



Purpose: For Decision

## Committee report

Committee	<b>CABINET</b>
Date	<b>TUESDAY, 14 SEPTEMBER 2010</b>
Title	<b>STRATEGIC HIGHWAY NETWORK IMPROVEMENTS FOR NEWPORT</b>
Report of	<b>COUNCILLOR GILES, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT AND CORPORATE SERVICES</b>

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### PURPOSE

1. To approve the proposed strategic highway improvements for managing traffic in Newport.

### OUTCOMES

2. The provision of a strategic highway network capable of accommodating traffic growth up to 2027.

### BACKGROUND

3. In 2006, transport consultant Mott MacDonald was commissioned by the Council to review and update the 'Transportation Study of Newport' and to assess the likely impacts of a number of future development proposals identified within the Unitary Development Plan. This was with a view to identifying a strategy for Newport that would accommodate future development through to 2020 and included updating the existing traffic model.
4. This work determined the impact that traffic generated by future developments would have on the existing road network by the year 2020 and identified traffic 'hot spots' where traffic congestion would occur in the morning and afternoon peak hours. The study concluded that there were strategic junction improvements that could be implemented to mitigate the impact of future developments on traffic flows.
5. In March 2010, to match the period covered by the Island Plan and in light of updated knowledge as to future development, a further review of the outputs from the model was conducted to prove the robustness of the proposed improvements and to facilitate development up to and including 2027.
6. A range of strategic solutions to provide additional capacity were confirmed as a result of this further work. The traffic model identified the following hot spot locations at which improvements would be needed:

- Hunnyhill / Hunnycross Way Junction.
- St Mary's Roundabout.
- Coppins Bridge Gyratory.
- St George's Roundabout.

These locations are identified as strategic junctions which would require improvements in order to facilitate planned growth, particularly within the Medina Valley which is identified as the area of the Island to accommodate the largest amount of regeneration based development. A Transport Study Report which identified the above improvements was published as part of the draft Island Plan in August 2008.

7. It is likely that during the Public Examination of the Island Plan Core Strategy, the Inspector will seek reassurance that the Council is committed to a robust strategy to provide the infrastructure necessary to support the proposed level of development in the Medina Valley. The Inspector will want to know what infrastructure is planned and where, when it is planned to be delivered and how it will be financed.

8. The detail of the proposed improvements is as follows:

(a) Hunnyhill / Hunnycross Way junction.  
Widening of all the approaches to the existing traffic signals to provide dedicated right turn lanes. (See Plan 1).

(b) St. Mary's Roundabout.  
To create a new, signalised 'T' junction on Parkhurst Road, to the north of the roundabout that would link directly with Forest Road. The existing entry / exit to Forest Road would in future only serve Whitesmith Road and Hunnyhill. (See Plan 2).

(c) Coppins Bridge Gyratory.  
A more complex solution is required here; it is proposed to increase capacity by closing the access from High Street onto Coppins Bridge and diverting traffic via St James' Street, Hunnycross Way and Riverway onto Medina Way. If, as a result of development, a link between Mill Street and Foxes Way (adjacent to Sainsbury's) is created, this would provide an additional cross town link. As a result of closing the access from High Street to Coppins Bridge there are a number of possibilities for the use of the eastern section of High Street and these options will be considered in a future report.

As a result of diverting additional traffic via Hunnycross Way and Riverway it will be necessary to carry out significant works to accommodate this traffic. These include the widening of Riverway to provide two lane approaches to each of the junctions, providing signal control at the junction of Hunnycross Way / Riverway and Riverway with the southbound slip road with Medina Way. (See Plan 3).

The southbound carriageway of Medina Way between the slip road and Coppins bridge would be widened to three lanes; minor widening and radius improvements on Coppins Bridge itself would be carried out and St George's Way widened to provide a two lane approach to Coppins Bridge. (See Plan 4).

(d) St. George's Roundabout.  
The capacity issues here are as a direct result of traffic queuing back from Coppins Bridge along St. George's Way. The proposed widening referred to above would resolve this problem.

9. The proposals listed above are high level solutions to future capacity issues. They are necessary to be delivered as an overall package in order to facilitate the level of development proposed in the Medina Valley area through the Island Plan. A corresponding safeguarding policy will be incorporated into the Island Plan to protect the land required for the junction improvements.
10. The improvements are not intended to address other traffic management issues in and around Newport, nor should those issues be a factor in determining support for this overall package of works, upon which a comprehensive Transport Strategy for Newport will be developed. However, by taking through traffic away from the town centre, Newport is protected from the full effects of traffic growth and there will be opportunities for environmental improvements and enhanced street schemes in areas such as the High Street. These will be considered in detail as a wider strategy develops.

## STRATEGIC CONTEXT

11. Under the Planning and Compensation Act 2004 the Council is required to replace its current statutory development plan (the Unitary Development Plan 2001) with a new Local Development Framework. This will be known as the *Island Plan* and is a key element of delivering the Community Strategy, the Local Area Agreement and Economic regeneration.
12. A fundamental aspect of both good planning and the Island Plan's overall strategy for promoting sustainable development, is to ensure that any necessary infrastructure and services are in place at the right time to serve the development. The Island Plan will also require that, where appropriate, new development should also make suitable contributions to wider strategic infrastructure. The identification of these infrastructure requirements has been informed by the Newport Transport Study.
13. One of the Council's seven key priorities is a Roads PFI scheme intended to improve and maintain the condition of the Island's road network. Improvements to provide increased capacity are outside of the scope of the PFI, however once constructed the successful PFI contractor will be expected to maintain these improved road junctions as part of the PFI contract.
14. The Council's over arching transport strategies are contained in The Local Transport Plan (LTP) which recognises transport as a key element of the Island Plan. The LTP, like the Island Plan, is driven by overarching themes which run through the Sustainable Community Plan and Local Area Agreement. The LTP's long term strategy recognises the need to support spatial, regeneration and sustainability objectives and was developed in parallel with work on the Island Plan Core Strategy.

## CONSULTATION

15. The Transportation Study Report, including the preferred options was presented at a public meeting in Newport in January 2008. A similar presentation was made to the Freight Seminar Group of the Quality Transport Partnership in January 2008.
16. The report was published as part of the consultation process for the Draft Island Plan in August 2008.
17. All Newport ward members have been briefed on the proposals.

18. Newport Parish Council has been briefed.

### FINANCIAL / BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

19. The package of measures has an estimated cost of £9.5M at 2007 prices and is to be funded entirely by development contributions, based on the relative impact each development has on the areas for improvement. Contributions of £3.1M have already been secured from the Pan Meadows development and Section 106 contributions from smaller developments in and around Newport.
20. It is important to note that, whilst these strategic improvements are to be considered and agreed as a package, it is not intended that the improvements would all be implemented at the same time, or possibly for a number of years. Each improvement will be the subject of a detailed design process which will provide accurate costings. It is intended that the developer contributions for each improvement will be in place prior to its commencement. It is not intended that the Council directly contributes to the cost of the improvements, other than through the necessary officer time involved in bringing these forward. Once each of the improvements has been fully designed and costed, a further member decision will be required to enable their commencement.

### LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

21. Changes to highway restrictions resulting from the four planned road improvements, such as speed limits etc, may require specific traffic regulation orders in due course. These will need to follow the prescribed procedure and will be subject to separate decisions.
22. Any proposal to formally stop up the bottom of High Street would require a formal stopping up order. This again would require a separate decision that may be dealt with under delegated authority.

### EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

23. Although there is no direct impact of equality and diversity on this report, the Council requires that all their services are delivered fairly to all residents. The Council is prioritising the requirement for service equality and diversity 'Impact Assessments' as a structured three year approach to ensuring that services are delivered against the new Equality Framework for Local Government.

### SECTION 17 CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998

24. There are no foreseen Section 17 Crime & Disorder issues arising from this decision. The detailed design of each of the road improvements will be fully evaluated against the Act as detailed designs are prepared.

### OPTIONS

25. Option 1      Not to approve the identified strategic highway improvements for Newport.
26. Option 2      Approve the identified strategic highway improvements for Newport.

## RISK MANAGEMENT

27. Relevant policies within the Island Plan need to be based upon robust evidence that will stand up to scrutiny through the examination process. In respect of its approach to transport infrastructure, the improvements proposed to the strategic highway network for Newport will address both future traffic management issues and demonstrate the commitment of the Council to delivering the strategic infrastructure required to support growth on the Island.
28. The scheme costs identified by the Transport Study are preliminary estimates based on a comparison of rates submitted for improvements schemes under the Highway Agency's Framework Agreement for Area 3 (Hampshire, Surrey & West Sussex). Typically, they exclude costs for diverting Statutory Undertakers equipment such as water and gas mains; impacts on existing buildings, structures etc., land acquisition costs, landscaping and compensation claims. Detailed design work would be necessary to identify these costs. As above, it is intended that all costs will be met from developer contributions. Agreement to the proposed strategic improvements will allow the detailed design work to be progressed for each strategic improvement as and when necessary.
29. Where no detailed risk assessment has been undertaken, guidance in the Highways Agency Design Manual for Road and Bridges suggests that an 'Optimism Bias' should be added to scheme costs, in the case of these schemes, a 45% optimism bias has been included to cover unforeseen eventualities.

## EVALUATION

30. Option 1 – Not approve the identified strategic highway improvements for Newport.

As stated above, it is likely that when the Island Plan is examined in public the Inspector will seek reassurance that the Council is committed to a strategy for providing the infrastructure necessary to accommodate the proposed level of development in the Medina Valley. The Inspector will want to know what infrastructure is planned and where, when it is planned to be delivered and how it will be financed. As a first step to evidence this, and to enable the development of a more comprehensive Transport Strategy for Newport it is important that an appropriate strategy for highway infrastructure improvements is approved. Without such an approval it would be difficult for the Council to convince the Inspector that it is committed to secure the infrastructure improvements necessary to support the level of proposed development in the Island Plan over the Plan period.

Approving only part of the package of measures is not a viable option because of interdependencies and the dynamic nature of traffic flow.

In the event the Inspector remains unconvinced of the Council's commitment, he may find the Island Plan to be unsound.

31. Option 2 – To approve the identified strategic highway improvements for Newport.

Approval of these strategic improvements will be the first step towards the development of a wider Transport Strategy for Newport. It is important to note that delivery of the

identified improvements is not a precursor to development taking place; the need for and phasing of the works will be development led to a large degree.

Earlier work undertaken on the Transport Study has identified the impact each of the potential development sites has on each of the critical junctions. This information can be used to determine developer contributions and the order in which the improvement works need to be brought forward.

#### RECOMMENDATION

32. Option 2 – To approve the identified strategic highway improvements for Newport.

#### APPENDICES ATTACHED

33. [APPENDIX A](#) - Plan 1 Improvements to Hunnyhill / Hunnycross Way junction.  
[APPENDIX B](#) - Plan 2 Improvements to St Mary's Roundabout & Forest Road.  
[APPENDIX C](#) - Plan 3 Improvements to Medina Way and Riverway slip roads.  
[APPENDIX D](#) - Plan 4 Improvements to Coppins Bridge and St George's Way.

#### BACKGROUND PAPERS

34. Newport Traffic Model: Data Collection, Model Validation and Forecasting Report October 2007.  
[http://www.iwight.com/living\\_here/planning/images/NewportTrafficModel\\_FINALReport\\_2\\_24-01-08.pdf](http://www.iwight.com/living_here/planning/images/NewportTrafficModel_FINALReport_2_24-01-08.pdf)
35. Newport Traffic Model: Highway Options for 2020, January 2007.  
[http://www.iwight.com/living\\_here/planning/images/NewportTrafficModel\\_FINALReport\\_4\\_20-05-10.pdf](http://www.iwight.com/living_here/planning/images/NewportTrafficModel_FINALReport_4_20-05-10.pdf)

Contact Point: Peter Taylor, Group Manager (Traffic Regulation)  
☎ 01983 823711 e-mail [peter.taylor@iow.gov.uk](mailto:peter.taylor@iow.gov.uk)

STUART LOVE  
Director of Environment &  
Neighbourhoods

COUNCILLOR EDWARD GILES  
Cabinet Member for the Environment,  
Transport & Corporate Services