



Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership

Independent Assessment Summary Report: A329 Corridor (Martins Heron) Improvement

Business Case Independent Assessment

Report No. RT-A087383-20

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Appendices

Appendix A – Business Case Checklist

1 Executive Summary

1.1 This technical note provides an independent review of the A329 Corridor Improvement Business Case submission to the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership. This scheme has been known as Martins Heron, as alterations to the Martins Heron roundabout form a major part of the scheme.

SCHEME SUMMARY

1.2 The A329 Corridor Improvements includes the following highway changes:

- Replacement of Martins Heron roundabout with a fully signalised junction;
- Modifying the highway between the junction of A329 London Road / B3017 Priory Road and A329 London Road / Fernbank Road and also the layout at the junctions themselves.

REVIEW FINDINGS

1.3 A number of items of information are required before the findings of the review can be fully provided.

1.4 Prior to acceptance of the BC the following main items should be taken into account when considering the overall benefits of the scheme:

- i) There is no Options Assessment Report (OAR). The processes of option sifting and assessment needs to be set out in an OAR as recommended in WebTAG guidance;
- ii) A legible detailed cost breakdown is required;
- iii) More details of the modelling are required;
- iv) High and Low Growth scenarios need to be conducted. This is a requirement in WebTAG (Unit M4: Forecasting and Uncertainty) and helps to ensure the scheme can service higher than expected demand, and is still viable if there is lower than expected demand.

- 1.5 The predicted Benefit to Cost Ratio (BCR) of the scheme is reported to be 4.627 over 60 years. A BCR of above 4.0 represents **Very High Value for Money (VfM)**.
- 1.6 DfT and TVB LEP guidance recommends that only schemes with a High or Very High Value for Money (VfM) be taken forward for funding. Unfortunately there is still considerable uncertainty about the economic case and the modelling that underpins it, and requests for further information are made in this report.
- 1.7 In conclusion, it is not possible to fully recommend the Business Case as submitted; as it is considered that the Business Case will require updating in order to be considered suitable for final submission. A conditional approval, subject to the satisfactory assessment of the requested items, is considered as the appropriate way forward.

2 Submitted Information

2.1 The Business Case independent assessment was carried out based upon the following reports and appendices submitted by Bracknell Forest Council and their consultant team (WSP/Parsons Brinkerhoff):

- BFC_A329 Corridor Improvement_Appraisal Specification Report_260816.docx;
- BFC_A329 Corridor Improvements_Business Case_FINAL.pdf.

3 Option Assessment Report - Review

3.1 There has been no Options Assessment Report (OAR) submitted.

4 Appraisal Specification Report - Review

- 4.1 The Appraisal Specification Report (ASR) was reviewed in September 2016. The review identified some items for consideration and explained that these should be addressed before submission of the full business case.
- 4.2 The WYG review of the ASR is given in the September 2016 note [ref: WYG_Martins_Heron-ASR_Review_(2016-09-06)].

5 Full Business Case Review

- 5.1 The Full Business Case (FBC) contains some omissions that we would expect to see within the document. There are also missing scenarios.
- 5.2 The document is titled a Business Case. It is assumed here that it is a Full Business Case.
- 5.3 Options assessment is an integral part of the Transport Business Case. The options that have been considered over the history of the scheme are set out in Chapter 3 of the Business Case. These options should be presented in an Options Assessment Report (OAR) following WebTAG guidance.
- 5.4 Details of the scheme layouts are good. It is easy to understand what the scheme entails. Details of the signal controllers or the signal timings need to be presented. If the scheme has been modelled in (for instance) Linsig, then the outputs should be presented.
- 5.5 Scheme costs are £3.8m PVC. A detailed breakdown of the costs is required for the Business Case and has been included in Appendix B. Unfortunately the text in Appendix B as supplied is not legible. A legible version needs to be provided.
- 5.6 Optimism bias of 44% has been applied and no Quantified Risk Assessment (QRA) at the appropriate level of detail has been conducted. It would normally be expected at this stage that a QRA would be undertaken.
- 5.7 The objectives of the A329 Corridor Improvements are to:
- Provide capacity enhancements to deal with the existing capacity whilst also accommodating an increase in future movements within the sub-region, most notably between Bracknell, Ascot, Windsor, Wokingham and beyond;
 - Make the arrival into Bracknell straightforward, attractive and give people a good first impression;
 - Improve journey times, reliability and journey quality for all road users;
 - Improve accessibility to Bracknell for pedestrians, cyclists and road users;

- Reduce congestion and its environmental impacts.

- 5.8 The scheme has been assessed on pure transport grounds.
- 5.9 The modelling methodology uses the Bracknell Multi-Modal Transport Model (BMMTM), which has been updated to a 2013 base year. We would like to see the local model validation report along with the demand model validation report.
- 5.10 Some significant rerouting appears to occur as a result of the scheme. This is indicated in Table 5.4 and described in the text. We would like to see network plots of the area showing the rerouting of traffic to understand the patterns better.
- 5.11 In the ASR review we requested justification for the choice of forecast years. This needs to be provided to ensure they are appropriate.
- 5.12 Low and High Growth scenarios are required as per WebTAG guidance.
- 5.13 The appraisal period of 60 years is high for a signalised junction. We would like to see a 30 year assessment unless, when supplied, the legible cost breakdown indicates 60 years is appropriate for the majority of scheme assets.
- 5.14 The benefits considered in the appraisal are:
- Economy benefits using TUBA;
 - Greenhouse gases using TUBA.
- 5.15 The scheme appears to affect traffic flows and speeds adjacent to properties. Hence there is a need for environmental assessments.
- 5.16 The Public Accounts (PA), Transport Economic Efficiency (TEE) and Analysis of Monetised Costs and Benefits (AMCB) tables need to be provided in the Business Case.
- 5.17 Cobalt accident analysis should be performed in order to assess the safety impacts of the scheme.
- 5.18 The single assessed scenario is reported to have a **BCR of 4.6**.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 The Full Business Case (FBC) contains some omissions that we would expect to see within the document. There are additional scenarios that should be assessed. These issues should be addressed before the FBC can be considered acceptable.
- 6.2 The scheme as presented has a **Very High Value for Money** with a **BCR of 4.6**.
- 6.3 DfT and TVB LEP guidance recommends that only schemes with a High or Very High Value for Money (VfM) be taken forward for funding.
- 6.4 However, there are several key requirements that are missing and some considerable uncertainty regarding the accuracy of the benefits that still needs to be addressed. Therefore it is not possible to recommend the A329 Corridor Improvement on the strength of the submitted business case.
- 6.5 In conclusion, it is not possible to recommend the Business Case as submitted; as it is considered that the Business Case will require updating in order to be considered suitable for final submission. A conditional approval, subject to the satisfactory assessment of the requested items, is considered as the appropriate way forward.



Appendix A – Business Case Checklist

Project Number: A087383
 Scheme: Martins Heron Rbt
 Submitted by: Slough Borough Council

Strategic Case	Addressed within Business Case	Notes	Economic Case	Addressed within Business Case	Notes	Financial Case	Addressed within Business Case	Notes	Commercial Case	Addressed within Business Case	Notes	Management Case	Addressed within Business Case	Notes
Business Strategy	Y	Sections 4.3, 4.4, 4.5	Options appraised	Y	Section 5.2	Costs	Y	Sections 6.2	Output based specification	Y	Section 7.2	Evidence of similar projects	Y	Section 8.2
Problem Identified	N	Section 4.6. Table 4.1 is presenting the identified problems, but there is no description of the problems (evidence base underpinning this). There shouldn't be a reference to the scheme in this section, only the presentation and the description of the identified problems.	Assumptions	Y	Section 5.3. Clear and detailed. There should be an extra heading separating the Economic Appraisal from the Assumption.	Budgets / Funding Cover	Y	Sections 6.3	Procurement Strategy	Y	Section 7.1 must be changed to 7.3	Programme / Project dependencies	N	A detailed project programme is not yet available.
Impact of not changing	Y	Section 4.9	Sensitivity and Risk Profile	Y	Section 5.4	Accounting Implications	Y	Sections 6.4	Sourcing Options	Y	Section 7.2 must be changed to 7.4	Governance	Y	Section 8.4
Drivers for change	Y	Not assessed but not compulsory	Appraisal Summary Table	Y	Appendix C				Payment Mechanisms	Y	Section 7.3 must be changed to 7.5	Programme / Project Plan	N	A detailed project programme is not yet available.
Objectives	Y	Section 4.10	Value for Money Statement	Y	Section 5.6				Pricing Framework and charging mechanisms	N	Not included	Assurances and approvals	Y	Section 8.5
Measures for success	N	Section 4.11. Measures of success have to be related to the objectives, identifying how the objectives will be appraised. Specific, realistic, measurable and time-bound.							Risk allocation and transfer	Y	Section 7.4 (change numbering appropriately)	Communication & Stakeholders	Y	Section 8.6
Scope	N	not included							Contract length	Y	Section 7.5 (change numbering appropriately)	Project Reporting	Y	Section 8.7
Constraints	Y	Section 4.12							Human resource issues	Y	Not completed but not compulsory	Implementation of work streams	Y	Not included but not compulsory
Inter-dependencies	Y	Section 4.13							Contract management	Y	Section 7.7 (change numbering appropriately)	Key Issues	Y	Section 8.9
Stakeholders	Y	Section 4.14. The contribution of each stakeholder to the scheme should be outlined.										Contract Management	Y	Section 8.10
Options	Y	Chapter 3 - Option Assessment										Risk Management	Y	Section 8.11
												Benefits realisation	Y	Section 8.12
												Monitoring and evaluation	Y	Section 8.13
												Contingency	Y	Section 8.14
												Options	Y	Section 8.15