.
4. Packages including new road infrastructure were shown to provide the greatest congestion relief to the city and increased resilience through the provision of an additional road crossing of the River Wye. Packages that did not include new road infrastructure had limited impact on resilience.

Background

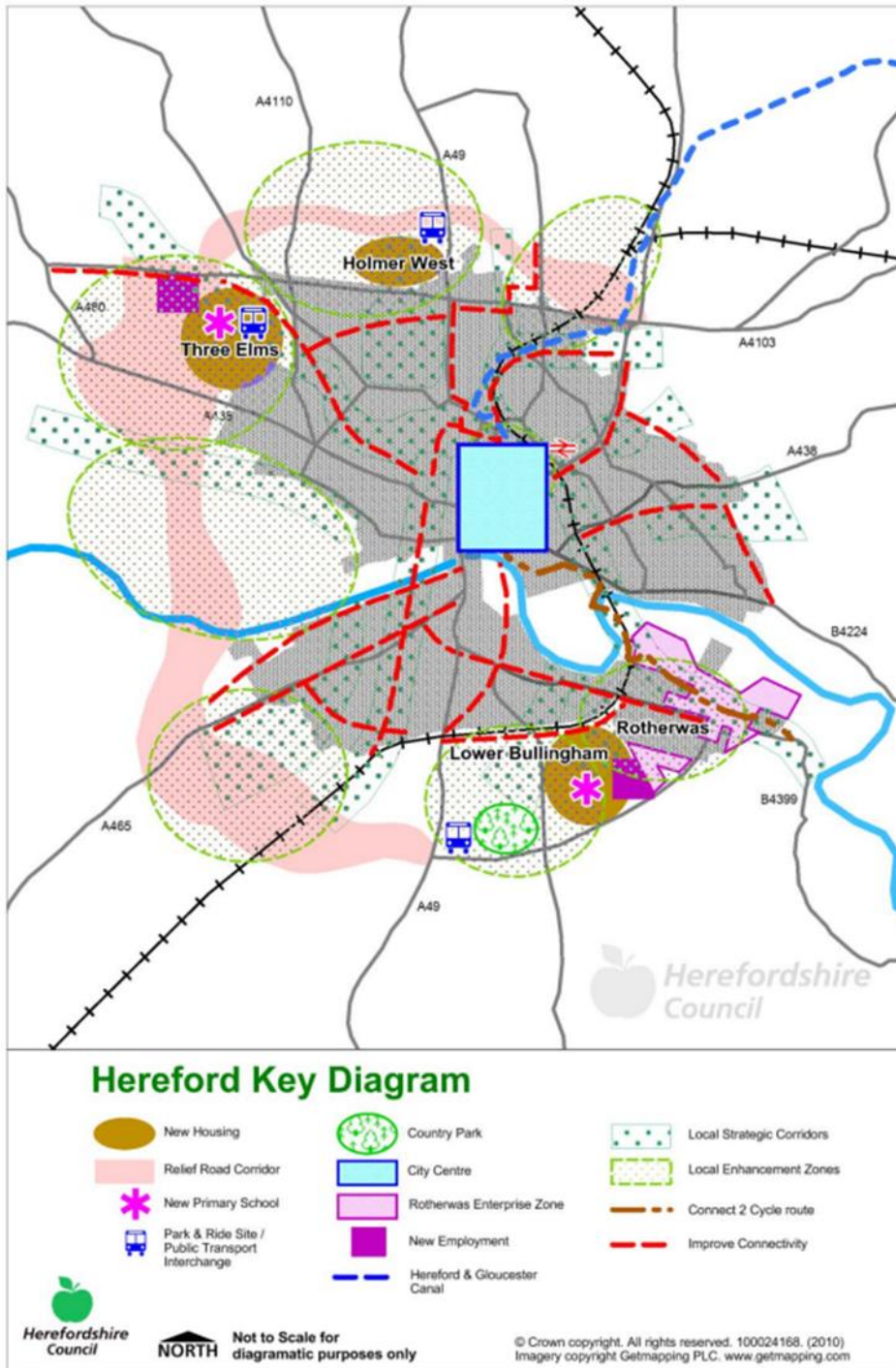
5. Hereford provides regionally important employment, retail, leisure, healthcare and learning opportunities used by those living and working in the city, as well as in the surrounding towns and villages. However, traffic congestion has long been recognised as a problem, leading to journey time unreliability with detrimental impacts on the economy, the environment and people's health. While neighbouring cities such as Shrewsbury, Worcester and Gloucester have enjoyed investment in new roads to address similar problems, plans for a bypass to the west of Hereford that form part of the current Local Transport Plan and Core Strategy have yet to be realised.
6. The A49 trunk road runs through the heart of the city and forms part of the Strategic Road Network between the Midlands and Gloucestershire to Wales. The road, managed by National Highways, crosses the River Wye to the south of the city centre via the Greyfriars Bridge. Being the only suitable bridge for heavy traffic for many miles, either east or west, raises significant resilience concerns for the network as a whole. The signposted diversion route in the event of the A49 being closed in the city centre is approximately 60km (38 miles) in length, following the A49, A4103, A417/A4172, A449, A40 and A49. Most local traffic in such cases will likely use local knowledge to follow minor and less suitable roads such as the B4399 and B4224, causing congestion problems in these locations. An Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) due to NOx emissions from traffic is centred on the A49 corridor and has been in place since 2001, The AQMA extends from Holmer Road in the north to Belmont Road in the south, extending east along New Market/Blue School Street and west along Eign Street as far as Barton Yard.
7. National Highways identifies the A49 as an important link in its Route Strategy for the Midlands and Gloucestershire to Wales, and some of the greatest morning peak delays on the whole route from Gloucester to the Welsh border north of Oswestry occur in Hereford. The potential impact of delays and the ability to progress development opportunities in the city is seen as a key challenge. One of National Highways' key route objectives is to provide efficient, safe and reliable north-south connectivity for people and goods between and within settlements on the A49 corridor, particularly the economic centre of Hereford.
8. Congestion on the A49 and elsewhere in the city threatens further growth in Hereford that is vital for its future prosperity. Plans for a bypass to the west of Hereford had been in development for many years and two schemes – the South Wye Transport Package and the Hereford Transport Package – were part of the council's capital programme. The new roads at the heart of each package were known, as the Southern Link Road and the Western Bypass, and included a wider programme of transport measures for walking and cycling infrastructure improvements intended to realise the local benefits and opportunities from the resulting change in traffic patterns.
9. The two schemes formed, and still form, a critical part of existing Council policy being integral to the Council's current Local Transport Plan (LTP) and Core Strategy. A draft Local Plan is in preparation and will be subject to public consultation in the Spring.
10. Following the county elections in May 2019, a new administration was elected and paused any further work on the two schemes while a full review of options was developed. However, planning permission for the Southern Link Road scheme remains in place. A preferred route had been selected for the Western Bypass and work was in hand to progress the scheme towards an application for planning permission.

11. The resulting options report, the Hereford Transport Strategy Review (HTSR), was completed in November 2020. The report showed that meeting objectives to reduce congestion and improve resilience would be most successful through a package of measures that included a new road and river crossing, plus improvements to walking, cycling and public transport facilities. However, it was also acknowledged that there would be impacts in other areas such as environment and carbon emissions from constructing a new road.
12. At its meeting on 2 February 2021, Council made the decision to stop both the Southern Link Road and the Western Bypass and to progress plans for an Eastern River Crossing and Link Road (ERiC). At its meeting on 24 June 2021 Cabinet approved the allocation of a £400,000 budget for the development of ERiC, and at its 29 September 2022 meeting Cabinet approved the allocation of a further £1m revenue budget. The new road was to be complemented by a package of measures that included walking, cycling, public transport and demand management improvement. These latter initiatives were later brought together under the draft Hereford Masterplan.

The Need for Investment

13. The Herefordshire economy faces a number of significant long term challenges. The Office of National Statistics (ONS) report into regional inequality in 2021 identified Herefordshire as having the lowest levels of productivity based on gross value added (GVA) per hour of any county tier in England, and the second lowest in the UK. Average wages in the county are 16% below the national average.
14. The Herefordshire Economic Plan states “There are major challenges around the resilience and reliability of our transport system. Long journey times for road freight, with major bottlenecks around Hereford, can lead to increased costs for businesses and discourages investment. These infrastructure challenges make it harder for people, especially younger and older residents, to access training, work, leisure and services. They are a significant contributor to lower business productivity, competitiveness and growth”.
15. Wider regional areas, particularly in southern and mid Wales and Shropshire, are also severely affected due to the A49 being a major trunk route. As such the recently formed Marches Forward Partnership recognises a bypass of Hereford to tackle congestion and delay as a priority project benefitting Shropshire, Monmouthshire, and Powys as well as Herefordshire.
16. At a meeting on 13 March 2024 with the Minister for Roads and Local Transport it was agreed that the DfT and the Council should work closely together to discuss proposals in more detail and to determine a way forward to address the transport issues in the city and surrounding areas. A previous meeting with Midlands Engine and Midlands Connect on 12 January 2024 reflected on the problems with productivity across the West Midlands when compared with the national average, but noted the high potential for growth in Herefordshire. It was recognised that, to achieve that potential, there is a critical need for additional highway infrastructure to support new housing and employment land around the city.
17. The county also faces a housing crisis, in particular the availability of affordable local homes to retain and attract the workforce needed to grow the economy. The Local Plan Review has identified the need for an additional 16,100 homes across the county over the next 20 years.

18. While Greyfriars Bridge currently carries traffic levels that are below its theoretical capacity, delays and congestion are most likely to be caused by traffic at adjacent junctions, especially the A49/A456 signalised roundabout to the south of the bridge. As a result, significant additional development, particularly to the south of the city or on the Rotherwas Industrial Estate and Hereford Enterprise Zone, is restricted due to National Highways' limitations on increased traffic on the A49.
19. For example, of 60 hectares of identified employment land, only 7 hectares can currently be identified and allocated due to these capacity restrictions. Two existing Core Strategy allocation sites in Hereford have currently had development potential reduced due to wider highway capacity issues in the city. The Three Elms site has been restricted from 1000 homes and 10 hectares of employment land and a new primary school, to 350 homes only. Development at Lower Bullingham is similarly restricted to 450 new homes from a potential 1000 homes.



20. Overall, the full potential for growth would be restricted without a second river crossing and additional highway capacity. Improved infrastructure will also lead to greater inward investment, and improved productivity across the wider sub-region through addressing delays in supply chain, movement of labour and the delivery of goods and services.

21. The reduction in traffic as a result of a new road will make for a more pleasant environment, help to improve road safety and create the conditions for better facilities for walking, cycling and buses such as the proposals set out in the draft Hereford Masterplan. All of these benefits will help to improve the city centre and encourage the local and visitor economy.

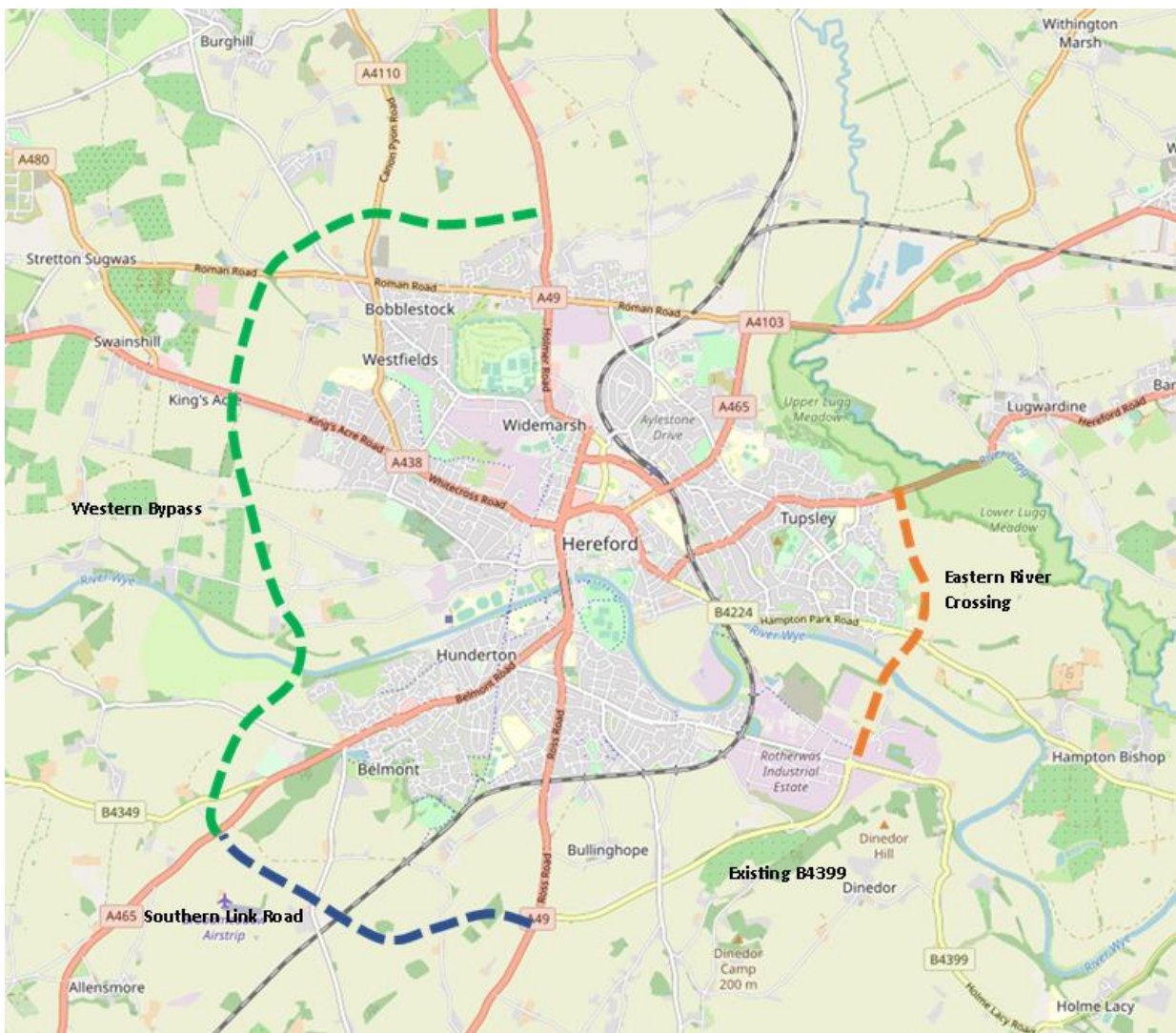
22. The draft Hereford Masterplan was published in early 2023 to celebrate the city's character and provide a blueprint for making it an even better place to live, work and visit in the future. The aim is to make Hereford an even better city, a greener, healthier and safer place to live, work, study and visit – and crucially, an easier place to get around.
23. The Masterplan identifies the opportunities to create a more sustainable, attractive, vibrant and economically active Hereford, which more sensitively embraces its heritage. In seeking to expand the choice available to people on how to move around the city, the aim is to create a more active travel city with safer infrastructure for cycling, walking, and public transport.
24. Over time, the goal is to increase visitor numbers and footfall in the city centre through the re-allocation of road space to the most healthy and efficient modes of getting around. The plan is for a car-light, but not anti-car, city centre that is easy to navigate and access on foot, by bike and using quick and reliable buses. The proposals also include a strategy to reduce road danger at the school gates, enable liveable neighbourhoods and provide safer routes to school.
25. This vision cannot happen without a reduction in the number of vehicles on the key roads in the city, such as the A49 north-south and the A438 east-west. The scale of change needed in traffic flows can best be realised by providing new road infrastructure and a second river crossing, as shown in Appendices B and C. As an example, the Masterplan includes suggestions for the transformation of the Commercial Road into a flagship, tree-lined boulevard that will act as a 'green spine' at the heart of the regeneration of this historic neighbourhood.
26. Offering improved and more attractive choices to move around the city will reduce dependence on the car for short journeys and help to ensure that spare road capacity is not filled with additional journeys generated as a consequence of improved journey times. This "induced demand" is a phenomenon whereby "new" traffic appears on the network as a result of increased capacity, and evidence suggests that the effect is greatest where there are high levels of congestion and suppressed demand. Without measures to improve walking, cycling and the use of public transport there is a risk that some of the benefits such as improved journey times will be eroded as more vehicles use the network. Therefore, the new road and city centre improvements can be viewed as complementary to, and dependent upon, one another.
27. A number of Masterplan schemes are currently underway as part of a project supported by the Levelling Up Fund 2, including the new transport hub at the railway station, new cycle and walking routes and measures to improve safety around schools.

New Road Options

28. A new road scheme could be expected to deliver against a number of key objectives:
 - **Economic benefits** – through improved productivity by reducing the costs to businesses caused by congestion and delay, establishing a more attractive location for inward investment, and by improving residents' access to training, work and services.
 - **Improved network resilience** – by providing a second major road crossing of the River Wye to reduce reliance on Greyfriars Bridge.

- **Detrunk the existing A49** – by diverting the trunk road along the new road and allowing the Council to carry out local improvements for better connectivity across the city.
- **Traffic benefits** - by reducing traffic congestion and improving journey times within and through the city.
- **City centre improvements** – by delivering reductions in traffic and a better local environment and reducing the A49's congestion barrier to regeneration and growth across the city centre
- **Support for the draft Local Plan** – by providing the transport access and capacity to allow strategic land use plans to be realised.

29. The three road schemes considered as part of the Hereford Transport Strategy Review – Southern Link Road, Western Bypass and the Eastern River Crossing and Link Road – and their location relative to Hereford are shown on the figure below.



Eastern River Crossing and Link Road

30. The Eastern River Crossing and Link Road (ERiC) has since been developed by consultants AECOM to the Strategic Outline Case (SOC) in line with Department for Transport (DfT) guidance for developing business cases for major transport schemes.

The scheme would connect the B4399 near the Chapel Road roundabout and head north over the River Wye by means of a long bridge before linking with Hampton Park Road before continuing north to connect to the A438.

31. The SOC concludes that there are four best-performing options that are feasible and should be considered for further, more detailed investigation as part of an Outline Business Case (OBC). The options comprise two possible alignments, each as a single carriageway road and with either a 30mph or a 40mph speed limit option. The key difference between the two options is the route taken east or west to reduce impact on the setting of Rotherwas House Scheduled Monument, the Grade II* listed Rotherwas Chapel and the associated Grade II listed stable and barn. The resulting alignment of the more easterly Option 3 routes means the road would have to cross a much wider part of the River Wye floodplain.



- I. Options 1a (30mph speed limit) and 1b (40mph) – these options would connect to the B4399 at the Chapel Road roundabout and route north over the River Wye by means of a viaduct before connecting with Hampton Park Road through an at-grade junction. They would then continue north before connecting to the A438.
- II. Options 3a (30mph) and 3b (40mph) – these options would connect to the B4399 at Chapel Road and partly utilise the existing carriageway of Chapel Road. An additional junction would be required where the alignment deviates to the east of Chapel Road. The options would then route north over the River Wye by means of a viaduct structure, and connect with Hampton Park Road further to the east than Option 1. They would then continue north, sharing the same tie-in location at the A438.

32. The routes are approximately 2.7km (1.7 miles) long. Both options include walking and cycling infrastructure alongside the carriageway and in each case the 40mph speed limit means a slightly wider cross section and an increased cost.
33. At the time of the HTSR being prepared in 2020, the scheme costs were estimated at around £55m for prices current at that time. The options assessed in the SOC include changes to design standards since 2020, particularly around increased design levels for crossing the River Wye floodplain, which has resulted in a significantly longer bridge required than had previously been considered. At either 290m long for Options 1a and 1b or 485m long for Options 3a and 3b, these are the most significant and costly parts of the new road schemes.
34. Coupled with the long bridge lengths, the options also include provision of a footway and cycleway alongside the new road in order to provide improved access between residential areas in the east of the city and the Rotherwas Industrial Estate. This increases the width of the route from a standard 9.3m to 15.8m for the 40mph options, pushing the cost estimates for the schemes at current Q4 2023 prices range to between £116m for Option 1b and £158m for Option 3b. Costs for these two options without the active travel measures and with a standard cross section only would be reduced to £84m for Option 1b and £109m for Option 3b. However, options without such facilities could score lower in terms of meeting one of the key objectives of “Growth; improve transport links between residential and employment areas to the east of Hereford” which may affect their inclusion on the shortlist of options for further consideration. Any major road scheme is expected to include active travel measures as part of an overall package, and alternative active travel measures would need to be investigated and included in the overall package costs.
35. Predictions for costs in the future, which involve estimating likely inflation over several years, require careful interpretation and a likely range of costs for a predicted start of construction is included at paragraphs 77-83. The SOC stage does not include a detailed calculation of benefit/cost ratios, but the impact of increased costs on the value for money of the scheme has been estimated to offer a medium or medium/low benefit/cost ratio.
36. Full details of the scheme can be found in the SOC report: (<https://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/downloads/download/2318/eastern-river-crossing-and-link-road---strategic-outline-case-report>).
37. An assessment of the ERiC scheme against the objectives is summarised below.

Economic Benefits

38. The benefits of new road infrastructure occur in two ways: through reductions in levels of traffic at particular locations and, therefore, improvements in journey times; and improved access for new development opportunities. When considering economic benefits it is the reductions in congestion that result in fewer delays, better journey times and reliability that offer the main advantages. This route will not unlock any future housing and employment opportunities as it is in an area of high flood risk zone 3 and any direct economic benefits would be limited.
39. Journey times for a number of routes across the city are shown in Appendix C. The most significant reductions in journey times of over a minute for shorter lengths of route can be found on the A438 Blueschool Street and the A49 at Victoria Street and Ross Road. This is likely due to reductions in traffic flow of between 7% and 27% over Greyfriars Bridge, depending on time of day and direction of travel. For longer

journeys through the city, the cumulative benefits can be seen in journey time reductions for north-south trips on the A49 of almost 3 minutes and similar savings for trips heading north-eastwards using the A49 and A465. East-west trips using the A438 would be faster by just over 1 minute.

Improved Resilience

40. By providing a second road crossing of the River Wye, ERiC provides a long-term solution to improving the resilience of the highway network in and around Hereford. As well as creating additional capacity, a second bridge will allow for an alternative route for traffic in the event of accidents and other incidents, as well as providing suitable diversion routes while maintenance works are carried out. However, height restrictions on a number of bridges over roads to the east of the city centre would limit its effectiveness for tall vehicles in the event of a closure of the Greyfriars Bridge.

Detrunking the A49

41. For the A49 trunk road to follow a different route to the current alignment through the heart of the city a suitable alternative would need to be created that would be acceptable to National Highways. By finishing at the A438 between Hereford and Lugwardine, there are no suitable roads for traffic using ERiC to access the A49 north of the city. Options to provide a new link road between the A438 and A49 have not been pursued, particularly because of the environmental constraints associated with the Lugg Meadows area between the A438 and A4103.
42. It must be concluded that no suitable alternative route could be found for the trunk road with ERiC and the trunk road would remain along its current alignment through the centre of Hereford. Despite ERiC taking some traffic off a number of routes through the city centre and reducing congestion and improving traffic flows along the A49, the benefits of detrunking the current route would not be realised.

Traffic Benefits

43. Changes in traffic flow are shown in Appendix B. Within the city, the ERiC scheme has a positive impact on traffic numbers across the existing A49 Greyfriars Bridge and south along the A49 Ross Road. These changes in traffic flow help to explain the improvements in journey times highlighted above. The most significant reductions in traffic flow, however, occur outside the city on the B4399 around Holme Lacy and near Dormington, suggesting that the new road will result in a reduction of traffic using the A4224 and other local roads to reach the city from the east.
44. Traffic increases are greatest on roads that would connect to the ERiC. The most obvious is the increase of nearly fourfold the traffic on the B4399 Rotherwas Link, but significant increases of around 50% would be seen on the A438 at Lugwardine and of over 30% (depending on direction and time of day) on the A465 at Withington Marsh and the A4103 at Withington. All of these increases are as a result of traffic finding a more direct route using ERiC to be more attractive than existing routes. In addition, Holme Lacy Road will experience increases of up to 31% between ERiC and the A49.

City Centre Improvements

45. Removal of traffic from the city centre, especially along the key routes of Edgar Street, Blueschool Street and Commercial Road, will help to promote more walking, cycling and use of public transport to deliver the ambitions of the Hereford Masterplan. The

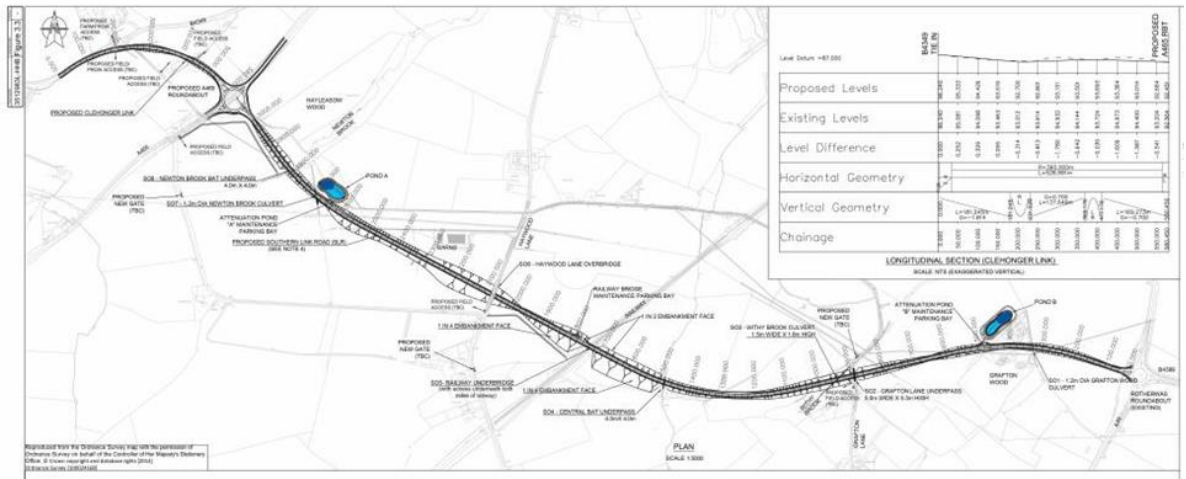
importance of the new transport hub as a focus of sustainable travel will be enhanced by improvements along Commercial Road to link to the city centre. Higher footfall in the centre and civic spaces will support local businesses and help to make them more resilient. Reducing the barrier from the congestion of the current A49 will also enhance regeneration opportunities in the city centre, including the growth corridor to the west of the city identified in the draft masterplan.

Support for the draft Local Plan and adopted Core Strategy

46. The draft Local Plan 2021-2041 seeks to promote the sustainable growth of the county and will start a period of public consultation on 25 March 2024.
47. The Core Strategy 2011-2031 remains council policy and identifies four major residential development sites to the north, west and south of the city as well as the city centre. Major employment development is anticipated to the west and south of the city.
48. The location of the sites in the Core Strategy suggests that ERiC could help to support the development of provision in the centre and to the south of Hereford. However, substantial increases in traffic on the Rotherwas Link as a result of ERiC would require further analysis to understand the impact on any junctions to access sites to the north of the link road. Traffic changes to the west and the north of the city as a result of ERiC are marginal and would be unlikely to create sufficient capacity to support development sites in these parts of the city, and the likely need for new infrastructure to serve these sites further compounds these problems.
49. The extract from the Core Strategy document shown at paragraph 19 demonstrates the intention of the strategy to locate new development close to a proposed western bypass and highlights the difficulties of ERiC in having any positive impact on the development of housing and employment sites at Holmer West and Three Elms. As stated above, given the flooding risk the eastern route would not unlock any new strategic housing or employment land opportunities.

Southern Link Road (SLR)

50. The Southern Link Road is a new 3.6km (2.2 miles) single carriageway road that formed part of the South Wye Transport Package and was granted planning permission on 18 July 2016. The scheme had subsequently been sufficiently far advanced that tenders had been invited for its construction before progress on the scheme was stopped. Construction of a short 150m section of the scheme – referred to as Stage 1 – was completed between 1 and 18 July 2019 within the three-year time limit of the planning permission to start works. The application has therefore been lawfully implemented but will require a full discharge of conditions before works could progress.



51. The scheme was at an advanced stage of development at the time progress was stopped. AECOM consultants were commissioned in 2023 to review the status of the scheme and to advise on the work packages and timescales if work was to be restarted. The full AECOM report has been attached as Appendix A.
52. Highway design standards have not substantially changed since the scheme was designed and it is anticipated that a road designed to current standards should be able to be accommodated within the red line of the existing planning permission. However, more detailed checks are needed for areas such as drainage and balancing pond facilities necessary to mitigate flood risk that may be affected by capacity increases to meet new climate change criteria. Further analysis may also be required for the design of structures, and liaison with National Highways, Network Rail and the Environment Agency may also affect some of the detailed design.
53. While planning permission exists for the scheme, the review confirmed that a number of planning conditions had not been fully discharged at the time that the Stage1 works were completed. In addition, planning permission for temporary works such as haul roads and site compounds have since lapsed and will need to be resubmitted. Some areas of legislation and guidance have since been updated and new requirements introduced, and it is considered that the baseline environmental data will in many cases be out of date. It will therefore be necessary to review, refresh and renew the environmental assessment as part of the further development of the scheme.
54. The latest timescale for starting construction shows an 18 month construction period and a start date between late 2026 and early 2027 and is dependent on many factors. The key variable is likely to concern land purchase, with options for acquiring land either through negotiation or using compulsory purchase powers and any public inquiry that may be necessary with the latter process. Most of the land previously purchased for the scheme was sold back to the previous owners and would need to be repurchased, although one plot remains in the Council's ownership.
55. The cost estimate has been reviewed to bring it up to date and is included at paragraphs 77-83.

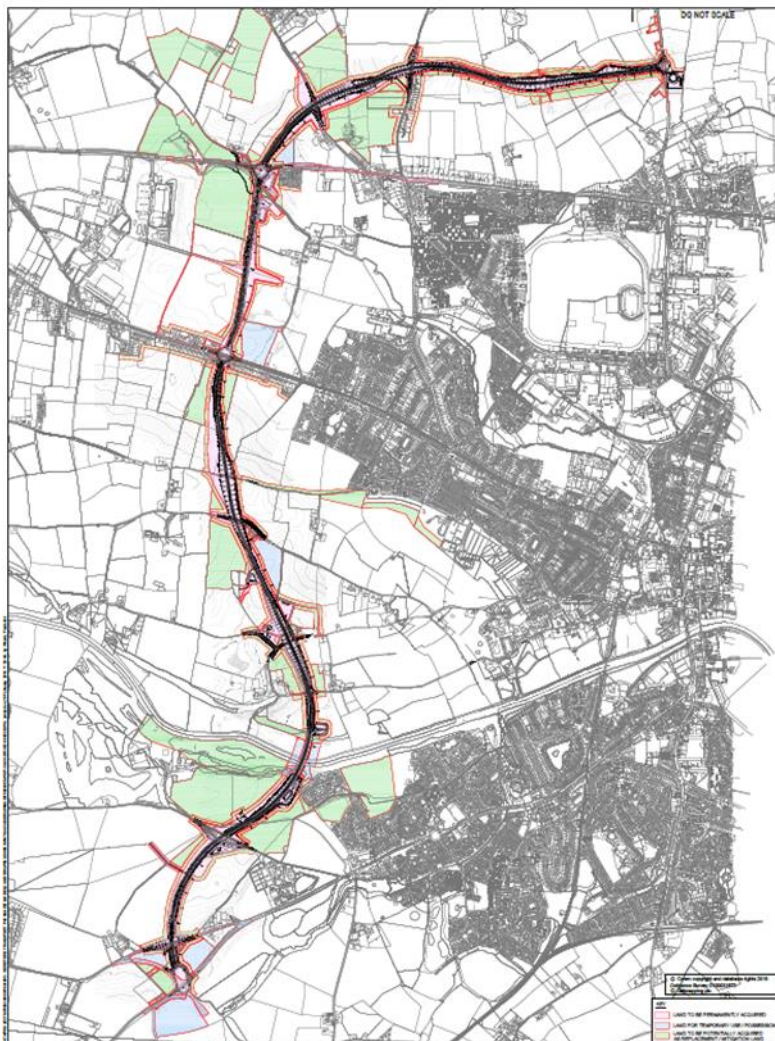
Western Bypass

56. At its meeting on 27 July 2018, Cabinet approved the red route as the preferred route for further scheme development of the Western Bypass as part of the Hereford Transport Package. At the time that work on the scheme was stopped, preparations

were underway for the planning application to be brought within the Planning Act 2008 as a project of national significance.

Any land lying in the site of the new highway (being land under the Red Route) will be blighted land. The council may be required to pay compensation to those landowners affected. This will be based upon the unblighted price of the land in the open market. No account shall be taken of any depreciation of the value of relevant interest in the land attributable to the fact that an indication has been given that the land is, or is likely to be, acquired by the Council for the Bypass project. In addition, any appreciation in value of the land due to the existence of the Bypass has to be disregarded in the valuation.

If residential properties are being acquired the claimant landowner may be entitled to home loss payments and, in the case of non-residential properties, basic loss and occupier's loss payments. Reasonable professional fees may also be claimed by the claimant landowner for the submission of the Blight Notice and negotiation of the compensation to be paid



57. Traffic levels from modelling suggested a WS2+1 standard of carriageway which would consist of alternating sections of two lanes in one direction and a single lane in the other, separated by a 1m wide strip. The sections of two-lane provision were generally on the approach to roundabouts.
58. The Western Bypass is approximately 8.1km (5.1 miles) in length and would connect to the SLR via a revised roundabout junction with the A465. From there it would head

roughly northwards to cross the River Wye. Roundabout junctions are planned with the A438 Kings Acre Road and the A4103 Roman Road before the road turns eastwards to a new roundabout on the A49 north of the city.

59. The cost estimate has been reviewed to bring it up to date and is included at paragraphs 77-83.

Hereford Western Bypass

60. Proposals for a full bypass to the west of the city has, for many years, comprised of both the Southern Link Road and the Western Bypass together. The two schemes will be referred to in this report as Phases 1 and 2 respectively of the Hereford Western Bypass (HWB), emphasising their interdependence. The HWB could therefore provide a new route for the A49 trunk road between the north and the south of the city.

Economic Benefits

61. The benefits of new road infrastructure manifest themselves in two ways: through reductions in levels of traffic at particular locations and, therefore, improvements in journey times; and improved access for new development opportunities. Fewer delays and greater reliability are of significant benefit to businesses, while residents would enjoy better access to work, training and essential services.
62. The evidence and analysis developed in support of the Local Plan has identified that the western route would unlock significant land for new strategic housing and employment growth along the corridor created to the west of the city. Including the long planned development at Three Elms, this could lead to an additional 2,000 homes and 60 hectares of employment land.
63. Journey times for a number of routes across the city are shown in Appendix C. The most significant reductions in journey times of up to almost 2 minutes for shorter lengths of route can be found on the A49 Victoria Street/438 Blueschool Street and the A49 at Ross Road and Edgar Street/Newtown Road/Holmer Road. This is likely due to reductions in traffic flow of between 19% and 39% over Greyfriars Bridge, depending on time of day and direction of travel and up to 39% on A49 Ross Road.
64. For longer journeys through the city, the cumulative benefits can be seen in journey time reductions for north-south trips on the A49 of almost 4 ½ minutes and nearly 4 minutes savings for trips heading north-eastwards using the A49 and A465. East-west trips using the A438 and passing through the city centre would be faster by close to 2 minutes.

Improved Resilience

65. By providing a second road crossing of the River Wye, HWB provides a long term solution to improving the resilience of the highway network in and around Hereford. As well as creating additional capacity, a second bridge will allow for an alternative route for traffic in the event of accidents and other incidents, as well as providing suitable diversion routes while maintenance works are carried out.

Detrunking the A49

66. The HWB connects the A49 in the north to the A49 in the south, providing a suitable alternative route for the trunk road, subject to the agreement of National Highways. Subject to National Highways' approval to the subsequent detrunking, the existing

road would become the responsibility of the council, allowing it to pursue improvements to pedestrian, cycling and public transport facilities and make junction alterations that would make the most of reduced traffic levels and help address some of the current severance caused by heavy traffic on the A49. The HWB would therefore provide a route for traffic that would otherwise pass through the city centre, either as part of longer north-south journeys along the A49 or for more local journeys by using the HWB to move between different parts of the city.

Traffic Benefits

67. Changes in traffic flow are shown in Appendix B. Within the city, the HWB scheme has a very positive impact on traffic numbers across the existing Greyfriars Bridge and along the whole of the A49 in the city, where reductions of up to 39% can be expected, depending on location and direction of travel. Reductions of more than 15% in traffic levels are also predicted on the B4224 Eign Road and more than 25% on Holme Lacy Road to the east and up to 25% on the A465 Belmont Road to the south west. These changes in traffic flow help to explain the improvements in journey times above
68. Further significant reductions further out from the city can be seen in a number of locations. To the east, traffic levels are expected to fall by up to 20% on the B4224 at Hampton Bishop and up to 29% at Sugwas Pool on the A438.
69. Traffic increases are greatest on roads that would connect to the HWB. The highest increase of 152% will occur on the B4399 Rotherwas Link Road caused by the rerouting of traffic from other routes onto the HWB. Other significant increases are seen at the A465 at Allensmore and the B4349 at Clehonger where changes of over 80% may be experienced, depending on time of day and direction of travel. As might be expected, increased flows of up to 33% may occur on the A49 immediately north of the new junction to the north of Hereford.

City Centre Improvements

70. Removal of traffic from the city centre, especially along the key routes of Edgar Street, Victoria Street and Ross Road, will help to reduce the severance between east and west parts of the city and allow for greater connectivity by a number of different modes such as walking and cycling.
71. Less traffic will help to create the conditions for more walking, cycling and use of public transport to deliver the ambitions of the Hereford Masterplan. Higher footfall in the centre and civic spaces will support local businesses and help to make them more resilient.
72. As identified above, reducing the footprint and traffic barrier of the A49 through the city centre will unlock significant regeneration opportunities in the city centre. In particular, the growth corridor to the west of the city centre as identified in the draft City Centre Masterplan.

Support for the draft Local Plan and adopted Core Strategy

73. The draft Local Plan 2021-2041 seeks to promote the sustainable growth of the county and will start a period of public consultation on 25 March 2024.

74. The Core Strategy 2011-2031 remains council policy and identifies four major residential development sites to the north, west and south of the city as well as the city centre. Major employment development is anticipated to the west and south of the city.
75. The location of the sites in the Core Strategy suggests that HWB would help to support the development of provision in the four key locations in the centre and to the north, west and south of Hereford. Significant increases in traffic on the Rotherwas Link as a result of HWB would require further analysis to understand the impact on any junctions to access sites to the north of the link road. Traffic changes to the west and the north of the city as a result of HWB should create sufficient capacity to support development sites in these parts of the city.
76. The extract from the Core Strategy document shown at paragraph 19 demonstrates the intention of the strategy to locate new development close to a proposed western bypass and highlights the positive contribution that HWB would have on the development of housing and employment sites at Holmer West and Three Elms.

Scheme Costs

77. The costs of the Eastern River Crossing and Link Road, the Southern Link Road and the Western Bypass have been calculated to the same period for Q4 2023 (ie the last quarter of the year 2023/24) to allow for comparison between the various options. Costs are very sensitive to the year of construction and any calculation for budget-setting purposes will need to estimate inflation between current day and the anticipated start of construction.
78. Q4 2023 costs estimates can be considered as a present-day cost, and the estimates for the schemes are, to the nearest £1m. For clarity only the ERiC options with a 40mph speed limit are set out here, as the reduction in cost for the 30mph options (1a and 3a) are relatively small:
 - Eastern River Crossing and Link Road Option 1b - £116m
 - Eastern River Crossing and Link Road Option 3b - £158m
 - Southern Link Road - £31m
 - Western Bypass - £201m
79. The Eastern River Crossing and Link Road scheme costs from the Strategic Outline Case represent a significant increase over estimates produced for the HTSR in 2020. Undoubtedly the impact of inflation in recent years will account for some of this difference, but the majority is likely due to two factors. The first is the much longer length of bridge required to span the River Wye flood plain due to an increase in design flood levels in this location. The second factor is the inclusion of an adjacent footway and cycleway alongside the road in order to improve connectivity. Removing this provision would result in a large reduction in the overall cost of the scheme, mostly due to the decreased width of the bridge. The impact on costs of removing this facility is set out in the summary table below.
80. Neither the Southern Link Road nor the Western Bypass was planned with similar adjacent facilities, but each was part of a wider package of measures that included active travel facilities to improve the provision of walking and cycling infrastructure. The cost of this is not included in the estimates in this report. All three schemes

would require additional investment as part of a package of complementary active travel measures such as those identified in the draft Hereford Masterplan.

81. Detrunking the A49 would mean the responsibility for maintaining the current road would transfer from National Highways to the Council and, conversely, National Highways would be responsible for the operation and future maintenance of the new road. Both National Highways and the Council would need to negotiate and agree a programme of works and an associated payment to the Council to bring the existing A49 up to a reasonable standard, recognising the reduced maintenance liabilities in the short- to medium-term of the new road.
82. The cost estimates for the individual schemes quoted above are current day costs at Q4 2023. Estimating for the cost at the time of construction requires the future rates of inflation to be calculated and can only be an approximation based on recent trends and forecasts. As such, cost estimates for construction have been produced as a range between -5% and +10% of the figure calculated using the Building Cost Information Service (BCIS) construction data at the time of making the estimate.
83. Costs are rounded to the nearest £1m and are always rounded up. Costs for ERiC options 1b and 3b without active travel measures (ATM) are also included as (no ATM) options.

Scheme	Q4 2023	Q1 2027		Q1 2031	
		-5%	+10%	-5%	+10%
Southern Link Road	£31m	£31m	£35m		
Western Bypass	£201m			£240m	£278m
ERiC Option 1b	£116m			£139m	£161m
ERiC Option 1b (no ATM)	£84m			£101m	£117m
ERiC Option 3b	£158m			£189m	£218m
ERiC Option 3b (no ATM)	£109m			£137m	£151m

Each scheme would require further work as part of the development of business cases to identify the appropriate funding packages.

For the HWB Phase 1, Cabinet (and Council) has already committed £10.3m to fund the next stages of the scheme. Cost estimates in para 77-83 identify the scheme cost as being £31m at current prices and, based on a likely start in late 2026 or early 2027, a budget cost estimate at that time ranging between £31m and £35m. This would suggest up to an additional £24.7m would be required to meet all scheme costs, depending on inflation between now and the time of construction.

Discussions are taking place with Midlands Connect (as the sub-regional transport body) and the DfT over the sources and criteria of any additional funding. There are three most likely options:

- I. The recently announced Local Transport Fund (LTF) has allocated £101.851m to Herefordshire Council for the seven year period 2025/26 to 2031/32. The LTF was announced on 26 February 2024 as part of the Government's Network North plan to invest the funds released from the cancellation of the northern leg of HS2, This is additional to existing funding that the council currently receives and can be invested in a broad range of projects that will provide: better connectivity within towns, suburbs and cities; better connectivity between towns and cities; and improve everyday local journeys for people. Early indications suggest that the Phase 1 would meet these criteria but this will be confirmed following the release of detailed guidance and further discussion with Midlands Connect and the DfT. The funding profile is

expected to be loaded towards the years 2027/28 to 2031/32 but the details of the levels of funding is yet to be announced.

- II. Major Road Network MRN2 funding through the DfT, which is expected to be announced in Spring 2024. Typically, the current MRN is intended for contributions between £20m and £50m towards new road projects, but detailed guidance is not expected to be available until Spring 2024.
- III. The £650m Midlands Road Fund as part of Network North's plans to support new roads in the region. Details of the criteria and eligibility are also expected in Spring 2024.
- IV. The HWB Phase 2 funding will likely be sourced through the DfT's Large Local Majors (LLM) fund which is intended for contributions of more than £50m that are beyond the scope of MRN Funds. Work is in hand to set out the routes to progress and fund the project with Midlands Connect and to explore additional or alternative funding options and contributions. The development of the Outline Business Case for the scheme would be a requirement to firm up plans for a funding package.

Other Impacts

84. Any major road scheme is likely to have significant impact on the environment close to the new road and on local carbon emissions, especially from embodied carbon because of construction activities. This should be considered against the environmental benefits in the city centre resulting from reduced traffic levels and congestion.
85. The HTSR report compared packages of measures that include the road schemes and recognises the adverse environmental impacts of the packages that included the Western Bypass and the Eastern Link. Both HWB and ERiC can be expected to have significant impacts on landscape and visual effects, with the HWB likely to have a greater impact on built heritage. Both schemes would have adverse impacts on the River Wye and other watercourses, while the impact of ERiC on the designated features of the River Wye Special Area of Conservation (SAC) are likely to be significantly adverse due to the extensive area of flood plain to be crossed. However, the reduction in traffic levels in the city and on key routes will improve local air quality and noise and help to create the environment for measures aimed at improving the take up of walking and cycling for shorter journeys. A key task of the next stages of scheme development will be a full review of environmental survey data and a reassessment of scheme impacts and likely mitigation measures.
86. DfT have introduced Carbon Management Plans which will have to be prepared as part of any funding submission. Analysis in the HTSR reinforces the conclusion that packages including both the "Western Bypass" and the "Eastern Link" (as described in the HTSR report) are both anticipated to result in a high increase in embodied carbon, mainly because of construction of the new roads themselves. Further work on the schemes should improve the accuracy of calculating the carbon emissions associated with the construction, maintenance and operation of the new roads. In turn, such analysis provides an opportunity to select materials and construction methods that would reduce the carbon emissions from building the scheme. It should be recognised that the costs associated with specific carbon reduction actions are not incorporated in the scheme costs identified in this report and the costs and benefits would form part of the development for business cases.

Summary

87. Any new road will offer a mix of advantages and disadvantages depending on the criteria and location being considered. However, the HWB offers greater benefits and fewer drawbacks when assessed against the key objectives:

	Hereford Western Bypass		Eastern River Crossing and Link Road	
	Impact	Description	Impact	Description
Economic Benefits	+2	Evidence and analysis in support of the Local Plan has identified that the western route would unlock significant land or new strategic housing and employment growth along the corridor created to the west of the city. Improved connectivity will also help developments in the south of the city. Significant reductions in journey times for north-south and east-west routes in the city means fewer delays and greater reliability for businesses, while residents would enjoy better access to work, training and essential services	+1	The area to the north of Rotherwas is an area of high flood risk (zone 3) which could not support strategic housing growth or the creation of new employment land. Therefore this route could not unlock any new future housing and employment opportunities and the direct economic benefits would be limited in the long-term future. The route would support development in the south of the city and further employment land at Rotherwas. Reductions in journey times for northeast-south and east-west routes in the city means fewer delays and greater reliability for businesses, while residents would enjoy better access to work, training and essential services
Improved Resilience	+2	A second river crossing provides a significant improvement to the resilience of the network as an alternative route for traffic crossing the Wye. Traffic reductions and improvements to journey times are greater than with ERiC, resulting in greater capacity to cope with incidents.	+1	The resilience of the network is improved by the provision of a second river crossing offering an alternative route for traffic crossing the Wye. There are traffic reductions and improvements to journey times as a result of the scheme but these are significantly less than those predicted with HWB, resulting in less additional capacity to cope with incidents.
Detrunk the Existing A49	+2	The HWB connects the A49 in the north to the A49 in the south, thus providing a suitable alternative route for the trunk road, subject to the agreement of National Highways. Subject to National Highways' approval to the subsequent detrunking, the existing road would become the responsibility of the council	0	No suitable, alternative route for the trunk road with ERiC and the trunk road would remain along its current alignment through the centre of Hereford. Despite ERiC taking some traffic off a number of routes through the city centre and reducing congestion and improving traffic flows along the A49, the benefits of detrunking the current route would not be realised.
Traffic Impact	+2	Traffic reductions across the city and journey time improvements on the A49 north-south route and on key east-west routes are significant and higher than ERiC. This provides greater opportunity to develop measures that will encourage more walking, cycling and bus use in the city and help to reduce the severance caused by traffic along the A49 corridor. Traffic is increased on key routes to the north and south west that connect to the HWB.	+1	The scheme results in traffic reductions in the city centre and journey time improvements on the A49 north-south route and on key east-west routes, although not as great as those offered by the HWB. This provides opportunities to develop measures that will encourage more walking, cycling and bus use in the city and help to reduce severance along the central and southern parts of the A49 corridor. Traffic reductions are seen outside Hereford to the south east, but there are increases in traffic flows on key routes to the norther east of the city.
City Centre Improvements	+2	Significant reductions in the levels of traffic and severance caused by the A49 through the city centre will unlock major regeneration opportunities in the city centre, in particular the growth corridor to the west of the city centre as identified in the draft Hereford Masterplan. Less traffic will support the ambitions of the Masterplan while higher footfall in the centre and civic spaces will support local businesses.	+1	Reductions in the levels of traffic on the A49 are mostly in the centre and south of the city and will help to reduce severance caused by the A49 through the city centre. However, the impact on the northern stretch of the A49 may not have much impact on the growth corridor to the west of the city centre as identified in the draft Hereford Masterplan. Less traffic will support the ambitions of the Masterplan while higher footfall in the centre and civic spaces will support local businesses.
Support for Core Strategy	+2	The location of the sites in the Core Strategy close to the HWB highlights the positive contribution that the new road would have on the development of housing and employment sites at Holmer West and Three Elms, and a supportive role in the development of development sites in the centre and to the south of Hereford.	+1	Of the sites shown in the Core Strategy, those in the centre and to the south of Hereford suggest that ERiC could help to support their development. Traffic changes to the west and the north of the city are marginal and would be unlikely to create sufficient capacity to support development sites in these parts of the city. The need for new infrastructure to serve these sites further compounds these problems. The flooding risks to the east of the city means the ERiC would not unlock any new strategic housing or employment land opportunities.
Current cost (Q4 2023)		£232m		£116m to £158m £84m to £109m (no active travel)
Estimated Completion		Phase 1 – 2028 Phase 2 - 2033		2033
Length or Route		Phase 1 – 3.6km (2.3 miles) Phase 2 – 8.1km (5.1 miles)		2.7km (1.7 miles)

Key:

+2	Strong positive impact
+1	Positive impact
0	Minimal or no impact

88. The benefits of the HWB over the ERiC are set out above. In recognising these benefits there are clear risks of not delivering the HWB:
- I. Not providing the necessary infrastructure to maximise Hereford's potential will harm future prosperity and leave the city in a vulnerable position due to poor network resilience.
 - II. Delay in delivering the HWB will continue to limit the provision of housing and employment land, hampering successful implementation of the Local Plan and a sustainable growth corridor round the city.
 - III. Construction inflation will continue to drive up costs and run the risk of undermining any business case if the schemes are delayed unnecessarily.
 - IV. Not addressing traffic problems that cause congestion and affect air quality will continue to impact on the quality of life and health of local people.

Recommendations

89. It is therefore recommended that Cabinet:
- I. Agrees to progress the Hereford Western Bypass linking the A49 north and south of the city consisting of the Southern Link Road within a capital budget of £10.3m as Phase 1 and the Western Bypass with a revenue budget of £760,000 as Phase 2, to realise the county's strategic housing and employment land growth critical to the Herefordshire economy.
 - II. Acknowledges the Strategic Outline Case report for the Eastern River Crossing and Link Road.
 - III. Approves the budget recommendations to commit £10.3m of capital funding for Phase 1 of the HWB and £760,000 of revenue funding for Phase 2 of the HWB as included in this report.
 - IV. Agrees to delegate the authority to take operational decisions during the development of the schemes to the Corporate Director for Economy and Environment in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure and the Section 151 Officer.
90. Progressing HWB Phases 1 and 2 will require several different work packages to be developed, including a full review of both schemes that make up the HWB to create detailed work programmes. This will include, but not be limited to, the following areas:
- I. A design review to ensure design elements are to current standards and reflect best practice.

- II. A refresh of transport modelling and economic appraisals based on up-to-date traffic data as included in the updated Herefordshire Strategic Transport Model.
 - III. A review of environmental surveys and standards to refresh the environmental assessments required to inform the further development of the schemes.
 - IV. Develop the next stages of business cases for the respective schemes, expected to be a Full Business Case for Phase 1 and the Outline Business Case for Phase 2. Both business cases will include an assessment of funding options and the establishment of a preferred funding package.
 - V. The recommencement of discussions with key stakeholders including, but not limited to, the Department for Transport, Midlands Connect, National Highways, the Environment Agency and Natural England.
91. To progress the work packages it is proposed to develop the governance procedures, management structures and the necessary technical expertise and experience to take the scheme forward. All procurement requirements will follow the Council procedure rules and/or current legislation relevant at the time of tender. The packages will, as a minimum, comprise the elements:
- I. The project governance necessary to establish the procedures and policies to determine how the project is managed and overseen.
 - II. A project management team to ensure progress of the projects, comprising the necessary expertise to represent the Council's interests including technical, planning, financial, procurement and legal contributions.
 - III. External consultancy support to provide the technical skills, knowledge and resources to progress the schemes.

Community impact

92. At its 9 February 2024 Budget meeting, the Council committed £10.3m of funds to progressing the Southern Link Road. The proposals in this report will advance the scheme as Phase 1 of the HWB.
93. The County Plan for 2020/24 has set priorities to receive and consider the Strategic Outline Business Case for the Eastern River Crossing and Link Road, and to consider alternative investment strategies to support the Community, Environment and Economy ambitions outlined in the Plan.
94. The County Plan 2020/24 sets out the ambition to achieve a thriving and prosperous economy that will provide sustainable, well-paid and rewarding job opportunities. The Council will strive for a vibrant local economy that improves quality of life for everyone and also generates the economic growth that will bring prosperity. In support of this ambition, the plan sets an aim to maintain our highway network and plan for the necessary transport infrastructure.

Environmental Impact

95. Traffic levels and congestion in the city are high and an Air Quality Management Area has been designated since 2001 centred on the A49 through the city centre. The AQMA is in place because of the resulting pollution in the form of NO_x. Measures to reduce traffic levels and congestion will help to address air quality concerns.

96. It is recognised that there will be a significant environmental impact from new roads and each scheme will require an Environmental Impact Assessment and Environmental Statement. The process of scheme development will identify the possible impacts that the scheme could have and design mitigation measures intended to avoid or minimise any such impact.
97. Any scheme will be required to deliver a biodiversity net gain of at least 10% so that the construction of the road will result in more or better quality natural habitat than before. Assessments of greenhouse gas emissions from the construction, maintenance and operation of the new roads will form part of scheme development to reduce the impact of the road on emissions.

Equality duty

98. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:
99. A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:
 - a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
100. Development of the schemes will include an equality impact assessment to inform and influence their design and implementation.
101. When consulting with the public and/or stakeholders, the Council will ensure that it meets its Public Sector Equality Duty by following its comprehensive internal guidance.

Resource implications

102. Council agreed on 8 December 2023 and again on 9 February 2024 budget meeting to commit £10.3m of funds to progressing the Southern Link Road. This budget will be used to fund the preparation of the scheme, now referred to as the HWB Phase 1, and will include land purchase, consultancy fees and other preparation costs and will contribute towards the costs of construction and supervision. However, additional sources of funding will be required to cover the overall cost – currently expected to be in the order of £35m – and part of the scheme development work will be to put together the business case and funding package.
103. Not all this ambitious HWB programme can be paid from capital sources and revenue funding will be needed for progressing the next stages of Phase 2, the section of HWB also known as the Western Bypass. The Council already has an approved revenue budget of £1.4m for the development of ERiC; at its meeting on 24 June 2021 Cabinet approved the allocation of a £400,000 budget for the scheme, and at its 29 September 2022 meeting Cabinet approved the allocation of a further £1m revenue budget. This included funding for the Strategic Outline Case and a contribution towards a new Herefordshire traffic model. It is expected that around £860,000 will remain of that budget.

104. Given the priority to develop the HWB it is therefore recommended that the £860,000 is vired away from ERiC towards the following projects:

- I. £760,000 allocated towards progressing the HWB Phase 2 (previously referred to as the western bypass). It is acknowledged that further revenue funding will be necessary to progress the project through to the planning application and business case stages to the point where capital funds can be used.. Most of this funding will be used for consultancy fees and staff costs associated with this work.
- II. £50,000 contribution towards the Council's new Local Transport Plan (LTP) which is currently being developed and is expected to be completed in the summer of 2024. The LTP will set out the strategic transport proposals for the county for perhaps the next 15 years or more and will therefore need to demonstrate the strategic business case for the costs and benefits of the HWB as well as a package of transport measures that will complement the. It is therefore recommended that £50,000 of funds is allocated to the existing £240,000 LTP budget to cover this additional work, which will include traffic and carbon emissions modelling. The current LTP budget mostly comprises a DfT capacity grant of almost £179,000 with the balance from funding allocated by Cabinet for updating the LTP at its meeting on 24 June 2021. Expenditure to date is around £130,000.
- III. £50,000 to complete a review of the Strategic Outline Case for the proposed Golden Valley Parkway railway station (also known as Pontrilas station).

105. Estimated costs and funding sources are:

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital cost of project						
SLR (HWB Phase 1)						
SLR – land purchase		500	1,500	1,000		3,000
SLR – consultancy fees		900	700	200	200	2,000
SLR – staff/PMO costs		350	300	300	300	1,250
SLR - contingency		1,050	1,000	1,000	1,000	4,050
TOTAL		2,800	3,500	2,500	1,500	10,300
Capital Funding sources						
Capital Receipts		2,800	2,200			5,000
Corporate Funded Borrowing			1,300	2,500	1,500	5,300
TOTAL		2,800	3,500	2,500	1,500	10,300
Revenue budget implications						
Western Bypass (HWB Phase 2)		150	300	310		760
LTP development		50				50
Pontrilas station SOC		50				50
TOTAL		250	300	310		860
Revenue Funding sources						
Earmarked Reserves		250	300	310		860
TOTAL		250	300	310		860

106. As detailed work packages are developed as described elsewhere in this report and as consultancy resources are engaged, these budgets and profiles will be refined and reported as set out in the governance procedures as appropriate.
107. Progressing these projects at the various stages of development will require a significant input of time and expertise from Council officers. This will require dedicated time to be allocated from officers' workloads but also to be sufficiently flexible to adjust to periods of high demand and intensive working. A detailed proposal for project governance, a management team and consultancy support will be prepared and an allowance has been made in the overall works package costs.

Legal implications

108. The Council is the Local Highway Authority for the purposes of the relevant legislation.
109. Sections 239, 240, 246, 250 and 260 of the Highways Act 1980 and the Acquisition of Land Act 1981 (to secure the acquisition of the land) grant a highway authority statutory powers to acquire land for the construction and improvement of a highway, to acquire land which is required for (or for use in connection with) the construction of the highway, to acquire land to mitigate the adverse effects of the highway and to create new rights over land. A confirmed CPO will need to be registered as a local land charge. (n.b. Compulsory purchase is a complicated, heavily involved and potentially costly process and it is recommended that specific legal guidance is sought prior to commencement of this process and/or when required).
110. The Highways Act 1980 sets out the duties and rights of the Local Highway Authority in respect of highways maintenance. In particular, Section 24(2) of that Act grants the Local Highway Authority the power to construct a new public highway. Further, sections 36 and 41 of dictate that most public highways, explicitly including those constructed by the highway authority, are maintainable at public expense
111. Under section 16 of the Traffic Management Act 2004, it is the duty of the Local Highway Authority to manage the road network within its administrative area with a view to achieving, so far as may be reasonably practicable having regard to their other obligations, policies and objectives, the following objectives:
 - a. securing the expeditious movement of traffic on the authority's road network;
and
 - b. facilitating the expeditious movement of traffic on road networks for which another authority is the traffic authority

Section 16(2) provides that action which the Local Highway Authority may take in performing that duty includes, in particular, any action which they consider will contribute to securing:

- c. the more efficient use of their road network; or

d. the avoidance, elimination or reduction of road congestion or other disruption to the movement of traffic on their road network or a road network for which another authority is the traffic authority;

112. As identified at paragraph 97 above, in accordance with the provisions of the Environment Act 2021, any scheme brought forward will be required to demonstrate a 10% biodiversity net gain (this can be either via onsite or offsite provision and, essentially means that the development must include provision for a quantifiable improvement in local biodiversity). It is set out within that legislation that biodiversity net gain must be included as a condition of any planning permission granted so this is inevitable.
113. The Council's Local Transport Plan 2016-2031 identifies, at Policy HN1, the construction of new roads as a means of addressing specific areas within the County's highway network where recurring congestion is a problem. The Council's Core Strategy, within its vision for social progress within Herefordshire identifies that congestion management and public transport improvements will be achieved through a balanced package of transport measures including the provision of a relief road, park and choose facilities and bus priority schemes.
114. The recommendations are; 1) practically deliverable (from a legal perspective), 2) consistent with the relevant Council policies, namely the LTP and Core Strategy, and 3) consistent with the Hereford Transport Strategy Review 2020

Risk management

115. The following risks and mitigation proposals to scheme delivery have been identified.

Risk	Mitigation
Cost increases due to inflation and other pressures exceed the available budget.	Review costs on a regular basis, include contingency within budgets to allow for unexpected increases, value-engineer designs to achieve cost reductions, maintain and review a cost risk register.
Challenges in putting together a robust funding package.	Prepare a funding options assessment and develop business cases for discussion with Midlands Connect and DfT, emphasising the regional and national importance of the scheme. Explore other opportunities for additional contributions such as developer funding. Ensure that a package of complementary measures such as active travel and public transport measures are developed as part of the business case to maximise funding opportunities.
Challenges to evidence base and conclusions derived from the data.	Prepare business cases in line with DFT guidance using current guidance and criteria, carried out by expert consultants and managed by an experienced council management team. Consider the option for a

	peer review at critical points of scheme development.
Sufficient staff resources to successfully project manage the schemes.	Develop an appropriate project governance structure and allocate roles, responsibilities and funds to attract and retain the right mix of skills and experience in the client management team.
Availability of consultancy resources to fully support the schemes and make timely progress.	Undertake a thorough procurement exercise to commission suitable consultancy support, recognising the appropriate balance between cost and quality.
Delays to starting the next stages of scheme development lead to problems meeting any programme constraints or funding opportunities.	Ensure a prompt start to the assembly of a client project management team and the appointment of consultancy support.
Demonstration of wider policy and strategy support for the HWB.	Ensure that emerging policies and strategies such as the new Local Transport Plan (to be presented to Council in Summer 2024) and the draft Local Plan incorporate the HWB and are able to demonstrate the benefits of the scheme. Ensure that a package of complementary measures such as active travel and public transport measures are developed as part of the business case to maximise the opportunities and benefits of the scheme.
As a result of detrunking the A49, costs associated with future maintenance of the current trunk road, including the Greyfriars Bridge, place pressures on the Council's budgets.	Ensure that negotiations with National Highways result in agreement of accurate asset condition and future liabilities in order to determine an appropriate programme of works and associated payment to the Council to bring the existing A49 up to a reasonable standard. Future maintenance will be covered by traditional LTP Maintenance Block allocation and potential bids to DfT for exceptional maintenance items on non-trunk road assets.
Properties close to the line of the schemes may be affected by blight.	Early identification of properties at risk and establishment of appropriate contingencies within scheme budgets. See para 56 for mitigation

Consultees

116. Progress of the schemes will involve extensive consultation with a number of stakeholders and the public and will depend on the current stage of development of the individual schemes. A consultation plan for the LTP will be coordinated with plans for consultation for the emerging Local Plan.
117. Comments from the Political Group Consultation meetings on 14th March are attached as Appendix D.

Appendices

Appendix A - Southern Link Road – Planning Application and Next Steps AECOM Report

Appendix B – Traffic Flows Summary

Appendix C – Journey Time Summary

Appendix D – Political Group Consultation Meeting Summary

Background papers

None identified

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Approved by	Ross Cook	Date 20/03/2024

Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.

ADEPT Transport	Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning and
AECOM	AECOM consultancy firm
BEP	Big Economic Plan
CPO	Compulsory Purchase Order
DfT	Department for Transport
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment

ERiC	Eastern River Crossing and Link Road
ES	Environmental Statement
HEZ	Hereford Enterprise Zone
HTSR	Hereford Transport Strategy Review
HWB	Hereford Western Bypass
LLM	Large Local Majors
LTP	Local Transport Plan
MRN	Major Road Network
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SLR	Southern Link Road
SOC	Strategic Outline Case
WSP	WSP consultancy firm

Hereford Southern Link Road

Planning Application and Design Review

Herefordshire Council

Project Number 60715938

February 2024

Quality information

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1. Introduction

AECOM has been requested by Herefordshire Council (HC) to carry out a review of planning application reference P151314/F ('the Southern Link Road (SLR)', hereby referred to as 'the Scheme') that was submitted to Herefordshire Council, in their capacity as the Local Planning Authority (LPA) in 2015 and to set out the next steps required to enable the re-commencement of construction of the Scheme. This report sets out the evaluation and conclusions of a review of planning issues and environmental issues with respect to the SLR. The review also explores options for incorporating active travel and to provide updated cost estimates. The findings will be summarised at the end of this report and will advise the options for the next stage required before commencement of construction.

2. Review of the Planning Application

2.1 Introduction

Planning application ref. P151314/F was submitted on behalf of Herefordshire Council on 8th May 2015. Planning permission reference P151314/F was granted subject to conditions on 18th July 2016 for the development of a "new single carriageway (Southern Link Road) and associated works" on the land between the "existing roundabout junction of A49(T) and B4399 to a new roundabout with the A465 then joining the B4349" (hereafter referred to as 'the Site'). The SLR is located to the south-west of Hereford.

This section provides a review of planning application ref. P151314/F to establish the validity of the planning permission and whether it can still be implemented. It also identifies any changes to local and national planning policy that have taken place since the approval of planning application ref. P151314/F. Finally, a review of the Scheme has been undertaken to establish whether active travel infrastructure can be incorporated into the SLR design.

This Section is structured as follows:

- Section 2.2 provides a contextual overview of planning application ref. P151314/F;
- Section 2.3 considers the validity of planning application ref. P151314/F;
- Section 2.4 reviews the planning policy context identifying any changes in local and national planning policy since the determination of planning application ref. P151314/F;
- Section 2.5 advises whether active travel infrastructure and amendments to the Scheme could be made at this stage; and
- Section 2.6 summarises our advice.

It should be noted that this advice is based on the information provided October 2023. It is therefore recommended that the advice set out in this document be confirmed should any changes be made to the Scheme or planning strategy.

2.2 Overview of Application P151314/F

A planning application was submitted on behalf of Herefordshire Council on 8th May 2015 and was allocated application reference number P151314/F. The description of development sought a "new single carriageway (Southern Link Road) and associated works". As Herefordshire Council was the applicant as well as the determining authority, it was undertaken in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations (1992).

The Scheme proposed under planning application ref. P151314/F would provide a new single carriageway (two lanes) road between the A49 Ross Road at the roundabout with Rotherwas Access Road and the A465 / B4349 Clehonger Road junction. The road is approximately 3.6 km in length. For the A49, the road extends westwards from a fourth arm to the roundabout, through Grafton Wood and then continuing over Grafton Lane at Withy

Brook before crossing above the existing Hereford to Newquay railway line. After this it passes underneath Haywood Lane, straightening up and heading in a north westerly direction to the A465, where a new four arm roundabout would have two entry lanes and two exit lanes. The road then extends from the proposed roundabout creating a new link to the B4349 (Clelonger Road). It is understood that no active travel infrastructure was included as part of the SLR scheme.

The planning application was determined at planning committee on 6th June 2016. Members voted to grant planning permission and the decision notice was dated 18th July 2016. Planning permission was granted subject to 21 conditions. Table 1 contains a schedule of the planning conditions along with information on their type and any triggers for discharging them. Reference should be made to the decision notice for the full wording of the planning conditions. The different types of condition include:

- Compliance – These conditions seek to ensure the proposed development is constructed in accordance with certain criteria or documentation;
- Pre-commencement – These conditions are linked to works commencing and usually require the submission of information to the LPA for approval to discharge. There are occasions where a pre-commencement condition is linked to a particular phase or element of the proposed development; and
- Prior to opening/use – These conditions are linked to the proposed development being brought into operation and usually require the submission of information to the LPA for approval to discharge prior to that stage.

Table 1: Schedule of Planning Conditions attached to planning permission ref. P151314/F

#	Condition	Type	Notes
1	Development shall be begun within three years of the granting of permission.	Compliance	Planning permission expires 18 th July 2019.
2	Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans.	Compliance	
3	Development shall be undertaken in accordance with the mitigation outlined in the Environmental Statement.	Compliance	
4	Construction to occur: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mon-Fri 7:30-18:00; • Saturday 8:00-13:00; and • No time on Sundays, Bank or Public Holidays. 	Compliance	Approval from LPA required where works are proposed outside of these hours.
5	The applicant must appoint an Environmental Co-ordinator(s) independent of the design and construction personnel.	Pre-commencement	The co-ordinator(s) is to be approved by the LPA.
6	Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).	Pre-commencement	Must be submitted to LPA no later than three months prior to commencement of construction.
7	Construction Environmental Management Plan – Sub Plans.	Pre-commencement	Linked to the CEMP above.
8	Soil management – Preparation of a Materials Management Plan.	Pre-commencement	
9	Archaeology – Implementation of a programme of archaeological works.	Pre-commencement	
10	Biodiversity – following of method statements for protected species.	Pre-commencement	

#	Condition	Type	Notes
11	Biodiversity (species and habitat protection and enhancement scheme)	Pre-commencement	
12	Landscape and tree protection (detailed landscape scheme)	Pre-commencement	
13	Landscape and tree protection (Landscape Maintenance and Management Plan)	Prior to opening/use	
14	Landscape and tree protection (construction materials and finishes)	Pre-commencement	Details to be provided prior to commencing construction of bridge structure or parapet.
15	Water Quality, Flood Risk and Drainage (surface water drainage scheme)	Pre-commencement	
16	Water Quality, Flood Risk and Drainage (mitigation measures and channel enhancements)	Pre-commencement	
17	Highways (approval of full design and construction details for junction between SLR and A49(T))	Pre-commencement	Details to be provided prior to commencing construction of junction between SLR and A49(T) – Subject to non-material amendment (P191223/AM) that linked the trigger to part of the works.
18	Highways (legal agreement for work on the A49 trunk road)	Pre-commencement	Details to be provided prior to commencing construction of junction between SLR and A49(T) – Subject to non-material amendment (P191223/AM) that linked the trigger to part of the works.
19	Highways (surface materials)	Pre-commencement	
20	Highways (lighting details)	Prior to opening/use	
21	Highways (weight restriction on Belmont Road)	Prior to opening/use	

2.3 Validity of Application P151314/F

Condition 1 of application reference P151314/F sets out that the development should be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of the planning permission. This means that construction works would have needed to commence on site prior to 18th July 2019.

For a planning permission to be implemented lawfully, all necessary pre-commencement planning conditions must be discharged prior to construction work commencing on site. There are 14 planning conditions in Table 1 that are pre-commencement, acknowledging that condition 14 is linked specifically to the construction of bridge structure or parapets and conditions 17 and 18 are linked to the construction of the junction between the SLR and the A49(T). The remaining 11 pre-commencement conditions would need to be discharged before application P151314/F could be implemented lawfully.

A search on the LPA's online 'Planning Search' tool identified several applications that have been submitted to discharge planning conditions associated with planning application ref. P151314/F. Table 2 provides a schedule of these applications and their status. A review of these discharge of condition applications confirms that all necessary pre-commencement planning conditions were discharged meaning planning application ref. P151314/F could have been lawfully implemented prior to the 18th July 2019. The last discharge of condition

application (ref. P191579/XA2 for Condition 5) was approved 20th June 2019 which provided 20 working days to lawfully implement the planning permission.

Table 2: Schedule of applications to discharge planning conditions associated with application P151314/F

Reference	Planning Condition(s)	Status	Date
P191777/XA2	12 Landscape and tree protection (detailed landscape scheme)	Approved – Condition 12 has been discharged	19 th June 2019
P191579/XA2	5 Environmental Co-ordinator	Approved – Condition 5 has been discharged	20 th June 2019
P191458/XA2	8 Soil management	Approved – Partial discharge of Condition 8 for Phase 1 of works	13 th June 2019
P191452/XA2	6 Construction Environmental Management Plan 7 Construction Environmental Management Plan – Sub Plans	Approved – Partial discharge of Conditions 6 and 7 for Phase 1 of works	12 th June 2019
P184535/XA2	9 Archaeology	Approved – Condition 9 has been discharged	15 th January 2019
P184246/XA2	20 Highways (lighting details)	Approved – Condition 20 has been discharged	8 th February 2019
P184245/XA2	19 Highways (surface materials)	Approved – Condition 19 has been discharged	8 th February 2019
P184244/XA2	16 Water Quality, Flood Risk and Drainage (channel enhancements)	Approved – Condition 16 has been discharged	22 nd May 2019
P184243/XA2	15 Water Quality, Flood Risk and Drainage (surface water drainage scheme)	Approved – Condition 15 has been discharged	09 th May 2019
P184242/XA2	14 Landscape and tree protection (construction materials and finishes)	Approved – Partial discharge of Condition 14 enabling works to commence	15 th January 2019
P184241/XA2	10 Biodiversity (method statements for protected species) 11 Biodiversity (species and habitat protection and enhancement scheme)	Approved – Conditions 10 and 11 have been discharged	1 st May 2019
P184240/XA2	4 Hours of operation	Approved – Condition 4 has been discharged	8 th January 2019

It has been evidenced through dated photographs that the Client undertook a nominal commencement of works between the 1st July 2019 and the 18th July 2019 (the date the planning permission reference P151314/F was set to expire). The development carried out during this period relates to Phase 1 as shown on drawing number DMCXX999-C-2601 (General Arrangement). The Client commenced partial construction of the road between Chainage 1150 m to Chainage 1300 m of the carriageway, which involved elements of earthworks, road pavements (unbound) and fencing approved by application.

This commencement of works has been evidenced and confirmed through a letter from the LPA dated 25th July 2019 which confirms that all the requisite pre-commence conditions attached to application ref. P151314/F have

been discharged and the development of Phase 1 of the SLR has commenced in accordance with the approved plans.

The case officer for the application, Miss Kelly Gibbons (Development Manager), visited the construction site on Thursday 4th July 2019 and Monday 9th July 2019, and confirmed that the works undertaken are considered sufficient to confirm the commencement of development in accordance with the requirements of Condition 1 (commencement of development within 3 years).

It has been clearly evidenced that commencement of development began lawfully prior to the date of consent expiry (18th July 2019), therefore Condition 1 has been satisfied and works to proceed with the scheme in accordance with the approved plans can be continued.

2.4 Planning Policy Context Review

Table 3 provides an overview of the planning policy context at the time application ref. P151314/F was determined and whether these documents have been superseded since its determination. This confirms that there has been no change in Herefordshire Council’s local planning policy. There has been a change in policy at a national level with several updates to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). There has also been a change in neighbourhood planning which has seen two neighbourhood plans being made since July 2016.

Table 3: Planning Policy Context

Planning policy context for application P151314/F	Current planning policy context
NPPF (2012)	NPPF (2023)
The Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy (adopted October 2015)	No change
Herefordshire Local Transport Plan 2016 – 2031 (adopted May 2016)	No change
The Callow and Haywood Draft Neighbourhood Development Plan 2011-31 – which had progressed to Regulation 16 stage and was with the examiner at the time application P151314/F was determined	Callow and Haywood Group Neighbourhood Development Plan (made 1 st December 2016)
Cleghonger Parish Council had designated their Neighbourhood Plan – this had not progressed to the Regulation 14 stage at the time application P151314/F was determined	Cleghonger Neighbourhood Development Plan (made 7 th June 2021)

2.4.1 National Planning Policy Framework (2023)

The NPPF was first published in 2012 and has been updated in July 2018, February 2019, July 2021, and September 2023 since the determination of planning application ref. P151314/F. The updates made to the NPPF are not considered to remove support for the SLR, they may however impact on the detail required to support a future application, if required. The following NPPF chapters would be considered relevant in relation to the detail for any future planning application for the SLR:

- Chapter 2 Achieving Sustainable Development;
- Chapter 6 Building a strong, competitive economy;
- Chapter 8 Promoting healthy and safe communities;
- Chapter 9 Promoting sustainable transport;
- Chapter 12 Achieving well-designed places;
- Chapter 14 Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change;
- Chapter 15 Conserving and enhancing the natural environment; and

- Chapter 16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

2.4.2 Callow and Haywood Group Neighbourhood Development Plan (2016)

The Callow and Haywood Group Neighbourhood Development Plan (CHGNP) was adopted on 1st December 2016 and now forms part of the Development Plan for Herefordshire meaning any future planning application would be assessed against its policies alongside existing national and County planning policies.

The CHGNP acknowledges that the SLR already benefits from planning permission. This is referenced at paragraphs 1.19 and 1.20 of the CHGNP which state:

“1.19 The proposed Southern Link Road to the south of the City of Hereford is a major concern as the identified corridor is likely to impact on the Group Parish to some degree, whichever route is finally determined by Herefordshire Council.

1.20 The proposed new Southern Link Road will link from the A49 Ross Road/Rotherwas Access Road roundabout to the A465 and the B4349 Clehonger Road. In June 2016 the planning application for the South Wye Transport Package (SWTP) – Southern Link Road was determined and planning consent was granted on 18 July 2016.”

Policy CH2 aims to ameliorate potential impacts on the group parish associated with the proposed SLR and sets out several criteria to reduce adverse impacts on local landscape character, wildlife, and local quality of life. Any future planning application for the SLR would need to address these criteria. In addition, the following CHGNP policies would be considered relevant in relation to the detail for any future planning application for the SLR:

- Policy CH1 – Protecting and Enhancing the Rural Landscape;
- Policy CH2 – Building and Transport Design Principles;
- Policy CH3 – Local Heritage List; and
- Policy CH4 – Protecting the Sensitive Landscape Assets in the Urban Fringe.

2.4.3 Clehonger Neighbourhood Development Plan (2021)

The Clehonger Neighbourhood Development Plan (CNDP) was adopted on 7th June 2021 and now forms part of the Development Plan for Herefordshire, meaning any future planning application would be assessed against its policies alongside existing national and County planning policies.

The SLR (referred to as the Hereford bypass) is referenced within the CNDP and covered by Policy C11. This policy secures the principle for a wider Hereford bypass and is intended to complement other policies of the CNDP by addressing potential impacts in a single policy. The CNDP acknowledges that the SLR already benefits from planning permission as demonstrated in the supporting text at Paragraph 6.15, which states:

“Herefordshire Council is developing proposals for a Hereford bypass which will pass through the Neighbourhood Area. Provision for the scheme is made in the Local Plan Core Strategy. An initial phase will see the existing junction of the A465 and the B4349 being moved to the west and replaced by a roundabout. The roundabout will serve a new road, the southern link road, running from the A49 at Grafton to the A465. These proposals have planning permission and compulsory purchase and side roads orders have been confirmed.”

The following CNDP policies would be considered relevant in relation to the detail for any future planning application for the Hereford SLR:

- Policy C1: Sustainable Development;
- Policy C4: Natural Environment;
- Policy C5: Historic Environment;
- Policy C6: Design; and
- Policy C11: Hereford bypass.

2.5 Amendments to Planning Permission Reference P151314/F

It has been established that planning permission ref. P151314/F has been lawfully implemented and works to construct the SLR in accordance with the approved plans can proceed. However, consideration is also being given to whether changes can be accommodated.

It is understood that potential amendments to the Scheme fall into two categories. The first would be changes to the design to align with current highway and other design guidance. This could conceivably involve changes to junctions, highway alignment and associated structures. The second involves the addition of a segregated cycle lane alongside the proposed road.

There is a desire to keep potential amendments within the red line boundary of planning permission ref. P151314/F. However, it is understood that an LTN 1/20 compliant cycle lane is unlikely to fit inside the existing red line boundary. It should be noted that any changes located outside of a red line boundary to a planning application cannot be covered under the available mechanisms for making amendments to an existing planning permission. An alternative consenting strategy (for example a separate planning application) will be required for any changes located outside of the red line boundary.

It is recommended that once the nature and scale of any potential amendments have been established a further review is undertaken to advise on the most suitable mechanism for amending the planning permission. The available mechanisms for amending a planning permission can be summarised as follows:

- **De-minimus changes** – These changes are of an extremely minor nature which means they can be accommodated within the approved design with agreement from the LPA. Based on the information available, this is unlikely to be applicable in this case.
- **Discharge of Condition Application** – Where changes relate to detail design it is sometimes possible to address them through a subsequent discharge of condition application that once approved would supersede any previously agreed detail. This would be applicable to minor changes in detail design that do not impact on information presented on the approved drawings.
- **Non-material Amendment (Section 96a) Application** – This type of application can be used for a minor change to a planning permission that does not breach any conditions placed on that permission. Whether a change is considered 'non-material' (rather than 'material') will depend on the specific details in that case and there is no definition for what can be considered non-material. If a change is not considered non-material by the LPA an amendment application or new planning application will be required.
- **Amendment (Section 73) Application** – This type of application allows the applicant to vary or remove planning conditions attached to the original planning permission. It can be used to make minor material changes to an application by varying the planning condition that secures the approved drawings. New drawings are provided and if approved supersede those in the original planning condition.
- **New Planning Application** – A new planning application will be required if the changes cannot be addressed using one of the mechanisms above.

It is recommended that allowance is made for discussing the preferred mechanism with the LPA to ensure all parties agree on the route forward. The preferred mechanism will require 'buy in' from the LPA as they will need to be satisfied any potential amendments can be addressed using that type of application. This will avoid an unnecessary delay to validation or a refusal if they disagree on the mechanism for amending the planning permission.

A further consideration is that application ref. P151314/F was an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) development and accompanied by an Environmental Statement (ES). Consideration will also need to be given as to whether the potential amendments trigger any changes to Likely Significant Effects as presented with the EIA. Changes to reported effects might impact on the mechanism used to amend a planning permission as well as information required to support an application. For example, a Section 73 application might need to be accompanied by an Environmental Statement Addendum to consider the potential for changes to Likely Significant Effects in the EIA.

2.6 Summary

Planning application ref. P151314/F was submitted on behalf of Herefordshire Council on 8th May 2015. The application sought a “*new single carriageway (Southern Link Road) and associated works*”. The application was determined at planning committee and planning permission was granted, subject to conditions, on 18th July 2016.

Planning application ref. P151314/F was subject to a planning condition requiring construction works to have commenced on site prior to the 18th July 2019. A review of discharge of condition applications confirms that all necessary pre-commencement planning conditions were discharged by the 20th June 2019.

The Client undertook a nominal commencement of works prior to the 18th July 2019 and that planning application ref. P151314/F has been lawfully implemented. This has been confirmed through a letter from the LPA dated 25th July 2019.

A review of the planning policy context confirms that there has been no change in Herefordshire Council’s local planning policy. There have been several updates made to the NPPF, but these are not considered to impact on the principle for the SLR. There has also been a change in neighbourhood planning which has seen two neighbourhood plans being made since July 2016. A review undertaken of these documents confirms they acknowledge development of the SLR.

Planning application ref. P151314/F has been lawfully implemented and works to construct the SLR can proceed in accordance with the approved plans, however it is understood the Client seeks to make potential amendments to the Scheme. Any changes outside of the red line boundary would require a new planning application. There are several mechanisms available for amending a planning permission. It is recommended that once the nature and scale of any potential amendments have been established a further review is undertaken to advise on the most suitable mechanism for amending the planning permission. This matter should also be discussed with the LPA to ensure their ‘buy in’ on the preferred approach. Consideration should also be given as to whether the potential amendments trigger any changes to Likely Significant Effects as presented with the EIA. This might impact on the mechanism used to amend a planning permission as well as information required to support an application.

3. Review of Environmental Assessment

3.1 Introduction

Planning application ref. P151314/F was an EIA development and accompanied by an ES. A review of this ES has been undertaken with respect to the surveys carried out, data sources used, and guidance followed. The current validity of the conclusions is discussed with respect to changes that have since come about with the passage of time. Where relevant, other documents related to environmental assessments have also been reviewed.

Legislation, guidance and policy have been reviewed to identify changes that may impact environmental surveys and assessments should these need to be updated.

Finally, the next steps required to progress construction of the Scheme are described for three scenarios in Section 4:

- if the Scheme is progressed as currently consented;
- if there are material amendments proposed to the Scheme which fall within the existing development boundary and are considered consistent with the original permission, allowing for the submission of a planning application under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (As Amended) to vary a condition(s) attached to the original planning permission; and
- the proposed changes cannot be addressed through an amendment to the existing permission and a new standalone planning application is to be submitted.

3.2 Review of Existing Environmental Surveys and Assessments

A review of the ES that was submitted with planning application ref. P151314/F, and other associated documents, has been undertaken and is described in Table 4. This table makes reference to the validity of the planning application in the context of a future potential planning application.

Table 4: Review of Environmental Assessments submitted with the Planning Application

Document/Item	Date completed	Summary of Conclusion	Comment on Validity
Issues Affecting the Whole ES	Issues Affecting the Whole ES	Issues Affecting the Whole ES	Issues Affecting the Whole ES
Consultation		Consultations with stakeholders and public consultation was undertaken as part of the planning application which this ES supports, and their responses were taken into account in the ES where applicable.	The consultation responses taken into account may not be considered representative of current stakeholders and the general public.
Opening Year		Assessments have been completed on the basis of construction occurring from the beginning of 2016 and the proposed Scheme being complete in late 2017, early 2018. Traffic figures have been calculated for the future years 2017 and 2032.	The temporal scope upon which the assessment is based is out of date as the proposed opening year has passed and the plan has been built out to incorporate new data as time has passed.
Air Quality	Air Quality	Air Quality	Air Quality
Air Quality Assessment (ES Chapter 5)	April 2015	A baseline monitoring survey was conducted Feb-May 2014. Exceedance of the annual mean objective value for NO ₂ recorded on Victoria Street. Elsewhere in the study area NO ₂ concentrations were below the objective value.	Given the time elapsed this data is considered out of date and not reflective of current conditions. Pollutant concentrations are often seen to reduce with time.

Document/Item	Date completed	Summary of Conclusion	Comment on Validity
		<p>Air quality assessment found: No significant effects during construction. Negligible air quality effects at human receptors during operation. Slight adverse impacts during operation at statutory ecological designated sites. Habitat planting proposed to compensate loss. Negligible residual effect.</p>	<p>Baseline year used for model verification was 2012. This is now considered very old, and the baseline situation is likely to have changed. The assessed opening year of 2017 has passed, and a future opening year will likely result in smaller modelled concentration changes due to emissions improvements with time. All data, guidance, and tools used have been updated since the assessment was completed. Of particular note, changes to the assessment of nitrogen deposition at statutory ecological designated sites may result in the finding of larger impacts were this assessment to be conducted using the current methodology, due to the additional consideration of contributory ammonia emissions .</p>
Cultural Heritage	Cultural Heritage	Cultural Heritage	Cultural Heritage
Cultural Heritage Assessment (ES Chapter 6)	April 2015	<p>Cultural heritage assessment found: Two scheduled monuments and 21 listed buildings within the Outer Study Area (up to 1 km from the Scheme). After mitigation, a significant effect (moderate/large adverse) on the setting of Haywood Lodge Listed Buildings during construction and operation. After mitigation, a non-significant effect (slight adverse) at Dinedor Camp Scheduled Monument during construction and operation. After mitigation, a non-significant effect (slight/moderate adverse) at a listed milestone during construction.</p>	<p>Data collection undertaken using historical and modern maps, secondary sources and the Herefordshire Council Historic Environment Record. Given the time elapsed this data is likely to be out of date and further data/designations may now be available.</p>
Cultural Heritage Assessment (ES Chapter 6)	April 2015	<p>The inner study area (up to 300 m from the Scheme) was visited in October 2014 in order to assess its character, identify visible historic features and assess factors which may affect asset survival.</p>	<p>Given the time elapsed since this visit, the setting of the study area and any heritage assets may have changed.</p>
Archaeological Field Evaluation Written Scheme of Investigation (ES Appendix 6.2)	January 2015	<p>An Archaeological Field Evaluation Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) has been devised in consultation with the Archaeological Advisor at Herefordshire Council.</p>	<p>Given the time elapsed and changes to guidance and methodology and the updated required for the desk study, the WSI may be considered out of date.</p>
Landscape	Landscape	Landscape	Landscape
Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (ES Chapter 7)	April 2015	<p>The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment found neutral to slight adverse landscape effects and neutral to large visual effects due to the proximity of the Scheme to residential properties. The temporal scope of the assessment is based on the following timescales;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline year (2014); • Construction Phase (start mid-201 6 with completion late 2017 / early 2018); and • Operational Phase - Year of Opening (late 2017 / early 2018) and 15yrs after opening. 	<p>The temporal scope upon which the assessment is based is out of date. The assessment has not been completed using the latest guidance.</p>
Landscape and Visual Impact	April 2015	<p>Baseline information has been gathered from desk-based studies. A Zone of</p>	<p>Given the time that has elapsed since the undertaking of this assessment, it is</p>

Document/Item	Date completed	Summary of Conclusion	Comment on Validity
Assessment (ES Chapter 7)		Theoretical Visibility (ZTV) was generated for Scheme and the baseline was also informed by field work.	considered that the baseline conditions will have changed considerably from those used as the baseline for the assessment (2014).
Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (ES Chapter 7)	April 2015	The potential effects of proposed street lighting and road signage have been taken into account in the assessment of landscape and visual effects.	The landscape assessment will not have taken account of improvements in lighting technology, particularly over the past five years. No standalone lighting assessment has been undertaken.
Landscape Viewpoints (ES Figure 7.2, 7.3)	December 2015	30 viewpoints selected and documented to assess the visual impacts of the Scheme.	Given the time that has elapsed, the viewpoint photography is unlikely to be reflective of current baseline conditions (new housing, vegetation growth etc). Additional receptors may also have been created as a result of additional development since 2014.
Arboriculture Report (ES Appendix 7.1)	April 2015	A field survey was undertaken in November 2014. Notable trees and woodland character were identified, impacts (including tree loss) were identified, and a method statement was outlined for the protection of trees during construction work.	It is explicitly stated that this report, and any recommendations made within it, are valid for a period of 12 months from the date of the site survey (November 2014). The condition and quality of trees since the survey is likely to have changed.
Ecology	Ecology	Ecology	Ecology
Habitat Regulations Screening Assessment	June 2016	No likely significant effects are expected during construction or operation at the Natura 2000 Sites considered (the River Wye Special Area of Conservation)	An updated Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) will be required having regard to all relevant case law relating to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017), the Habitats Directive and Birds Directive. This includes the key ruling by the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) in the case of People Over Wind, Peter Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta (C-323/17) (CJEU, 2018). This case held that; <i>"it is not appropriate, at the screening stage, to take account of the measures intended to avoid or reduce the harmful effects of the plan or project on that site"</i> (paragraph 40). This establishes that 'mitigation measures' cannot be taken into account at the screening stage, but they can be taken into account in an Appropriate Assessment. The existing HRA Screening Report states that <i>"Likely significant effects were ruled out on the basis of hydrological protection measures during both construction and operation. Potential fragmentation effects have been addressed by including measures to maintain habitat permeability within the design. Incidental mortality and disturbance of species will be minimised by the inclusion of underpasses for otters and bats within the operational design."</i>
Ecology Assessments (ES Chapter 8)	April 2015	Desk study undertaken using information collated from Herefordshire Biological Records Centre and the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) online database.	Given the time that has elapsed, the data from these records is now considered out of date. Relevant guidance has been updated (e.g. guidelines for ecological assessment (The Chartered Institute of Ecologists and Environmental Managers, CIEEM, 2018), and Preliminary Ecological Assessment (CIEEM, 2017)). In

Document/Item	Date completed	Summary of Conclusion	Comment on Validity
			addition, Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) have been replaced by Local Wildlife Sites (LWS).
Phase 1 Habitat Survey Report (ES Appendix 8.1)	November 2014	An Extended Phase 1 Habitat survey was undertaken by suitably experienced ecologists on 7 th and 8 th April 2014. This survey informed the suite of detailed surveys.	Given the time elapsed it is considered this survey and report is out of date and not fully reflective of the current ecological baseline conditions. Relevant guidance has been updated (CIEEM, 2017), and other species and habitats may now be rare or notable (e.g. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, JNCC, 2023).
N/A			It is possible that the Site may now have potential to support other protected or notable species or habitats (e.g. pine marten), or those that are newly identified as rare or notable (e.g. JNCC, 2023, British Trust for Ornithology, Birds of Conservation Concern 5, 2021).
Woodland Botanical Survey Report (ES Appendix 8.2) and Botanical Update Report in 2017	December 2014 / 2017	Woodland botanical surveys were undertaken by a competent botanist experienced in undertaking woodland surveys on the 18 th and 19 th September 2014. Five woodlands were assessed within close proximity to the Scheme. Habitats surveyed in 2017 were not found to have changed significantly since the surveys in 2014.	Noted that planning permission was granted in 2016. However, a number of objections were raised by the public in relation to carrying out woodland National Vegetation Classification (NVC) surveys outside the optimum season in 2014, undervaluing Grafton Wood and the lack of bryophyte and targeted species. Therefore, surveys were updated in 2017, which found no significant change from the 2014 results. Given the time elapsed since the 2017 surveys it is considered that these surveys are now out of date. The report will not be in accordance with current ancient woodland guidance from Natural England and the Forestry Commission (2022).
Hedgerow Report (ES Appendix 8.3)	December 2014	A hedgerow assessment was undertaken by competent botanists between the 17 th and 19 th of September 2014. Several species-rich and Important hedgerows were identified. A total of 35 hedgerows were assessed as part of the hedgerow survey.	It is noted in the ES that 12 species-rich hedgerows (some of which are classified as important under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997) will be bisected by the Scheme, and there are seven other species-rich hedgerows which may potentially be indirectly impacted. Given the time lapsed since the 2014 surveys, it is considered that these surveys are now out of date.
Terrestrial Invertebrate Report (ES Appendix 8.4)	December 2014	A general scoping invertebrate survey was undertaken on 28 th May 2014, with a follow up survey on 11 th September 2014. Five invertebrate species with conservation status were found during the survey.	It is noted in the ES that there is habitat loss (resulting in direct mortality of terrestrial invertebrates) within Grafton Wood and hedgerows. Additionally, temporary impacts through construction are considered on other habitat including a group of apple trees, the hedgerow oak pollard and Hayteasow Wood. Given the time lapsed since the 2014 survey, it is considered that it is now out of date. The report may not include species that are now listed as rare or notable, for example as species of principle importance by Defra and Natural England (2022).
Aquatic Invertebrate Report (ES Appendix 8.5)	November 2014	Sampling was carried out over two seasons in 2014: spring (28 th May 2014) and autumn (11 th September 2014). No uncommon or	Given the time lapsed since the 2014 survey, it is considered that it is now out of date.

Document/Item	Date completed	Summary of Conclusion	Comment on Validity
		protected species were recorded during the survey.	
Great Crested Newt Report (ES Appendix 8.6) and Great Crested Newt Report 2018	December 2014 / April 2018	A great crested newt (<i>Triturus cristatus</i>) survey was undertaken between 28 th April and 3 rd June 2014. This species was recorded as present in all eight ponds which were assessed and evidence of breeding was found in five ponds. An updated report was published in December 2018 following a survey conducted between 10 th April and 20 th June 2017 to inform the discharge of planning conditions 10-11. This survey confirmed the presence of great crested nest in eight out of ten ponds which contained water.	Noted in the ES that no waterbodies suitable for great crested newts will be impacted from survey data in 2014, however impact on great crested newt terrestrial habitat. The surveys are considered out of date (CIEEM, 2019).
Reptile Report (ES Appendix 8.7)	December 2014	The survey area was visited on seven occasions between 5 th June 2014 and 30 th September 2014. Small numbers of common and widespread species were recorded.	Given the time lapsed since the survey, it is considered that it is now out of date.
Riparian Survey Report (ES Appendix 8.8)	January 2015	A water vole (<i>Arvicola amphibius</i>), white clawed crayfish (<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i>), and otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) presence / likely absence survey was undertaken on 4 th September 2014. Water vole and white clawed crayfish were not recorded during the survey. Evidence of otter was found on Withy Brook.	Given the time lapsed since the survey, it is considered that it is now out of date. The report will not have been prepared with reference to Natural England's updated standing advice for protected species (2022).
Breeding Bird Report (ES Appendix 8.9)	December 2014	Six visits were undertaken between 29 th April 2014 and 9 th July 2014. 37 bird species were recording as breeding of which 14 were of conservation importance.	Given the time lapsed since the survey, it is considered that it is now out of date. The report will not have consideration of the updated Birds of Conservation Concern 5, British Trust for Ornithology, 2021.
Barn Owl Report (ES Appendix 8.10)	December 2014	A detailed barn owl survey was undertaken on 2 nd and 3 rd July 2014, 24 th and 25 th September 2014 and 10 th November 2014. One roost was identified but it was not a breeding site.	Given the time lapsed since the survey, it is considered that it is now out of date. The report will not have consideration of the updated Birds of Conservation Concern 5, British Trust for Ornithology, 2021.
Bat Activity Report (ES Appendix 8.11)	December 2014	A suite of bat surveys were undertaken across 2014. A relatively high number of bat passes was found with at least 10 species recorded. The survey area was considered to be 'bat rich'.	Bat survey guidance has been updated since 2014, and the existing surveys are considered to be out of date. The report will not have consideration for the Bat Conservation Trust guidelines (2023).
Bat Roost Report (ES Appendix 8.12)	December 2014	A suite of bat surveys were undertaken across 2014. Two adjacent trees were found to support bat roosts. The survey found the presence of major roosts within 10 km of the Scheme.	Bat survey guidance has been updated since 2014, and the existing surveys are considered to be out of date. The report will not have consideration for the Bat Conservation Trust guidelines (2023).
Dormouse Report (ES Appendix 8.14)	December 2014	A dormouse (<i>Muscardinus avellanarius</i>) presence / likely absence survey was conducted between May and November 2014. This species was not recorded during the survey.	Given the time lapsed since the survey, it is considered that it is now out of date.
Badger Survey	July 2014	A badger (<i>Meles meles</i>) survey was undertaken on 29 th , 30 th and 31 st July 2014. Eight outlier setts were recorded.	Badgers are highly mobile, and so the survey data is considered out of date and not in accordance with the Badger Trust's best practice guidance (2023).
Geology and Soils	Geology and Soils	Geology and Soils	Geology and Soils

Document/Item	Date completed	Summary of Conclusion	Comment on Validity
Geology and Soil Assessment (ES Chapter 9)	April 2015	<p>Baseline conditions were identified from desk-based studies including the following: The Groundsure report for the site has been reviewed to provide a preliminary indication of potential ground stability issues at the site.</p> <p>Outline of the bedrock and superficial geology given using British Geological Survey (BGS) data.</p> <p>There are two active groundwater abstractions recorded by the Environment Agency within the study corridor.</p>	All data, guidance, and tools used have been updated since the assessment was completed. In particular, BGS updated to its latest Geology Viewer with more accurate and up to date records in 2022, and the Groundsure report will not feature the latest relevant information or be undertaken in line with up to date Law Society Guidance.
Geology and Soil Assessment (ES Chapter 9)	April 2015	A slight adverse effect (not significant) was found for geology and geomorphology due to the sterilisation of minerals in a Mineral Safeguarding Area (MSA). The mineral resource within the MSA in the study corridor is currently not being worked.	Given the time that has passed, it is unknown whether the mineral resources within the MSA are currently being worked and a review of recent planning applications/permissions would be required. In addition, the upcoming Minerals and Waste Local Plan may introduce new/altered MSAs.
Geology and Soil Assessment (ES Chapter 9)	April 2015	A slight/moderate adverse effect (not significant) was found for soils due to loss of Grade 2 agricultural land.	Given the time that has elapsed, the quality of agricultural land may have altered, and developments may have resulted in a loss of agricultural land.
Geology and Soil Assessment (ES Chapter 9)	April 2015	A slight effect (not significant) was found for groundwater for leaching and a neutral or slight effect (not significant) was found for end users for accumulation of gases for which mitigation of a Ground Investigation to obtain chemical data was recommended.	Any groundwater monitoring and contamination testing which was undertaken prior to commencement may now be considered out of date due to the time that has since elapsed.
Materials	Materials	Materials	Materials
Materials Assessment (ES Chapter 10)	April 2015	As part of the baseline conditions identification process 11 landfill sites for construction waste within close proximity to the site were identified.	Three of these landfills are no longer operational, and their capacity has likely significantly reduced since the assessment was undertaken.
Materials Assessment (ES Chapter 10)	April 2015	Effects of the proposed Scheme in relation to materials and waste were considered to be minor adverse (not significant) provided mitigation, primarily in the form of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and a Site Waste Management Plan (SWMP) is implemented.	All data and tools used have been updated since the assessment was completed. Policy and guidance regarding waste recycling and disposal for construction activities has changed since this assessment was undertaken, with greater emphasis placed on avoidance of landfill.
Noise and Vibration	Noise and Vibration	Noise and Vibration	Noise and Vibration
Noise and Vibration Assessment (ES Chapter 11)	November 2014	Baseline noise levels were identified by a noise survey. Attended noise measurements were taken at 4 locations for a period of 3 hours.	Given the time elapsed this data is considered out of date. Baseline noise levels may now be different.
Noise and Vibration Assessment (ES Chapter 11)	November 2014	<p>The noise and vibration assessment found: 4 NSRs would experience a major adverse impact during construction.</p> <p>5 NSRs would experience a major adverse impact during operation in the short term, 1 NSR would experience a major adverse impact during operation in the long term.</p> <p>The majority of NSRs would experience a decrease in noise levels.</p>	<p>All data, guidance, and tools used have been updated since the assessment was completed.</p> <p>Road noise maps were updated in 2019. In this latest dataset there are several Noise Important Areas (NIAs) to the north of the Scheme (IDs 14592, 7726, 7725, 11817*) which were not considered in the assessment.</p>
Effects on All Travellers	Effects on All Travellers	Effects on All Travellers	Effects on All Travellers
Effects on all Travellers (ES Chapter 12)	April 2015	Site visits and assessment of aerial photography provided the baseline data	Given the time elapsed this site visit and aerial imagery is not considered to reflect the current baseline.

Document/Item	Date completed	Summary of Conclusion	Comment on Validity
		<p>enabling an assessment of Views from the Road.</p> <p>In order to determine the level of stress caused by fear of accidents actual Personal Injury and Collision (PIC) data has been acquired for a 5-year period on the existing roads which surround the proposed Scheme.</p>	<p>Collision and injury data is assessed for the previous five years and is now out of date.</p> <p>The methodology relating to Effects on All Travellers no longer exists, and elements of this assessment have been incorporated into the Population and Human Health Chapter.</p>
Community and Private Assets	Community and Private Assets	Community and Private Assets	Community and Private Assets
Community and Private Assets (ES Chapter 13)	April 2015	Baseline information was obtained from Defra's Agricultural Land Classification (ALC) (provisional), and, in the absence of a detailed survey all scheme agricultural land was assumed to be Grade 2.	<p>There have been no known updates to the ALC since 2015; however if detailed surveys have since been undertaken these may reveal a greater understanding of the baseline.</p> <p>The methodology relating to Community and Private Assets no longer exists, and elements of this assessment have been incorporated into the Population and Human Health Chapter.</p>
Community and Private Assets (ES Chapter 13)	April 2015	The proposed Scheme will involve 150 m ² of land take from Private Property (Pykeways). This is only 7% of the area of the property, and therefore there will be a Minor Adverse effect on Private Property.	Given the time that has elapsed since this assessment, it is possible that land agricultural ownership relevant to the Scheme may have altered and so the assessment of private property is considered out of date.
Road Drainage and the Water Environment	Road Drainage and the Water Environment	Road Drainage and the Water Environment	Road Drainage and the Water Environment
Road Drainage and the Water Environment (ES Chapter 14)	April 2015	<p>Baseline conditions of watercourses were informed by a site visit, with photographs presented. No surface water sampling has been undertaken to inform this ES. Water Framework Directive (WFD) Data on water quality was obtained for the River Wye and Norton Brook, but no information is held for other relevant watercourses.</p> <p>Water quality data was obtained from 2015 Water Framework Directive (WFD) Data (Cycle 2).</p>	<p>Given the time elapsed, these photos may no longer be representative of the current baseline. It is considered that water sampling of all relevant watercourses would be required.</p> <p>Data has now progressed to WFD Cycle 3 with updated quality assessments, in particular reductions in ecological and chemical quality from 'Good' to 'Moderate'.</p>
Road Drainage and the Water Environment (ES Chapter 14)	April 2015	<p>The road drainage and water environment assessment found, after mitigation:</p> <p>Neutral to slight to moderate adverse effects during construction including a slight to moderate adverse effect to Withy Brook due to increased sediment loading.</p> <p>Neutral effects during operation.</p> <p>Mitigation includes adherence to a CEMP during construction and a robust drainage system during operation.</p>	All data, guidance, and tools used have been updated since the assessment was completed.
Flood Risk Assessment (ES Appendix 14.4)	February 2015	The proposed Scheme is located entirely in Flood Zone 1, but local flood risk was identified at Withy Brook and Norton Brook. A flood risk assessment including flood modelling at Withy Brook has been carried out which demonstrates that the Scheme does not pose unacceptable flood risk to users of the proposed SLR or increase flood risk to people and property elsewhere.	All data, guidance, and tools used have been updated since the assessment was completed.
Cumulative Effects	Cumulative Effects	Cumulative Effects	Cumulative Effects

Document/Item	Date completed	Summary of Conclusion	Comment on Validity
Cumulative Effects (ES Chapter 15)	April 2015	Cumulative assessment based on developments identified as of January 2015.	Given the time that has passed, it is considered that the development identified as relevant for the assessment of cumulative effects (Tables 15.2 & 15.3) are now out of date. The findings of the cumulative assessment as laid out in ES Chapter 15 are therefore no longer accurate. This would have a knock on effect on each of the discipline chapters where they assess cumulative effects. Changes in guidance for assessment of cumulative effects has changed since the undertaking of this assessment, and the guidance used would now be considered insufficient. No assessment of combined effects is given.
Construction Environmental Management Plan	Construction Environmental Management Plan	Construction Environmental Management Plan	Construction Environmental Management Plan
Draft Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), submitted with ES	April 2015	This draft CEMP sets out how environmental protection will be managed during construction. It states the mitigation measures proposed to reduce environmental harm, monitoring requirements, the requirements for implementation method statements, etc. It states that it is to be a live document kept up to date by the contractor, which should be updated and reviewed 'on a regular basis'.	A final CEMP has only been produced for Stage 1 of works. Given the time that has passed, it is considered that this document is out of date.
Draft CEMP, submitted with discharge of planning conditions 6&7	November 2018	This draft CEMP sets out how environmental protection will be managed during construction, with the inclusion of topic-specific sub-plans as required by planning condition 7. It states that the Final CEMP, owned by the contractor, must be updated by the Contractor on a minimum of a six-monthly basis.	A final CEMP has only been produced for Stage 1 of works. Given that more than six months has passed, it is considered that this document is out of date.

As discussed further in Section 4, below, any future potential planning application may require new assessments to be undertaken in order to reflect the current environmental baseline, incorporate any changes to the Scheme and be in line with the latest legislation and guidance.

3.3 Review of Changes to Legislation, Policy and Guidance with respect to Environmental Assessment

Table 5: Review of Changes to Legislation, Policy, and Guidance with respect to Environmental Assessment

Legislation/Guidance	Date of revision/ introduction	Comment on Changes
General – National	General – National	General – National
EIA Regulations	Updated in 2017	A number of significant changes were introduced under the 2017 update, including the need to consider the effects on the environment arising from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the vulnerability of development to major accidents and disasters (MADs); impacts from waste or use of natural resources;

Legislation/Guidance	Date of revision/ introduction	Comment on Changes
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> impacts on and resilience to climate change; and impacts on cultural heritage and landscape. <p>The update also introduced the need for a consideration of the environmental effects of alternatives to the proposed development and to ensure the those preparing the Environmental Statement were 'competent experts'.</p>
BNG	The provision for a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain to be a condition of planning permission in England was introduced under the Environment Act 2021, and is currently expected to come into effect in January 2024.	The requirement for developments to have undertaken a BNG assessment and to demonstrate BNG gain was not present at the time of the submission of the planning application, and would be relevant if either an amendment or full application is required.
DMRB guidance (including Interim Advice Notes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LA 101 – Introduction to environmental assessment, last updated in 2019; LA 102 – Sustainability and environment, last updated 2019; LA 103 – Scoping projects for environmental assessment, last updated 2020; LA 104 – Environmental assessment and monitoring; LA 105 – Air Quality, last updated 2019; LA 106 – Cultural heritage assessment, last updated 2020; LA 107 – Landscape and visual effects, last updated 2020; LA 108 – Biodiversity, last updated 2020; LA 109 – Geology and Soils, last updated 2019; LA 110 – Material assets and waste, last updated 2019; LA 111 – Noise and vibration, last updated 2020; LA 112 – Population and human health, last updated 2020 (superseding Effects on All Travellers and Community and Private Assets); LA 113 – Road drainage and the water environment, last updated 2020; LA 115 – Habitats Regulations assessment, last updated 2020 	Wholesale update to guidance for all disciplines. This makes it difficult to compare changes in the impacts between 2014 and the current baseline (for more detail, see Section 4 below).
Climate requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LA 114 – Climate, last updated 2021. 	National Highways guidance on the assessment of climate impacts to and from the Scheme was issued in 2019 for the first time, and updated in 2021. A climate chapter of the ES was not produced to inform the current planning application, but would now be considered to be required for a new planning application, and likely a S73 amendment.
General - Local	General - Local	General - Local

Legislation/Guidance	Date of revision/ introduction	Comment on Changes
The Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (Herefordshire Council, 2007)	Superseded in 2015 by the Local Plan – Core Strategy	<p>Introduction of more specific environmental policies including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LD3 – Green Infrastructure; • SD1 – Sustainable design and energy efficiency; • SD 2 – Renewable and low carbon energy • SD3 – Sustainable water management and water resources; and • SD4 – Waste water treatment and river water quality. <p>Please note: Some of the assessments in the 2014 ES have used the 2007 plan whilst others have used the newer 2015 plan.</p>
Cultural Heritage	Cultural Heritage	Cultural Heritage
Standard and guidance for historic environment desk-based assessment (The Chartered Institute of Archaeologists (CIfA), 2012)	Later version published in 2014 and updated in 2020	Updated references to latest Historic England guidance. This would need to be taken into account when either discharging conditions or preparing a future potential planning application.
Code of conduct: professional ethics in archaeology (CIfA, 2013)	Later version published 2014, updated 2022	Updated references to latest Historic England guidance. This would need to be taken into account when either discharging conditions or preparing a future potential planning application.
Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (Historic England, 2006)	Reissued 2015	Updated references to latest Historic England guidance. This would need to be taken into account when either discharging conditions or preparing a future potential planning application.
The Setting of Heritage Assets (Historic England, 2011)	Second Edition Issued 2017	Updated references to latest Historic England guidance. This would need to be taken into account when either discharging conditions or preparing a future potential planning application.
Scheduled Monuments & nationally important but non-scheduled monuments (Department for Culture, Media & Sport, 2010)	Updated 2013	Updated references to latest Historic England guidance. This would need to be taken into account when either discharging conditions or preparing a future potential planning application.
Seeing the History in the View: A Method for assessing Heritage Significance within Views (English Heritage, 2011)	Superseded by The Setting of Heritage Assets, 2017	Updated references to latest Historic England guidance. This would need to be taken into account when either discharging conditions or preparing a future potential planning application.
After ICOMOS, 2010 Guidance on Heritage Impact Assessment for Cultural Heritage Properties (International Council on Monuments and Sites, 2010)	Updated 2011, Integrated into the Guidance and Toolkit for Impact Assessments in a World Heritage Context (UNESCO, ICCROM, ICOMOS, IUCN, 2022)	Updated references to latest Historic England guidance. This would need to be taken into account when either discharging conditions or preparing a future potential planning application.
Herefordshire Landscape Character Assessment (Herefordshire Council, 2004)	Superseded by the Herefordshire County Landscape Character Assessment published 2023 (Herefordshire Council)	Updated references to latest Historic England guidance. This would need to be taken into account when either discharging conditions or preparing a future potential planning application.
Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-Excavation (English Heritage, 2002)	Second Edition published in 2011.	Updated references to latest Historic England guidance. This would need to be taken into account when either discharging conditions or preparing a future potential planning application.

Legislation/Guidance	Date of revision/ introduction	Comment on Changes
1992 Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections (Museums' and Galleries' Commission (1992)	Superseded by the Standards and Guidance in the Care of Archaeological Collections (Society for Museum Archaeology, 2020)	Updated references to latest Historic England guidance. This would need to be taken into account when either discharging conditions or preparing a future potential planning application.
Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation (ClfA, 2009)	Updated in 2014.	Updated references to latest Historic England guidance. This would need to be taken into account when either discharging conditions or preparing a future potential planning application.
The Herefordshire Heritage Services [museum] document Standards for the Deposition of Archaeological Archives with Herefordshire Heritage Services (1999), as amended (Herefordshire Museum Services, 1999)	Superseded by the Collections Development Policy 2020-2024 (Herefordshire Museum Service, 2020)	Updated references to latest Historic England guidance. This would need to be taken into account when either discharging conditions or preparing a future potential planning application.
Landscape	Landscape	Landscape
Landscape Character Assessment Guidance for England and Scotland (Countryside Agency (CA) and Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), 2002)	Superseded by Landscape and seascape character assessments guidance (Natural England, 2014).	This would need to be taken into account when either discharging conditions or preparing a future potential planning application.
Ecology	Ecology	Ecology
CJEU. (2018). Judgment of the Court (Seventh Chamber) of 12 April 2018. People Over Wind and Peter Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta.	New precedent	Mitigation can no longer be used to conclude no likely significant effects at the screening stage, a full appropriate assessment would be required.
The UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework (Joint Nature Conservation Commission & Defra, July 2012)	An updated Implementation Plan was produced in July 2018.	
National Planning Policy Framework (2023)	Updated in 2018, 2019 and 2023	Consideration of updates required. Particularly with regards to ancient woodland. The NPPF now states that <i>“development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons, for example, infrastructure projects (including nationally significant infrastructure projects, orders under the Transport and Works Act and hybrid bills), where the public benefit would clearly outweigh the loss or deterioration of habitat.”</i>
Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended in 2019). London: HMSO	Legislation has been updated in 2017 and 2019	Consideration of updated legislation required.
Environment Act (2021)	New legislation	Requires consideration, and is the legal driver for BNG assessment. Will require all relevant developments to achieve a minimum 10% net gain in biodiversity units relative to the site's baseline biodiversity value in the near future.
Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. London: HMSO	New legislation	Requires consideration
Herefordshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (HC, 2010)	Superseded by the Herefordshire Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy (HC, 2023)	

Legislation/Guidance	Date of revision/ introduction	Comment on Changes
Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment (Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, 2006)	Replaced by The Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland (CIEEM, 2018)	New survey and assessment guidance.
Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2006). Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment.	Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (2nd Edn.). Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester (2017).	Updated guidance
Advice note on the lifespan of ecological reports & surveys. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester (2019).	New guidance	Guidance on the lifespan of ecology reports – maximum three years old.
Biodiversity Net Gain: Good Practice Principles for Development, A Practical Guide. CIEEM, CIRIA, IEMA (2016)	New guidance	A guide to BNG
Biodiversity Metric 4.0. Natural England (2023)	New metric	For application to BNG
The Biodiversity Metric 4.0 – User Guide, Technical Annex 1 & Technical Annex 2. Natural England (2023)	New guidance	Guidance for using BNG
UKHab (2023) The UK Habitat Classification System UKHabs Classification Version 2 published in 2023	New application	For use in BNG.
Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions. Natural England and Forestry Commission (2022)	New guidance	Requires consideration – states “ <i>You should refuse planning permission if development will result in the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees unless both of the following applies:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>there are wholly exceptional reasons</i> - <i>there’s a suitable compensation strategy in place (this must not be a part of considerations of wholly exceptional reasons)”</i>
Habitats and species of principal importance in England. JNCC (2023)	Ongoing updates	Relevant species and habitats to be considered during survey scoping, fieldwork and assessment
Protected species and development: advice for local planning authorities. Natural England’s Standing Advice on Protected Species	All advice updated in 2022	Updated advice to be considered
UK BAP (various)	Habitats and species of principal importance in England. Defra and Natural England (2022).	Updated list of species and habitats for consideration
Birds of Conservation Concern 4, British Trust for Ornithology (2015)	Birds of Conservation Concern 5, British Trust for Ornithology (2021)	Updated list of species for consideration
Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3 rd edition). Collins, J.(ed) (2015). The Bat Conversation Trust. London.	Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition). Collins, J.(ed) (2023). The Bat Conversation Trust. London.	Updated survey methodology and assessment guidance
Guidance Note 08/23: Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night. Bat Conservation Trust	New guidance.	Guidance regarding bats and lighting.

Legislation/Guidance	Date of revision/ introduction	Comment on Changes
& Institute of Lighting Professionals (2023).		
Badger Protection: Best Practice Guidance for Developers, Ecologists and Planners (England). Badger Trust (2023)	New guidance.	Updated guidance
Invasive Non-Native Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order 2019	New legislation.	Requires consideration of relevant invasive species
The Water Environment (Water Framework Directive (WFD)) (England and Wales) Regulations 2017	New legislation.	Requires consideration. Sets out requirements to prevent the deterioration of aquatic ecosystems; protect, enhance and restore waterbodies to 'good' status; and achieve compliance with standards and objectives for protected areas.
Environment Agency (2017). Freshwater macro-invertebrate sampling in rivers Operational Instruction 018_08. Environment Agency, Bristol, UK.	New guidance.	Requires consideration for aquatic invertebrate surveys.
Naura, M. (2021). River Habitat Survey Input and Analysis Software: Riverdene Consultancy. Version 1.5: January 2021.	New guidance.	Requires consideration for the assessment of hydromorphological condition of rivers for the WFD.
Riverdene Consultancy (2016a). Hydromorphology and geomorphology guidelines: Hydromorphological indices derivation: Instructions for calculating the Habitat Modification Score using River Habitat Survey data. (Based on Environment Agency guidelines for calculating HMS scores, 2003).	New guidance.	Requires consideration for the survey of watercourses.
Riverdene Consultancy (2016b). Instructions for calculating the River Habitat Quality Class using RHS. Based on Naura (2001) River Habitat Quality Assessment and Walker (2005) River Habitat Objectives (Environment Agency internal reports). Riverdene Consultancy	New guidance.	Requires consideration for the survey of watercourses.
WFD-UKTAG (Water Framework Directive – United Kingdom Advisory Group) (2020). UKTAG River Assessment Method Macrophytes and Phytobenthos: Phytobenthos - Diatoms for Assessing River and Lake Ecological Quality (River DARLEQ3).	New guidance.	Requires consideration for the survey of watercourses.
CJEU. (2018). Judgment of the Court (Seventh Chamber) of 12 April 2018. People Over Wind and Peter Sweetman v Coillte Teoranta.	Case law relating to the 2017 Regulations, the Habitats Directive and Birds Directive	For consideration for Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA). This case held that; "it is not appropriate, at the screening stage, to take account of the measures intended to avoid or reduce the harmful effects of the plan or project on that site" (paragraph 40). This establishes that 'mitigation measures' cannot be taken into account at the screening stage, but they can be taken

Legislation/Guidance	Date of revision/ introduction	Comment on Changes
		into account in an Appropriate Assessment
Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. (2021, February 24). Guidance: Habitats Regulations Assessments: Protecting a European Site	New guidance	For consideration for HRA.
European Commission. (2001). Assessment of plans and projects significantly affecting Natura 2000 sites. Methodological guidance on the provisions of Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC. Luxembourg: Office of Official Publications of the European Communities	New guidance	For consideration for HRA.
The Planning Inspectorate. (2017, November). Advice Note Ten: Habitats Regulations Assessment relevant to nationally significant infrastructure projects, Version 8. Retrieved November 07, 2021 ¹ .	New guidance	For consideration for HRA.
The Planning Inspectorate. (2018). Advice Note Nine: Rochdale Envelope. Retrieved January 24, 2022 ² .	New guidance	For consideration for HRA.
Geology and Soils	Geology and Soils	Geology and Soils
Contaminated Land Report 11 Model Procedures for the Management of Land Contamination (Environment Agency, 2004)	Withdrawn 2020 and replaced with the Land Contamination Risk Management (LCRM) guidance, last updated July 2023 (Environment Agency, 2023).	
The saved minerals and waste policies of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (Herefordshire Council, 2007)	HC Minerals and Waste Local Plan to be introduced to replace the saved minerals and waste policies of the Unitary Development Plan and would be in place by the time of any future assessment.	
Materials	Materials	Materials
Waste Strategy for Herefordshire and Worcestershire (Herefordshire Council and Partners, 2011)	Updated 2022, due to for review 2023.	
Noise and Vibration	Noise and Vibration	Noise and Vibration
Environmental Noise (England) Regulations 2006 (UK Government, 2006)	These regulations, the enactment of the European Noise Directive (2002/49/EC), were amended in 2018.	
Noise Action Plan for Major Roads (Defra, 2010)	Updated 2019.	
Effects on All Travellers	Effects on All Travellers	Effects on All Travellers
Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RWIP) (HC, 2007)	Updated to 2018-2028 version.	Builds upon discussions with the local community and reflects changes in needs.
Road Drainage and the Water Environment	Road Drainage and the Water Environment	Road Drainage and the Water Environment

¹ National Infrastructure Planning: <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/legislation-and-advice/advice-notes/advice-note-ten/>

² National Infrastructure Planning: <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/legislation-and-advice/advice-notes/advice-note-nine-rochdale-envelope/>

Legislation/Guidance	Date of revision/ introduction	Comment on Changes
Groundwater Protection: Policy and Practice (GP3) (Environment Agency)	Replaced by The Environment Agency's approach to groundwater protection (2018)	
Pollution Prevention Guidelines (PPGs) (Environment Agency, 2011)	Withdrawn 2015. Replaced by the Guidance for Pollution Prevention (GPP) (Environment Agency, 2021)	
Herefordshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) (Herefordshire Council)	Updated 2019	

A considerable amount of the legislation / guidance which underpins the planning application for the Scheme has subsequently been updated or superseded, or newer guidance / requirements have been introduced. As discussed further in Section 10, any future potential planning application would require new assessments to be undertaken where guidance has changed significantly or did not exist previously.

4. Transport modelling and appraisal review

This section provides Herefordshire Council with a summary of the transport modelling and appraisal documentation used to appraise the Hereford Southern Link Road (SLR).

This note includes the following four sections:

1. A review of the available information relating to the planning application of the SLR and associated works (P151314/F³)
2. A review of transport modelling and appraisal relating to the SLR undertaken since the submission of the planning application
3. Recommendations for the future transport modelling and appraisal of the SLR
4. Summary of the information presented in this note

4.1 Review of Available Information Relating to the Planning Application of the Hereford Southern Link Road

All documentation presented as part of the planning application has been reviewed, and from which the following has been concluded.

- The Hereford Multi-Model Transport Model (HMMTM) has been used to assess the SLR.
- HMMTM was developed by Amey, and subsequently modified by JMP Consultants Limited
- The model uses SATURN software alongside a suite of transport models for the town which collectively make up the HMMTM
- The model represents a 2012 base year, and forecast years of 2017 and 2032 – both of which were used to assess the SLR.
- The model represents an average weekday, and the following time periods:
 - AM peak hour (08:00-09:00)
 - Interpeak average hour (10:00-16:00)
 - PM peak hour (17:00-18:00)

This information was provided in the following three documents which were submitted as part of the planning application:

- 77. Transport Assessment Part 1
- 84. Transport Assessment Part 8
- 122. Briefing Note - Transport Impacts & benefits Arising from SLR

Through AECOM's work with Herefordshire Council on other projects, AECOM have had access to other documentation relating to the HMMTM. From this, the following information has been deduced:

2011.03 - Interim Forecast Report Rev East Route Options (TPi), March 2011

³ [Planning Search – Herefordshire Council](#)

- HMMTM uses DIADEM software to undertake variable demand modelling to forecast car, public transport (bus, coach and rail), cycle and walk demand matrices

4.2 A review of transport modelling and appraisal relating to the SLR undertaken since the submission of the planning application

Since the submission of the planning application, additional transport modelling and appraisal work has been undertaken on the SLR. The additional documentation has been reviewed and is summarised below.

- The Hereford Transport Model (HTM) has been built to assess a range of transport measures and local plan / core strategy proposals alongside providing inputs to transport business cases and environmental appraisal.
- HTM was developed by WSP, on behalf of Balfour Beatty Living Places
- The model comprises of a full transport demand model, with separation highway and public transport assignments, which interact under the demand model. This allows transport schemes that impact the highway, public transport and active networks to be tested.
- The model uses PTV Visum software for the transport demand and public transport assignment models, and SATURN software for the highway assignment model.
- The model represents a 2016 base year, and forecast years of 2020, 2026, 2032, 2035, 2041 and 2051.
- The model represents an average weekday, with the following time periods being represented in the HTM
 - Transport demand model
 - o AM peak hour (07:00-10:00)
 - o Interpeak peak hour (10:00-16:00)
 - o PM peak hour (16:00-19:00)
 - Highway assignment model
 - o AM peak hour (08:00--09:00)
 - o Interpeak average hour (10:00-15:00)
 - o PM peak hour (17:00-18:00)
 - Public transport assignment model
 - o AM peak hour (08:00--09:00)
 - o Interpeak peak hour (11:00-12:00)
 - o PM peak hour (17:00-18:00)
- The HTM demand model represents road (car, light goods vehicles, and heavy goods vehicles), public transport (bus and rail), and active modes (walk and cycle)
- The model has been developed in accordance with the September 2016 release of the DfT's Transport Analysis Guidance (TAG) Databook
- The transport modelling of the Hereford Transport Package assumes the following:
 - The SLR opens in 2020
 - The bypass (a continuation of the SLR) opens in 2026
 - The end of the LTP is 2032
- The transport modelling economic appraisal of the South Wye Transport Package considers the SLR (connecting the A49/B4399 roundabout with the A465) and the associated active travel measures in the South Wye area

- DfT’s TUBA (v1.9.11) software have been used to economically appraise the transport user benefits of the South Wye Transport Package using TAG Databook May 2018.
- DfT’s CobalT (v2013.2) software have been used to economically appraise the accidents of the South Wye Transport Package using TAG Databook December 2016.
- The economic appraisal of the South Wye Transport Package (SLR and associated active travel measures) assumes a scheme opening year of 2020, and uses forecast years of 2020, 2026, 2032, 2041 and 2051 as inputs to the appraisal.
- The scheme costs of the South Wye Transport Package have been calculated in Q4 2018 prices, and total £34,719,000 (excluding maintenance) for both the SLR and active travel measures.
- The economic appraisal of the South Wye Transport Package has been undertaken over a 60-year period, from 2020 to 2079.
- This economic appraisal of the South Wye Transport Package has been undertaken using outputs from the highway assignment model only. Therefore, impacts to public transport and active travel users are not captured.
- The following table 6 summarises the benefit to cost ratio of the South Wye Transport Package as reported in February 2019.

Table 6: BCR South Wye Transport Package

Type	Benefits (£000s)
<i>Travel Time</i>	£69.357
<i>Operating costs – fuel</i>	-£1,764
<i>Operating costs – non-fuel</i>	-£5,517
<i>Indirect taxes</i>	£4,216
<i>Greenhouse gas</i>	-£1,961
Total (Present Value Benefits)	£64,331
Present Value Costs	£23,444
Benefit Cost Ratio	2.74
<i>Value for Money Category</i>	<i>High</i>

- In accordance with DfT’s TAG, both a low growth and high growth sensitivity test has been undertaken of the South Wye Transport Package. The results of which are reported below.

Table 7: BCR Sensitivity testing South Wye Transport Package

Type	Benefits (£000s)		
	Core	Low Growth	High Growth
Total (Present Value Benefits)	£64,331	£55,559	£79,335
Present Value Costs	£23,444	£23,444	£23,444
Benefit Cost Ratio	2.74	2.37	3.38

This information was provided in the following three documents which were submitted as part of the planning application:

- Hereford Transport Model Demand Model, Demand Model Validation Report, WSP – February 2019
- Traffic Forecasting Report, Hereford Transport Package, WSP – July 2018
- South Wye Transport Package Economic Appraisal Report, WSP – February 2019

4.3 Recommendations

Following the review of the documentation available relating to the SLR, the below recommendations have been made for any future transport modelling and appraisal of the SLR.

- The transport modelling is undertaken in the latest strategic transport model available in the Hereford region that is suitable for the appraisal of the SLR.

- The latest transport modelling and appraisal of the SLR has been undertaken in a model that has been calibrated and validated to a base year of 2016, 7 years ago. It is recommended that any future work is undertaken in a strategic transport model with a more recent base year.
 - This is in accordance with TAG Unit M2.2⁴ which states *“Former guidance (withdrawn sections of the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges) indicated that models should not be used without justification where the source data is more than five years old when used for detailed scheme appraisal because there might be significant changes to the travel patterns and traffic level. This simple threshold should not be used, as there can be significant changes that would make the use of more recent data inappropriate or there may have been little change and older data may be acceptable. Changes such as the closure or opening of a major retail centre or major transport infrastructure such as a new bypass would be expected to result in the need to collect and use more recent data.”*
- The uncertainty log is reviewed to ensure any “near certain, or more than likely” transport interventions and developments are included in the transport modelling.
 - The uncertainty log was initially compiled in 2016. It is anticipated that this will need revising to ensure the forecast of the SLR is robust. This is likely to include updating the transport model forecasts to include the latest Herefordshire Local Plan (2021-2041).
 - This is in accordance with TAG Unit M45, which states “The purpose of the uncertainty log is to record the central forecasting assumptions that underpin the core scenario and record the degree of uncertainty around these central assumptions.”
- The opening year of the SLR is reviewed and revised in any future transport modelling forecasts and appraisal.
- The scheme design of the SLR is reviewed to ensure the transport modelling reflects the latest scheme designs.
- The transport modelling of the SLR, and any associated schemes, is undertaken in accordance with the latest version of the DfT TAG.
- If the HTM is used for any future transport modelling and appraisal of the SLR, the forecasts are revised in accordance with DfT’s TAG. TAG Unit M4 recommends that an adjustment is applied to the forecast years if the base year of the transport model been calibrated before the COVID-19 pandemic to account for the longer-term travel impacts of COVID-19.
 - It is well documented that the impact of COVID-19 significantly reduced trips during 2020, 2021 and in early 2022. The current transport network (Q3 2023) continues to see a reduction in commuting trips compared to pre-COVID-19, and fewer trips during the peak hours. The transport modelling used in the appraisal of the SLR was undertaken before the COVID-19 pandemic, and therefore the transport modelling and appraisal forecasts do not consider any changes to trip patterns or volumes.
 - This is in accordance with TAG Unit M4, which states “it is the Department’s view and recommendation that this evident suppression of travel demand relative to a pre-pandemic projection of demand at this time should be appropriately represented in transport analysis. This is important particularly in appraisal and analysis supporting transport investment decisions. ...In transport modelling terms, therefore, the guidance in TAG Unit M2.2 applies. That is, this is an event of a significant change in trip patterns. To account for COVID-19 related changes, trip *matrices based before the beginning of the pandemic should ideally be rebased, or if this is not possible, an appropriate adjustment applied to model inputs or outputs in a proportionate way.*”
 - The economic appraisal of the SLR calculates that 27% of the Present Value Benefits of the SLR are from commuting trips, and 20% are from business trips. It is anticipated that reviewing the model forecasts in accordance with DfT’s TAG, would reduce the benefits resulting from these two purposes, therefore reducing the Present Value of Benefits and the Benefit Cost Ratio, which may impact the Value for Money Category of the scheme.

⁴ DfT TAG Unit M2.2 Base Year Demand Matrix Development, May 2020 - <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5fbfd998fa8f559e32b4d25/tag-m2-2-base-year-matrix.pdf>

⁵ DfT TAG Unit M4 Forecasting and Uncertainty, May 2023 - https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1161977/tag-unit-m4-forecasting-and-uncertainty.pdf

- Any future transport modelling is undertaken using the latest transport demand forecasts available in the NTEM and TEMPRO.
- The latest economic appraisal of the transport user benefits of the SLR has been undertaken in DfT's TUBA software. The version used was 1.9.11 (June 2018 release). It is recommended that any appraisal of the SLR uses the latest version of the software.
- The latest economic appraisal of the accidents associated with the SLR has been undertaken in DfT's CobalT software. The version used was 2013.2 (2013 release) alongside parameter version 2016.2 (December 2016). It is recommended that any appraisal of the SLR uses the latest version of the software and parameters file.
- It is recommended that any future appraisal of the SLR reviews the:
 - Scheme costs
 - It is anticipated that the scheme costs would increase, at least in accordance with inflation and the cost of materials. An increase in scheme costs will increase the Present Value Costs of the scheme, and will reduce the Benefit to Cost Ratio, and therefore may impact the Value for Money Category of the scheme.
 - Cost profile
 - Opening year
 - It is anticipated that the opening year of the scheme would be delayed to at least 2024
 - Appraisal period
 - It is anticipated that the appraisal period would change from 2020 – 2079, to 60 years from the proposed opening year (e.g. 2024 – 2093). The DfT's TUBA software interpolates between modelled years, and assumes no growth in scheme benefits beyond the last modelled year, 2051. Assuming the same modelled years, but reviewing the appraisal period, is likely to impact the Present Value Benefits of the SLR as there would be more years where no growth in scheme benefits is assumed.
- The economic appraisal of the South Wye Transport Package was undertaken using outputs from the highway assignment model only. It is recommended that any future economic appraisal also considers the economic impact to public transport and active travel users as the scheme may generate mode shift.
 - For example, TAG Unit A5.5⁶ states *“Even if a transport scheme is not aimed at active modes specifically, it may have important effects on their use, particularly where it causes mode shift. For example, urban road improvements might increase car use, reducing the number of active mode users.”*

4.4 Summary

The documentation relating to the strategic transport modelling and appraisal of the Hereford Southern Link Road and associated works has been reviewed with respect to the Department for Transport's Transport Analysis Guidance. At the time the strategic modelling and appraisal was undertaken, February 2019, the forecast and appraisal of the scheme was considered to be in accordance with industry guidance.

As outlined in the recommendations, there are a number of refinements to the strategic transport modelling and appraisal of the SLR which should be addressed to ensure the work is consistent with the latest TAG issued by the DfT. These relate to a variety of topics, including the age of the strategic transport model, uncertainty log, representation of trip rates and travel patterns in the model and the impact of COVID-19, assumptions about the design and opening of the SLR, and ensuring the full impact of the scheme is captured in the latest version of DfT software.

⁶ DfT TAG Unit A5.5 Highway Appraisal, January 2014 - <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5fc8f2068fa8f5475152ab8c/tag-a5-5-highway-appraisal.pdf>

Should this scheme require additional funding from the DfT, it is expected that Herefordshire Council will be asked to address the strategic transport modelling and appraisal which has been undertaken, and update traffic forecasts and economic appraisal to ensure they are in accordance with current DfT TAG.

5. Highway Design Review

This section of the report reviews the current planning application highway design to check compliance with the current design standards. This design check is based on the Parsons Brinkerhoff drawing 'Figure 3.3' as submitted with the planning application and included in Appendix A. The check has not included the later options appraisal designs produced by WSP reference '2019.02 - SWTP Option Refinement Report (WSP)'. The design standard used for the original design was the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB). The DMRB contains information about current design standards relating to the design, assessment and operation of motorway and all-purpose trunk roads in the United Kingdom. The standards that would have been used to design the SLR were superseded in 2020 by a new suite of documents to have a clear consistent format. Generally, the content of the standards from a technical perspective for the geometrical design of highways has not changed but has been made to be read in a style that clearly states what shall be done. The following paragraphs review the SLR compliance with current standards.

6. Geometric Review of Scheme

6.1 Horizontal and Vertical Alignment

According to the Hereford Planning Statement, the SLR has been designed to a 100kph design speed. The Clehonger Link has been designed for a 70kph design speed.

The alignment of the proposed SLR and Clehonger Link have been designed in accordance with TD9/93 'Highway Link Design' (Volume 6, Section 1, Part 1, DMRB, Highways Agency, February 2002), however this standard has been superseded by CD109 'Highway Link Design' issued March 2020. The Route Plan and Longitudinal Section for the SLR can be found in drawing number 'Drawing reference Figure 3.3' shown in Figure 1.

The horizontal alignment has been reviewed against CD109 (Issued March 2020) to understand whether it is compliant with the latest design standards. The SLR design utilises three horizontal curves with radii of 720m, while the Clehonger Link has a single horizontal curve of 360m radius which all meet the desirable minimum requirements as set out in CD109 Table 2.10. These curves would be required to have a superelevation of 5%, however the current plans and files provided on the planning portal webpage do not include any information regarding crossfalls so we have not been able to review this against the design for crossfall and superelevation.

In the proposed design, transitions have been provided as per CD109. Clause 4.12 With regards to the SLR, the transitions used for the 720m radii curves all have a length of 99m which is the correct transition length for the horizontal curves used. Use of the Equation in CD109 paragraph 4.13 shows that the transition length would be 99.1m when using a q value (rate of increase of centripetal acceleration) of 0.3 metres / sec³ which is acceptable. The transitions length for the 360m radii curve on the Clehonger Link has not been provided on the corresponding long section, however a scaled measurement off the available plan shows a single transition length for the western tie in to the B4349 has been used at a length of approximately 27m. To get a transition length of 27m, you would have to increase the q value above the maximum limit of 0.6 metres / sec³ and hence this would be a departure from standards. There is no transition to the eastern side but this is part of the approach to the roundabout and is therefore not required.

The vertical geometry of the proposed SLR and Clehonger Link design includes a combination of tangents and crest and sag curves. On the SLR, the longitudinal gradients along the tangents range between minimum -1.5% and maximum 5%. In the locations of the horizontal alignment where superelevation is required, the longitudinal gradient is greater than + or - 0.5% which meets the recommendations of CD109 clause 4.8.3. The edge longitudinal fall is required to be 0.5% minimum to ensure drainage of the scheme. Many of the transitions fall

within areas of low long fall, bottom of sags, tops of crests and gradients of 0.7% - Depending on the length the superelevation change is applied over there is a high chance of edge gradients being less than 0.5% with minimal crossfalls also resulting in flat spots, or undesirably long drainage paths if long change over lengths used. Rolling crowns are likely to be needed to ensure good drainage.

The maximum gradient for the proposed SLR, of 5%, is below the desirable maximum of 6% for an All-purpose single carriageway as outlined in CD109 Table 5.1 and therefore acceptable. On the Clehonger Link, the longitudinal gradients along the tangents range between minimum -1.84% and maximum 0.7%. In the locations of the horizontal alignment where superelevation is required, the longitudinal gradient is greater than + or - 0.5% which meets the recommendations of CD109 clause 4.8.3 (this is not a requirement). There are no issues with the maximum gradient of 0.7% if the highway drainage gullies have been spaced appropriately.

With regards to the SLR, the vertical geometry uses a combination of 3 crest curves and 3 sag curves. The three crest curves have K values of 100, 55 and 100 respectively whilst the 3 sag curves have K values of 26. The desirable minimum crest K value for a design speed of 100kph is given as 100 in CD109 Table 2.10 whilst a value of 55 is one step below the desirable minimum crest K value. Likewise, the desirable minimum sag K value for a design speed of 100kph is given as 26. In summary, the sag and crest curves meet the desirable minimum values, except for one of the crest curves which is one step below the desirable minimum. As for the Clehonger Link, it uses a single crest and sag curve with K values of 36 and 24 respectively. The crest curve is above the desirable minimum requirements from CD109 Table 2.10 of 30 while the sag curve is also above the corresponding desirable minimum requirement of 20.

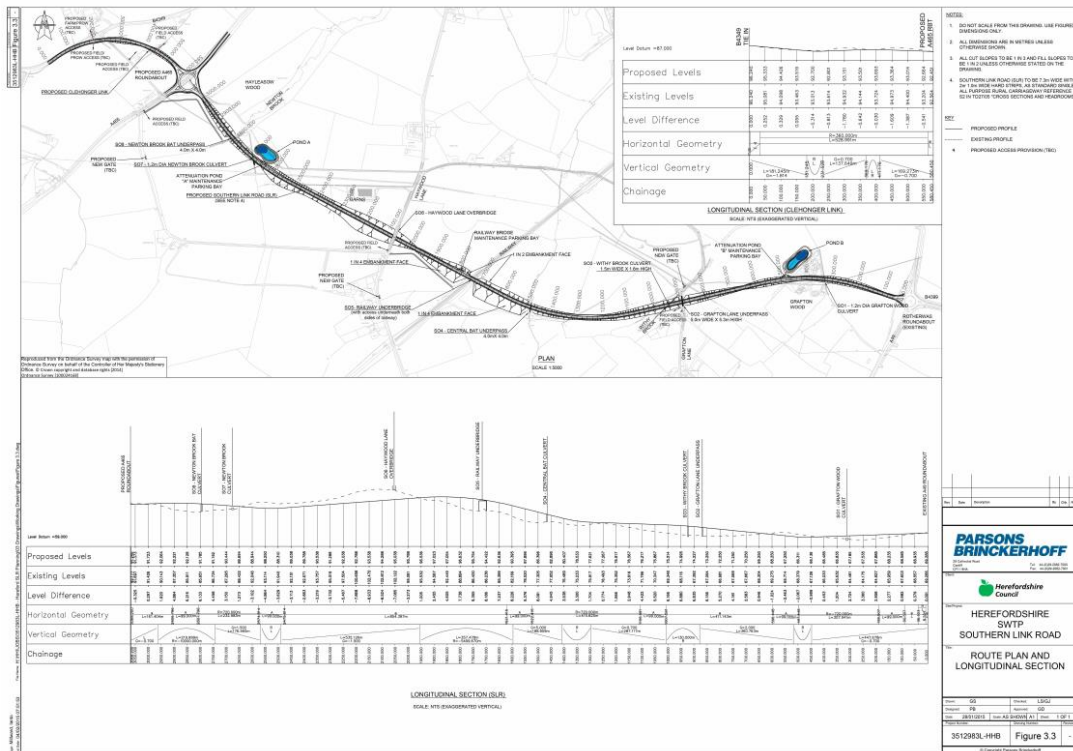


Figure 1 - Current Route Plan and Longitudinal Section Drawing

In summary for this section, there is a one-step relaxation in vertical curvature on the SLR for the crest curve with K value 55 located between chainages 1600.000 and 1950.000.

There is a horizontal departure from standards related to the horizontal geometry on the Clehonger Link where the transition length at approximate chainage 15.000 is shorter than the required length of 34m and uses a q value greater than 0.6 metres / sec³, this violates CD109 clause 4.14.

6.2 Cross-section and Lane Widths

The Planning Statement states that the SLR has been designed as a standard two lane single, all-purpose rural carriageway in accordance with Figure 4-3a of TD27/05 'Cross-sections and Headrooms'. This standard has been superseded by CD127 'Cross-sections and Headrooms', however a review of the same cross-section

(Figure 2.1.1N1e) in the updated standard shows no change in the dimensions of the cross-section components of the SLR design. The planning statement noted that the Clehonger Link also used the same cross-section except for the omission of the hard strips giving an overall hard surfacing width of 7.3m.

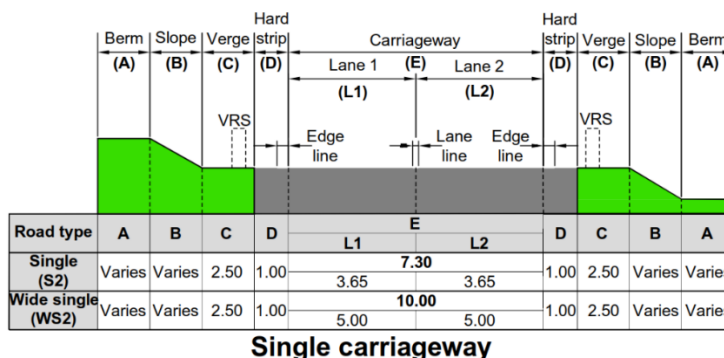


Figure 2 - Illustrative Cross-Section of the proposed Southern Link Road

Measurements were taken along both the SLR and the Clehonger Link and the widths for the lanes and hard strips areas were found to match the dimensions from Figure 2.1.1N1e (shown in figure 2 above). The verge width is 2.5m along most of the scheme route however it has been widened where other design features like drainage pipes have had to be accommodated. These changes are deemed acceptable.

6.3 Overtaking Sections

The scheme should have greater than 30% overtaking areas to conform with CD109 Paragraph 9.2 and 9.4. The design has approximately 10% overtaking based on measurements from the pdf's which would result in a departure from standards. This needs to be reviewed in more detail when the extent of the barriers and 3D model file becomes available.

The design has been reviewed to gather whether overtaking would be safe based on the current lining which uses Diag. 1008.1 from the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions centre lines along the whole length of the SLR and Clehonger Link with the exception of the 1004.1 warning lines which have been used on the approach to the roundabouts.

Figure 9.23N2 from CD 109 shows a curve selection chart for horizontal curves and recommends whether overtaking would be suitable or not. With regards to the SLR (where the design speed is 100kph), it states that non-overtaking sections should be designed using the radii shown in section D, which the 720m radii curves along the SLR fall into. It is also suggested that the non-overtaking sections be accompanied with appropriate warning lines (Diagram 1013.1 marking from Chapter 5 Traffic Signs Manual). A review of the Clehonger Link horizontal curve with radius 360m (design speed is 70kph) also shows that it should be a non-overtaking section as per section D.

Therefore, the road marking design needs to be updated to ensure that the diagram 1008.1 centre lines are replaced with diagram 1013.1 non-overtaking warning lines between the chainages where the horizontal curves are present as currently the design suggests overtaking would be allowed throughout the SLR and Clehonger Link.

6.4 Stopping Sight Distance

In the absence of a 3D design model and AutoCAD files for the scheme, the pdf files have been used to review the SLR and Clehonger Link mainline design against the Stopping Sight Distances (SSD) required, in accordance with CD109.

The desirable minimum SSD required along the SLR, both westbound and eastbound, is 215m for a design speed of 100kph in accordance with CD109 Table 2.10. A review of the SSD horizontally shows there may be obstructions to the visibility splays. While there are no issues with the embankments, it is probable that Vertical Restraint Systems (VRS), cuttings and the highway boundary fence will affect these visibility splays and will require the SSD to drop some steps below the desirable minimum recommended standard.

It is not certain, without more detailed design information, how many steps below the desirable minimum the SSD will need to deviate but it is clear that some type of VRS will need to be provided on the SLR. The planning statement states, in paragraph 2.11.1, 'The embankments (see Figures 2.2 and 2.3 from the planning statement) will have a 1 in 2 (26°) slope which will be slackened to 1 in 4 (14°) on the southern slopes adjacent to the railway crossing in order to reduce the impact of the route from the existing properties on Haywood Lane'. The steep embankments would be accompanied by high speeds on the SLR and two large drainage attenuation ponds, therefore, it is recommended that these hazards be evaluated further with a Road Restraint Risk Assessment Process (RRRAP) and a VRS provided as determined by the outcome of the RRRAP. Currently, the only VRS provided from the design documents reviewed is in the form of H4a containment barriers at the Railway underbridge located between chainages 1700.000 and 1800.000. The VRS currently proposed, in general, is deemed potentially inadequate to deal with the hazards to vehicles along the SLR and any additional VRS will have the potential to impact on the SSD and possible addition of relaxations and departures from standard.

The highway boundary fence appears to follow the toe of the embankment around the majority of the SLR. This can be seen from the landscape mitigation proposals plan (drawing number 'Figure 7.4.1') however it is difficult to pinpoint the exact location of the fence since the scale of the drawing is at 1:5000 and no AutoCAD file has been received which includes the fencing. Nonetheless, for vehicles travelling westbound, there is a potential issue with the visibility splays between 300.000 and 460.000 which may cross the boundary fence. For vehicles travelling eastbound on the SLR, there may be issues with the splays being impacted by the fencing between chainages 1320.000 & 1070.000 and 2600.000 & 2660.000. To avoid the issues of the boundary fence, the SSD could be dropped to one step below the desirable minimum.

A vertical check of the SSD for the SLR shows that the desirable minimum SSD can be met along the majority of the vertical profile however between chainages 2050.000 and 1500.000, where the crest curve is one step below desirable minimum, the achievable SSD drops from 215m to 160m which is also one step below the desirable minimum. This combination of one step below the desirable minimum for both SSD and vertical curvature results in a departure from standard.

The desirable minimum stopping sight distance required along the Clehonger Link Road, both westbound and eastbound, is 120m for a design speed of 70kph. Whilst this is achievable travelling eastbound towards the proposed roundabout, the desirable minimum SSD cannot be achieved for vehicles going westbound as the majority of this road is in cut and the visibility splays are obstructed by the earthworks. To ensure there are no obstructions to the visibility envelope, the SSD has to drop one step below the desirable minimum to a distance of 90m. This is an allowable relaxation from standards as long as it is not in the vicinity of a junction as is the case for the eastbound direction. A VRS is not proposed in this area from the design plans, it is assumed that the RRRAP assessment concluded no VRS was required therefore there are no obstructions in achieving SSD of 90m. There were no issues identified with the SSD when doing a vertical check of the Clehonger Link Road.

6.5 Direct Accesses

Seven direct accesses are proposed, according to the Route Plan shown in drawing 'Drawing reference Figure 3.3' Figure 1. The geometry and visibility requirements have been reviewed using CD 123 'Geometric design of at-grade priority and signal-controlled junctions'.

All the accesses meet the geometric requirements of CD 123, with the majority of the accesses utilising minimum 2m splayed entries, whilst one of the accesses on the Clehonger Link Road uses 6m curves instead which is acceptable. The accesses were all assessed for visibility and while two of the three accesses on the Clehonger Link Road achieved the desirable minimum SSD of 120m, one of the accesses required the setback to be reduced to 2m and the SSD reduced to approximately 70m which is 2 steps below the desirable minimum. The access provided on Haywood Lane (design speed of 70kph) would require the hedges to the north of the junction to be removed from within the visibility splay for the SSD of 120m to be achieved even when the setback is reduced to 2m. The impact on the hedges cannot be avoided by going below the desirable minimum SSD, since a portion of the hedgerow will still require removing. It is difficult to confirm from the Ordnance Survey map but reducing the setback from 4.5m to 2m may allow the desirable minimum SSD of 120m to be met when measuring a visibility splay to the south of the junction. The design needs to be confirmed to assess if it is possible to remove any of the hedge line. It may require a departure from standard if the hedge cannot be removed.

6.6 Maintenance Hardstanding Areas

There are two maintenance hardstanding laybys provided on the SLR, for which the geometry and visibility requirements have been reviewed against CD 169 'The design of lay-bys, maintenance hardstandings, rest areas, service areas and observation platforms'.

The maintenance laybys meet the geometric requirements set out in CD169 with the layby having a parking area width of 3.5m. The length of the parking area is 25m. These meet the requirements of a 'simple maintenance hardstanding' area as shown in Figure 7.10.1a in CD169.

Visibility was also measured using the methodology laid out in clause 7.2 of CD169. Visibility is achieved using the desirable minimum SSD of 215m, however this is based on the current design which doesn't include VRS along the SLR, other than at the railway underbridge around chainage 1740.000. If VRS is introduced, it will obstruct a portion of the visibility envelope and possibly result in relaxations or departures from standards.

6.7 Roundabout Design

The SLR and Clehonger Link roads have interfaces with two roundabouts, one is an existing roundabout at the A49 / B4399 junction to the east where a new western arm is proposed whilst the second will be a new roundabout, proposed at the junction between the A465 and B4349 and will have 4 arms – the SLR will form the eastern arm whilst the Clehonger Link will form the western arm.

The geometric design and visibility requirements for roundabouts were reviewed in accordance with CD116 'Geometric design of roundabouts' for the western arm on the A49 / B4399 existing roundabout and all the arms on the proposed A465 / B4349 roundabout. The detailed review can be found in the Appendix B.

With regards to the existing roundabout at the A49 / B4399 junction, where a new western arm is proposed, the geometric design is acceptable in the most part. However, there is a safety concern regarding the traffic island on the western arm where the kerb line isn't tangential with the central island. A review of the road marking plan shows that hatched markings have not been provided on the side of the island for eastbound traffic approaching the roundabout, which could have been used to adjust vehicle paths, so the edge of the markings were tangential with the central island. The current arrangement increases the likelihood of vehicle paths overlapping. The entry width on the western arm is currently circa 7.5m so there is potential scope to adjust the lane width to accommodate the hatched markings. Further work is suggested to remove this safety concern. There are no issues with the visibility requirements of the western arm of this roundabout for the most part, however the location of the highway boundary fence may impact the approach visibility. Without the 3D digital files in AutoCAD format it is difficult to ascertain the exact location of the fence and whether it intrudes into the visibility splay. A detailed review of all the roundabout arms has not been undertaken at this point in time due to the lack of detailed information.

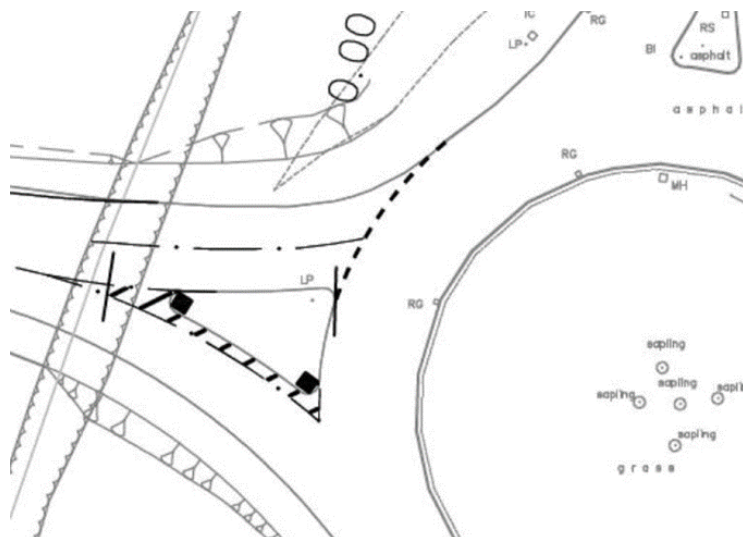


Figure 3 - Proposed markings at the traffic island

on the proposed western arm of the A49 / B4399 roundabout

The proposed A465 / B4349 roundabout complies with the requirements of CD116 and there are no departures from standard identified. It is worth noting here that this review was carried out based on the kerblines reference file shown in the '0500 Series Drainage and Service Ducts Sheet 11 of 13' which is dated 13/04/2016 received from HC. This reference file seems to supersede that which is shown in the 'Traffic Signs and Road Markings' plan which was used to review the A49 / B4399 roundabout (the geometry for this roundabout did not change). Since the Traffic Signs and Road Markings plan does not reflect the latest geometry for the A465 / B4349 roundabout, the road markings at the traffic islands have not been reviewed. The current kerblines arrangement however, without using the hatched markings either side of the traffic island, ensures that vehicles entering the roundabout will not overlap each other on all the arms except the Clehonger Link Road. When the traffic island kerblines on the western arm is projected towards the central island, it is not tangential and therefore the kerblines need to be adjusted or hatched markings should be added to maintain appropriate entry width and ensure vehicles do not overlap each other when entering the roundabout. The Traffic Sign and Road Marking plan did not show the locations of the chevron signs that would need to be placed at the A465 / B4349 roundabout. These signs should be added to the roundabout and placed, so they do not intrude on the visibility splays for drivers entering the roundabout or looking right. Also, the approach visibility on the eastern arm needs to be reviewed further once details on the accurate location of the highway boundary fence have been confirmed as it may go outside of the highway boundary.

6.1 Summary

The documentation received relating to the highway design geometry of the Hereford Southern Link Road and associated works has been reviewed with respect to their compliance with the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges. It is noted that there is limited information available and that the design has been further revised but was not made available for this review. The design reviewed has some issues within it which would require

departure from standards to be approved. It is believed that a departures report is available but this was not shared for review so no comment can be made to the completeness of the departures.

There is also a concern that the revised standards for drainage are more onerous than those used when the scheme was originally developed. A review of the drainage design should be undertaken to ensure compliance with current standards.

No details were provided for a vertical restraint barrier system (VRS) A review of the VRS requirements should be undertaken to ensure that a Road Restraint Risk Assessment has been undertaken and informed the design.

7. Structures

7.1 Overview

A review of the Southern Link Road (SLR) outline structures designs contained in the planning application reference P151314/F, which was granted planning permission in 2016, has been undertaken as detailed below.

The Southern Link Road (SLR) comprises a new road between the A49/B4399 and A465/B4349 junctions, to the south of Hereford. The Planning Statement identifies eight structures on the proposed scheme consisting of: two bridges, one vehicle underpass, two bat underpasses and three culverts carrying watercourses.

7.2 Available Information

There are limited drawings of the structures made available. Of the eight structures, only six are identified on the plan included in drawing 3512983L-HHB-Figure 2.2 Rev. A (Sept. 2015), and these are:

- S01 – Grafton Wood culvert
- S02 – Grafton Lane Underpass (typical section included)
- S03 – Withy Brook Culvert
- S04 – Central Bat Underpass (typical section included)
- S05 – Railway Underbridge (typical section included)
- S06 – Haywood Lane Overbridge

However, the Planning Statement does give descriptions of all the eight structures, and these are summarised in Table 8 below:

Table 8: SLR proposed structures.

Structure Ref	Name	Description
S01	Grafton Wood culvert	No details provided
S02	Grafton Lane Underpass	5m width a minimum headroom of 5.3m spanning over Grafton Lane
S03	Withy Brook Culvert	Standard precast concrete culvert, skewed to road alignment, with security gates
S04	Central Bat Underpass	Has a clear opening of 4m by 4m for bat access

S05*	Railway Underbridge	32.9m single span, integral steel composite deck, spanning over a railway line. 5.1m minimum headroom to be provided and 4.5m maintenance access track to be provided on either side of the Network rail land boundary.
S06	Haywood Lane Overbridge	A single span, integral steel composite deck, spanning over Haywood Lane. Further information.
S07	Newton Brook Culvert	Standard precast concrete culvert, skewed to road alignment, with security gates
S08	Newton Brook Underpass	Has a clear opening of 4m by 4m for bat access

*It is noted that a General Arrangement drawing (3512983L-HHB-S05 rev. B) of the Railway Underbridge was produced in January 2016. The filename indicates that this is an AiP (Approval in Principle) drawing.

7.3 Validity of Structures Design and Next Steps

It is not clear whether Approval in Principle (AiP) documents have been prepared for these structures, and due to the limited information, that has been available, it has not been possible to review the outline designs and whether they can be implemented.

Nonetheless, should AiPs had been produced in accordance with the DMRB standard BD 2/12 Technical Approval of Highway Structures, which was current at the time, the validity of which would have expired. Clause 2.29 of BD 2/12 states that an AiP is valid for three years after the date of agreement with the Technical Approval Authority (TAA).

As the validity of any AiPs, which may have been produced at the time, would have expired, they will need to be updated and to reflect and incorporate changes to the latest suite of DMRB standards. It is not clear, due to the limited information provided, whether Detailed Design (For Construction) drawings and specifications had been produced or design documents had been produced up to planning stage: AiPs and General Arrangement drawings. Any Detailed Design packages produced at the time ought to be checked and updated to comply with the current standards.

In addition, it is advisable to engage with third parties if any of their requirements have changed. Specifically, for S05 Railway Underbridge and the culverts carrying watercourses, it is necessary to initiate conversation with Network Rail and the Environment Agency respectively, to ascertain whether their requirements have been modified.

8. Active Travel Review

8.1 Overview

This section considers the potential for implementation of active travel measures along the Southern Link Road. The purpose of this is to assess the space and demand for active travel measures in the scheme. The existing reports were assessed along with the drawings and other documentation that had previously been provided by other parties.

The Hereford Transport Package and the South Wye Transport Package reports by WSP have included for assessing the possibilities of improving active travel around Hereford. While the reports discuss the improvement of active travel around the South Wye area and in Hereford centre, they do not include for active travel measures to be implemented along the route of the SLR. The conclusion of these reports highlighted possible areas for improvement which mostly consisted of recommendations for improvement to walking and cycling infrastructure on Belmont Road and better active travel connectivity to the Hereford Enterprise Zone. Although the reports were published in 2018 and 2019 the demand summaries can be interpreted the same at this time, however, the design standards used have since been superseded by Local Transport Note (LTN)1/20 on Cycle Infrastructure

Design. The reports suggest shared footway/cycleways, while LTN 1/20 would suggest segregated cycle tracks are required along the SLR.

As the above active travel measures are beyond the extents of the SLR scheme they have been excluded from further review in this report

Additional reviews for Active Travel are being undertaken by Herefordshire under the Herefordshire local plan, Masterplan, County Cycling plan and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans.

8.2 Design Requirements

LTN 1/20 was published in July 2020 to improve the cycling design standards that were previously available to improve how active travel can better be implemented into highway improvements. The transport note provides a table with the recommended appropriate protection that should be provided for cyclists of all levels at different design speeds. The table can be seen below. Due to the SLR having a design speed of 100kph and the Clehonger link having a design speed of 70kph it can be seen that any proposed active travel measures for the Southern Link Road should include a fully kerbed cycle track.

Speed Limit ¹	Motor Traffic Flow (pcu/24 hour) ²	Protected Space for Cycling			Cycle Lane (mandatory/ advisory)	Mixed Traffic
		Fully Kerbed Cycle Track	Stepped Cycle Track	Light Segregation		
20 mph ³	0	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
	2000	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
	4000	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
	6000+	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow
30 mph	0	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow
	2000	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow
	4000	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow
	6000+	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Yellow
40 mph	Any	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Pink	Pink
50+ mph	Any	Green	Pink	Pink	Pink	Pink

- Provision suitable for most people
- Provision not suitable for all people and will exclude some potential users and/or have safety concerns
- Provision suitable for few people and will exclude most potential users and/or have safety concerns

Notes:

1. If the 85th percentile speed is more than 10% above the speed limit the next highest speed limit should be applied
2. The recommended provision assumes that the peak hour motor traffic flow is no more than 10% of the 24 hour flow
3. In rural areas achieving speeds of 20mph may be difficult, and so shared routes with speeds of up to 30mph will be generally acceptable with motor vehicle flows of up to 1,000 pcu per day

Figure 4 - LTN 1/20 appropriate protection requirements

The existing corridor design for the Southern Link Road consists of two 3.65m wide carriageway lanes with a 1m hard strip at either edge before joining the verge which consists of various widths across the scheme, this equates to a total hard standing corridor width of 9.3m. There are six proposed bridges/culverts across the SLR including over the railway which along with the restricted red line boundary provide major constraints for the consideration of active travel measures.

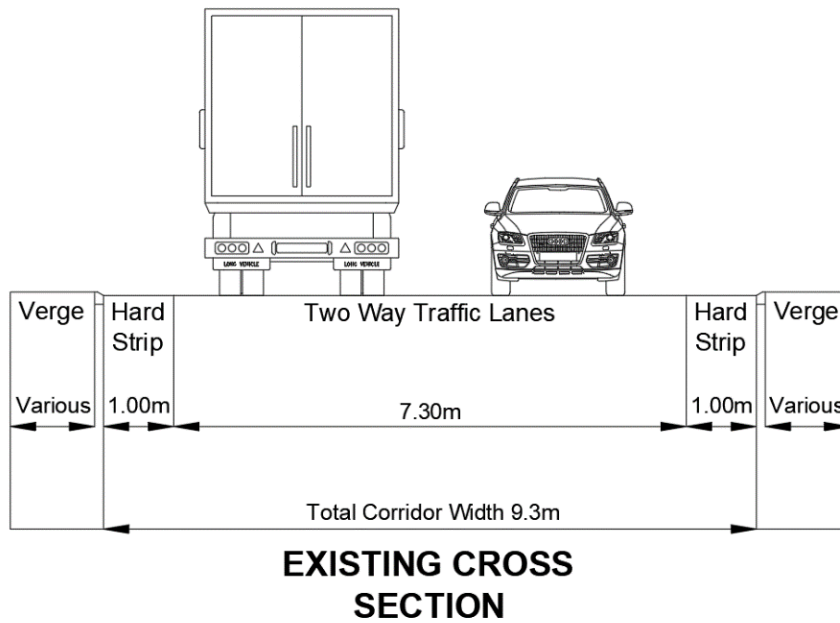


Figure 5 – Existing design cross section

LTN 1/20 refers to desirable minimum widths for cycle tracks and traffic separation. In the SLR case, the desirable minimum protected space for the 2-way cycle track is 3m. While the desirable minimum separation between carriageway and cycle track along a 60mph road is 2.5m. Also included is a 2m desirable minimum footway. Using these design parameters, the new total corridor width becomes 15.8m not including the verge to the side without the active travel measures. The assumption for the active travel measures is to replace the existing corridor with the active travel corridor about the centre line of the existing design with the active travel measures placed on the north side of the scheme, this will alleviate the need to redesign the alignment of the existing SLR design. The proposed active travel measures considered will require an additional hard standing width of 6.5m to the north. The proposed active travel corridor is shown below. It should be noted that there may be scope to reduce the footway / cycleway width to absolute minimum with a shared facility which may be more appropriate at this rural location.

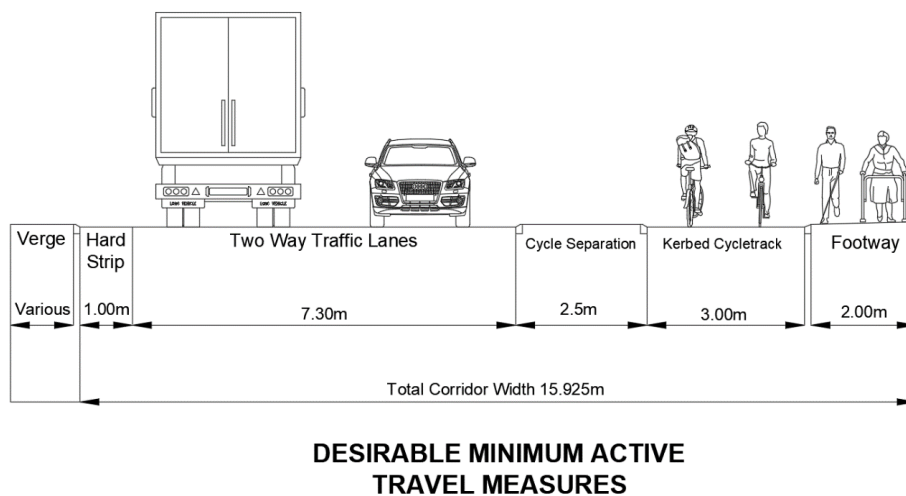


Figure 6 - LTN 1/20 Desirable minimum cross section

8.3 Demand

The demand for cycle infrastructure for the SLR is important to understand when considering active travel options. Hereford Enterprise Zone (HEZ) has been identified as a key location to improve active travel connectivity between areas of Hereford. The B4399 which runs between HEZ and the SLR junction with the A49 currently has no cycle infrastructure and is a similar design to the existing SLR design. To include active travel measures on this section of the SLR and end them with no further cycle infrastructure improvements on the B4399 would not be best practice and would not help in encouraging more people to use active travel to access the HEZ.

Grafton Lane is the highest demand creator for active travel on the SLR. National Cycle Route 46 runs along Grafton Lane with an off carriageway shared cycle route approximately half a mile north of its intersection with the SLR continuing into the centre of Hereford. National Cycle Route 46 runs from Bromsgrove in the West Midlands to Neath in Wales and so presents high cycle demand. The connection of this cycle route to the SLR could be an important factor in the proposal of active travel measures to support better cycle connectivity to the surrounding areas and settlements.

Clehonger is around 2 miles west of where the SLR will meet the A456 along the B4349. If active travel measures were available along the SLR then it may help to promote the use of active travel for people in Clehonger and the surrounding area to access Hereford City Centre by utilising access to National Cycle Route 46. However, as previous reports have mentioned, it may be more beneficial to provide this demand with the improvements of cycle connectivity along the A465 and the A49 as these routes provide a more direct journey into the city centre.

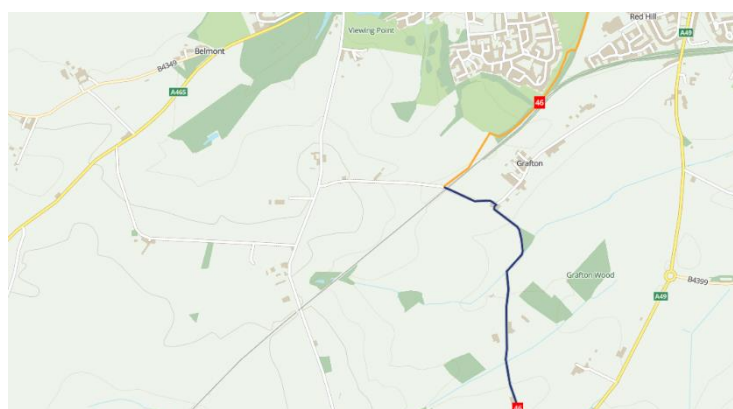


Figure 7 - National Cycle Route 46

Any future developments, including residential or industrial, in South Wye and the surrounding area may increase the demand for active travel measures along the SLR. However, without an appreciation for the potential growth of this part of Hereford, this has not been considered.

8.4 Constraints

The constraints of implementing the active travel measures discussed along the SLR are attributed to a restriction of space, either due to the addition of active travel extending beyond the red line boundary for the scheme or restrictions at structures across the project. The requirement of 6.5m of extra hard standing width presents difficulties within the existing proposals as active travel measures were not considered during the initial design.

8.5 Summary

The active travel measure presented above cannot be accommodated within the existing red line boundary due to the larger cross sectional width required along the length of the route and at pinch points such as the rail and road bridges

A review of alternative active travel measures should be undertaken in order to ensure links to existing routes are enhanced and integrated where possible within the existing red line boundary.

9. Commercial Review

9.1 Commercial review of Full Business Case

A review of the cost estimate for the SLR has been undertaken. Due to the limited information that has been available it has not been possible to undertake a full cost estimate review of rates and items. This cost estimate has therefore been limited to a review and uplift of the values identified in the Financial Case report for the South Wye Transport Package. The Financial report included the Southern Link Road and a series of active travel measures in Hereford. The active travel measures have been removed from this review as they are assumed to be delivered under a separate commission.

It has been concluded that it will be difficult to add active travel measures to the existing Hereford Southern Link Road scheme within the current red line boundary. Therefore, no cost estimate has been undertaken at this time.

The scheme costs in the full business case were developed by Balfour Beatty Living Places (BBLP) Table 9 includes the BBLP / FBC costs as described below.

- Construction activities
 - Based on detailed construction activity schedule from BBLP in table 9 and review of tender documents returned
- Third party costs
 - Costs for Statutory Undertakers at £1.09 million based on budget estimates provided by the four affected utility providers (Dŵr Cymru / Welsh Water, Western Power Distribution, Cadent and BT Openreach);
 - *National Highways (formerly Highways England) agreed commuted lump sum of £89,025; and
 - Network Rail costs cover items such as Basic Asset Protection Agreements (BAPA) for the design and construction phases and the potential relocation of a mast. A BAPA for the design phase was agreed with Network Rail for a cost of £25,000.
- Professional Fees
 - Construction phase supervision and project management costs have been based on an estimate of 5% of construction activities and third party costs to give an estimate of £941,763
 - Design fees for the scheme are estimated at £6.4 million (rounded to the nearest £0.1 million) and covers design and development fees to date and forecast costs up to the construction phase.
 - Adding the construction phase supervision and project management costs to the design fees, as well as accounting for costs incurred by Herefordshire Council project management team during this period, provides a cumulative professional fees total of £7.4m (rounded to the nearest £0.1m).
- Land Costs
 - Land costs for the scheme at January 2019 are anticipated to be £2.0 million including £191,387 spent on land purchased to date, with a further £204,600 of land costs following exchange of contracts with a landowner. The remaining land costs are assumed incomplete

unless otherwise confirmed by HC and will require to be completed following confirmation of CPO/SRO Orders.

- Risk and contingencies
 - A Quantified Cost Risk Assessment (QCRA) was prepared based on the DfT prescribed four-step process in the FBC financial case. The mean post-mitigated cost is £1.4m (rounded to the nearest £0.1m).

An exercise of uplifting the original costs produced by BBLP for the Southern Link Road Project from Q2 2018 (index 326) to Q3 2023 (index 386) with the TPI increasing by 18% in this period. The indexes used for the uplift are from BCIS and can be found in Appendix C. This exercise covers the price increase from when the original costs were produced (Q2 2018) as described above to today's date (Q3 2023). BCIS predicts TPI to increase by a further 13% from Q3 2023 (today) to Q1 2027 (potential project start date). The exercise was split as per the original split by BBLP and can found below: SLR Risk-Adjusted Cost Estimate Table 9.

The costs have been inflated to Q2 2027 rates in the right column (in both table 9 and 10). These costs exclude construction inflation to the midpoint of the project and includes tender inflation up to Q2 2027.

There is a discrepancy between the costs in the SLR Risk adjusted cost estimate in table 9 below which was taken from the FBC report compared with the detailed construction activity costs in table 10 below. This should be investigated to ensure that the overall cost is accurate.

Table 9: SLR Risk-Adjusted Cost Estimate – with AECOM TPI increase

SLR Risk-Adjusted Cost Estimate	SLR Risk-Adjusted Cost Estimate	SLR Risk-Adjusted Cost Estimate	SLR Risk-Adjusted Cost Estimate	SLR Risk-Adjusted Cost Estimate
WSP DESCRIPTION	BBLP COST	AECOM RECALCULATION AMOUNT	REBASED COSTS FROM Q2 2018 TO Q3 2023	REBASED COSTS FROM Q3 2023 TO Q2 2027
Construction Activities	£17,638,184	-	£20,884,476	£23,589,718
Third Party Costs	£1,220,270	-	£1,444,860	£1,632,018
Professional Fees	£7,380,888	-	£8,739,334	£9,871,372
Land Costs	£2,000,000	-	£2,368,098	£2,674,847
Risk and Contingencies	£1,486,591	-	£1,760,197	£1,988,201
Risk-Adjusted Cost Estimate	£29,679,342	£29,725,933	£35,196,965	£39,756,156

The below Table 10 consists of detailed construction activity schedule from BBLP.

Table 10: FBC Construction Costs – with AECOM TPI increase.

SLR – Construction Costs	SLR – Construction Costs	SLR – Construction Costs	SLR – Construction Costs	SLR – Construction Costs
SERIES	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT	TOTAL	AECOM RECALCULATION AMOUNT
	CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES			
200	SITE CLEARANCE	£83,014		
300	FENCING	£268,183		
400	ROAD RESTRAINT SYSTEMS (VEHICLE AND PEDESTRIAN)	£316,405		
500	DRAINAGE AND SERVICE DUCTS	£1,141,223		
600	EARTHWORKS	£3,972,449		
700	PAVEMENTS	£2,565,560		
1100	KERBS FOOTWAYS AND PAVED AREAS	£179,113		
1200	TRAFFIC SIGNS AND ROAD MARKINGS	£207,760		
1300	ROAD LIGHTING COLUMNS AND BRACKETS, CCTV MASTS AND CANTILEVER MASTS	£47,000		
1400	ELECTRICAL WORK FOR ROAD LIGHTING AND TRAFFIC SIGNS	£100,362		
1500	MOTORWAY COMMUNICATIONS	£67,210		
2700	ACCOMMODATION WORKS	£147,365		
3000	LANDSCAPE AND ECOLOGY	£917,750		
	STRUCTURES - (prices based on approximate estimating, therefore OH & P included, Spons p.75)	£2,896,672		
	Temporary Works	£732,576		
		SUB TOTAL	£13,642,641	£13,642,642
	ADD FOR CONTRACTOR'S OH&P (not included in above rates) 12.50%	£1,457,302		
	ADD FOR CONTRACTORS RISK	£750,000		
	ADD FOR CONTRACTORS INFLATION	£1,460,000		
	PRELIMINARIES (INC. TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT)	£2,927,381		
		SUB TOTAL	£6,594,683	£6,594,683
		ESTIMATED CONSTRUCTION COSTS	£20,237,324	£20,237,325
	AECOM - REBASED COSTS FROM Q2 2018 TO Q3 2023			£23,961,986
	AECOM - REBASED COSTS FROM Q3 2023 TO Q2 2027			£27,065,870

A review of the construction costs against the tenders received by Herefordshire Council in October 2018 was undertaken. There were 3 compliant tenders received by the client of £17,479,187.77, £17,295,299.11 and £33,997.00. If we exclude the higher tender then the remaining 2 are within 15% of the estimated construction cost from the original South Wye Transport Package Financial Case.

The tax situation associated with various construction items has changed since October 2018 which will further inflate costs (red diesel and land fill tax).

AECOM would be able to provide a more accurate cost if the scheme was remeasured and costed by AECOM based on the revised design were it made available.

Design guidance has pushed against the use of culverted watercourses rather than open span structures. This issue could be raised in the preparation of an ES Addendum and could be raised as a potential objection at Public Inquiry. Any change to provide open span structures would have significant cost and programme implications.

A similar project, that is currently under construction, has a cost of **construction cost** £33.8M when scaled proportionally to the SLR. A simple comparison between this and the rebased SLR construction cost of £24M shows a large difference of £9.2M. Therefore it would be advisable to involve a contractor at an early stage to provide input into the changing costs of materials particularly due to recent global events such as the Covid pandemic and difficulties/ increased cost of procuring materials.

9.2 Summary

The review of the commercial aspects of the SLR has been limited to an uplift of existing FBC financial case.

The design fees in table 9 have been partially paid for by HC. An assumed fee of 15% of the original BBLP has been estimated to be required to complete the project on the assumption that there is no further design work except for minor amendments, environmental resurveying and land acquisition as well as taking the project through construction support. It is therefore estimated that £8.4m has been spent with £1.47M fees remaining.

The total risk adjusted cost is therefore reduced from £39,756,156 by £8,401,372 to £31.4M rounded to the nearest £0.1M.

10. What Next / Gap Analysis

The review of the documentation in concluding the next steps has been limited to the available information received from HC. Existing design information was not received in sufficient detail to enable a full review of some items within the scope of this commission. Each section has been summarised below and are available within the detailed sections for each element.

10.1 Planning Application

Planning application ref. P151314/F is considered to have been lawfully implemented and works to construct the SLR can proceed in accordance with the approved plans, however it is understood the Client seeks to make potential amendments to the Scheme. Any changes outside of the red line boundary would require a new planning application. There are several mechanisms available for amending a planning permission. It is recommended that once the nature and scale of any potential amendments have been established a further review is undertaken to advise on the most suitable mechanism for amending the planning permission. This matter should also be discussed with the LPA to ensure their 'buy in' on the preferred approach. Consideration should also be given as to whether the potential amendments trigger any changes to Likely Significant Effects as presented with the EIA. This might impact on the mechanism used to amend a planning permission as well as information required to support an application.

10.2 Environmental Assessment

10.2.1 If the Scheme is Progressed as Currently Consented

If the Scheme were to be progressed as currently consented, and there was no need to apply for external funding, at a minimum there would be a requirement to discharge any outstanding pre-commencement / pre-construction conditions attached to the planning permission.

Conditions 6 and 7 relating to the CEMP were partially discharged by the LPA following the submission of two CEMPs (a Final Phase 1 CEMP and Draft SLR CEMP). The decision notice states that a Final CEMP which should build upon measures in the Draft CEMP should be submitted for discharge before any works outside of Phase 1. The Draft SLR CEMP contains a number of outstanding action points for the Final CEMP to include, for example:

- a description of construction activities (including phasing timing, scheduling and sequencing of works) which will inform the rest of the CEMP;
- production of a Noise method statement; refinement of the requirement for noise barriers once a programme of works and a schedule of plant items is available; an out of hours protocol providing a noise and vibration assessment of out of hours works;
- production of a Pollution Incident Control Plan; and
- production of a Site Waste Management Plan.

In addition, there may be other elements of the Draft CEMP which require updating for the Final CEMP due to the time that has elapsed since its production, reflecting evolving best practice and guidance.

Condition 8 (soil management) has also been partially discharged on the basis of a submission of a Materials Management Plan for Phase 1 of works only. A Materials Management Plan for the remaining construction work would have to be submitted prior to the commencement of any works.

It is also considered that there would be a legal obligation to undertake new ecological surveys even where suitable mitigation was implemented under licence previously for the purpose of obtaining relevant European Protected Species (EPS) licences from Natural England. This is because the ecological baseline for the Scheme may have altered and sufficient time has passed that protected species may have colonised areas not previously inhabited (for example, badgers will frequently build new setts, use them for a short period and then abandon them). In addition, guidance, policy and legislation has been updated over the past decade and requires up to date consideration to ensure mitigation remains appropriate such that the effects remain as those outlined in the ES. For this reason, updated species-specific surveys would also need to be carried out even where a likely absence was established previously. Where updated surveys establish the presence of protected species to be

impacted by the Scheme, licence applications must be prepared and submitted to Natural England, who typically have a determination period of at least 30 working days (and an additional five working days to acknowledge receipt). Ecological works are seasonally constrained and sufficient time would need to be allowed prior to the construction of the Scheme to allow for new surveys to be carried out, licences acquired, and mitigation put in place. Terrestrial and aquatic ecology planners outlining the seasonal constraints for survey and mitigation work are provided at Appendix D. It's anticipated that the necessary surveys could be carried out within one cycle, by March 2025 at the earliest.

It is considered unlikely that a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment would be required unless there are material changes to the Scheme.

Whilst not a legal requirement, given the length of time that has lapsed, fresh engagement with the public and stakeholders would be beneficial to increase awareness and support for the Scheme.

10.2.2 If Changes to the Scheme are Required

It is considered most likely that the Scheme would be amended via either an application under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act, or by a new full planning application.

Given the length of time that has elapsed since the planning application for the Scheme was first prepared, it is important to note that the public consultation undertaken would no longer be considered reflective of the current relevant stakeholders, and new public consultation should be undertaken regardless of the type of application submitted.

As per Section 10.2.1, in this instance, a suite of updated ecological surveys would be required to fully inform the Scheme, mitigation measures and any licensing requirements.

If there are material changes to the Scheme, it is considered likely that a Biodiversity Net Gain BNG Assessment will be required.

10.2.3 Section 73 Application

Any material alteration to the Scheme that would not alter the planning application boundary would result in the need for an application to be submitted under Section 73 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (As amended). This application would require an in-depth ES Addendum and updates to baseline information as noted in Section 3Table 4, including the undertaking of a Climate Assessment (this not previously having been carried out). This is in order to meet validation requirements and show compliance with current policy and legislation, though the exact scope of work to be undertaken would need to be confirmed with the LPA. This could include updated noise modelling for any additional receptors within the vicinity and a review of archaeological requirements.

Alterations to the Scheme may result in changes to the required material volumes, impacting upon the number of vehicle journeys incorporated into the traffic modelling; this would have wider impacts upon other technical disciplines, such as air quality and noise. Changes to the position / layout of the Scheme design will require review of the assessment for other topics.

A suite of updated ecological surveys and assessments (to include HRA Screening and an ES chapter) would be required to fully inform the Scheme, mitigation measures and any licensing requirements. A BNG Assessment may be required.

It is strongly suggested that, if a Section 73 application were to be progressed, discussions are held with the LPA to identify the exact nature and scope of the application. It is assumed that, with the exception of new assessments, the ES addendum could be prepared assessing the new baseline but using the same methodology as the original application, so that comparisons can be made between the old and new schemes. In addition to this, it may be required that the Scheme is also assessed using the latest guidance and methodology. The need for new assessments, such as climate change and BNG, would be at the discretion of the LPA. The feasibility of progressing a planning application under Section 73 is heavily dependent upon the extent of the changes that are proposed. The ES addendum itself may drive design changes that lead to having to make a full planning application.

10.2.4 Full Planning Application

Changes to the Scheme which would alter the planning application boundary would result in the need for a new, full planning application supported by a new ES and suite of technical assessments in line with current policy and methodologies as outlined in Table 55. A new scoping opinion would need to be sought from the LPA in order to confirm the nature and extent of any planning application.

A suite of updated environmental surveys and assessments would be required to fully inform the Scheme, mitigation measures and any licensing requirements. It is likely that a BNG Assessment would be required.

10.3 Funding and Business Case Development

If external funding is required in order to progress the Scheme, then it is likely that the full business case would need to be revisited as part of a funding application. The most common avenue for funding, the Department for Transport (DfT), follows the five-case model as outlined in *The Green Book: Central Government Guidance on Appraisal and Evaluation* (HM Treasury, 2022⁷). This requires business cases to:

- set out a robust case for change that demonstrates how the proposal has a strong strategic fit to the organisation's priorities, government ambitions and the area(s) in scope – the 'strategic dimension';
- demonstrate the value for money and the best choice for maximising social welfare through options appraisal – the 'economic dimension';
- illustrate the commercial viability and supply-side capacity for the proposal – the 'commercial dimension'
- demonstrate the proposal is financially affordable – the 'financial dimension'; and
- set out the proposal's deliverability through the effective development of plans, management and resources to oversee the project from outputs to outcomes – the 'management dimension'

The programme of business case development can vary depending upon the nature and scale of the proposal, but is typically formed of three stages:

- Stage 1 - Strategic Outline Case (SOC);
- Stage 2 - Outline Business Case (OBC); and
- Stage 3 - Full Business Case (FBC).

The DfT Transport Analysis Guidance (TAG) (2022⁸) provides more detailed insight as to how to conduct transport studies, however the development of a business case would require the undertaking of an environmental appraisal of the proposed scheme based upon current baseline data and assessment and that is in line with the latest legislation and guidance. The requirements of other funding bodies may differ slightly but would likely follow a similar format.

The need for landscape monetisation to be incorporated into a business case would also need to be considered.

10.4 Environmental Status

Existing environmental survey information is now considered out of date. They are required to be updated to inform the production of the CEMP as required by planning condition, and to inform EPS licence applications to Natural England for works which may impact any identified protected species. These surveys are expected to be able to be completed by March 2025. Additional environmental works may be required, for example if an amendment to the planning permission due to a material change to the design is sought, or at the request of an external funding body such as the DfT.

⁷ HM Treasury (2022). *The Green Book: Central Government Guidance on Appraisal and Evaluation*. Available at: [The Green Book](#) [Accessed 29-09-2023]

⁸ Department for Transport (2022). *Transport analysis guidance*. Available at: [TAG](#) [Accessed 05-10-2023]

10.5 Transport modelling and appraisal review

The documentation relating to the strategic transport modelling and appraisal of the Hereford Southern Link Road and associated works has been reviewed with respect to the Department for Transport's Transport Analysis Guidance. At the time the strategic modelling and appraisal was undertaken, February 2019, the forecast and appraisal of the scheme was considered to be in accordance with industry guidance.

As outlined in the recommendations, there are a number of refinements to the strategic transport modelling and appraisal of the SLR which should be addressed to ensure the work is consistent with the latest TAG issued by the DfT. These relate to a variety of topics, including the age of the strategic transport model, uncertainty log, representation of trip rates and travel patterns in the model and the impact of COVID-19, assumptions about the design and opening of the SLR, and ensuring the full impact of the scheme is captured in the latest version of DfT software.

Should this scheme require additional funding from the DfT, it is expected that Herefordshire Council will be asked to address the strategic transport modelling and appraisal which has been undertaken, and update traffic forecasts and economic appraisal to ensure they are in accordance with current DfT TAG.

10.6 Highways

It is understood that a full suite of drawings and specification are in place for the construction of this project. Design checks were undertaken based on the limited information available from the planning application drawings which were used to identify design issues. The standards have not substantially changed regarding the geometry and layout of the highway design. Assuming that the design was compliant with design requirements and relaxation / departure from standards, which should have been identified within the original design, have been reviewed and approved, including those issues identified in this report then the project can proceed with the current design with the following to be considered.

As the received information was very limited (general arrangement drawings from the planning application at 1:1500 scale) It is suggested that a full review of design information is undertaken to ensure that the construction issue pack is complete together with the site and works information pack.

A review of the existing statutory undertakers' equipment should be undertaken to ensure no further utilities are required to be diverted and that the current diversions are still valid. HC should consider whether it's worth completing a digital 3-D clash detection exercise to reduce the likelihood of potential conflict and associated standing time when on site.

A review of the drainage design should be undertaken to ensure that the design complies with current standards. We require confirmation that the drainage network has been designed with a 20% allowance for climate change. The ES Addendum climate assessment is likely to result in some drainage re-design to allow for increased rainfall intensity and run off. This would include the provision of larger balancing facilities to mitigate downstream flooding. The DMRB now requires a sensitivity test to allow for a 40% climate change. This will be picked up in the ES addendum.

A review of the proposed highway cross section and potential departures from standard could be undertaken to assess whether sufficient width can be obtained to enable the provision of improved cycleway/footway facilities.

A full review of the lighting may be required to be undertaken to ensure that it meets current illumination standards and practices.

10.7 Structures

HC should confirm the status of the AiPs in accordance with the DMRB standard BD 2/12 Technical Approval of Highway Structures. As the validity of any AiPs, which may have been produced at the time, would have expired, they will need to be updated and to reflect and incorporate changes to the latest suite of DMRB standards.

Design guidance has pushed against the use of culverted watercourses rather than open span structures. This issue could be raised in the preparation of an ES Addendum and could be raised as a potential objection at Public Inquiry. Any change to provide open span structures would have significant cost and programme implications.

HC should consider future proofing the proposed structures to provide sufficient width for a future active travel scheme. This item would require discussion with the planning authority to ensure that any such amendments can be achieved without a full planning application.

Discussions with third parties, Network Rail and Environment Agency, are required to establish if their requirements had changed whilst also planning the bridge construction to ensure adequate possession dates are available within the construction period.

Any design drawings and specification need to be checked, to ensure compliance with the latest design standards, and updated accordingly.

10.8 Active travel

It is recommended that a full review of the active travel provisions are undertaken in the future to understand what alternative measures could be introduced along adjacent routes and residential areas to improve connectivity. This would complement works being undertaken on other active travel reviews within Hereford such as the Town planning review and the Hereford Masterplan.

10.9 Commercial

The commercial review of the design is based on the South Wye Transport Package Financial Case which utilised the Outline Business Case / Tender documents received from HC. This review has been limited to an uplift to the original costs in the FBC to bring them up to a construction start date of 2027.

These would include minimal additional design fees at this stage as it is not clear from the information that was made available whether any design changes are required to take the design to construction issue. The design fees in table 9 have been partially paid for by HC. An assumed fee of 15% of the original BBLP has been estimated to be required to complete the project on the assumption that there is no further design work except for minor amendments, environmental resurveying and land acquisition as well as taking the project through construction support. It is therefore estimated that £8.4m has been spent with £1.47M fees remaining. Should further design work or reapplication of the planning application then this fee would need to be increased as appropriate

The total risk adjusted cost is therefore reduced from £39,756,156 by £8,401,372 to £31.4M rounded to the nearest £0.1M based on the above assumptions.

The land costs are assumed incomplete unless otherwise confirmed by HC and will require to be reviewed following confirmation of CPO/SRO Orders and have therefore been retained as the original value.

AECOM would be able to provide a more accurate cost if the scheme was remeasured and costed by AECOM based on the revised design were it made available.

10.10 Timescales

Environmental surveys need to be redone to bring the survey information up to date in order to inform the production of the CEMP as required by planning condition, and to inform EPS licence applications to Natural England for works which may impact any identified protected species. Ecological works are seasonally constrained and sufficient time would need to be allowed prior to the construction of the Scheme to allow for new surveys to be carried out, licences acquired, and mitigation put in place. Terrestrial and aquatic ecology planners outlining the seasonal constraints for survey and mitigation work are provided at Appendix D. It's anticipated that the necessary surveys could be carried out within one cycle, by March 2025 at the earliest. Natural England typically have a determination period of at least 30 working days for a licence application (and an additional five working days to acknowledge receipt).

Should any material changes to the Scheme be proposed which require the submission of a Section 73 application or a new planning application, additional time would be required for further environmental assessment works as described in Section 10.2. There may also be additional requirements for environmental assessment from the funding bodies, for example the DfT, which will entail additional time.

If the same Technical Approval Authority is used as for the original structures design, and they are comfortable with the original designs and design standards used at that time, obtaining approval for the AIPs will be straight forward and would be completed in weeks, However, the worst-case scenario would involve re-design to new standards that would require revised AIP, technical approval, design check and certification. This could take up to nine months to finalise. Assuming that any redesign work required maintains the structural form and similar aesthetic appearance of the original design, this will not impact planning.

The drainage design is likely to require updating due to allowances required for climate change. The time required to make such changes will be dependent on the availability of design calculations for the existing network. It would be reasonable to allow a duration of three months to complete this task. The impact of such changes will require discussion with the planning authority, If they cannot be implemented under a Section 73 application, this could result in the submission of a full planning application. The revised design, including the provision of additional/increased attenuation features may result in departures from standard. The time for preparation and approval of these departures would need to be allowed for in the timescale of this task.

The original design requires more detailed analysis to verify compliance with the CDM regulations. Various design standards, design guidance and best practice has changed since the original design was approved. Design improvements are in part driven by CDM. Off-site fabrication has become much more commonly used to reduce site-based operations, often completed at height. For example, bridge edge beams are often now installed with built in parapets. If any such items are identified, it will be difficult to ignore them due to the CDM implications, and may lead to design changes and associated programme impact.

Reworks for traffic modelling would need to be undertaken to ensure that the FBC is in place. Note that changes to the traffic modelling may impact the BCR and undermine the planning application.

The CPO process should be run alongside discussions regarding purchase of land to ensure that the land can be acquired under the legal route should the need arise. It is estimated to require a 24 month duration to undertake the full CPO process which would need to be started in Q3 2024 to enable a potential start on site by Q3 2026. Note that if reasonable objections are raised this could lead to a public inquiry and judicial review, with further design changes and associated delays.

If the project went to Public Inquiry there are some new considerations that an objector could raise to get the scheme rejected. Some of these would be covered in the ES Addendum such as carbon management. A full review of all scheme documentation would be required to ensure that all necessary documentation has been prepared and appropriately considered. Any newly specified documentation would need to be prepared to enable informed responses to potential objections e.g. WCHAR.

If the scheme went to Public Inquiry HC should try to engage those individuals involved in the design process as expert witnesses. Considerable effort would be required by others to take on these roles, where they only have limited detail of the scheme.

We need to understand the views of the planning authority to ascertain whether the orders process could run in parallel with the outstanding design items.

If a full planning application is required the opportunity would arise to include active travel measures within the footprint of the scheme.

An indicative programme is included in Appendix E to plan out the activities through to start of construction. The programme assumes windows to undertake the ecology surveys as described above. It should be noted that if this window is missed then the programme will be required to extend to the next calendar year. The programme assumes the 24 month CPO process as described above although it is expected that the land purchase will be under a negotiated process with the formal CPO process running alongside. This could reduce the timescale for this activity considerably to a possible 12 month duration which would result in a start of construction date of Q2/Q3 2026.

A construction period of approximately 18 months is expected to be achievable, it would be advisable to engage with a contractor at the earliest opportunity to ensure that the construction can be phased to achieve the 18 month timescale.

The programme is caveated by the following:

- Indicative programmes based on the limited information available to AECOM.
- CPO process to be completed in conjunction with the negotiated land acquisition in case negotiated route is not accepted
- No time has been allowed to complete Planning Applications for Haul roads / topsoil storage areas
- Any design changes undertaken by others since the planning approval are assumed to be Non material changes
- No further Ground Investigation assumed required, review of existing GI information only
- FBC to be limited to minor update of current report
- Planning Application assumed acceptable and not subject to reapplication (assumes amendments can be completed under S73 – 16 week determination may be challenging)
- No allowance has been made for any further flood modelling. EA approvals are currently time consuming due to lack of EA resource for approval.
- Programme makes no allowance for any archaeological works. If archaeological trenching works are required by County Archaeologist and make findings, strip map and record works could be required with significant additional duration and cost.
- No allowance has been made for the design of service protection slabs. The appraisal and approval of any such designs can be drawn out.
- The environmental surveys make no allowance for the relocation of any wildlife identified (e.g. badgers/ newts).
- The environmental surveys make no allowance for the removal of any invasive species (Japanese knotweed / Himalayan balsam).

10.11 Risks

Natural England has the discretion to reject an application for an EPS licence if the supporting evidence is poor. Should updated environmental surveys not be obtained, there is a risk that Natural England could refuse the relevant licence applications based on the age of the existing survey data. Surveys would then need to be conducted in order to obtain the appropriate licences, and this may have impacts on the timescales of the project. Conducting works which may impact on EPS (such as damaging or destroying a breeding site or resting place of a protected species) without the appropriate licence is a breach of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended in 2019).

Early engagement with the LPA and the funding bodies is required to understand their requirements with respect to environmental work in the case that amendments to the planning permission are sought, or a business case is required to be prepared.

10.12 Summary

This report sets out the validity of the planning application and reviews reference P151314/F ('the Southern Link Road (SLR)') as well as reviewing existing design information and presents a 'what next' for all elements of the scheme, identifying risks to the project.

The report presents the client with sufficient information to make informed decisions about each element of the scheme and determine the way forward.

Appendix B

A49 / B4399 / Hereford SLR Roundabout Review Document

Roundabout Name: A49 / B4399 / New Link Road Rb (Hereford)
 Roundabout Type: Normal

Arm	Name	Design Speed (kph)	Speed Limit (MPH)	Des Min SSD (m)	Ref CD 109
Arm-1	S.E. Western Arm	100	60	21.5m	
Arm-2					
Arm-3					
Arm-4					

Arm	D - Inscribed circle diameter (m)	Width of Circulatory Carrieway (m)	Diameter of Central Island	Traffic splitter islands	Vehicle swept Paths	Entry width (m)	Flare Length	PMI - Conflict angle (deg)	Arc of Splitter Island	Entry radius (m)	Entry path radius (m)	Exit Width (m)	Exit Radius (m)	Forward visibility on approach (m)	Forward visibility at entry	Right Hand Visibility at Giveway	Right Hand Visibility at 15m from Giveway
Clause DMRB CD116	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.10	3.14.3	3.12 to 3.14	3.17.1	3.18.1	3.18.2	3.19.1	3.26	3.28.2 and 3.28.3	3.29.3	3.37 to 3.42	Figure 4.3N Table 3.43	Figure 3.45 Table 3.43	Figure 3.46 Table 3.43
Design standards (For 'Normal' Roundabouts)	23m min - 100m max	1 to 1.2 of maximum Entry width. Range 8.4m to 10m	4m minimum. No kerbed traffic islands required on each approach (3.7.3)	Kerbed traffic islands required on each approach	Vehicle swept path analysis required for large design vehicles.	Single lane entry 4.5m wide (should) Lane width range 3.0m to 4.5m (should). Multi lane entries should be 4.5m (should). Single or dual carrieway 19m max (should).	Minimum flare length of 5m in urban areas and 25m in rural areas	No less than 20 degrees and no greater than 60 degrees	The hub line of the traffic island should lie on an arc which, when projected forward, meets the central island tangentially.	Not less than 10m. Not greater than 20m.	Shall not exceed 100m	7m to 7.5m at single carrieways. Taper at 1:15 to 1:20. 6m min at nose to island.	20m-100m	SSD required to gateway line. Use CD 109 for SSD distance.	40m	40m	40m
1	Circa 60	9.0m	42.0m	Yes	Fine - 16m articulated lorry tested	7.5	circa 30m	50 Degrees	No	20mR	60.0	between 7.0 and 7.5	60mR	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
2																	
3																	
4																	

CD116 Designation: 1 Shall/Should 2 Shall 3 Shall 4 Awaed (see row 4 above) Should Should Should Should Should Should Should Should

If the current island geometry is to be retained, the hatch markings need to be adjusted so that the edge of the markings is tangential with the central island.

Keep verge and central island landscaping clear of visibility gaps

- = OK, within standard CD116
- = Non compliant
- = Non compliant, but not safety issue. Or information / design not yet available

Observations

A465 / B4349 / Hereford SLR Roundabout Review Document

Roundabout Name: A465 / B4349 / New Link Road Rbr (Hereford)
 Roundabout Type: Normal

Arm	Name	Speed Limit (MPH)	Design Speed (MPH)	Des Min SSD (m) Ref CD 109
Arm-1	SLR - Eastern Arm	60	100	215m
Arm-2	A465 - Southern Arm	60	100	215m
Arm-3	Chelvinger Link (B4349) - Western Arm	40	70	120m
Arm-4	A465 - Northern Arm	60	100	215m

Roundabout Geometry

Arm	D - Inscribed circle diameter (m)	Width of Circulatory Carriageway (m)	Diameter of Central Island	Traffic splitter islands	Vehicle Swept Paths	Entry width (m)	Flare Length	PHI - Conflict (entry) angle (deg)	Arc of Splitter Island	Entry radius (m)	Entry path Radius (m)	Ext Width (m)	Exit Radius (m)	Forward visibility on approach (m)	Forward visibility at entry	Right Hand Visibility at Giveway	Right Hand Visibility at 15m from Giveway
Clause DWRB CD116	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.10	3.14.3	3.12 to 3.14	3.17.1	3.18.1	3.18.2	3.19.1	3.26	3.28.2 and 3.28.3	3.29.3	3.37 to 3.42	Figure 4.3N Table 3.43	Figure 3.45 Table 3.43	Figure 3.46 Table 3.43
Design standards for 'Normal' Roundabouts	28m min - 100m max	1 to 1.2 of maximum Entry width 8.4 x 1.2 = 10m Range 8.4m to 10m	4m minimum (No planting on islands less than 10m dia, 3.7.2)	kerbed traffic islands required on each approach	Vehicle swept path analysis required for largest design vehicle	Single lane entry 4.5m wide (should). Lane width ranges 3.0m to 4.5m (should). 3m to 3.5m wide lanes (should). Single c/w: max 10.5m (shall). Dual Carriageway: 15m max (shall).	Minimum flare length of 5m in urban areas and 25m in rural areas	No less than 20 degrees and no greater than 60 degrees	The kerb line of the traffic island should lie on an arc which, when projected forward, meets the central island tangentially.	Not less than 10m. Not greater than 100m.	Shall not exceed 100m	7m to 7.5m at single carriageways. Taper at 1:15 to 1:20. 6m min at nose to island.	20m-100m	SSD required to give way line. Use CD 109 for SSD distance.	50m	50m	50m
1	Circa 78	8.6	62.0	Yes	Fine - 16m articulated lorry tested	7.2	37.0	27 Degrees	Yes	30.0	60.0	Yes	70.0	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
2	Circa 78	8.6	62.0	Yes	Fine - 15m articulated lorry tested	7.2	47.0	31 Degrees	Yes	30.0	60.0	Yes	81.0	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
3	Circa 78	8.6	62.0	Yes	Fine - 16m articulated lorry tested	7.2	51.0	36 Degrees	No	30.0	63.0	Yes	50.0	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
4	Circa 78	8.6	62.0	Yes	Fine - 16m articulated lorry tested	7.2	28.0	32 Degrees	Yes	30.0	50.0	Yes	61.0	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant	Compliant
CD116 Designation:	Shall / Should	Shall	Shall	Shall	Should	Mixed (see row 14 above)	Should	Should	Should	Should	Shall	Should	Should	Shall	Shall	Shall	Shall

Since the kerblines have been created from the pdf, they do not fully represent the 'true' kerblines. However, it seems that the four islands are tangential with the central island.

The approach visibility on the eastern arm needs to be confirmed once a detailed drawing of the highway boundary fencing has been received.
 Chevron signs have not been added in the design yet at this roundabout. The design does not include the visibility splays at the roundabout.

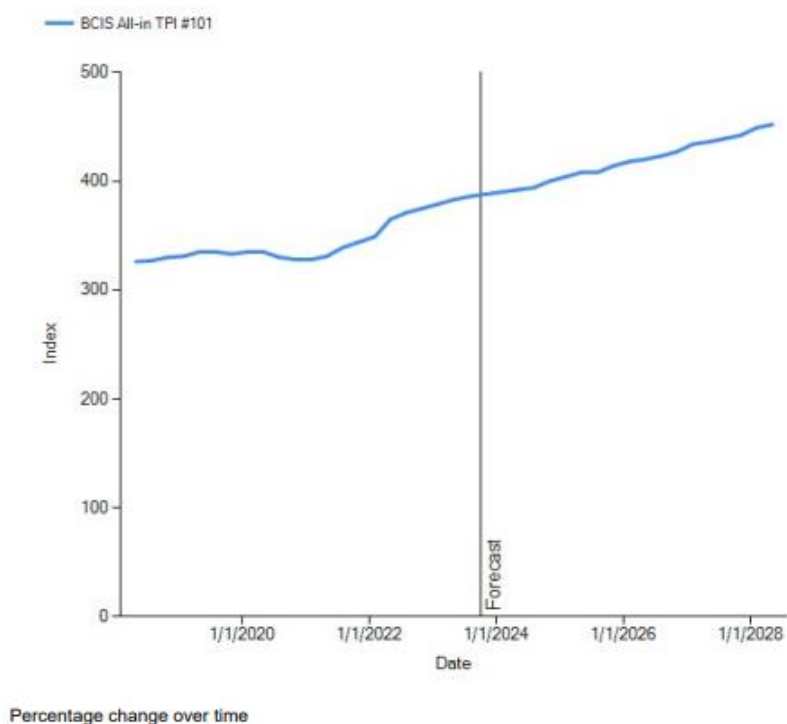
- = OK, within standard CD116
- = Non compliant
- = Non compliant, but not safety issue. Or information / design not yet available.

Appendix C

Indexes used for the uplift from BCIS

Date	Index	Equivalent sample	Percentage change		
			On year	On quarter	On month
2Q 2018	326	94	6.2%	0.0%	
3Q 2018	327	90	6.9%	0.3%	
4Q 2018	330	85	4.1%	0.9%	
1Q 2019	331	74	1.5%	0.3%	
2Q 2019	335	66	2.8%	1.2%	
3Q 2019	335	62	2.4%	0.0%	
4Q 2019	333	56	0.9%	-0.6%	
1Q 2020	335	Provisional	1.2%	0.6%	
2Q 2020	335	Provisional	0.0%	0.0%	
3Q 2020	330	Provisional	-1.5%	-1.5%	
4Q 2020	328	Provisional	-1.5%	-0.6%	
1Q 2021	328	Provisional	-2.1%	0.0%	
2Q 2021	331	Provisional	-1.2%	0.9%	
3Q 2021	339	Provisional	2.7%	2.4%	
4Q 2021	344	Provisional	4.9%	1.5%	
1Q 2022	349	Provisional	6.4%	1.5%	
2Q 2022	365	Provisional	10.3%	4.6%	
3Q 2022	371	Provisional	9.4%	1.6%	
4Q 2022	375	Provisional	9.0%	1.1%	
1Q 2023	379	Provisional	8.6%	1.1%	
2Q 2023	383	Provisional	4.9%	1.1%	
3Q 2023	386	Provisional	4.0%	0.8%	
4Q 2023	388	Forecast	3.5%	0.5%	
1Q 2024	390	Forecast	2.9%	0.5%	
2Q 2024	392	Forecast	2.3%	0.5%	
3Q 2024	394	Forecast	2.1%	0.5%	
4Q 2024	400	Forecast	3.1%	1.5%	
1Q 2025	404	Forecast	3.6%	1.0%	
2Q 2025	408	Forecast	4.1%	1.0%	
3Q 2025	408	Forecast	3.6%	0.0%	
4Q 2025	414	Forecast	3.5%	1.5%	
1Q 2026	418	Forecast	3.5%	1.0%	
2Q 2026	420	Forecast	2.9%	0.5%	
3Q 2026	423	Forecast	3.7%	0.7%	

Date	Index	Equivalent sample	On year	On quarter	On month
4Q 2026	427	Forecast	3.1%	0.9%	
1Q 2027	434	Forecast	3.8%	1.6%	
2Q 2027	436	Forecast	3.8%	0.5%	
3Q 2027	439	Forecast	3.8%	0.7%	
4Q 2027	442	Forecast	3.5%	0.7%	
1Q 2028	449	Forecast	3.5%	1.6%	
2Q 2028	452	Forecast	3.7%	0.7%	



Appendix D

Terrestrial and aquatic ecology planners

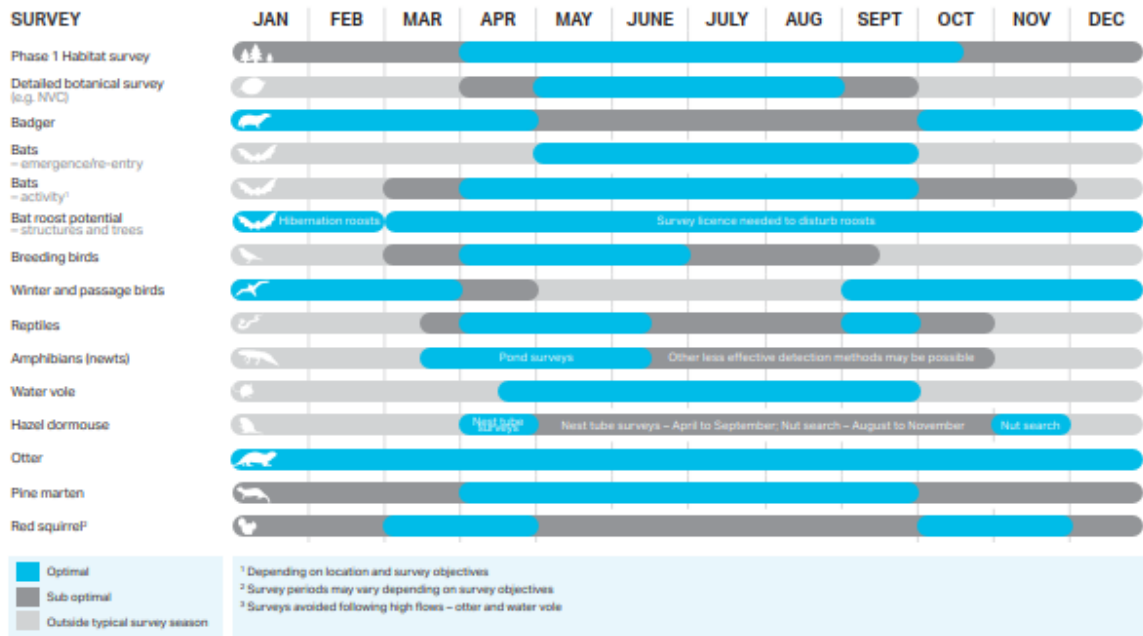


TERRESTRIAL ECOLOGY PLANNER

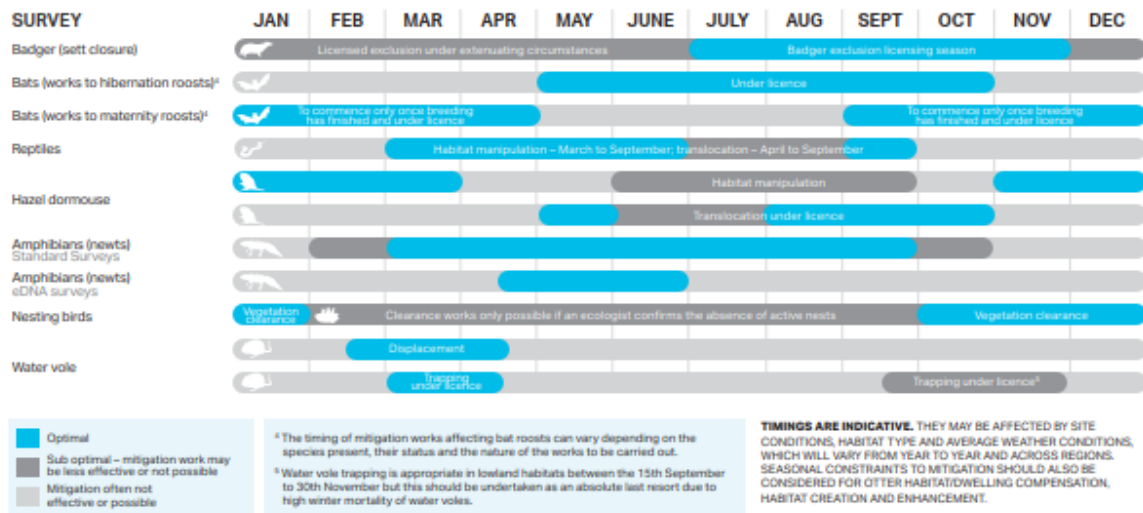
Programming and delivering ecological surveys and mitigation at the appropriate time of year is critical to securing reliable information to inform and enable planning, design, operations and maintenance. This planner provides a general guide to timing for surveys and mitigation for a range of habitats and species in the UK and Ireland. For further information and advice contact our team of professional ecologists at AECOM.



SURVEY TIMING



MITIGATION TIMING



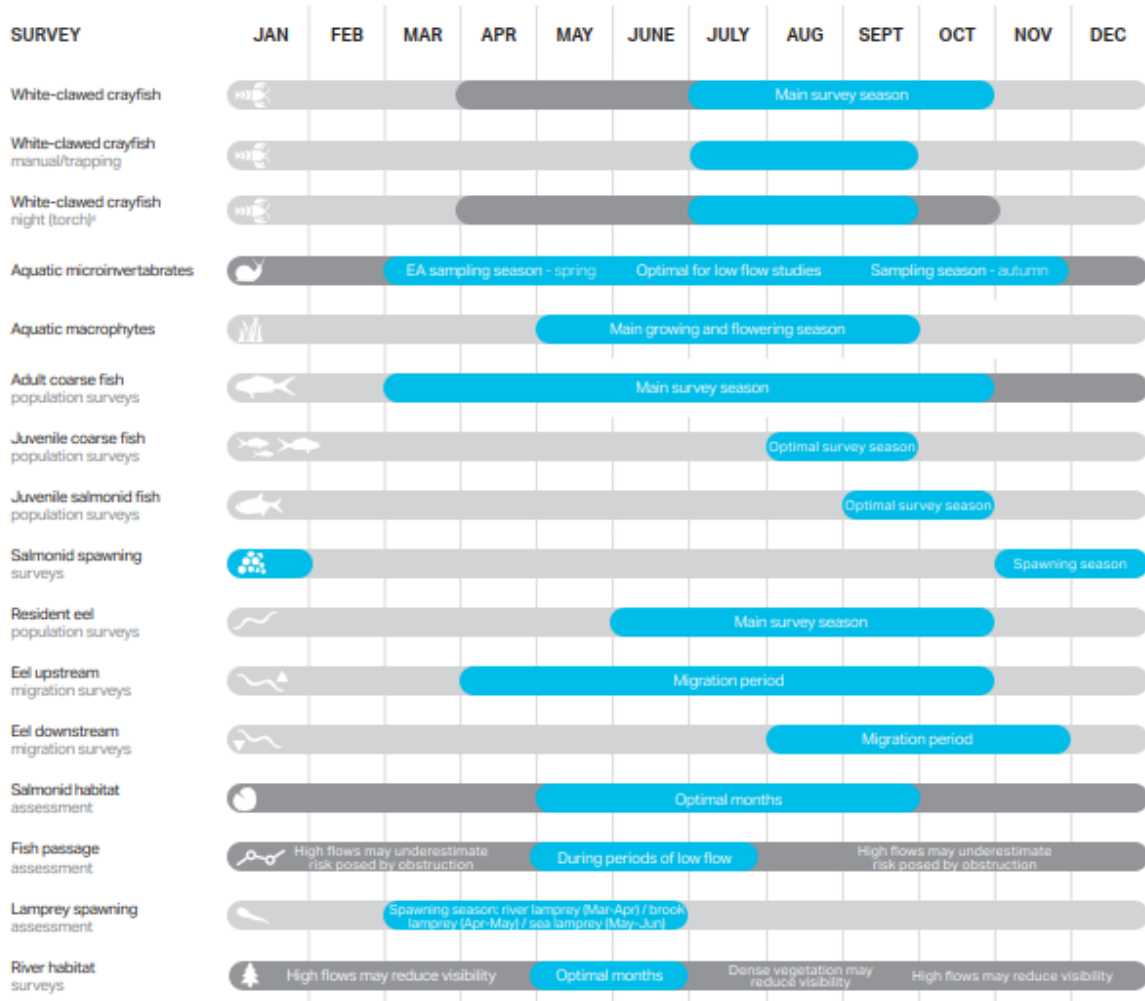


AQUATIC ECOLOGY PLANNER

Programming and delivering ecological surveys at the appropriate time of year is critical to securing reliable information to inform and enable planning, design, operations and maintenance. This planner provides a general guide to timing surveys for a range of habitats and species in the UK and Ireland. For further information and advice contact our team of professional ecologists at AECOM.



SURVEY TIMING



- Optimal survey period
- Sub optimal survey period
- Surveys unreliable

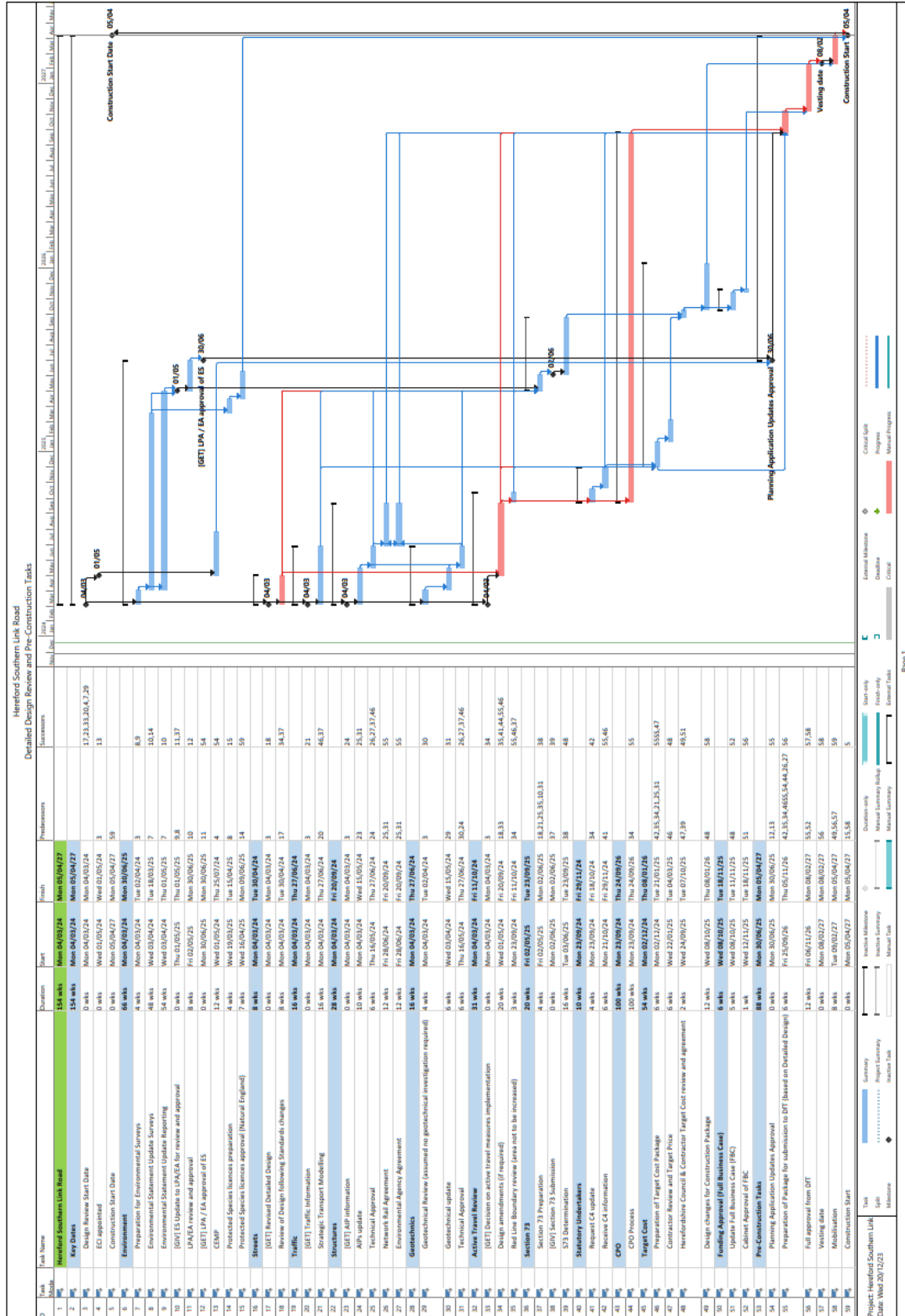
TIMINGS ARE INDICATIVE. THEY MAY BE AFFECTED BY SITE CONDITIONS, HABITAT TYPE AND AVERAGE WEATHER CONDITIONS, WHICH WILL VARY FROM YEAR TO YEAR AND ACROSS REGIONS. SEASONAL CONSTRAINTS TO MITIGATION SHOULD ALSO BE CONSIDERED FOR OTTER HABITAT/DWELLING COMPENSATION, HABITAT CREATION AND ENHANCEMENT.

PLEASE CONTACT THE ECOLOGY TEAM AT AECOM IN THE UK AND IRELAND FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MITIGATION TIMINGS.

* Mitigation proposals to manage white-clawed crayfish on site should only take place between the 1st July and the 30th September inclusive under a Natural England licence.

Appendix E

Indicative programme



Appendix B – New Road Strategy for Hereford Traffic Flows Summary

Introduction

The Hereford Transport Model (HTM) has been used to assess the impacts of the following potential highway schemes, in terms of traffic flows and journey time changes on the surrounding network compared to a Do Nothing Scenario (where no changes to the road network are assumed).

- Eastern River Crossing (ERiC)
- The Hereford Western Bypass (HWB) - Southern Link Road (SLR) & Western Bypass (WB)

Schematic maps have been produced to demonstrate more visually the impacts of the schemes on the network. Maps have been produced showing traffic flow and journey time changes based on the following scenarios using the 2032 model:

- ERiC (AM & PM peak) compared to the Do Nothing
- HWB - SLR & Western Bypass (AM & PM peak) compared to the Do Nothing

The HTM provides outputs by direction for a number of links across Herefordshire. To aid with the mapping and visual interpretation, the directional outputs have been averaged to provide one figure (either % change in traffic flows or journey time change) for each link.

Traffic flow changes with both the implementation of ERiC and the implementation of the SLR & Western Bypass scheme in the AM Peak are set out in Table 1 and displayed in map format in Figure 1 and Figure 2. The lettered references included in Table 1 against each link correspond with the letters displayed on the map.

Traffic flows are reported as vehicles per hour in the direction described.

Any changes are reported as a change in vehicles per hour compared to the Do Nothing Scenario and also as a percentage change.

The changes in traffic flows in Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4 are for the average change for both directions of traffic combined, as shown in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1 - Traffic flows changes: ERiC v Do Nothing and HWB v Do Nothing (AM Peak)

Ref.	Description	Direction	Do Nothing	ERiC	Difference	% Change by Direction	Average % Change (Directions Combined)	HWB (SLR+WB)	Difference	% Change by Direction	Average % Change (Directions Combined)
A	A49, Victoria Street	Northbound	1794	1665	-129	-7%	-17%	1451	-343	-19%	-29%
A	A49, Victoria Street	Southbound	1635	1189	-446	-27%	-17%	998	-637	-39%	-29%
B	Eastern River Crossing	Northbound	n/a	782	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
B	Eastern River Crossing	Southbound	n/a	1012	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
C	Southern Link Road	Eastbound	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	626	n/a	n/a	n/a
C	Southern Link Road	Westbound	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	436	n/a	n/a	n/a
D	B4399 Rotherwas Link	Eastbound	314	611	297	95%	168%	640	326	104%	128%
D	B4399 Rotherwas Link	Westbound	116	396	280	241%	168%	292	176	152%	128%
E	B4399, Holme Lacy Road	Eastbound	454	190	-264	-58%	-56%	482	28	6%	10%
E	B4399, Holme Lacy Road	Westbound	530	246	-284	-54%	-56%	606	76	14%	10%
F	B4399, Bridge Road	Eastbound	588	183	-405	-69%	-68%	553	-35	-6%	0%
F	B4399, Bridge Road	Westbound	584	188	-396	-68%	-68%	618	34	6%	0%
G	B4224, Eign Road	Westbound	514	534	20	4%	8%	468	-46	-9%	1%
G	B4224, Eign Road	Eastbound	218	246	28	13%	8%	242	24	11%	1%
H	B4224, Hampton Bishop	Eastbound	383	326	-57	-15%	-12%	303	-80	-21%	-21%
H	B4224, Hampton Bishop	Westbound	650	590	-60	-9%	-12%	519	-131	-20%	-21%
I	A49, Ross Road	Northbound	675	581	-94	-14%	-14%	522	-152	-23%	-30%
I	A49, Ross Road	Southbound	549	473	-76	-14%	-14%	349	-201	-37%	-30%
J	Holme Lacy Road	Eastbound	721	614	-107	-15%	11%	482	-239	-33%	-25%
J	Holme Lacy Road	Westbound	301	414	113	37%	11%	248	-53	-18%	-25%
K	A465, Belmont Road	Northbound	655	608	-47	-7%	-6%	527	-128	-19%	-17%
K	A465, Belmont Road	Southbound	660	621	-39	-6%	-6%	568	-91	-14%	-17%

Ref.	Description	Direction	Do Nothing	ERIC	Difference	% Change by Direction	Average % Change (Directions Combined)	HWB (SLR+WB)	Difference	% Change by Direction	Average % Change (Directions Combined)
L	Minor Road, Near Callow	Northbound	69	105	36	52%	98%	5	-64	-93%	-92%
L	Minor Road, Near Callow	Southbound	36	89	53	145%	98%	4	-33	-90%	-92%
M	A465, Allensmore	Northbound	333	307	-26	-8%	-10%	554	221	66%	69%
M	A465, Allensmore	Southbound	305	268	-37	-12%	-10%	522	217	71%	69%
N	B4349, Clehonger	Eastbound	239	246	7	3%	5%	390	152	63%	63%
N	B4349, Clehonger	Westbound	187	199	12	7%	5%	305	118	63%	63%
O	B4348, Winnal	Eastbound	106	117	11	11%	21%	46	-60	-57%	-41%
O	B4348, Winnal	Westbound	91	120	29	31%	21%	69	-22	-25%	-41%
P	B4349, Kingstone	Eastbound	126	124	-2	-2%	-7%	155	28	22%	30%
P	B4349, Kingstone	Westbound	87	77	-10	-12%	-7%	120	33	37%	30%
Q	B4352, Madley	Eastbound	241	226	-15	-6%	-2%	172	-69	-29%	-31%
Q	B4352, Madley	Westbound	247	252	5	2%	-2%	163	-84	-34%	-31%
R	A438, Sugwas Pool	Eastbound	397	378	-19	-5%	-6%	313	-85	-21%	-25%
R	A438, Sugwas Pool	Westbound	291	268	-23	-8%	-6%	207	-84	-29%	-25%
S	A438, Kings Acre Road	Eastbound	675	693	18	3%	3%	628	-46	-7%	-4%
S	A438, Kings Acre Road	Westbound	487	505	18	4%	3%	479	-8	-2%	-4%
T	A4103, Stretton Sugwas	Eastbound	648	624	-24	-4%	-5%	572	-76	-12%	-13%
T	A4103, Stretton Sugwas	Westbound	464	436	-28	-6%	-5%	399	-65	-14%	-13%
U	A4110, Canon Pyon Road	Northbound	235	224	-11	-5%	-3%	156	-78	-33%	-19%
U	A4110, Canon Pyon Road	Southbound	338	332	-6	-2%	-3%	324	-14	-4%	-19%
V	A49, Pipe and Lyde	Northbound	616	616	0	0%	-1%	701	85	14%	14%
V	A49, Pipe and Lyde	Southbound	847	837	-10	-1%	-1%	974	127	15%	14%
W	A465, Eau Withington	Northbound	164	192	28	17%	11%	174	10	6%	1%
W	A465, Eau Withington	Southbound	294	309	15	5%	11%	284	-10	-4%	1%

Ref.	Description	Direction	Do Nothing	ERIC	Difference	% Change by Direction	Average % Change (Directions Combined)	HWB (SLR+WB)	Difference	% Change by Direction	Average % Change (Directions Combined)
X	A4103, Withington	Eastbound	454	524	70	15%	10%	473	19	4%	4%
X	A4103, Withington	Westbound	626	660	34	5%	10%	645	19	3%	4%
Y	A438, Lugwardine	Eastbound	436	676	240	55%	46%	440	4	1%	0%
Y	A438, Lugwardine	Westbound	680	930	250	37%	46%	669	-10	-2%	0%
Z	A438, Ledbury Road	Eastbound	219	225	6	3%	0%	212	-7	-3%	-2%
Z	A438, Ledbury Road	Westbound	656	639	-17	-3%	0%	654	-2	0%	-2%
AA	A465, Withington Marsh	Northbound	216	295	79	37%	25%	221	5	2%	1%
AA	A465, Withington Marsh	Southbound	386	437	51	13%	25%	382	-4	-1%	1%
AB	A4103, Whitestone	Eastbound	405	457	52	13%	17%	418	13	3%	2%
AB	A4103, Whitestone	Westbound	462	562	100	22%	17%	469	7	1%	2%
AC	A438, Dormington	Eastbound	497	433	-64	-13%	-11%	496	-1	0%	0%
AC	A438, Dormington	Westbound	690	629	-61	-9%	-11%	693	3	0%	0%
AD	Clay Hill Pit, Dormington	Northbound	274	80	-194	-71%	-67%	269	-5	-2%	0%
AD	Clay Hill Pit, Dormington	Southbound	357	134	-223	-62%	-67%	366	8	2%	0%
AE	A49, Ross Road, Callow	Northbound	715	845	130	18%	21%	695	-20	-3%	-9%
AE	A49, Ross Road, Callow	Southbound	509	630	121	24%	21%	430	-79	-16%	-9%
AF	Western Bypass (South)	Northbound	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	906	n/a	n/a	n/a
AF	Western Bypass (South)	Southbound	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	997	n/a	n/a	n/a
AG	Western Bypass (North)	Northbound	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	789	n/a	n/a	n/a
AG	Western Bypass (North)	Southbound	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	695	n/a	n/a	n/a

Traffic flow change maps are shown overleaf.

Figure 1 – Average traffic flow changes - ERiC vs Do Nothing (AM Peak)

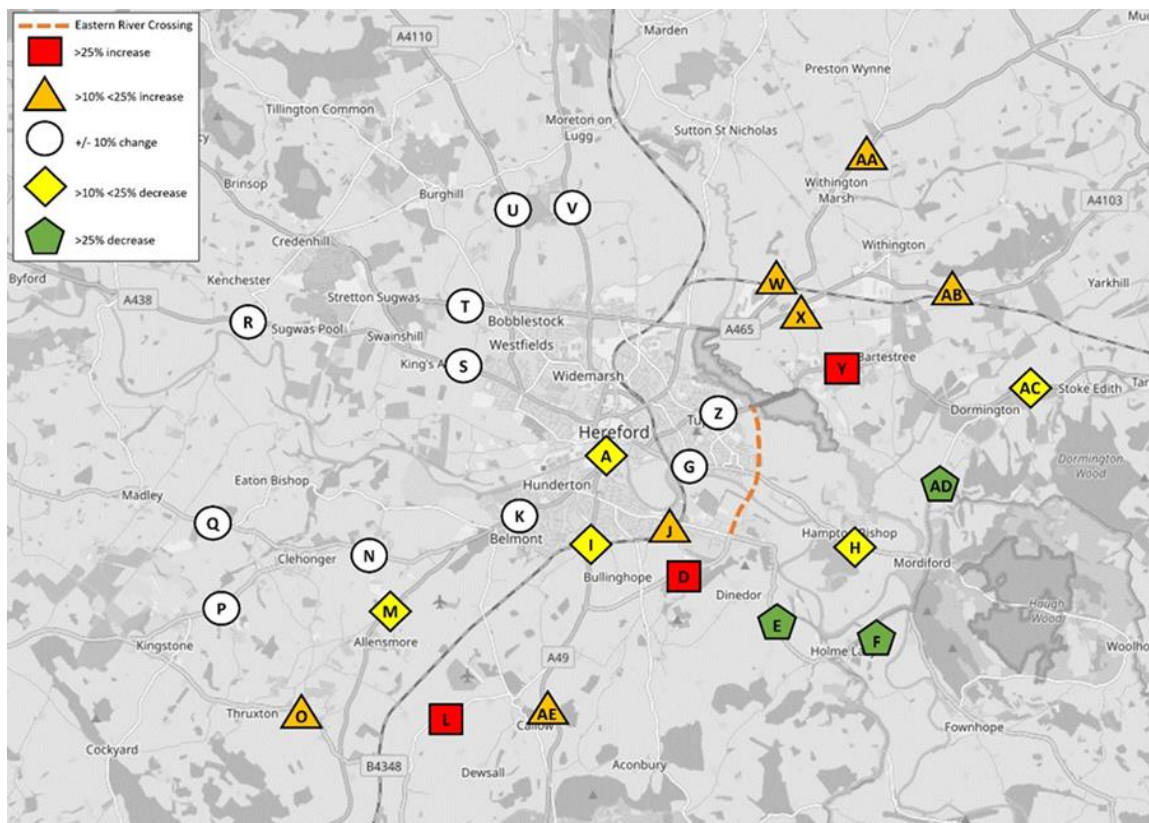
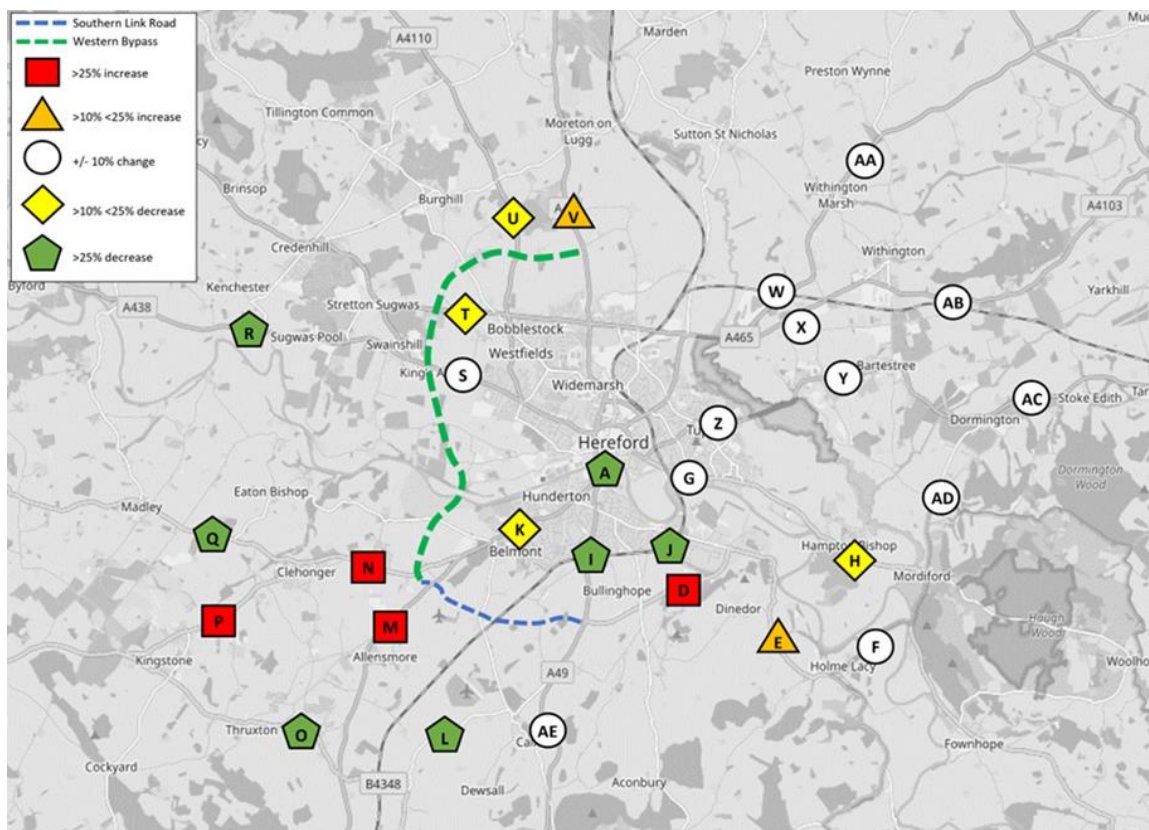


Figure 2 – Average traffic flow changes - HWB vs Do Nothing (AM Peak)



Traffic flow changes associated with the schemes in the PM Peak are set out in **Table 2** and displayed in map format in **Figure 3** and **Figure 4**.

Table 2 - Traffic flow changes: ERiC vs Do Nothing and HWB vs Do Nothing (PM Peak)

Ref.	Description	Direction	Do Nothing	ERiC	Difference	% Change by Direction	Average % Change (Directions Combined)	HWB (SLR+WB)	Difference	% Change by Direction	Average % Change (Directions Combined)
A	A49, Victoria Street	Northbound	1753	1430	-323	-18%	-15%	1163	-590	-34%	-30%
A	A49, Victoria Street	Southbound	1915	1702	-213	-11%	-15%	1425	-490	-26%	-30%
B	Eastern River Crossing	Northbound	n/a	904	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
B	Eastern River Crossing	Southbound	n/a	632	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
C	Southern Link Road	Eastbound	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	399	n/a	n/a	n/a
C	Southern Link Road	Westbound	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	641	n/a	n/a	n/a
D	B4399 Rotherwas Link	Eastbound	117	420	303	260%	154%	276	159	137%	99%
D	B4399 Rotherwas Link	Westbound	443	656	213	48%	154%	716	273	61%	99%
E	B4399, Holme Lacy Road	Eastbound	551	233	-318	-58%	-50%	589	38	7%	14%
E	B4399, Holme Lacy Road	Westbound	406	237	-169	-42%	-50%	493	87	21%	14%
F	B4399, Bridge Road	Eastbound	605	183	-422	-70%	-62%	611	6	1%	7%
F	B4399, Bridge Road	Westbound	485	223	-262	-54%	-62%	547	62	13%	7%
G	B4224, Eign Road	Westbound	204	220	16	8%	3%	190	-14	-7%	-4%
G	B4224, Eign Road	Eastbound	343	336	-7	-2%	3%	339	-4	-1%	-4%
H	B4224, Hampton Bishop	Eastbound	448	457	9	2%	-6%	388	-60	-13%	-16%
H	B4224, Hampton Bishop	Westbound	443	377	-66	-15%	-6%	360	-83	-19%	-16%
I	A49, Ross Road	Northbound	623	549	-74	-12%	-13%	389	-234	-38%	-31%
I	A49, Ross Road	Southbound	643	558	-85	-13%	-13%	491	-152	-24%	-31%
J	Holme Lacy Road	Eastbound	318	374	56	18%	12%	242	-76	-24%	-22%
J	Holme Lacy Road	Westbound	605	643	38	6%	12%	478	-127	-21%	-22%
K	A465, Belmont Road	Northbound	710	634	-76	-11%	-6%	607	-103	-15%	-20%
K	A465, Belmont Road	Southbound	665	656	-9	-1%	-6%	500	-165	-25%	-20%

Ref.	Description	Direction	Do Nothing	ERIC	Difference	% Change by Direction	Average % Change (Directions Combined)	HWB (SLR+WB)	Difference	% Change by Direction	Average % Change (Directions Combined)
L	Minor Road, Near Callow	Northbound	43	111	68	159%	101%	2	-41	-95%	-95%
L	Minor Road, Near Callow	Southbound	73	105	32	43%	101%	4	-69	-95%	-95%
M	A465, Allensmore	Northbound	416	358	-58	-14%	-10%	541	125	30%	43%
M	A465, Allensmore	Southbound	340	317	-23	-7%	-10%	531	191	56%	43%
N	B4349, Clehonger	Eastbound	192	199	7	4%	4%	352	160	84%	71%
N	B4349, Clehonger	Westbound	256	265	9	4%	4%	408	152	59%	71%
O	B4348, Winnal	Eastbound	153	187	34	22%	15%	127	-26	-17%	-22%
O	B4348, Winnal	Westbound	168	182	14	8%	15%	122	-46	-28%	-22%
P	B4349, Kingstone	Eastbound	99	92	-7	-7%	-5%	155	56	57%	58%
P	B4349, Kingstone	Westbound	108	105	-3	-2%	-5%	170	62	58%	58%
Q	B4352, Madley	Eastbound	206	212	6	3%	0%	177	-29	-14%	-20%
Q	B4352, Madley	Westbound	227	221	-6	-2%	0%	166	-61	-27%	-20%
R	A438, Sugwas Pool	Eastbound	369	353	-16	-4%	-4%	297	-72	-20%	-19%
R	A438, Sugwas Pool	Westbound	470	454	-16	-3%	-4%	381	-89	-19%	-19%
S	A438, Kings Acre Road	Eastbound	508	523	15	3%	2%	505	-3	-1%	-2%
S	A438, Kings Acre Road	Westbound	673	678	5	1%	2%	652	-21	-3%	-2%
T	A4103, Stretton Sugwas	Eastbound	504	478	-26	-5%	-4%	412	-92	-18%	-12%
T	A4103, Stretton Sugwas	Westbound	583	568	-15	-3%	-4%	547	-36	-6%	-12%
U	A4110, Canon Pyon Road	Northbound	413	397	-16	-4%	-2%	381	-32	-8%	-11%
U	A4110, Canon Pyon Road	Southbound	214	216	2	1%	-2%	182	-32	-15%	-11%
V	A49, Pipe and Lyde	Northbound	687	661	-26	-4%	-2%	912	225	33%	23%
V	A49, Pipe and Lyde	Southbound	719	712	-7	-1%	-2%	809	90	12%	23%
W	A465, Eau Withington	Northbound	289	260	-29	-10%	-7%	299	10	3%	5%
W	A465, Eau Withington	Southbound	208	200	-8	-4%	-7%	221	13	6%	5%
X	A4103, Withington	Eastbound	509	665	156	31%	19%	517	8	2%	2%
X	A4103, Withington	Westbound	536	580	44	8%	19%	549	13	2%	2%
Y	A438, Lugwardine	Eastbound	541	791	250	46%	46%	546	5	1%	-1%

Ref.	Description	Direction	Do Nothing	ERIC	Difference	% Change by Direction	Average % Change (Directions Combined)	HWB (SLR+WB)	Difference	% Change by Direction	Average % Change (Directions Combined)
Y	A438, Lugwardine	Westbound	464	673	209	45%	46%	448	-16	-4%	-1%
Z	A438, Ledbury Road	Eastbound	395	392	-3	-1%	-6%	390	-5	-1%	-3%
Z	A438, Ledbury Road	Westbound	375	333	-42	-11%	-6%	360	-15	-4%	-3%
AA	A465, Withington Marsh	Northbound	309	372	63	21%	20%	316	7	2%	3%
AA	A465, Withington Marsh	Southbound	256	308	52	20%	20%	267	11	4%	3%
AB	A4103, Whitestone	Eastbound	446	498	52	12%	8%	449	3	1%	1%
AB	A4103, Whitestone	Westbound	477	499	22	5%	8%	481	4	1%	1%
AC	A438, Dormington	Eastbound	567	528	-39	-7%	-6%	568	1	0%	1%
AC	A438, Dormington	Westbound	499	476	-23	-5%	-6%	503	4	1%	1%
AD	Clay Hill Pit, Dormington	Northbound	290	97	-193	-67%	-66%	283	-7	-2%	2%
AD	Clay Hill Pit, Dormington	Southbound	261	90	-171	-65%	-66%	277	16	6%	2%
AE	A49, Ross Road, Callow	Northbound	526	637	111	21%	17%	491	-35	-7%	-6%
AE	A49, Ross Road, Callow	Southbound	740	831	91	12%	17%	705	-35	-5%	-6%
AF	Western Bypass (South)	Northbound	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	967	n/a	n/a	n/a
AF	Western Bypass (South)	Southbound	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	816	n/a	n/a	n/a
AG	Western Bypass (North)	Northbound	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	680	n/a	n/a	n/a
AG	Western Bypass (North)	Southbound	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	753	n/a	n/a	n/a

Traffic flow change maps are shown overleaf.

Figure 3 – Average traffic flow changes - ERiC vs Do Nothing (PM Peak)

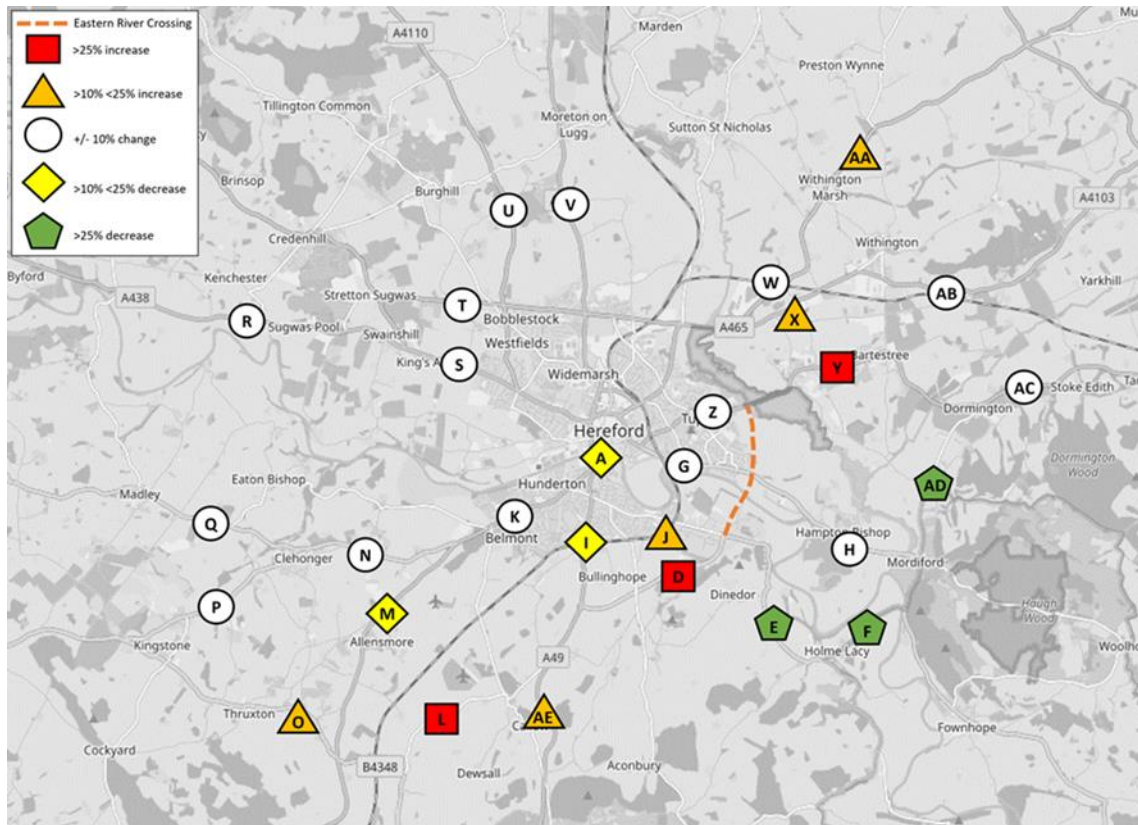
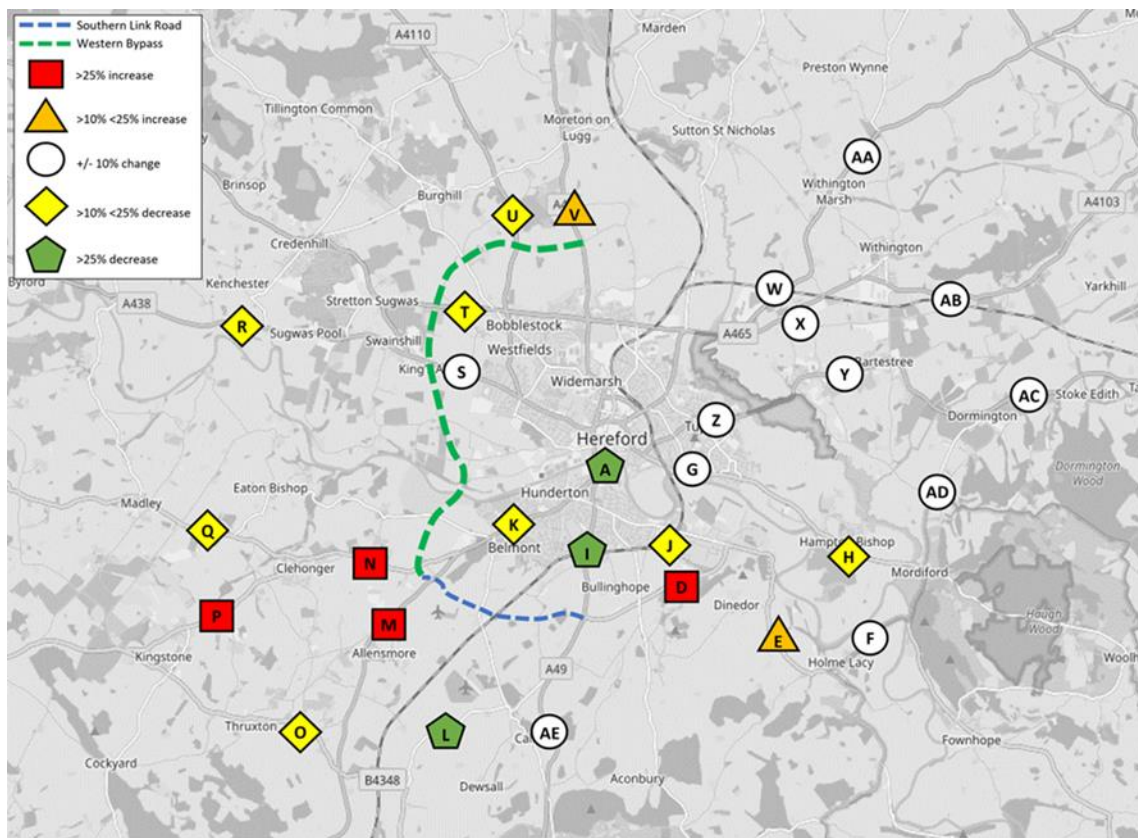


Figure 4 – Average traffic flow changes - HWB vs Do Nothing (PM Peak)



Appendix C – Journey Time Summary

Introduction

The Hereford Transport Model (HTM) has been used to assess the impacts of the following potential highway schemes, in terms of journey time changes on the surrounding network compared to a Do Nothing Scenario (where no changes to the road network are assumed). This appendix should be read in conjunction with the traffic flow summary in Appendix B.

The schemes are:

- Eastern River Crossing (ERiC)
- The Hereford Western Bypass (HWB) - Southern Link Road (SLR) & Western Bypass (WB).

Schematic maps have been produced to demonstrate more visually the impacts of the schemes on the network. Maps have been produced showing journey time changes based on the following scenarios using the 2032 model:

- ERiC (AM & PM peak) compared to the Do Nothing
- HWB - SLR & Western Bypass (AM & PM peak) compared to the Do Nothing

The HTM provides outputs by direction for a number of links across Herefordshire. To aid with the mapping and visual interpretation, the directional outputs have been averaged to provide one figure (% change in journey times) for each link.

Journey time changes with both the implementation of ERiC and the implementation of the HWB (SLR & Western Bypass) scheme in the AM Peak are set out in **Table 1** and displayed in map format in **Figure 1** and **Figure 2**. These are based on changes to journey times along the shorter routes along the network.

The routes are shown in different colours on the maps but can also be summarised as:

Route 1 – A49 Victoria Street from A465 Asda junction to the A438 Blueschool Street at its junction with A465 Commercial Road.

Route 2 – A49 Edgar Street from its junction with A438 Blueschool Street to A49 Holmer Road at its junction with A4103 Roman Road.

Route 3 – A465 Commercial Road from its junction with A438 Blueschool Street to the A4103 at its junction with the A465.

Route 4 – A438 from its junction with A465 Commercial Road to its junction with ERiC (near the Cock of Tupsley pub).

Route 5 – A49 Ross Road from its junction with the B4399 Rotherwas Link to its junction with the A465 Belmont Road.

Route 6 – A465 Belmont Road from its junction with the A49 Ross Road to the junction with Abbotsmead Road.

Route 7 – A438 Whitecross Road from its junction with the A49 to the A480 junction to Stretton Sugwas.

Route 8 – The B4399 Rotherwas Link from its junction with the A49 Ross Road to the junction with the B4399 Straight Mile.

Route 9 – A49 Ross Road from its junction with A465 Belmont Road along Holme Lacy Road and the Straight Mile to its junction with the B4399 Rotherwas Link Road.

Route 10 – Eastern River Crossing and Link Road.

Table 1 - Journey time changes: ERiC vs Do Nothing and HWB vs Do Nothing (AM Peak) (Shorter Routes)

Ref	Direction	Do Nothing	ERiC	Difference	ERiC Average (Directions Combined) (mm:ss)	HWB (SLR+WB)	Difference	HWB (SLR+WB) Average (Directions Combined) (mm:ss)
1	Northbound	07:07	05:18	- 01:49	-01:17	05:11	- 01:56	-01:16
1	Southbound	05:13	04:28	- 00:45	-01:17	04:36	- 00:37	-01:16
2	Inbound	05:53	05:34	- 00:20	-00:12	04:47	- 01:07	-00:53
2	Outbound	05:06	05:03	- 00:03	-00:12	04:27	- 00:39	-00:53
3	Inbound	08:20	07:53	- 00:27	-00:14	08:02	- 00:18	-00:11
3	Outbound	06:21	06:21	00:00	-00:14	06:18	- 00:03	-00:11
4	Inbound	07:38	07:05	- 00:33	-00:17	07:27	- 00:11	-00:09
4	Outbound	06:07	06:07	- 00:00	-00:17	06:00	- 00:07	-00:09
5	Inbound	07:51	06:32	- 01:19	-00:44	06:05	- 01:46	-01:04
5	Outbound	04:54	04:45	- 00:09	-00:44	04:34	- 00:21	-01:04
6	Inbound	05:20	04:51	- 00:30	-00:18	04:21	- 00:59	-00:39
6	Outbound	03:48	03:43	- 00:05	-00:18	03:29	- 00:19	-00:39
7	Inbound	07:15	07:32	00:17	00:10	07:15	- 00:01	-00:02
7	Outbound	06:28	06:30	00:02	00:10	06:26	- 00:02	-00:02
8	Eastbound	02:40	02:58	00:18	00:13	02:58	00:17	00:12
8	Westbound	02:29	02:38	00:08	00:13	02:35	00:06	00:12
9	Eastbound	06:20	06:09	- 00:11	-00:12	05:55	- 00:24	-00:27
9	Westbound	06:07	05:55	- 00:12	-00:12	05:37	- 00:30	-00:27
10	Northbound	n/a	02:52	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
10	Southbound	n/a	03:00	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Journey time change maps are shown overleaf.

Figure 1 - Journey time changes - ERiC vs Do Nothing (AM Peak)

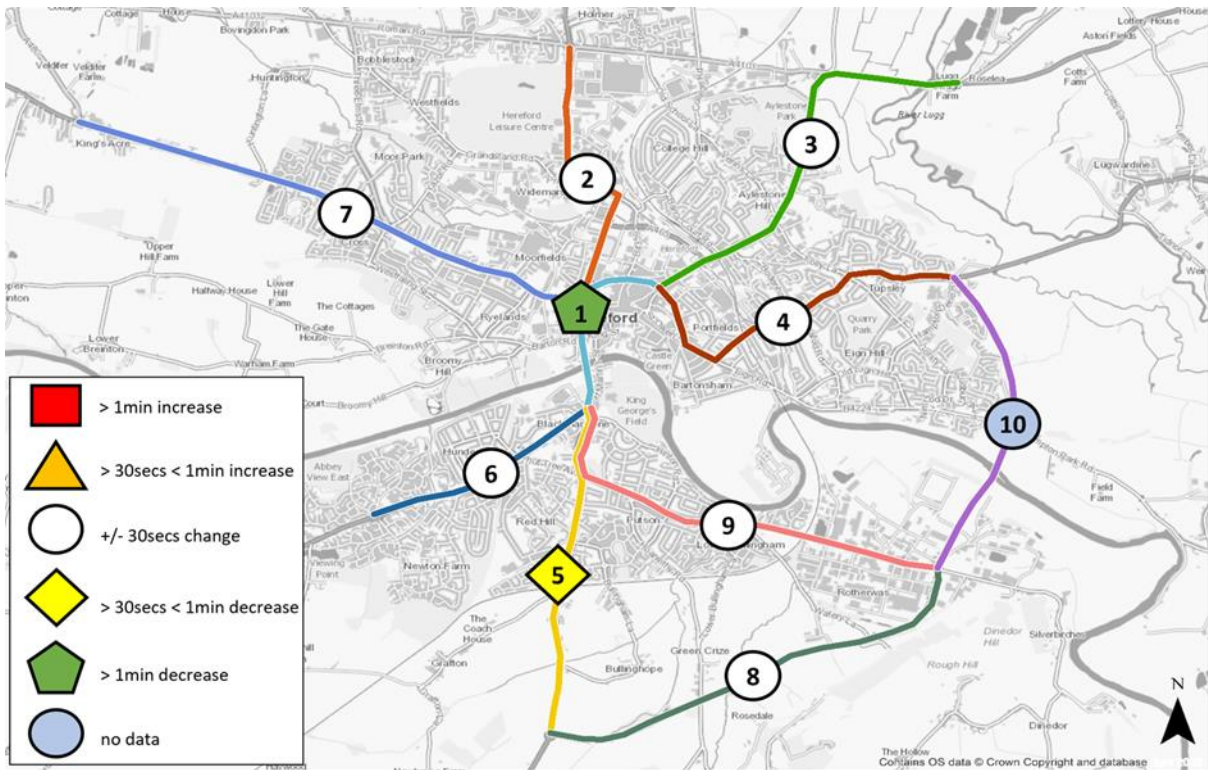
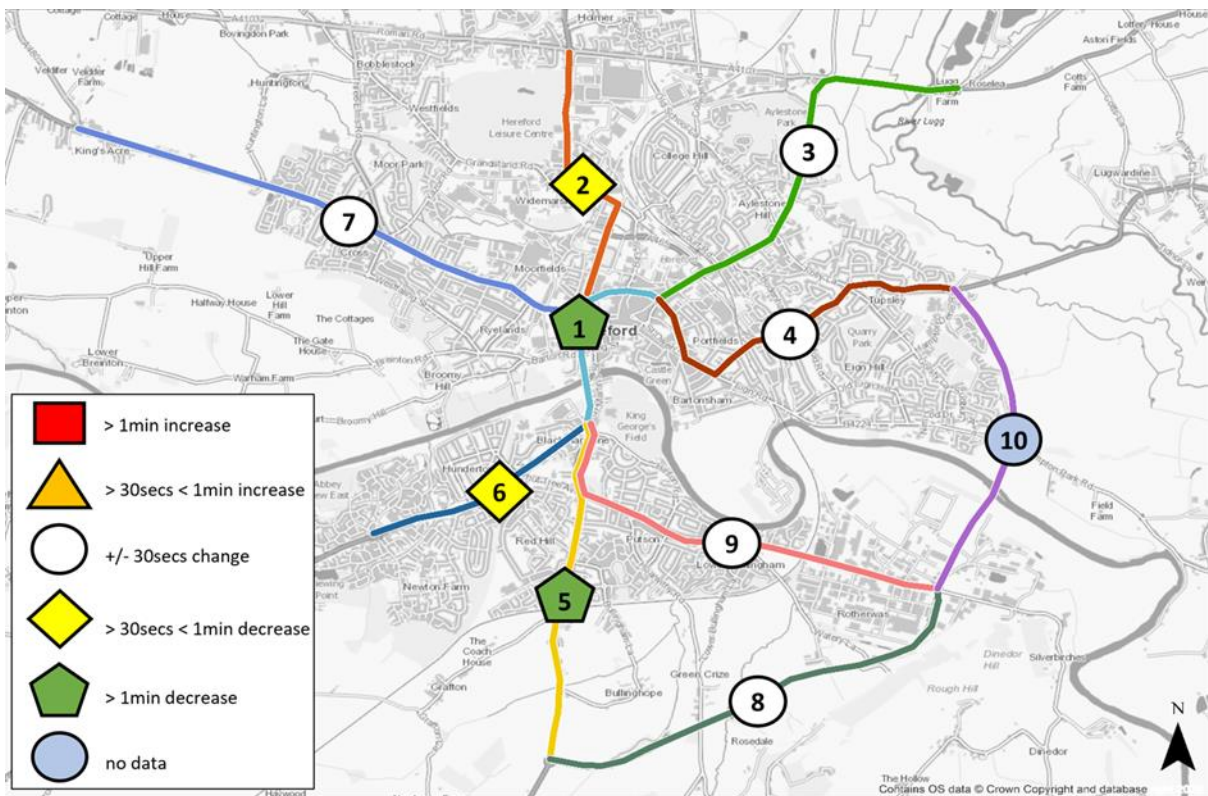


Figure 2 - Journey time changes - HWB vs Do Nothing (AM Peak)



Journey time changes along the longer routes which make-up the network as a result of the schemes in the AM peak are shown below.

Route 11 – Routes 5 + 1 + 3.

Route 12 – Routes 8 + 10.

Route 13 – Routes 5 + part of 1 + 2.

Route 14 – Routes 7 + part of 1 + 4

Table 2 - Journey time changes: ERiC vs Do Nothing and HWB vs Do Nothing (AM Peak) (Longer Routes)

Ref	Direction	Do Nothing	ERiC	Difference	ERiC Average (Directions Combined) (mm:ss)	HWB (SLR+ WB)	Difference	HWB (SLR+WB) Average (Directions Combined) (mm:ss)
11	Northeastbound	21:05	17:57	- 03:09	-02:18	17:16	- 03:49	-02:29
11	Southwestbound	17:45	16:19	- 01:27	-02:18	16:37	- 01:09	-02:29
12	Northbound	n/a	05:50	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
12	Southbound	n/a	05:38	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
13	Northbound	17:01	14:03	- 02:57	-01:51	12:36	- 04:25	-03:08
13	Southbound	13:30	12:46	- 00:44	-01:51	11:41	- 01:50	-03:08
14	Eastbound	18:35	17:20	- 01:14	-01:07	16:54	- 01:40	-01:04
14	Westbound	17:30	16:30	- 01:00	-01:07	17:02	- 00:28	-01:04

Journey time change maps are shown overleaf.

Figure 3 - Journey time changes - ERiC vs Do Nothing (AM Peak)

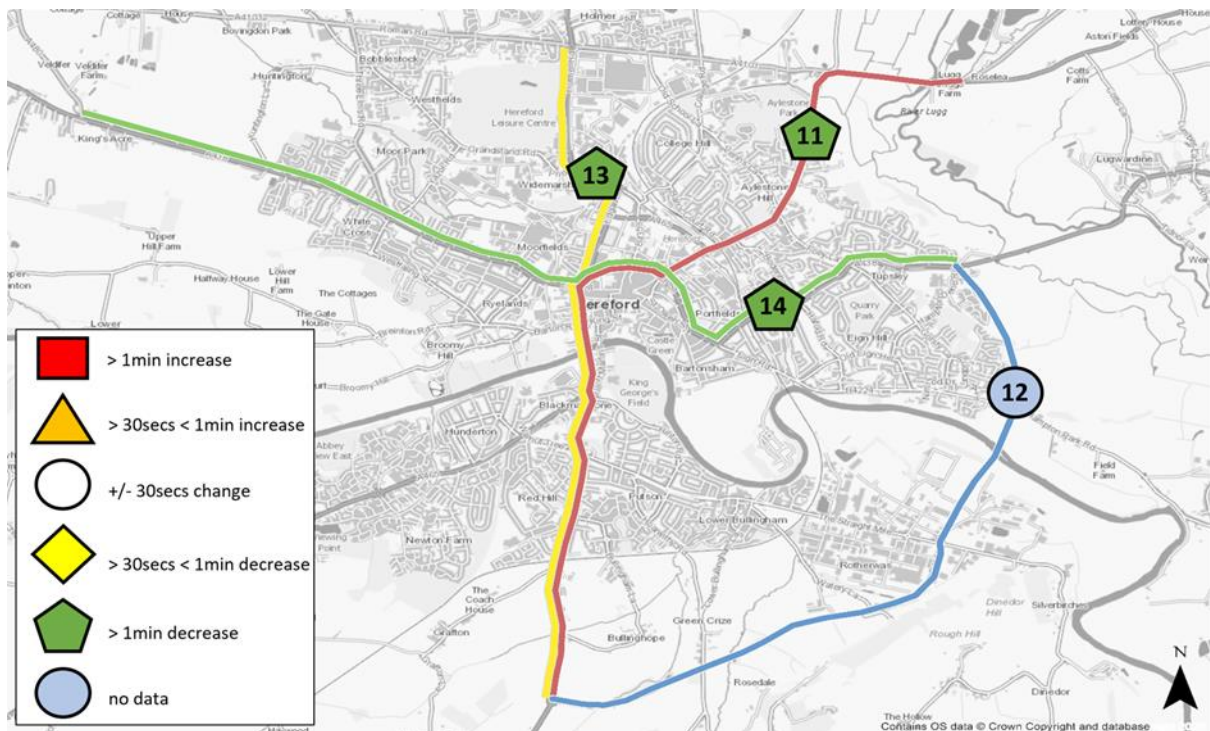
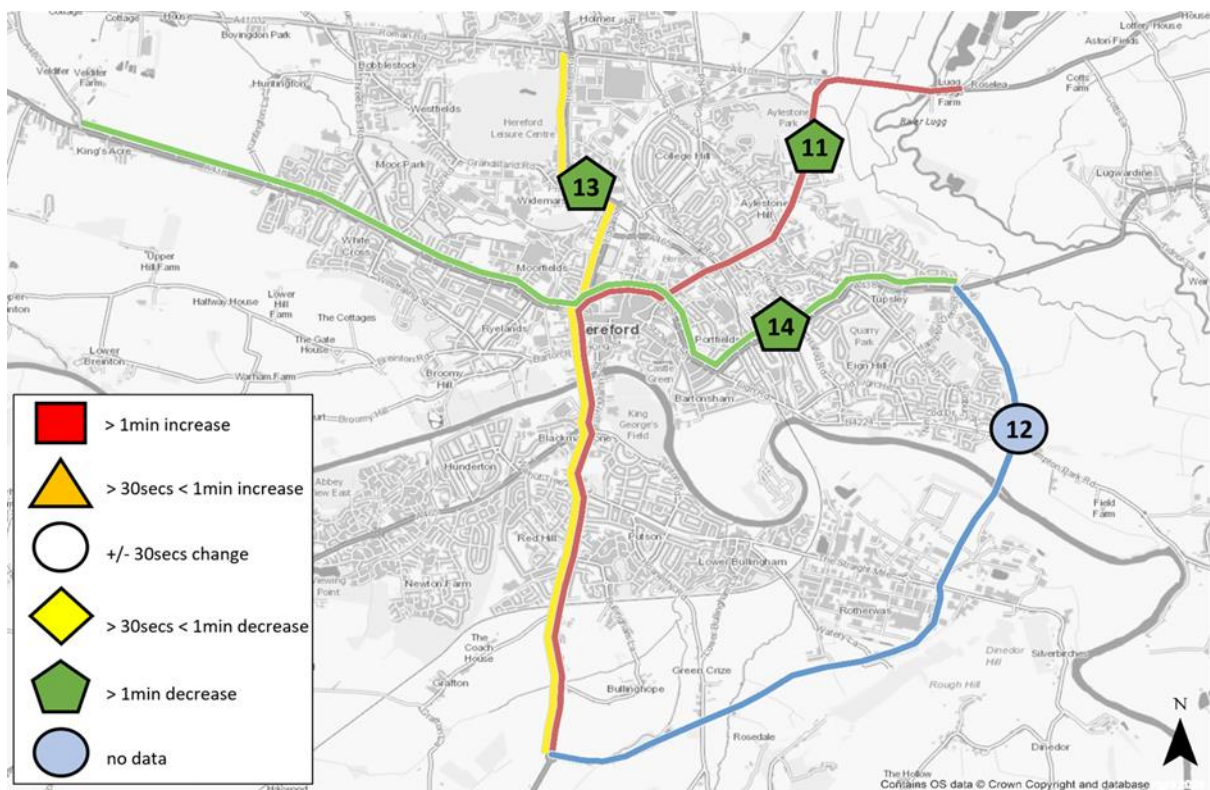


Figure 4 - Journey time changes - HWB vs Do Nothing (AM Peak)



Journey time changes associated with the schemes in the PM Peak are set out in **Table 3** and displayed in map format in **Figure 5** and **Figure 6**. These are based on changes to journey times along the shorter routes along the network.

Table 3 - Journey time changes: ERiC vs Do Nothing and HWB vs Do Nothing (PM Peak) (Shorter Routes)

Ref	Direction	Do Nothing	ERiC	Difference	ERiC Average (Directions Combined) (mm:ss)	HWB (SLR+WB)	Difference	HWB (SLR+WB) Average (Directions Combined) (mm:ss)
1	Northbound	06:45	05:32	- 01:13	-00:48	05:24	- 01:21	-00:56
	Southbound	04:28	04:06	- 00:22	-00:48	03:57	- 00:31	-00:56
2	Inbound	05:02	04:50	- 00:12	-00:22	04:22	- 00:40	-01:04
	Outbound	06:11	05:40	- 00:31	-00:22	04:45	- 01:27	-01:04
3	Inbound	06:54	06:48	- 00:06	-00:09	06:48	- 00:06	-00:08
	Outbound	07:00	06:48	- 00:12	-00:09	06:50	- 00:10	-00:08
4	Inbound	06:45	06:27	- 00:18	-00:12	06:40	- 00:05	-00:03
	Outbound	06:10	06:04	- 00:06	-00:12	06:10	00:00	-00:03
5	Inbound	05:57	05:33	- 00:23	-00:19	05:12	- 00:45	-00:37
	Outbound	05:16	05:02	- 00:14	-00:19	04:48	- 00:28	-00:37
6	Inbound	04:22	04:08	- 00:14	-00:11	03:49	- 00:33	-00:37
	Outbound	04:39	04:32	- 00:07	-00:11	03:59	- 00:40	-00:37
7	Inbound	06:47	06:55	00:08	-00:04	06:49	00:02	-00:17
	Outbound	07:25	07:08	- 00:16	-00:04	06:49	- 00:35	-00:17
8	Eastbound	02:36	02:45	00:09	00:11	02:41	00:04	00:11
	Westbound	02:42	02:54	00:12	00:11	03:00	00:18	00:11
9	Eastbound	06:11	06:13	00:02	-00:50	05:57	- 00:14	-00:21
	Westbound	06:07	06:04	- 00:03	-00:50	05:39	- 00:28	-00:21
10	Northbound	n/a	02:52	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Southbound	n/a	02:57	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Journey time change maps are shown overleaf.

Figure 5 - Journey time changes - ERiC vs Do Nothing (PM Peak)

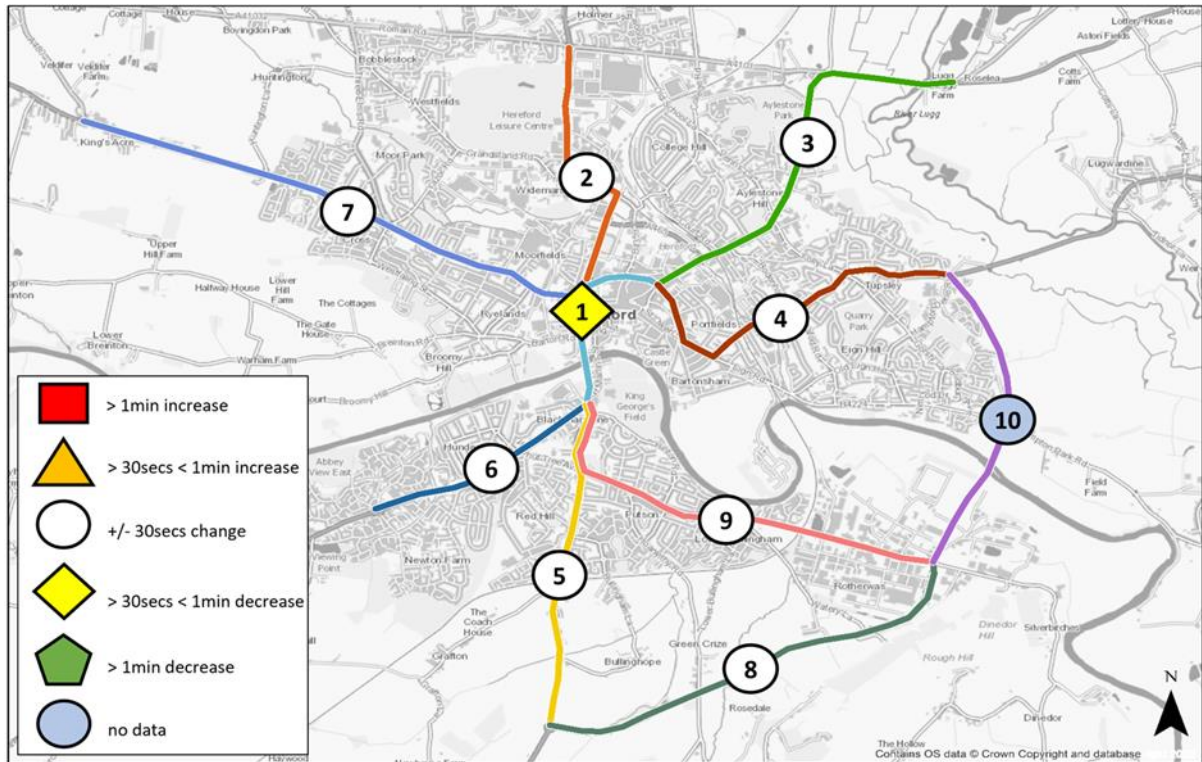
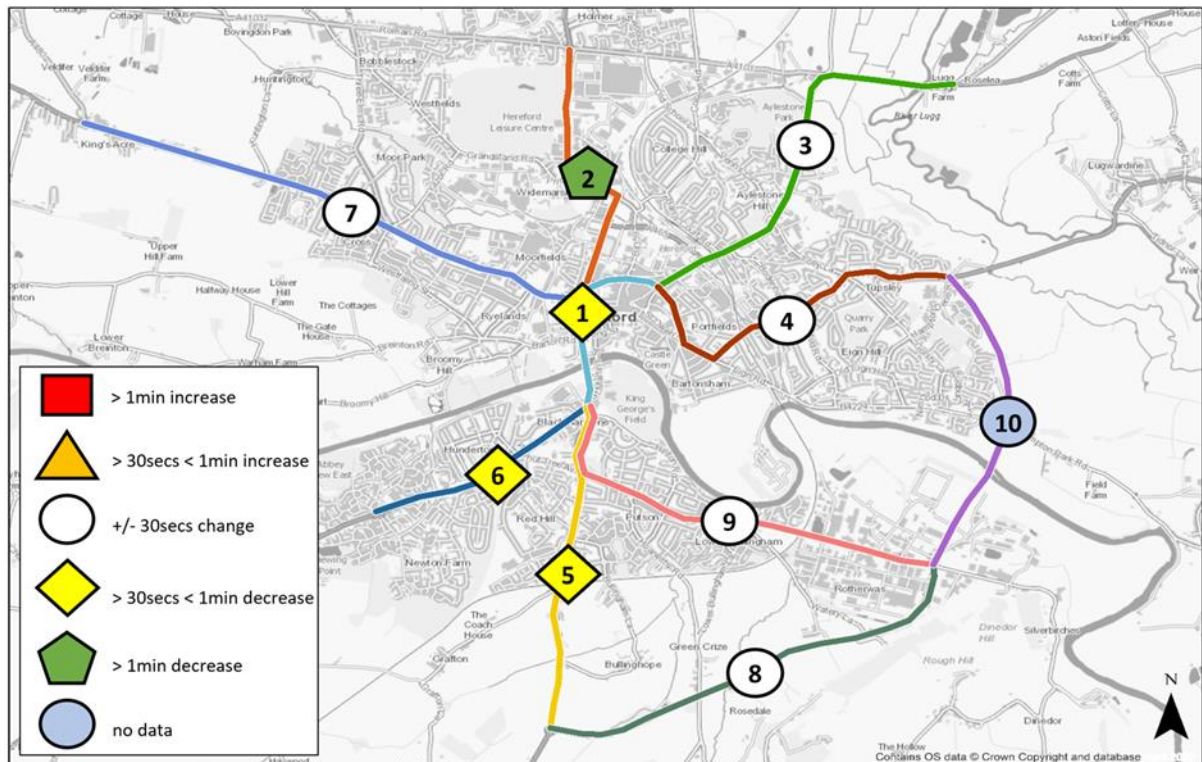


Figure 6 - Journey time changes - HWB vs Do Nothing (PM Peak)



Journey time changes along the longer routes which make-up the network as a result of the schemes in the PM peak are shown below.

Table 4 - Journey time changes: ERiC vs Do Nothing and HWB vs Do Nothing (PM Peak) (Longer Routes)

Ref	Direction	Do Nothing	ERiC	Difference	ERiC Average (Directions Combined) (mm:ss)	HWB (SLR+ WB)	Difference	HWB (SLR+WB) Average (Directions Combined) (mm:ss)
11	Northeastbound	18:52	17:09	- 01:43	-01:19	16:46	- 02:05	-01:35
11	Southwestbound	16:29	15:35	- 00:54	-01:19	15:25	- 01:04	-01:35
12	Northbound	n/a	05:37	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
12	Southbound	n/a	05:51	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
13	Northbound	15:17	13:38	- 01:39	-01:09	12:13	- 03:04	-02:19
13	Southbound	12:38	11:59	- 00:39	-01:09	11:04	- 01:34	-02:19
14	Eastbound	17:32	16:34	- 00:58	-00:51	16:32	- 01:00	-00:53
14	Westbound	17:00	16:17	- 00:44	-00:51	16:14	- 00:46	-00:53

Journey time change maps are shown overleaf.

Figure 7 - Journey time changes - ERiC vs Do Nothing (PM Peak)

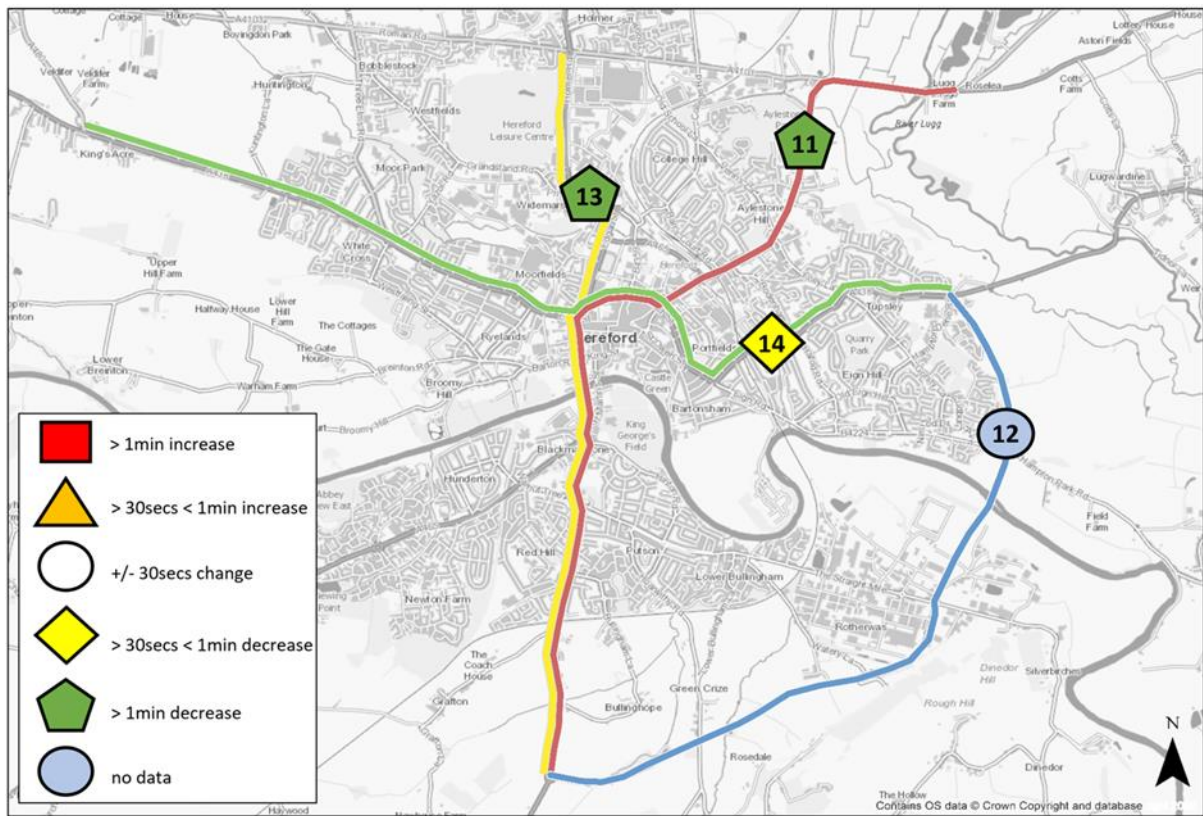
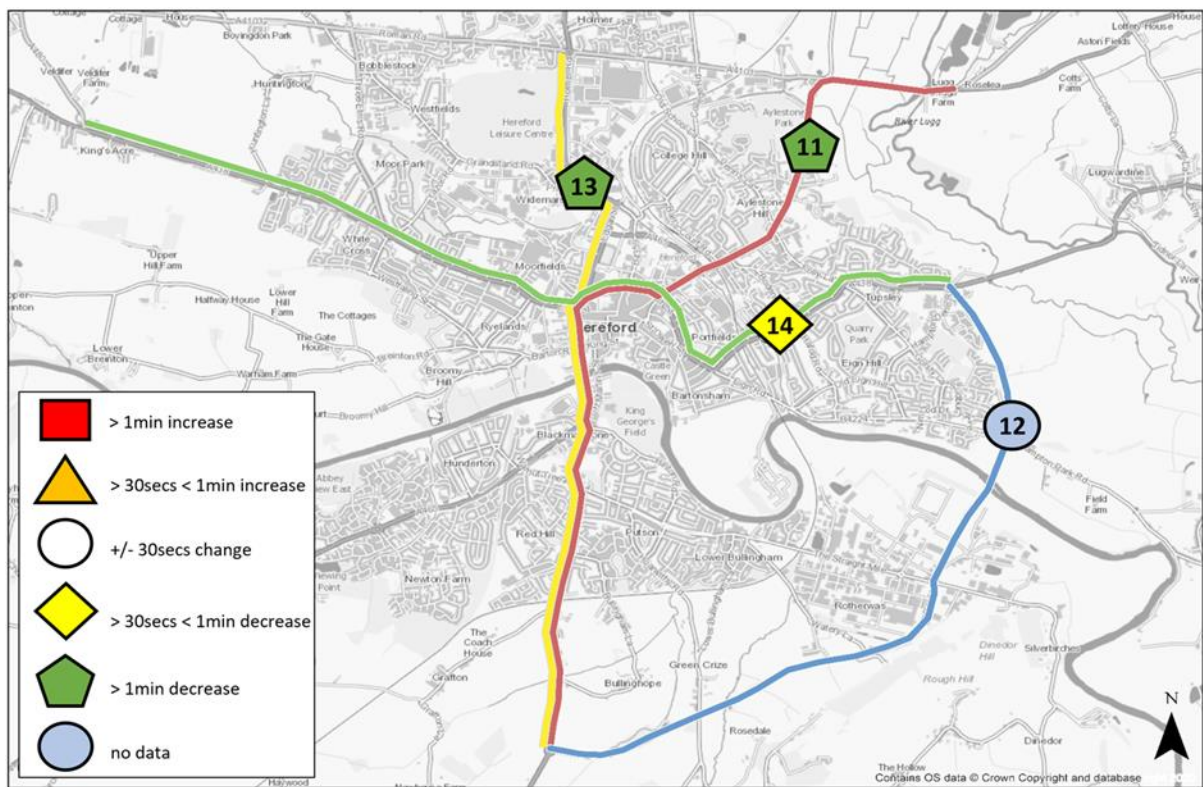


Figure 8 - Journey time changes - HWB vs Do Nothing (PM Peak)



Appendix D – Summary of Comments at Political Group Consultations on 14th March 2024.

Two Political Group consultations were held on 14th March 2024. The meeting at 2pm was held in person at the Plough Lane offices of Herefordshire Council, while the 6pm meeting was held online via Teams.

Each meeting was chaired by Cllr Price, Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure, and lasted for approximately one hour.

2pm Meeting

The Green Party commented that the evidence provided for the meeting was inadequate and requested that the evidence base and report should be published in full.

The Green Party requested that provisions are made to mitigate safety risks given that additional road capacity and junctions are proposed to be delivered.

The Conservative Party supported the full western bypass noting Eastern River Crossing and Link Road (ERiC) only provides localised benefits whilst the western bypass meets requirements to bypass the A49.

The Green Party requested that any statistics quoted in documents should include a source.

The Green Party asked why the objectives for the Local Transport Plan (LTP) hadn't been used in the New Road Strategy for Hereford (NRSH) report and why separate objectives have been developed for the road schemes.

The Liberal Democrats were supportive of detrunking the A49, noting there are schools and houses currently very close to the road.

The Green Party queried the scheme costs and how they had been built up.

The Green Party believes proposals are not compatible with LTP guidance and asked why, rather than just deciding to build a road, the most cost effective ways to reduce congestion, improve safety and meet our carbon commitments are not being considered.

The Conservative Party asked whether the scheme costs included junctions and environmental mitigation works.

The Conservative Party believe that the Southern Link Road (SLR) on its own would provide benefits for traffic travelling between South Wales and the Rotherwas Estate.

The Green Party asked whether active travel costs are included in the costs.

The True Independent Party is not supportive of a western bypass as it will not do anything for the economy and doubts whether it would get planning permission due to the high water table and flooding issues.

6pm Meeting

The Green Party queried whether the formal Transport Analysis Guidance (TAG) had been followed in the ERiC Strategic Outline Case report and whether the options considered were a wide enough range of possible solutions.

The green Party agreed with objectives to boost the local economy and reduce congestion but felt that other objectives should have been included such as reducing carbon emissions, improving public health, reducing deaths and injuries and protecting and enhancing nature.

The Conservative Party appreciated the clarity of the map and supporting data in setting out the routes and the options.

The Liberal Democrats Party considered that the strategy should be addressing the transport decarbonisation agenda.

The Conservative Party raised a query over how the increased flood design levels might affect the bridge over the River Wye for the Hereford Western Bypass (HWB).

The Green Party raised concerns over the risk that the HWB may become an access road for housing sites and whether the factor of induced demand as a result of increased capacity had been considered.

The Independents for Herefordshire Party queried the costs and risks associated with detrunking and the liabilities of the existing road and bridge.

The Independents for Herefordshire queried how the costs had been calculated for the three scheme elements.

The Independents for Herefordshire queried the completion date of 2031.

The Green Party would like to see more objectives considered in the assessment of the options such as elements for the environment and protecting and enhancing nature.

The Independents for Herefordshire Party asked to see the detail behind the cost modelling to understand the differences between the various options.

The Independents for Herefordshire Party queried whether active travel measures were included in the costs quoted.

The Independents for Herefordshire Party raised the issue of the DfT considering roads only after all other options had been considered and would like to details of the other options considered.

The Independents for Herefordshire Party queried whether the increased flood risk on all strategic sites had been taken into account when calculating numbers of homes and whether the impact on the traffic had been modelled.

The Independents for Herefordshire Party queried whether the value for money calculations for the SLR would be for a stand-alone scheme or as part of the full HWB.

The Independents for Herefordshire Party asked whether the schemes were all modelled using the same data assumptions and whether it was using up-to-date traffic data.

The Independents for Herefordshire Party questioned whether the £102m of Local Transport Funds were being considered for schemes across the county.

The Independents for Herefordshire Party queried the status of the draft Hereford Masterplan.

