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**REGENERIS**

Independent Assessment Summary Report:  
Barkham Bridge  
Ref 2.43

A Final Report by Hatch Regeneris Consulting  
November 2019

# Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership

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# Executive Summary

- i. This technical note provides an independent assessment of the Barkham Bridge scheme Business Case submission to the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (TVB LEP).

## Scheme Summary

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- ii. The business case submission sets out the case for investment in a new bridge alignment on the Barkham Road to remove current one-way working and permit two-way traffic flow across the corridor.
- iii. The old alignment would be retained for walking and cycling provision and highway drainage improvements are incorporated within the scheme to reduce flood risk and improve network resilience.
- iv. The Barkham Road route is utilised by the Leopard Bus, that provides connections to Wokingham, and is part of the safe routes to school network. It will also provide an important connection to and from the proposed development site at Arborfield Garrison.
- v. The overall scheme cost is estimated to be £7.65 million, with £4.24 million sought from the Local Growth Fund (LGF).

## Review Findings

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### Conclusions

- vi. The overall scheme is considered to align well with strategic priorities and there is a well-established need for the intervention. It enhances connectivity along the Barkham Road Corridor, connecting nearby villages with Wokingham. It also supports the broader delivery of the Arborfield Garrison SDL.
- vii. The overall Economic Case for the scheme forecasts it will deliver high value for money through direct transport user benefits, albeit these may be subject to variation based upon underlying levels of growth. In addition to these direct benefits, there will also be a range of wider economic and social benefits. Whilst some negative environmental impacts may occur, mitigation measures will be included to minimise these impacts.
- viii. The Financial Case demonstrates that the costs of the scheme are well-developed and appropriate levels of contingency and risk allowance are included.
- ix. The Commercial and Management Cases are considered to be relatively succinct, but compliant with requirements. They provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the procurement approaches offer value for money and that there are robust measures in place to manage the delivery of the project.
- x. It is our conclusion that there is sufficient evidence presented to support the overall case for investment in the scheme. It has good strategic alignment and a clear need for intervention has been demonstrated. Whilst there are some uncertainties relating to the overall scale of benefits, the central case assessment of monetised costs and benefits forecasts the scheme will deliver high value for money. The scheme is at an advanced stage of development, with limited risks for deliverability.

### Recommendations

- xi. On the basis that it aligns well with strategic priorities, addresses a clear need for intervention, is forecast to deliver high value for money, and is deliverable, we recommend this scheme for approval.

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides an independent assessment of the Full Business Case (FBC) submitted by Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) for a new bridge alignment on the Barkham Road to remove current one-way working and permit two-way traffic flow across the corridor.
- 1.2 The report considers the evidence presented and whether it represents a robust case for the investment of Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (TVB LEP) growth deal funds.
- 1.3 The independent assessment has applied criteria from TVB LEP assurance framework and the requirements for transport scheme business cases set out within the Department for Transport (DfT) Transport Appraisal Guidance (TAG).

## Submitted Information

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- 1.4 The independent assessment process for the Barkham Bridge submission has been conducted on the following set of documentation submitted by WBC and their consultant team (WSP):
  - An Early Submission Full Business Case Report (3<sup>rd</sup> July 2019)
  - A Final Full Business Case Report (30<sup>th</sup> October 2019)
- 1.5 The Early Submission FBC was completed in advance of the July BLT Board meeting but it was concluded that insufficient analysis had been completed at this time to enable the scheme to be considered at this meeting.
- 1.6 Whilst no formal Option Appraisal Report or Appraisal Specification Report were submitted for this project, a number of meetings have taken place with WBC, and their consultants, between June 2019 and September 2019 in which the appraisal specification has been discuss and agreed, alongside the broader requirements of the final business case submission and comment upon the acceptability of input assumptions and parameters.

## Report Structure

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- 1.7 This Independent Assessors Report responds to the formal submission of documentation, as well as the informal engagement process with WBC and their consultants, to provide a review of information provided, assess it suitability and robustness against TVB LEPs assurance requirements, and provide recommendations in relation to the approval of LEP funding for the proposed scheme.
- 1.8 The report is structure as follows:
  - **Section 2: Appraisal Specification** – presents a high-level review of the process undertaken to agree the proposed appraisal approach to be adopted
  - **Section 3: Full Business Case Submission** – presents an initial summary of scheme elements included business case submission, alongside the details presented within each of the five ‘cases’ (Strategic, Economic, Financial, Commercial, Management). It also sets out the recommendations to the LEP Local Transport Body relating to the suitability of the scheme for funding.

## 2. Appraisal Specification

### Overview

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- 2.1 No formal Appraisal Specification Report has been submitted for this project; however, the approach to the business case has been discussed, in detail, between WBC, their consultants, TVB LEP, and Hatch Regeneris, including at a meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2019.
- 2.2 The approach to the assessment has evolved between the Early Submission FBC in July and the subsequent development of the Final FBC, based on feedback provided by Hatch Regeneris. This is briefly outlined below.

### Initial Approach

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- 2.3 The Early Submission FBC submitted in July was based around the assessment of journey times savings for vehicles travelling along Barkham Road, alongside wider consideration of how the scheme will support the delivery of the Arborfield Garrison development.
- 2.4 The assessment of journey time savings focused on the AM and PM Peak periods and did not take direct consideration of the impacts outside of these periods. There was also no assessment of accident impacts. Whilst the overall strategic case for the scheme was considered strong there was insufficient evidence to determine that it delivered high value for money from investment.

### Revised Approach

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- 2.5 The revised approach adopted within the Final FBC will expand the range of impacts assessed and will include specific monetisation of the benefits the scheme will deliver during the inter-peak and off-peak periods, as well as the impacts upon accidents.
- 2.6 Further detail to support the Commercial and Management Cases will also be provided.

### Assessor Review

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- 2.7 The revised approach, agreed at the meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2019, is considered to be appropriate for the scheme. The importance of being able to demonstrate the scheme offers high value for money from investment is reiterated.

## 3. Full Business Case

### Overview

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- 3.1 The full business case submission sets out the case for investment in a new bridge alignment on the Barkham Road to remove current one-way working and permit two-way traffic flow across the corridor.
- 3.2 The old alignment would be retained for walking and cycling provision and highway drainage improvements are incorporated within the scheme to reduce flood risk and improve network resilience.
- 3.3 The Barkham Road route is utilised by the Leopard Buss that provides connections to Wokingham, and is part of the safe routes to school network.
- 3.4 The Barkham Road route will also provide an important connection to and from the proposed development site at Arborfield Garrison, which will deliver 3,500 homes.

### Key Input Assumptions and Parameters

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- 3.5 The overarching business case is considered particularly reliant upon the following key assumptions:
  - The Wokingham Strategic Transport Model 4 (WSTM4) has been utilised with two model years 2021 and 2026 for the AM and PM peak periods
  - Annualisation factors:
    - 253 days per year
    - Model period factoring: AM Peak = 2.62, Inter-peak = 6, PM Peak = 2.75
    - Overall: AM Peak = 662 hrs, PM Peak = 696 hrs
  - 60-year benefits appraisal period
  - Costs and benefits discounted to 2010 prices
  - 3% optimism bias applied
  - The nearby Arborfield Garrison SDL is not deemed directly dependent upon the Barkham Bridge scheme, but the scheme will support the delivery of homes at the site.

### Independent Assessor Comment

- 3.6 The use of the WSTM4 model is considered appropriate. It is understood from engagement with the Applicant that the impact of the current one-way working on Barkham Bridge has been specifically coded into the model and calibrated with on-site survey data of delays.
- 3.7 The annualisation factors, the appraisal period and the discount period are all acceptable.
- 3.8 The level of optimism bias is low but reflects the fact that the scheme has undergone detailed design and so cost estimates are considered to be highly accurate.
- 3.9 It is agreed that the Arborfield Garrison SDL is not directly dependent upon the Barkham Bridge scheme.

## Strategic Case

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- 3.10 The Strategic Case provides an **overview of the area** and a **scheme description**, and the **background to the scheme**, highlighting the constraint of the current single lane bridge.
- 3.11 The key **policy context** is highlighted in relation to TVB LEP and Council's strategies and policies.
- 3.12 The **need for a highway scheme** at this location is set out focusing upon the issues of congestion on both the Barkham Road corridor and the surrounding network, and the need to support new development.
- 3.13 Particular reference is made to the Arborfield Garrison site, where 2,000 home, a secondary, and a primary school will be delivered on the northern part of the site, and a further 1,500 homes, a primary school, and industrial floor space on the southern part of the site. The impact of growth upon traffic flows is presented and demonstrates that congestion levels at Barkham Bridge will increase.
- 3.14 It is also noted that remedial structural work to the bridge was undertaken in 2012-13 but that the asset has a limited residual life and will be subject to increasing maintenance requirements over the coming years.
- 3.15 The strategic importance of the route, linking a number of villages to Wokingham, is also highlighted.
- 3.16 The **objectives** of the scheme are summarised as:
- Assist with facilitating the Arborfield Garrison SDL housing development (3,500 dwellings)
  - Support the 2026 Local Plan housing delivery in the borough
  - Deliver improvements to transport capacity on routes from Arborfield towards Wokingham
  - Improve journey times to existing and new employment opportunities leading to the growth of the local economy
  - Relieve some of the congestion pressure in the area local to Barkham and Arborfield
  - Encourage sustainable and active transport
- 3.17 The range of **options** considered to meet the established objectives is summarised with reference to alternative routes, alternative alignments, and the need to minimise temporary construction disruption. The benefits of the preferred option over the alternatives are summarised.
- 3.18 The **measures for success** associated with two of the established objectives are set set out, relating to journey time benefits and delivery of housing and jobs.
- 3.19 Given the advanced stage of development of the scheme, there are no longer considered to be any significant **constraints** for delivery. No planning consent was required, and land deals have been completed. Agreement with flood alleviation measures have been agreed with the Environment Agency. The scheme is also considered to have no **inter-dependencies**.
- 3.20 A summary of the **transport modelling** and **economic appraisal approach** is set out. This highlights the forecast change in traffic flows over Barkham Bridge, and routes to and from this location, as a result of the scheme. The importance of the route for trips to and from Arborfield Garrison is presented.
- 3.21 An indicative assessment of the impact of the scheme upon journey times is also presented, and shows for eastbound trips into Wokingham during peak travel times in 2021,



journey times could be reduced by around 9% (between 35 and 45 seconds). These benefits are forecast to increase over time as traffic levels increase.

- 3.22 A quantified assessment of accident impacts has been undertaken but it is also stated that there have been a number of 'near misses' at the bridge itself and that the benefit of reducing these risks of accidents are not capture in the quantified assessment.
- 3.23 Reference is made to the **stakeholders** who have been engaged as part of the scheme development process, including TVB LEP, statutory bodies (including the Environment Agency), local residents, and land owners.
- 3.24 The Strategic Case concludes with a clear **summary** of the congestion issues addressed by the scheme, how it will support wider network resilience, and the need to support the Arborfield Garrison SDL.

### Independent Assessor Comment

- 3.25 The Strategic Case is considered to presents a robust overview of the issues, objectives and preferred solutions for the Barkham Road corridor and surrounding network.
- 3.26 The policy context is reasonably well established, with reference to key local policy documents.
- 3.27 The outlined **need for the scheme** is established, with some supporting evidence provided. The importance of the scheme in supporting the delivery of the Arborfield Garrison SDL is detailed. There is also useful evidence around how the link supports wider connectivity between local villages and Wokingham.
- 3.28 The impact of **no change** is not specifically explored and the drivers for change are implied rather than explicitly stated.
- 3.29 There are a range of suitable **scheme objectives** presented that are focused upon the strategic priorities of growth, connectivity and accessibility, and overall transport capacity within the corridor and wider area. The impact the Barkham Bridge scheme will have in addressing some of the objectives is presented, including how it will to encourage sustainable and active travel.
- 3.30 The **measures of success** only specifically relate to two of the stated objectives but they are logical, albeit relative unspecific in terms of the scale of outcomes.
- 3.31 The **options assessment** process demonstrates that improvements along different transport corridors has been considered before concluding that improvements to the Barkham Road corridor were preferable. The different highway alignments for the scheme are also presented, with reference to a previous Options Report.
- 3.32 The evidence presented provide confidence that the scheme has no significant **constraints** or **inter-dependencies**, with no outstanding planning consent, land purchase, or requirements from statutory bodies.
- 3.33 The information presented on the **traffic modelling** and **economic case** provides clear insight into the benefits delivered by the scheme, in terms of reducing travel times, as well as the importance of the link to trips from Arborfield Garrison SDL. It also highlights useful additional information around the maintenance requirements of the current Barkham Bridge structure and the reduction in the risk of accidents on the bridge itself.
- 3.34 The list of **stakeholders** appears reasonably comprehensive, with detail presented around the level of engagement undertaken to date and a demonstration of involvement from statutory bodies.
- 3.35 The **summary** section provides a useful overview of the key elements of the strategic case and it is considered that the underlying case for investment in the scheme has been made.

The link to the delivery of the Arborfield Garrison SDL is considered to be an important strategic connection for the scheme, as well as the wider role of the Barkham Road corridor in providing strategic connectivity across the area.

## Economic Case

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- 3.36 The Economic Case describes the transport modelling work undertaken, the economic assessment approach, the scheme cost calculations, a discussion of potential accident impacts, and the economic assessment results.
- 3.37 The approach to the **transport modelling** is set out, describing the use of the WSTM4 model and its base year calibration and validation.
- 3.38 The approach to assessing future year demand for the model is set out, along with the committed transport schemes included within the model. The model covers an average hour within a 1-hour AM peak period, and average inter-peak hour, and an average hour within a 1-hour PM peak period. The scenarios appraised are set out.
- 3.39 Traffic model outputs are presenting demonstrating the impact of the scheme upon journey times along the Barkham Road corridor leading into Wokingham. These indicate around 9% travel time reductions in 2021 (between 35 and 45 seconds) and between 12% and 14% by 2036 (between 55 and 80 seconds). The impact upon traffic flows are also presented.
- 3.40 The range of **scheme benefits** are set out. These include the costs and benefits in relation to **accidents**, assessed through DfT's COBALT software. These indicate that, across the whole highway network, there is forecast to be a slight disbenefits, equating to £92,000, in 2010 prices.
- 3.41 The **transport user benefits** are presented. These have been calculated using the DfT's TUBA software. Overall benefits are estimated as just under £12.3 million in 2010 prices.
- 3.42 The impact upon the **Public Accounts** is presented, with a broad transport budget of £5.685 million and a loss in fuel duty revenues of £372,000, both in 2010 prices.
- 3.43 The **Analysis of Monetised Costs and Benefits** is presented with the scheme forecast to generate an overall benefit cost ratio (BCR) of 2.08 to 1. If an additional 10% uplift is applied to account for wider economic impacts, the adjusted BCR is forecast to increase to 2.14.
- 3.44 The **environmental impacts** of the scheme are presented. No assessment of **noise and air quality** has been undertaken as it was considered that the scheme alignment moves the road further away from properties.
- 3.45 Whilst there could be some potential impacts upon **biodiversity**, mitigation measures will be in place to minimise these impacts. Similarly, a number of measures are stated for the protection of the **water environment** during the construction phase, and the Planting Plan to minimise impacts upon **landscape**.
- 3.46 The **social impacts** of the scheme are presented. It is acknowledged that the network-wide **accident impacts** have been assessed as a slight adverse impact; however, evidence is presented to demonstrate that, at a local (Barkham Bridge) level, the risk of accidents is anticipated to reduce, and that these benefits are not captured within the COBALT assessment.
- 3.47 The impacts upon **physical activity** are stated as being limited and so have not been assessed in detail. Similarly, the impact upon **security** is considered neutral. The scheme is considered to offer some positive impact in terms of reducing **severance**, through the provision of additional transport capacity. **Journey quality** is also forecast to have a slight positive benefit, through improving traveller care and reducing stress.

- 3.48 No impacts on **option and non-use values** are anticipated. A detailed assessment of the impact upon **accessibility** has not been undertaken, as the scheme is not stated to substantially affect access to public services.
- 3.49 The **distributional impacts** of the scheme are presented in relation to income distribution, children, young adults, older people, disabled, black and minority ethnic groups, those without access to a car, and carers.
- 3.50 The **user benefits** and **affordability** impact are primarily derived by individuals within higher income groups. Other impacts are generally stated as being neutral across user groups.
- 3.51 High and low growth **sensitivity tests** are presented. Under the low growth scenario the adjusted BCR falls to 1.69 to 1, representing medium value for money. Under the high growth scenario it increased to 3.47 to 1.
- 3.52 An **Appraisal Summary Table** is completed and attached with business case. The **Value for Money Statement** confirms the scheme is forecast to deliver High Value Money.

### Independent Assessor Comment

- 3.53 The Economic Case presents detailed information on the approach adopted, the tools utilised, and the forecast economic costs and benefits of the scheme.
- 3.54 A range of information is presented around the traffic modelling that demonstrates the WSTM4 is a robust and appropriate tool to use. The assessment of AM Peak, inter-Peak, and PM Peak is considered appropriate and two future year scenarios have been assessed, following standard practice for extrapolation of benefits
- 3.55 The outputs clearly demonstrate the scheme deliver direct transport benefits and that there will also be wider network benefits, particularly in terms of resilience.
- 3.56 The assessment of network accident impacts applies standard industry approaches and is considered robust. The slight adverse impact is not considered to be unexpected for a scheme of this type.
- 3.57 The overall assessment of transport user benefits is robust, applying standard industry practices. It is understood that the breakdown of benefits by time period is as follows: AM Peak = 48% of benefits, inter-peak = 11%, and PM Peak = 41%. No benefits have been assessed for Saturdays or Sundays and, as such, the assessment can be considered marginally conservative in its approach. The outputs demonstrate that the scheme clearly provides significant direct transport benefits, most notably during the periods of peak traffic flows.
- 3.58 The application of a 3% level of optimism bias to the scheme costs is considered appropriate given that the scheme is fully designed and there is considerable certainty in the costs.
- 3.59 The overall assessment of monetised costs and benefits demonstrates the scheme is forecast to deliver high value for money, under the Central Case scenario.
- 3.60 The environmental assessment has been undertaken in a proportional manner. There is no assessment of noise and air quality impacts. This is considered to be reasonable, as the scheme is enhancing an existing highway route. Traffic volumes are forecast to increase along the route and so there could be some marginal negative impacts, but these will be off-set but reduction in traffic movements along alternative routes.
- 3.61 The assessments of biodiversity, water environment and landscape are considered detailed and reflect the advanced nature of the scheme design. The assessment of impacts is considered to be robust.

- 3.62 The assessment of social impacts has also been undertaken in a proportional manner. There is no assessment of physical activity, security, option values, and accessibility. Given the scale and type of scheme, this is considered to be reasonable, albeit it is considered that there could be some minor positive accessibility impacts.
- 3.63 The assessment of accidents presents a useful local assessment of the risk of accidents at Barkham Bridge itself and it is considered appropriate that these benefits are classified as additional to the standard COBALT assessment.
- 3.64 The assessment of severance and journey quality are also considered robust.
- 3.65 A detailed assessment of distributional impacts has been undertaken and the outputs are considered robust.
- 3.66 The sensitivity tests for low and high growth indicate that the outcomes of the economic case are relatively sensitive to the assumed level of future growth. Under the low growth scenario, the benefit cost ratio falls into the medium value for money category, albeit the scheme will still generate significantly greater benefits than the associated costs.
- 3.67 The overall value for money statement demonstrates that the scheme will represent high value for money under the central case scenario.

## Financial Case

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- 3.68 The Financial Case provides a breakdown of the capital scheme costs and the estimated funding and cost profiles.
- 3.69 The **total cost** of the scheme is £7.645m, of which the **funding ask** from TVB LEP is £4.236m.
- 3.70 The breakdown of costs details: Lands; Pt1 Claims; Core team; Surveys; Enabling; utilities; and construction. This generates a sub-total of £6.418m.
- 3.71 An additional allowance for price inflation is included of £0.509m and £0.718m is included to cover risk, taken from a quantified risk assessment.
- 3.72 It is confirmed that the scheme is at detailed design stage, with early contractor involvement (Balfour Beatty) who have provided the scheme costs.
- 3.73 A detailed outturn costs and spending profile is presented, with the total per annum summarised below:
- 2017/18 = £196,560
  - 2018/19 = £990,771
  - 2019/20 = £3,086,916
  - 2020/21 = £3,121,191
  - 2021/22 = £250,000
- 3.74 Funding is to be sourced from the LEP (£4.236m) and from the Council Capital Programme (£3.410m).
- 3.75 WBC S151 Officer has provided a letter confirming the borough's commitment to the scheme and the availability of funds.

## Independent Assessor Comment

- 3.76 Whilst the breakdown in cost estimates presented is relatively high level, they have been directly provided by the contractor and so are considered likely to be robust. Cost inflation has been adequately incorporated.

- 3.77 A Quantified Risk Budget of £0.718m (or 11% of the construction cost) has been set aside to meet any unexpected costs. This is based upon a detailed assessment of risks and would appear to be a reasonable amount of contingency funding for a scheme at detailed design phase.

## Commercial Case

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- 3.78 The Commercial Case outlines the procurement strategy, incorporating sourcing options, payment and charging mechanisms, risk allocation and transfer, and contract management procedures.
- 3.79 WBC's contact with Balfour Beatty, via the Scape Framework, to deliver major highway schemes is described. Similarly, the Highway Alliance Partnership that WBC has established with WSP and Volker Highways to deliver highways and transportation services is highlighted.
- 3.80 The benefits of the Scape framework are set out and the reasons why alternative approaches were not pursued are described. This focuses upon the time and costs incurred around tendering.
- 3.81 A statement around the value for money of the selected procurement approach is provided, which includes reference to the Value for Money Toolkit embedded within the Scape procurement process.
- 3.82 The procurement approach for the Highway Alliance is also described to demonstrate that it represents a robust approach.
- 3.83 An outputs-based specification for the scheme is set out encompassing all elements of the scheme.
- 3.84 The administration of payment of contracts under each framework/partnership is described, and similarly the risk allocation and transfer.
- 3.85 The contract management procedure the Council has in place to manage both frameworks/alliances is described.

## Independent Assessor Comment

- 3.86 The advantages of the Scape Framework and the Highway Alliance are well set out. Whilst the benefits over alternative approaches appears heavily focused upon time and cost incurred around tendering, it also demonstrated how the Scape procurement process ensure broader value for money.
- 3.87 A detailed Output-Based Specification for the scheme is included, alongside a brief overview of the payment and charging mechanisms to be applied on the contract.
- 3.88 There information on risk allocation and transfer is relatively high level but provides evidence that a process is in place to actively manage risk allocation.
- 3.89 There is clear evidence that WBC has contract management procedures are in place to manage the Scape Framework and the Highways Alliance.

## Management Case

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- 3.90 The Management Case presents information on how the proposal will be delivered and managed.
- 3.91 A range of examples of WBC's **experience** in successfully delivering transport infrastructure schemes are provided, including those deliver by Balfour Beatty.
- 3.92 **Programme and project dependencies** are discussed but considered to be minimal given the advanced stage of development of the project.
- 3.93 An overview of **governance** is provided, with an organogram setting out key project roles, with named individuals, and responsibility outlined.
- 3.94 Reference is made to TVB LEP Assurance Framework for assessing projects at critical stages, as part of the **assurance and approval** process.
- 3.95 The **Communication & Stakeholder Management** processes are described in broad terms, with reference to engagement and inputs from key stakeholders
- 3.96 A description of the progress reports that will be produced as part of the **project reporting** process is set out.
- 3.97 An **Implementation Plan** sets out the key workstreams and issues and milestones. This confirms scheme opening by March 2021.
- 3.98 Reference is made to the maintenance of a risk register as part of the **Risk Management Strategy**. The risk register is split into two sheets: once in relation to Employer Risks; and the other for Contractor Risks.
- 3.99 A **Benefits Realisation Plan** is described in broad terms, whilst a **Monitoring and Evaluation Plan** is attached as an appendix.

## Independent Assessor Comment

- 3.100 The **previous project examples** demonstrate WBC's and Balfour Beatty's ability to deliver major transport schemes similar to Barkham Bridge.
  - 3.101 It is recognised that the scheme is well developed and, as such, the **project and programme** dependencies will be limited, with no planning requirements, land acquisition completed, and agreements with statutory bodies, such as the environment agency
  - 3.102 The **governance** structure is clear, with specific responsibilities outlined for defined individuals. The reference to adhering to TVB LEP **assurance** process s welcomed but additional detail on the local implementation could have been provided.
  - 3.103 The **communication and stakeholder management strategy** is relatively high level; however, evidence of engagement with key stakeholders is presented. The Risk Management Strategy has limited detail but it is clear there is a live risk register to manage on-going risks.
  - 3.104 The **Benefits Realisation Plan** section does not contain specific details on how the applicant will ensure the identified scheme benefits will be realised. The attached **Monitoring and Evaluation Plan** provides sufficient evidence of how the impacts of the project will be evaluated.
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# Summary and Conclusions

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## Summary

3.105 The review of the five cases has identified the following key points for consideration:

- The **Strategic Case** demonstrates reasonably strong policy alignment and a good case for intervention, with clear supporting evidence of the benefits the scheme will deliver in relation to reducing delays and improving journey time for access and movement along the Barkham Road Corridor. The importance of the scheme in supporting the Arborfield Garrison SDL is also established, with 3,500 homes to be delivered across the site.

The limited residual life of the current Barkham Bridge is also highlighted, with the likelihood of increasing maintenance requirements on the old structure if it is not replaced.

A clear set of overarching objectives is established, and it is demonstrated how the scheme will respond to each one. It is also demonstrated that the scheme is at an advanced stage of development, with all major constraints addressed, and thorough engagement with necessary statutory bodies, specifically the Environment Agency.

- The overall **Economic Case** for the scheme demonstrates that it will achieve 'high' value for money. There are significant transport user benefits, in terms of journey time savings and vehicle operating cost reductions. These occur predominantly across the peak periods of traffic, but also within the inter-peak. Whilst there are slight adverse accident impacts across the highway network as a whole, it is further demonstrated that there will be further (non-monetised) reductions in the risk of accidents at Barkham Bridge itself. The scheme is also likely to deliver some wider economic benefits.

A detailed assessment of social and distributional impacts has been undertaken, with broadly neutral and slight positive impacts. The assessment of environmental impacts is considered detailed, and whilst some negative impacts are identified, these will broadly be mitigated against through the design of the scheme and accompanying measures.

The sensitivity analysis indicates that the scale of benefits is sensitive to the level of underlying growth, with the low growth scenario forecast to deliver only 'medium' value for money, albeit the benefits would still significantly outweigh the costs of the scheme.

- The **Financial Case** presented for the scheme is considered robust with a breakdown of costs and an understanding that these are based upon final detailed design for the scheme. A suitable risk contingency is included (11% of construction costs), which has been generated through a quantified risk register. Match funding is provided by WBC through their Capital Programme, with confirmation of available funds provided by the S151 Officer.
- The **Commercial and Management Cases** provide reasonably detailed information to demonstrate surety in the procurement processes and the overall deliverability of the project. The advanced state of the project means that the contractor has already had involvement and there is a clear programme and allocation of risks. There is evidence that the project team has sufficient experience to deliver the project and there is a clear governance structure. Whilst the assurance protocols presented are limited it is recognised that the delivery will be subject to the conditions of the Wokingham Highway Alliance Scape framework.

## Conclusions

- 3.106 The overall scheme is considered to align well with strategic priorities and there is a well-established need for the intervention. It enhances connectivity along the Barkham Road Corridor, connecting nearby villages with Wokingham. It also supports the broader delivery of the Arborfield Garrison SDL.
- 3.107 The overall Economic Case for the scheme forecasts it will deliver high value for money through direct transport user benefits, albeit these may be subject to variation based upon underlying levels of growth. In addition to these direct benefits, there will also be a range of wider economic and social benefits. Whilst some negative environmental impacts may occur, mitigation measures will be included to minimise these impacts.
- 3.108 The Financial Case demonstrates that the costs of the scheme are well-developed and appropriate levels of contingency and risk allowance are included.
- 3.109 The Commercial and Management Cases are considered to be relatively succinct, but compliant with requirements. They provide sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the procurement approaches offer value for money and that there are robust measures in place to manage the delivery of the project.
- 3.110 It is our conclusion that there is sufficient evidence presented to support the overall case for investment in the scheme. It has good strategic alignment and a clear need for intervention has been demonstrated. Whilst there are some uncertainties relating to the overall scale of benefits, the central case assessment of monetised costs and benefits forecasts the scheme will deliver high value for money. The scheme is at an advanced stage of development, with limited risks for deliverability. On this basis, we recommend the scheme for approval.





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