



CABINET

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 22 March 2016
Report Subject	Review of Strategic Highway Improvement Schemes
Cabinet Member	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Environment
Report Author	Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Councils Priority Strategic Highway Improvement Schemes are listed within the Higher Level Interventions of the North Wales Joint Local Transport Plan (LTP).

Following the refresh of the LTP earlier this year, a revision of the Strategic Highway Improvement Schemes was also completed to ensure that the schemes support and align with the current priorities and transport strategies/plans within the revised LTP.

It is now necessary to address the problem of properties along the route of the original improvements being blighted through the Local Land Charge procedure for schemes that no longer form part of the Strategic Highway Improvement list and for the reasons outlined in this report will never be delivered.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Cabinet approves the removal of the Highway Improvement schemes listed in this report, which no longer form part of the Councils Transport priorities as defined within the LTP.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE BACKGROUND TO PREVIOUS STRATEGIC AND NON-STRATEGIC HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES
1.01	The refreshed LTP has been jointly produced by the six North Wales Local Authorities of Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Anglesey and Wrexham. The LTP will serve as a complementary document to the National Transport Plan to address the issues and opportunities for transport in North Wales. The document was approved by Cabinet in 2015.
1.02	Welsh Government asked each Local Authorities to prioritise their transport schemes to ensure they provided the greatest potential contribution to meeting the vision and outcomes of the LTP. These schemes were then contained within the LTP's Higher Level Interventions and are highlighted as the 'Councils Strategic Highway Improvement Schemes'.
1.03	The Councils Strategic Highway Improvement Schemes listed in the revised LTP Higher Level Interventions will now supersede the previous list of designated Highway Improvements in the County and will have the following impact on the schemes originally listed:
	A541/A550 Hope/Caergwrle Bypass (Removed)
1.04	The scheme has 'Preferred Route' status and hence has a protected line. Work on the preparation for a Planning Application was halted back in approximately 1995 under the then Clwyd County Council and no further work has been carried out on the project since that time.
1.05	This is obviously a cross-boundary scheme, with part of the route lying within Wrexham County Borough Council (WCBC). The part of the scheme which sits within WCBC is no longer protected in their own LDP, therefore the scheme in its current format is not deliverable.
1.06	Between the 24 November 2014 and 5 January 2015, consultation took place on the Draft North Wales LTP. The Draft Plan included Flintshire County Council's priority schemes and did not include the Hope/Caergwrle By Pass. No objections to the fact that this scheme was not included as a priority intervention for the Plan were received. In addition the route is not identified as a Strategic Routes for Transport improvements within the LTP and therefore it is recommended the scheme is removed from the Councils Strategic Highway Improvement Schemes List.
	Plough Lane Link Road (Retained)
1.07	The proposed East-West route linking the Wepre Park / Hall Lane area with the Plough Lane/A494 area was proposed to relieve traffic congestion on the main B5129 Chester Road through Shotton by relieving the congested main road of locally generated traffic.

1.08	The scheme was developed and approved in 1988 and has a “Preferred Route” status but the planning permission for the scheme has now lapsed.
1.09	<p>The Welsh Government stated in the National Transport Finance Plan published in July 2015 that it will develop a scheme to improve the A55/A494/A548 corridor and has appointed AECOM to complete a study for the Deeside Corridor improvement. The two proposals under consideration are the Blue and Red Routes:</p> <p>Blue Route: Would improve existing transport infrastructure and capacity enhancements along the existing A55/A494 corridor.</p> <p>Red Route: Would increase capacity along the existing A548 and provide a new road between the A55 and A548.</p>
1.10	The B5129 route through Deeside is identified as a Strategic Routes for Transport improvements within the LTP and has been the subject of significant investment with schemes such as the Signal Synchronisation Scheme and the proposed Queensferry Roundabout improvements - both increasing the capacity and journey times along the route.
1.11	From a Highways Strategy perspective it would be prudent to keep the Plough Lane Link Road in the current Strategic Highway Improvement Programme, in order for it to be considered in the wider study that AECOM are undertaking as part of the Deeside Corridor Study. AECOM may also wish to consider whether or not the protected routes could be utilised for a sustainable transport corridor (such as a dedicated cycle track), if it is found that the Plough Lane Link Road is not required to address congestion and capacity as a result of other highway improvements in the area.
1.12	<p>The results of the AECOM study should be available prior to the adoption of the LDP and therefore, if it is decided that the scheme is necessary we can recommend protection of the Stage 2 and 3 routes in the future LDP, along with any other firm proposals recommended by the study. It should be noted however that only Stage 2 options for the scheme are protected in the current UDP and Stage 3 (known as the Green Route) is not protected and if this option is to be protected in the emerging LDP there would need to be a strong justification for the route, as it is affected by both a SAC and SSSI site.</p> <p>If the outcome of the AECOM study is that the scheme is not required, a recommendation can be put forward for the removal of the scheme from the Councils Strategic Highway Improvement list at that time.</p>
	Gas Lane, Mold (Removed)
1.13	This is a scheme inherited from Clwyd County Council and was originally a road straightening and footway improvement scheme proposed by Mold Town Council for inclusion in the now obsolete Match Funding list. The feasibility of the scheme was looked into with Mold Town Council several years ago and at the time the cost was too prohibitive to progress and it is now recommended that the scheme is removed from the list of Strategic Highway Improvement Schemes. There were no comments received in

	support of the scheme during the consultation process on the refreshed LTP.
1.14	There are no proposed candidate sites for the LDP that affect this proposal and therefore there is no impact on development proposal considerations at this stage.
	Pen y Maes Road, Holywell and Pinfold Lane, Buckley (Removed)
1.15	<p>This is a footway/visibility improvement inherited from Clwyd County Council. Due to the timescale of the original proposal and in order for this scheme to now progress it would require re-evaluation and a new feasibility study. The cost of the scheme would now be prohibitive to initiate and it is now recommended that the scheme is removed from the list of Strategic Highway Improvement Schemes.</p> <p>There is one proposed candidate site for the LDP which has a small frontage affecting the scheme. Removal of this scheme would not prejudice consideration of the candidate site, as any improvement to the highway frontage could be considered as part of detailed development, if the site is approved.</p>
	A548 Greenfield to Ffynnongroew Improvement. (Retained)
1.16	<p>The scheme was developed following a public consultation exercise in 1989 and has "Preferred Route" status for Stage 1 of the scheme which extends the dual carriageway at Greenfield to immediately East of Abakan Mill.</p> <p>The National Transport Finance Plan 2015 has identified a proposal to potentially Trunk the A548 Connahs Quay (A548/A550 Junction) to Mostyn (Flintshire) and in addition the route is listed as a Strategic Routes for Transport improvements as it forms part of a major A548 highway strategic link which runs from the Cheshire Border to the Denbighshire border and links coastal attractions along the North Wales coastline.</p>
1.17	Because the route is identified as a Strategic Routes for Transport improvements within the LTP it is therefore recommended that the scheme remains on the list of Strategic Highway Improvement Schemes List until a final decision on the Trunking of the A548 has been made.
	A5104 Penyffordd Station to Padeswood Junction (Retained)
1.18	The A550 road improvement were completed in the 1980's and the outstanding scheme is an improved road alignment and footway on the A5104 from the A550 Penyffordd By – Pass to Padeswood Road.
1.19	The proposal would meet the criteria for Active Travel and Safer Routes in the Community as it is within an Active Travel settlement area and provides sustainable access to Penyffordd Railway Station, it is intended to include this scheme on the Integrated Map for Active Travel.
1.20	It is recommended therefore that the scheme is retained on the protected list of Strategic Highway Improvement Schemes List.

1.21	Pinfold Lane Buckley. (Removed)
1.22	This road widening scheme dates back to Clwyd County Council.
1.23	The LDP contains candidate site proposals for both sides of Pinfold Lane and land would be required in order to deliver the scheme. This would not prevent development taking place but would impact on the available land for development if the scheme continues to be protected. To protect the scheme a Planning Inspector would have to be satisfied that the scheme will be delivered within the Plan Period, which is unlikely due to funding constraints.
1.24	If we remove the scheme from the Programme, we could rely on S.106 improvements to the lane as part of detailed development proposals on any candidate sites that are retained for the LDP. The recommendation is that the scheme should be removed from the Strategic Highway Improvement Schemes List.
	Springfield Hill, Pentre Halkyn (Removed)
1.25	Clwyd County Council in the 1980's adopted a scheme for the improvement of the B5123 from the Springfield Hotel to Greenlands on Pentre Road and included the improvement of the C79 to its junction with the C71 Caerwys Road. The proposed improvement provided for a 7.3 metre carriageway with 2m wide footways.
1.26	Elements of this improvement were undertaken many years ago with the assistance of European funding. Unfortunately, although the scheme is still within the Council's Programme it has not been possible to implement any further elements of the scheme due to budgetary constraints and the lack of appropriate grant funding for schemes of this nature.
1.27	The route does not form part of the strategic highway network and therefore it is recommended that the scheme does not form part of the Strategic Highway Improvement Schemes List.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	Retaining redundant schemes within the Council's protected highway schemes programme will impact on the decision as whether or not to include a proposed candidate sites within the emerging LDP resulting in the possibility of developments being refused which could result in a detrimental impact on Flintshire's future economic growth.
2.02	Retention of redundant schemes also impacts on staff resources that are required to investigate individual enquiries arising from scheme declarations on searches, these can be time consuming and contentious at times and can result in legal procedures.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	With the Cabinet Member.
3.02	A full public consultation process was undertaken prior to the completion and submission of the revised LTP which included the new priority scheme listing. This included public drop in events held in Mold and at other centres across N Wales.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	Not applicable.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>A55/A494/A548 Deeside Corridor Improvement Consultation http://a55-a494-a548-deesidecorridorimprovement.com/</p> <p>National Transport Finance Plan 2015 http://gov.wales/docs/det/policy/150722-ntfp15-en.pdf</p> <p>North Wales Regional Transport Plan 2009 http://www.taith.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/FINAL-RTP-30-09-091.pdf</p> <p>North Wales Joint Local Transport Plan 2015 http://www.taith.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/North-Wales-Joint-Local-Transport-Plan-2015.pdf</p> <p>Contact Officer: Robin Nursaw, Highway Policy Officer. Telephone: 01352704608 E-mail: Robin.Nursaw@flintshire.gov.uk.</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	LTP – Local Transport Plan