

Appendix E: Recommendations from the General Scrutiny Committee, 9 November 2020

Recommendation A:

More detailed studies are undertaken on the benefits and dis-benefits of traffic light management in more locations in Hereford.

Response

Whilst the removal of traffic signals along the A49 was looked at and discarded by the review due to negative impacts on pedestrians and cyclists, traffic light management would form an element of the Intelligent Transport Systems option (page 53 of the review) which is included in Package C.

If cabinet is minded to support this recommendation this would be additional work which the cabinet could ask officers to consider and set out the resource requirements to progress.

Recommendation B:

That as a result of this review, the committee recommends that the cabinet consider 'weighting of the preferred outcomes' to help determine the preferred package to take forward.

Response

The review has specifically chosen not to weight the 4 objectives or 16 outcomes which underpin these objectives. This provides a comparative view of performance for all of the six packages. Cabinet may choose to assign its own strategic priorities in respect of objectives and outcomes and reference these priorities in determining its preferred package.

If cabinet wished for weightings to be applied to the package assessments it could ask for this as a further step to the review. Cabinet would need to confirm its preferred weightings or instruct that alternative weightings are assessed. If cabinet wished to progress this work it would need to defer its decision on the preferred packages and this would extend the review.

Recommendation C:

Support is given to promoting more 'park and choose' options in combination with more investment in to public transport options and cycle routes to reduce demand for car journeys into or through the city centre with a particular focus given to the limited transport options currently experienced by Herefordshire's rural communities.

That the executive set up a transport team as a matter of priority to implement the planning of cycling and walking, and that the road schemes are reconfigured to accommodate walking and cycling safely within the city.

Response

The recommendation is noted. Package A includes investment in park and choose options (identified as mobility hubs at page 51 of the review) and cycle routes (Page 45) and Package A+B includes significant investment in public transport options within the Hereford's urban area and urban fringe (options set out at pages 45, 46, 47 and 49 of the review) and these will support longer distance travel needs. Cabinet will be able to select this combination of package options noting the support indicated by committee.

Whilst this review has focused on transport issues in Hereford in line with the scope set out in the cabinet member decision of January 2020 it is appreciated that it would be helpful to review

transport challenges and solutions countywide. The cabinet report sets out the original intention to review the Local Transport Plan within 5 years of its adoption which would be by 2021. It is also important to note that the core strategy update is due to comment in the next few months. As such, the intention would be to undertake a wider review of transport strategy for the whole county over the coming year.

Cabinet may ask officers to consider the approach to designing and delivering transport schemes and report back on options and funding implications for different approaches.

Recommendation D:

The cabinet follow up on the suggestion for a 'River-Bus Service' in ongoing refinement and review of the Hereford transport package options.

Response

Whilst this proposal was not considered in the review or suggested by members or stakeholders during the engagement stages of the review cabinet could include this option in its preferred package combination and instruct that this is considered further in the context of package development work. The cost of undertaking this work would need to be confirmed and set out in a subsequent report to the cabinet member.

Recommendation E:

Consideration is given to a wider, more in depth study, on the transport options that address countywide transport challenges and solutions, not just in Hereford City.

Response

Whilst this review has focused on transport issues in Hereford in line with the scope set out in the cabinet member decision of January 2020 it is appreciated that it would be helpful to review transport challenges and solutions countywide. The cabinet report sets out the original intention to review the Local Transport Plan within 5 years of its adoption which would be by 2021. It is also important to note that the core strategy update is due to comment in the next few months. As such, the intention would be to undertake a wider review of transport strategy for the whole county over the coming year.

Recommendations F:

The cabinet should not feel constrained by having to consider just the package of options that has been presented to them as part of this review.

Response

The recommendation to cabinet sets out that cabinet may consider the packages as assessed in the review or combination of package options.

Recommendation G:

The committee considers that further analysis is undertaken to assess further the mitigation measures of traffic utilising an eastern crossing before the dis-benefits of an eastern crossing rule it out as an option.

Response

Cabinet may choose to agree a package which includes an eastern river crossing noting that 2 eastern river crossing options have been assessed within the 6 packages. If cabinet considers that further technical work is required to understand the impacts and potential mitigations of these elements (or any other transport elements) it could ask officers to consider and set out the resource requirements for any additional technical work.

Recommendation H:

School travel and transport is given greater priority and that more work is done to undertake survey work with schools and parents to gain a better understanding to what the barriers to uptake of school transport are.

Response

Whilst an assessment of the barriers to uptake of different modes of travel to school (other than by car) was not part of this review and the review did not undertake fresh and comprehensive surveys of travel to school for county schools. This is additional work which the cabinet could ask officers to consider and set out the resource requirements to progress.

Recommendation I:

That carbon offsetting is looked at in relation to offsetting on major infrastructure projects.

Response

Carbon offsetting is being considered in the work being undertaken on the carbon management plan – Pathway to Carbon Neutral. The Plan indicates that offsetting is likely to follow in the 5 years following the current management plan and between 2025 and 2030.

Recommendation J:

The impact of assessing routes over other river crossings, in particular, the Bridge Sollars crossing, is built into the analysis of options and packages under review.

Response

Cabinet is invited to consider whether or not it wishes to instruct that further work is done to understand wider traffic movements through the county and outside of the Hereford transport network in the context further development of a preferred package. This is additional work which the cabinet could ask officers to consider and set out the resource requirements to progress.

Recommendation K:

That the executive abandon the Western Bypass and reject other major road infrastructure schemes, barring only the eastern river crossing option.

Response

The recommendations for cabinet include the option to stop work on the western bypass and southern link road and the western bypass as also include in package A+C+D. Two of the package options include eastern river crossings and cabinet may determine to progress either of these

options. Any decision which would result in a significant change to current adopted policy and strategy may require the need for consideration by full council.

Recommendation L:

The executive take a look again to the robustness of the qualitative assessment of the evidence presented.

Response

If cabinet wished to look again at the robustness of the qualitative assessment this would extend the review and would require it to defer any decision.

Cabinet have been briefed on the review at various stages of its development and also requested the engagement of a critical friend in the form of an independent transport consultant to review the draft report and inform final reporting. The critical friend has confirmed that in their view the details of the assessment have been done at a level appropriate to the stage of work, noting that further detailed work would be required. The review includes both qualitative assessment and assessment which is based on modelled outputs. The qualitative assessment was undertaken by transport planners with experience of strategy development and scheme delivery across a range of transport interventions and work was subject to discussion and challenge with council officers, stakeholders and members through the engagement sessions.

Recommendation M:

Herefordshire Council to immediately implement a well-designed comprehensive safe and attractive network of active travel measures across the entire county to reduce the effect of climate change and the risk of surface flooding.

Response

This aligns with policy and the types of measures identified in Package A. A number of active travel measures are being progressed which will include improvements for pedestrians, cyclists, bus and rail users and we are continuing to deliver the choose how you move behavioural change programme countywide. Clearly, more of these measures could be introduced more quickly if additional funding is available and it is anticipated that there will be further opportunities to bid for external funds over the coming months as government provides more details following its publication of 'Decarbonising Transport' and 'Gear Change' earlier in 2020.