

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel

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WARD(S): Langley St Mary's, Langley Kedermister, Foxborough

PART I

FOR INFORMATION

LANGLEY HIGH STREET, INFRASTRUCTURE - IMPACT ON BUSINESSES

1. **Purpose of Report**

To inform the Panel of the plans to transform the highway layout and adjacent infrastructure in Langley, substantially funded by Local Growth Fund contributions via the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). Also to set out the rationale for the scheme, and the expected impacts of the proposed scheme on local business and services.

2. **Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

The Panel is requested to note the report.

3. **The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan**

The [Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy](#) (SJWS) is the document that details the priorities agreed for Slough with partner organisations. The SJWS has been developed using a comprehensive evidence base that includes the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA). Both are clearly linked and must be used in conjunction when preparing your report. They have been combined in the Slough Wellbeing Board report template to enable you to provide supporting information highlighting the link between the SJWS and JSNA priorities.

3a. **Slough Wellbeing Strategy Priorities**

The scheme is designed to address the priorities as follows:

1. ***Starting Well:*** By providing a better designed, safer road network with junction and crossing improvements, allowing better mobility of the Langley area, including access to schools, doctors, playing grounds and other facilities for the young.
2. ***Integration (relating to Health & Social Care):*** Through provision of greater travel opportunities for all, including modal choice, leading to the expected economic growth for all, including new jobs and services. Also by providing a more attractive environment as well as opportunities for active travel (cycling and walking) as well as connectivity overall. There are well established links

between positive physical measures and benefits to mental health and wellbeing.

3. ***Strong, healthy and attractive neighbourhoods:*** By providing a better designed, safer road network with junction and crossing improvements, as well as improved air quality. Also by improving the attractiveness of the area, planning applications are expected to be carried through to development, with a variety of types and scales of property expected to be built

3b. **Five Year Plan Outcomes**

Outcome 3: Slough will be an attractive place where people choose to live, work and stay.

The scheme is designed to incorporate landscaping improvements as well as new infrastructure and enhanced road network, enhancing the natural capital of the area as well as improving accessibility and travel options.

Outcome 4. Our residents will live in good quality homes.

The scheme is expected to lead to the development of a number of new housing units. Provisionally estimated at over 200 in the next few years.

Outcome 5: Slough will attract, retain and grow businesses and investment to provide opportunities for our residents.

The scheme will stimulate commercial growth and activity, improving the vibrancy of the area. This will be facilitated by enhanced connectivity between Langley, the wider borough of Slough and beyond. The scheme will also encourage public transport and active travel uptake. Residents will also benefit from the expected benefits in improved air quality and reduced levels of congestion.

4. **Other Implications**

(a) Financial

The majority of the funding for the scheme is being provided by the Local Enterprise Partnership. The first two sections of the three section scheme have contributions of £1,033,000 and £1,324,000 respectively from re-profiled Local Growth Fund sources. The third section of the overall plan is expected to be funded mainly by a contribution of £1.643m from MHCLG sources (a new government funding opportunity). Each of these sections will also include a local 20% capital contribution from Council funds (approx. £800k in total). A capital business case for the first two sections was presented and approved by the capital board in July. Approval for the 20% contribution for the third and final section will be presented for approval in due course.

The award of funding from the LEP has been approved by the Berkshire Local Transport Body, subject to satisfactorily meeting some rudimentary conditions by the end of August. The main condition of relevance here is acceptance that the Council will be responsible for any overspend possible in the delivery of the scheme.

As always, the progress of the scheme, and specifically the cost and expenditure elements, will be carefully monitored throughout and addressed as appropriate.

In addition to the above financial implications for the Council, the development of the scheme will have potential financial impacts on a number of businesses in the area, specifically those located adjacent to the area(s) of highway directly affected by the scheme.

The Major Infrastructure Projects service considers that the overall development is expected to stimulate economic growth, and that the benefits to all (including businesses, employers, residents, visitors and commuters) will outweigh the total of any localised impacts on specific commercial premises and services.

Further, the scheme is considered necessary due to the planned closure of Hollow Hill Lane by Network Rail as part of their Western Rail Link to Heathrow project (WRLtH). Extensive modelling has been conducted previously, with the results indicated that the closure, if not supported by substantial mitigation, would result in high levels of congestion and potentially gridlock in the local area, including Harrow market and all linked approaches.

(b) Risk Management

Recommendation from section 2 above	Risks/Threats/Opportunities	Current Controls	Using the Risk Management Matrix Score the risk	Future Controls
	Risk of over-spending due to unforeseen circumstances beyond existing contingency levels.	Independent review already performed by Hatch Regeneris, with predicted costs closely studied.	Low risk Medium impact Overall low score	Close monitoring of costs and expenditure throughout the project. Effective project management, including regular progress meetings and reporting.
	Risk of public dissatisfaction, either short term or on completion, due to unexpected events or conditions affecting the operation of the network and the	Advance information sharing and public consultation. Skilled design and adherence to detail in preparation for a successful outcome for all concerned.	Low risk. Medium impact. Overall low score.	Ongoing public engagement. Monitoring and evaluation of the scheme. Any appropriate remedial measures to be applied.

	attractiveness of the area			
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(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no Human Rights or similar implications.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment

No Equalities Impact Assessment is proposed on the basis that this proposal comprises an extension to the existing / recently completed Langley Station access and highways improvements scheme, also funded by the LEP. The impacts of this scheme and all related follow on work are expected to be applicable to all members of the community, with no specific protected groups adversely affected.

(e) Workforce

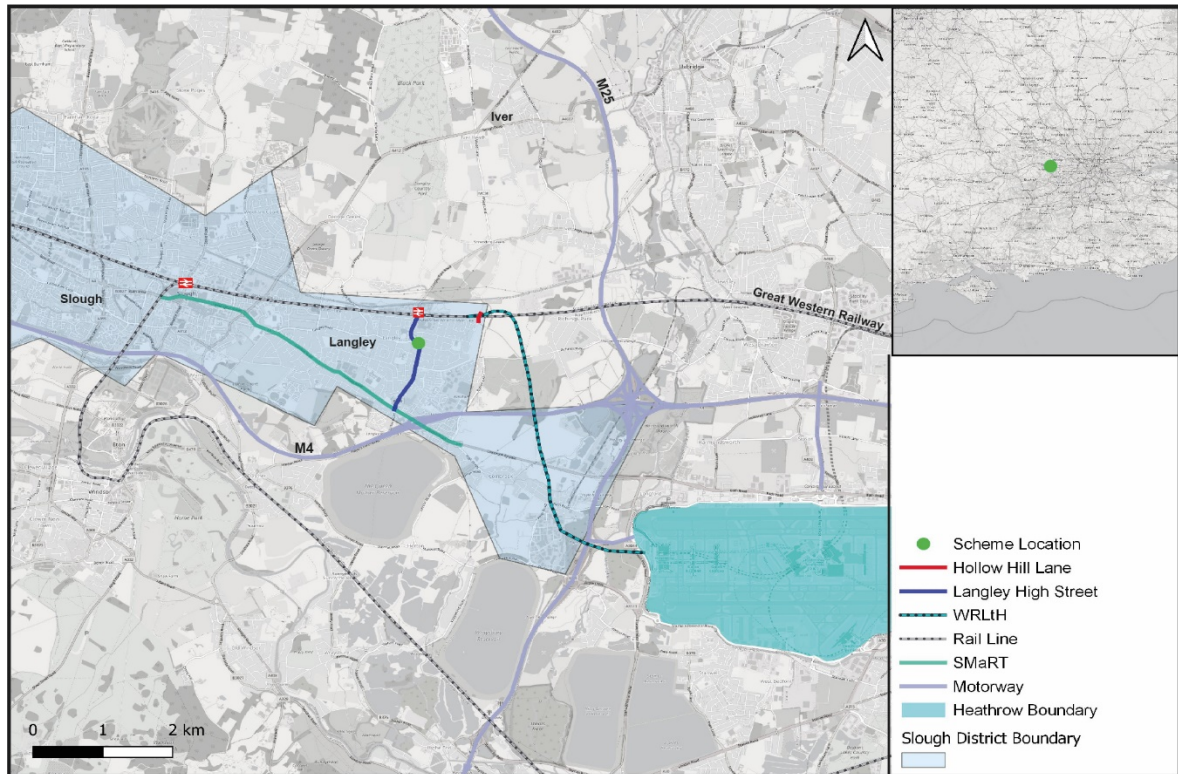
There are no negative workforce implications. The scheme will be constructed by the Council's Direct Service Organisation (DSO), as an extension to the arrangements previously in place for the original scheme. This is considered to be a positive arrangement all round.

5. **Supporting Information**

- 5.1 The TVB LEP Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) 2015/2016 – 2022/2021 rightly states that the close proximity of Heathrow airport provides a locational advantage for the region, particularly for Slough and Langley, by ensuring residents have access to highly-skilled and high wage jobs. The Western Rail Link to Heathrow (WRLtH) will provide a step change in supporting the employment growth within Slough and Langley by providing quick and reliable access to Heathrow. The TVB LEP's support for the WRLtH scheme is clearly articulated throughout the strategic planning documents including the SEP, the SEP Implementation Plan and the Evidence Base. This strategic support is continued through the creation of WRLtH project team and Stakeholder Steering Group, showing the TVB LEP's continued and dedicated support to the implementation of the WRLtH scheme.
- 5.2 Slough Borough Council appreciates the importance of this opportunity, although it is understood that improvements to the rail network should not be detrimental to other modes of transport. To successfully implement the WRLtH alongside the existing Great Western rail network, the road tunnel (Chequers Bridge) on Hollow Hill Lane will have to be permanently closed. As a popular commuter route, this will force current traffic to use alternative routes, potentially adding a significant amount of pressure on local roads. The scheme aims to support the WRLtH and economic prosperity in the TVB region whilst mitigating the impact that will result from the closure of Hollow Hill Lane.
- 5.3 Figure1 below highlights the key transport infrastructure surrounding the scheme including the Slough Mass Rapid Transit Phases 1 and 2 along the A4 and the M4

Smart motorway scheme to the south, Langley Station improvements, Crossrail and the WRLtH.

Fig1:



The proposed scheme, which is an extension to the original rail station accessibility and Station Road/ High Street/ Langley Road junction improvement scheme in Langley, will complement the SEP's overall vision ensuring that:

“The ambition and creativity of our established businesses will be energised through strong, knowledge-rich, networks [and] our infrastructure will match the scale of our ambition and potential”ⁱ

- 5.4 Strategic traffic modelling has shown that the closure of Hollow Hill Lane will result in a re-routing of traffic onto Meadfield Road and High Street in Langley and this increased number of vehicles will make the High Street more congestedⁱ. If not tackled, the consequential effects of this congestion threaten to impact labour supply to local businesses, access to education i.e. Marish Primary School, Langley Hall Primary Academy and Langley College, connectivity to the wider TVB district and will inhibit future economic prosperity. Once implemented, these improvements will reduce congestion along High Street and reduce the negative environmental impacts that are associated with the slow-moving nature of congested traffic, notably noise and air quality.
- 5.5 The proposed scheme aims to accommodate future demand as a result of the Hollow Hill Lane closure, on both High Street and Meadfield Road by enhancing the efficiency and flow of vehicle movement within Langley, thus improving access to the strategic road network. As part of the design for operational improvements

at the junction, improvements for pedestrians and cyclists have also been incorporated.

- 5.6 As mentioned above, Hollow Hill Lane will close at a date yet to be determined, but expected to be before 2027, as part of the planned Western Rail link work to Heathrow. Although Slough Borough Council has no influence over this closure, it is expected that the closure is due to start sometime in 2022.
- 5.7 The Council consulted on plans in 2019 when proposing the changes to the Harrow Market roundabout and the associated widening north and south of the junction. Since then the Council has delivered a new junction and secured funding for the remaining sections from the Station Road bridge to Elmhurst Road.
- 5.8 The proposed widening is being consulted on at the time of writing, albeit via the council's Bluejeans virtual meetings platform. This consultation process will run over two weeks to enable residents and businesses to provide their feedback.
- 5.9 Concern has been raised by members and businesses with regard to the widening and the potential for land take on Meadfield Road and Willoughby Road. Earlier concept designs did show land take, however these were early drawings as part of bid to the LEP. Over the past few week's the designs have been changed to minimise and eliminate the impact on the businesses in the Langley area; this has included the following:
 - Redesigning the junctions to remove land take
 - Redesign the junctions to reduce impact on car parking
 - Provide options for the land take of the Langley Memorial Gardens

The result of this work is the proposed removal of one parking space in front of the shops at Willow Court, Meadfield Rd, and up to two parking spaces in front of the dentist on High Street. These losses are in-part offset by increased footway space and crossing facilities for pedestrians.

Appendices A and B show the current options that were taken to consultation. The area of land take within Langley Memorial Ground is to be confirmed through the consultation exercise, and through discussion with the Parks Trustee Committee.

- 5.10 There have been separate ongoing discussions with regard to the provision of bays on Elmhurst Rd. Our Parking team have reviewed this element and have identified an opportunity to install limited waiting bays in this location. It is our intention to seek to incorporate this is the project.
- 5.11 Officers are very aware of the current pressure on local businesses and have worked on numerous options to support them. As part of the consultation we will want to hear from those businesses to make sure we have captured their concerns and also options for improving the scheme to help them stay open.
- 5.12 Appendix C shows the approximate land take requirements on Station Rd, to the north of Langley Rd; however it should be noted that the exact requirement is developing with the design. All areas of land take to the north of Langley Rd have been subject to previous planning discussions and highway adoption is in progress.

6. **Comments of Other Committees**

An informal members briefing session was held on Bluejeans by the service on 26th June 2020. In addition, local ward members were invited to attend the initial session of the Parks Trustee Committee Meeting, held on 20th July 2020.

The scheme proposal has also been thoroughly and independently reviewed by Hatch Regeneris, appointed by the LEP, and by the Berkshire Local Transport Body, with Cllr Anderson in attendance and representing Slough Borough Council for this purpose. LEP / BLTB.

7. **Conclusion**

The Major Infrastructure Projects service considers that the proposed scheme will be highly beneficially to Langley, Slough borough and the wider region in a variety of significant ways. These include increased economic growth, enhanced accessibility and connectivity, with improved traffic flow and reduced congestion, associate improvements in air quality, and overall a more vibrant and attractive area. The scheme is being designed to improve the highway infrastructure and transport links, but also to maintain and further enhance the natural capital so important to Langley as a village.

As covered in the section on financial implications, there may be some short term, localised impacts on a number of businesses. Awareness of any such effects will no doubt come up in the public consultation, with all appropriate mitigating measures to be instigated as far as possible. Ultimately, though, the scheme is expected to make an extensive positive impact. The scheme is also considered critical in preparation for the expected impacts of the closure of Hollow Hill Lane by Network Rail.

8. **Appendices Attached**

- 'A' Preliminary Design option A
- 'B' Preliminary Design option B
- 'C' Third Party Land Map Annotation

9. **Background Papers**

None

ⁱ Langley Junction Assessment and Outline Design Technical Note, March 2019.