

**AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET**

**Name of Committee**                      **Rugby Area Committee**

**Date of Committee**                      **25th January 2007**

**Report Title**                                **The Future of the A4071 Bilton Bypass and A426 Newbold Road Dualling Schemes**

**Summary**

Two improvement lines have been historically protected by the County Council for schemes in Bilton on the A4071, and on the A426 Newbold Road between Avon Mill and Evreux Way. Construction of the Rugby Western Relief Road will remove the justification for these schemes, as traffic is predicted to fall in both of these corridors. Area Committee is asked to recommend to Cabinet that these schemes be formally abandoned, and that alternative transport improvements be investigated.

**For further information please contact**

Adrian Hart  
 Team Leader Transport Planning  
 Tel. 01926 735667  
 adrianhart@warwickshire.gov.uk

**Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework?**

Yes/No

**Background Papers**                      Warwickshire Final Local Transport Plan 2006

**CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:-**                      *Details to be specified*

Other Committees                       .....

Local Member(s)  
 (With brief comments, if appropriate)

Councillor T Cavanagh  
 Councillor Ms K King  
 Councillor B Levy  
 Councillor I Smith  
 Councillor J Vereker – comments incorporated  
 Councillor J Wells – supports the recommendation  
 .....

Other Elected Members                       .....

Cabinet Member  
(Reports to The Cabinet, to be cleared with appropriate Cabinet Member)

Councillor M Heatley – for information

Chief Executive

.....

Legal

I Marriott – agreed

Finance

C Holden – comments incorporated

Other Chief Officers

.....

District Councils

Rugby Borough Council – supports the abandonment of both schemes

Health Authority

.....

Police

.....

Other Bodies/Individuals

.....

**FINAL DECISION**

**YES/NO** (If 'No' complete Suggested Next Steps)

**SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS :**

*Details to be specified*

Further consideration by this Committee

.....

To Council

.....

To Cabinet

To be reported to Cabinet once final approval for Rugby Western Relief Road has been received from the Department for Transport.

To an O & S Committee

.....

To an Area Committee

That a further report be brought before the Area Committee to set out the findings of the investigative work recommended in the report. Date to be agreed.

Further Consultation

.....

## Rugby Area Committee - 25th January 2007

### The Future of the A4071 Bilton Bypass and A426 Newbold Road Dualling Schemes

#### Report of the Strategic Director for Environment and Economy

#### Recommendation

That Area Committee:-

1. Recommends to Cabinet that the A4071 Bilton Bypass and A426 Newbold Road Dualling schemes are formally abandoned without further public consultation once final approval for Rugby Western Relief Road is received from the Department for Transport.
2. Endorses a study to determine the feasibility and cost of providing a cycle link over the land retained for the A4071 Bilton Bypass.

#### 1. Background

- 1.1 Two improvement lines have been historically protected by the County Council for schemes within the urban area of Rugby. These relate to the provision of a bypass of Bilton village on the A4071 and the proposed dualling of the A426 Newbold Road between Avon Mill and Evreux Way. Both schemes have been identified in the County Council's wider programme of transport schemes for many years, but with little prospect of them being delivered even in the long term.
- 1.2 Both schemes would have significant negative environmental effects, and would require demolition of a number of properties. Whilst they remain in the County's wider programme these schemes create blight and uncertainty for local residents and businesses.
- 1.3 Construction of the Rugby Western Relief Road will remove the justification for both schemes. Traffic is predicted to fall on the A4071 and the A426 following the opening of the Western Relief Road. Any improvements to these corridors would potentially undermine the impact of the Western Relief Road, and encourage more traffic to travel through the town centre.
- 1.4 Confirmation of the side road orders for the Rugby Western Relief Road was received from the Department for Transport (DfT) on 1st December 2006. The

County Council is now in the process of securing final approval from DfT for the funding of the Western Relief Road. Now that construction of the scheme is more certain, it is considered an appropriate time to remove the A4071 Bilton Bypass and A426 Newbold Road Dualling scheme from the County Council's wider transport programme.

- 1.5 As well as removing the blight associated with these schemes, their abandonment will enable properties owned by the County Council along the preserved line of both routes to be sold. These capital receipts are required to part fund the current shortfall in funding for the Western Relief Road.

## **2. Consultation Undertaken**

- 2.1 As Members will recall, the proposal to remove the A4071 Bilton Bypass scheme and the A426 Newbold Road Dualling scheme from the County Council's wider transport programme was first proposed in Autumn 2003.
- 2.2 A consultation was subsequently carried out to seek local views on the proposed abandonment of these schemes. The consultation exercise included a press release, public notices and an exhibition at the Town Hall in Rugby.
- 2.3 24 consultation responses were received with regard to the A4071 Bilton Bypass scheme, of which 15 respondents were in favour of the scheme's abandonment and nine were opposed.
- 2.4 However, shortly after the consultation exercise commenced, a number of Borough Councillors for Bilton Ward distributed a leaflet to around 900 properties within the area, asserting that the future expansion of the Cawston residential development would increase traffic on Bilton Main Street. The leaflet included a reply slip for residents to return to the County Council, indicating whether they were in favour or opposed to the construction of Bilton Bypass.
- 2.5 A high response was received as a result of this campaign, with 139 respondents opposing the abandonment of the Bilton Bypass scheme and just 17 in favour.
- 2.6 The proposed abandonment of the A426 Newbold Road Dualling scheme attracted little opposition.
- 2.7 As a result of the opposition to the abandonment of the Bilton Bypass scheme, Area Committee agreed to delay a decision on the future of these schemes until a time when construction of the Rugby Western Relief Road was more certain.
- 2.8 Much of the opposition to the abandonment of the Bilton Bypass was based on concern about the impact of the expansion of Cawston housing development. However, the location of this housing development and the provision of the Western Relief Road were interlinked decisions. Traffic modelling undertaken by the County Council has predicted that traffic flows will be lower than present levels on Main Street, Bilton and on Newbold Road after the Western Relief Road is built.

- 2.9 In view of the above and the fact that construction of the Relief Road is now more certain, it is considered that a further public consultation exercise on the proposed abandonment of the A4071 Bilton Bypass and A426 Newbold Road Dualling scheme is not appropriate.
- 2.10 Rugby Borough Council has confirmed that it supports the abandonment of both these schemes.

### **3. Alternative Transport Schemes**

- 3.1 It is proposed to investigate alternative transport infrastructure improvements in Bilton and on Newbold Road following the abandonment of the two schemes.
- 3.2 The land preserved for the Bilton Bypass scheme parallels Main Street, between Lawford Lane and Beech Drive. This corridor of open space could potentially be developed into a shared footway/cycleway, providing a traffic free alternative to Main Street. To the west, there is potential for this cycle facility to link to an existing cycle route within the Cawston development. To the east, it would link to the Bilton Road, where an existing cycle route to the town centre begins at Addison Road. There is potential to extend this existing cycle facility westwards to create a continuous cycle link between Cawston and Bilton area and the town centre.
- 3.3 This route would form a valuable addition to Rugby's expanding cycle network, linking to other routes to enable a range of journeys from the Cawston and Bilton areas to be made by bicycle. There is also potential for the route to assist cycle journeys to Bilton School from other areas of Rugby.
- 3.4 Area Committee is asked to endorse the principle of this pedestrian/cycle link so that the feasibility and cost of this option can be investigated. It is proposed that a further report be brought before the Committee on this matter in due course.
- 3.5 In terms of the A426 Newbold Road, the Warwickshire Final Local Transport Plan 2006 states that in lieu of the proposed dualling scheme, a more modest improvement to enhance the corridor between Avon Mill and Evreux Way will be developed during this Local Transport Plan (LTP) period (i.e. by 2011). The aims of the scheme will be:-
- (i) To improve safety, particularly at the junction of Newbold Road and Wood Street;
  - (ii) To improve conditions for pedestrians, cyclists and other vulnerable road users;
  - (iii) To improve bus infrastructure facilities, if appropriate;
  - (iv) To be complementary to proposals to improve the Avon Mill roundabout as part of the Western Relief Road scheme, and to any opening up of Hunters Lane as part of the redevelopment of the former GEC/Alstom site; and

- (v) To improve the entrance to Rugby from the Leicester Road/Newbold Road corridor as a major gateway to the town (the Borough Council is currently in the process of developing such a scheme).

JOHN DEEGAN  
Strategic Director for Environment and Economy  
Shire Hall  
Warwick

2nd January 2006