

COMMITTEE: EXECUTIVE REF NO: E/19/28
DATE: 3 SEPTEMBER 2019
SUBJECT: IPSWICH NORTHERN BYPASS
PORTFOLIO HOLDER: COUNCILLOR DAVID ELLESMERE
HEAD OF SERVICE: RUSSELL WILLIAMS

Short description of report content and the decision requested:

Three broad options for a possible 'Ipswich Northern Bypass' are currently being consulted upon. The closing date for comments is 13th September 2019.

This report sets out some of the background to the issue, advocates that the Council should respond to the consultation and sets out the suggested response.

Ward(s) affected:

All route options are outside the Borough boundary

List of Appendices included in this report:

- a) *Appendix 1 – Relevant extracts from Draft minutes from Area Committees*

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This report was prepared after consultation with:

Internal consultees:

Corporate Management Team

External consultees:

None

The following policies form a context to this report:

(all relevant policies must also be referred to in the body of the report)

Building a Better Ipswich 2017

Ipswich Local Plan

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AS REQUIRED BY LAW

(papers relied on to write the report but which are not published and do not contain exempt information)

1. None

OTHER HELPFUL PAPERS

(papers which the report author considers might be helpful – this might include published material)

1. See: <https://ipswichnorthernroute.org.uk/>.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Consultation, led by the County Council, has started on the Ipswich Northern Bypass. There is a dedicated web-site at: <https://ipswichnorthernroute.org.uk/>.
- 1.2 The consultation period closes on Friday 13th September 2019.
- 1.3 At headline level, there are two issues for the Council to consider:
 - (i) Whether the Council wishes to respond formally to the consultation or not; and
 - (ii) If it does wish to respond, what should the response be?
- 1.4 It should be noted that whether or not a new road is built will not be a decision of the Borough Council, i.e. the Borough is not the 'highway authority' and all the routes suggested are completely outside the Borough boundary.

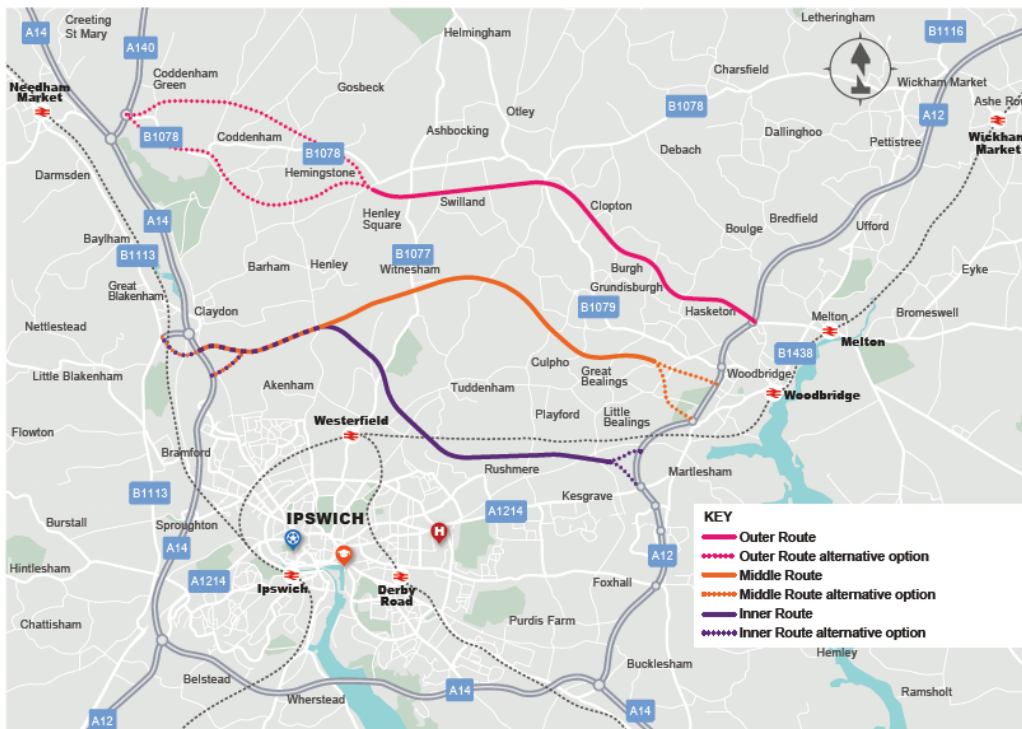
2. Background

- 2.1 Whilst the notion of a bypass to the north of Ipswich has been mooted for decades, the County Council, with support from all Suffolk Public Sector Leaders (including Councillor Ellesmere), has commissioned work on route options (etc) and is currently undertaking a consultation on proposals/issues.
- 2.2 A series of meetings/events have been organised as part of the consultation, including one at Ipswich Library on 20th July 2019, and relevant County officers have attended each Area Committee within their recent round of meetings.
- 2.3 The consultation information is available via a bespoke website: <https://ipswichnorthernroute.org.uk/>.

2.4 In summary the project objectives are suggested to be:



2.5 The map below summarises the route options:



- 2.6 In terms of how the various routes might connect with existing roads into/out of the town, the consultation document says (p10):

The map (on p10) shows the key routes together with the key roads connecting into the main routes It is anticipated that these will be connected by roundabouts: The connecting roads are:

- *Henley Road*
- *Westerfield Road*
- *Tuddenham Road/Grundisburgh Road*
- *Rushmere Road*

- 2.7 Note: whilst the text suggests Rushmere Road, the relevant map (coupled with local knowledge) suggests that this should in fact refer to Playford Road.

3. Relevant Policies

- 3.1 The current stated IBC position arguably comprises two elements:

- (i) The Corporate Plan: *“In terms of our enabling role we will: Lobby for improvements in infrastructure such as a Northern Route, improved rail connectivity and service.”*
- (ii) The latest Local Plan document: *“Additional east-west highway capacity could be provided within the plan period in the Ipswich area to meet the needs of the wider population and to provide the potential to reallocate some central road space”; and*

“The Council will work with partners such as the other local planning authorities in the ISPA, Suffolk County Council, Clinical Commissioning Groups, utilities companies, Highways England and Network Rail in supporting and enabling the delivery of key strategic infrastructure, and in particular the timely delivery of: a) Ipswich Northern Routes”; and

“The Council supports the following strategic transport improvements: a. Ipswich Northern Routes”; and

“The Council will actively encourage key partners to investigate the possibility of a northern bypass, to address the issue of: (a) central east-west movement; (b) movements within and around the north of Ipswich; and (c) the capacity of the A14, particularly around the Orwell Bridge. The Council will work with neighbouring authorities and Suffolk County Council to ensure that the merits and delivery options for some form of northern bypass are fully investigated. It is recognised that any such route would be within the Suffolk Coastal District Council and Mid Suffolk District Council areas (i.e. not between the Ipswich Garden Suburb - policy CS10 - and Westerfield village) and therefore it is not practical to include such a route within this Strategy. However, the Council will encourage those authorities, together with Suffolk County Council and other interested parties, to actively investigate such a route, and would be prepared to contribute to any such investigation.”

4. Options Considered / Under Consideration

- 4.1 In terms of the two questions set out at 1.3 above, there are a number of options that could be pursued.
- 4.2 In terms of question 1.3(i) - Whether the Council wishes to respond formally to the consultation or not, there are two main options:
- Option 1: Respond
Option 2: Don't respond.
- 4.3 It is recommended that Option 1 is pursued since that clearly follows the Council's policy position as set out in section 3. Not commenting would appear to be contrary to the Council's set position.
- 4.4 In terms of question 1.3(ii) - What should the response be, there are many possible options.

4.5 Having considered the relevant information, both within the consultation documentation and the Council's policy position, and having regard to the early stage that this is within the overall process, it is recommended that the response should be relatively simple/strategic and should focus on the following issues:

- (a) Indicating general support to the project from the Borough Council;
- (b) Suggesting a strong preference for the inner route due to perceived benefits – including for the Ipswich area economy and residents;
- (c) Being neutral on the middle route as it would be better than not having a bypass but it appears from the information available to not be as beneficial as the inner route;
- (d) Not supporting the outer route due to the fact that it won't lead to noticeable benefits for the Ipswich area economy/residents, primarily due to being too far from Ipswich;
- (e) That environmental matters including the potential for improved public transport and walking and cycling routes and scope for reorganising/enhancing inner town routes (and therefore supporting air quality issues in Ipswich) should be positively considered within the next phase of the work;
- (f) Noting the importance of this new route in terms of providing a viable alternative to the existing Southern Bypass when its use is compromised due to an incident at any point along it, especially the full or partial closure of the Orwell Bridge;
- (g) Recognising that the route is likely to allow for new growth i.e. open up some land for housing led developments. If so, any such housing should be managed so that would help fund the road;
- (h) Supporting the development of the next phase of work leading to the completion of the Strategic Outline Business Case – in accordance with position of the Suffolk Public Sector Leaders Group and the funding it has set aside from business rates;
- (i) Stating a preference for junctions with existing roads along the route of the bypass to be dealt with by bridges / flyovers rather than roundabouts;
- (j) Recognising that there is lots of work still to do and indicating a wish to continue to be heavily involved.

5. Consultations

5.1 The consultation is being led by Suffolk County Council and the Borough is proposing to respond to it.

5.2 The draft minutes from the debates on the matter at our Area Committees (in total about 150 members of the public attended these meetings) are attached as Appendix 1. The discussion at the North East Area Committee (attended by three members of the public) was not minuted as it did not form part of the formal meeting.

6. Risk Management

6.1 As the Borough is a consultee at this stage it is not considered there are any significant risks associated with this report. Arguably the two possible risks are:

- (a) The Borough's view not being clear: By commenting, this negates this risk;
- (b) The Borough's choice of view being incorrect: It is considered that the views expressed at paragraph 4.5 are the appropriate one's for this stage of the process and that – in any event – there should be plenty of further stages to refine comments (assuming the project progresses).

6.2 The above two risks are summarised within the table below:

Risk Description	Consequence of risk	Risk Controls	Probability of risk occurring taking account of controls (scale 1-6) 1 – almost impossible 6 – very high	Impact of risk, if it occurred taking account of actions (scale 1 – negligible; 4 – catastrophic)	Actions to mitigate risk
Partners don't know the Council's view	IBC position may not be taken into account	Make view known – by commenting	1	3	Submit consultation response
Councils view is not most appropriate one	Project may go in the wrong direction	Views are consistent with policy position and there will be plenty more opportunities to comment	2	3	Submit consultation response and continue active involvement in the project.

7. Environmental Impact Assessment

7.1 The impacts of any route/development on the environment will be a key consideration for the decision maker(s). Such matters will be tested throughout the process.

7.2 In responding to this consultation, it is being recommended that the Council responds in accordance with its published policy position. It should also be noted that it will not be the decision maker on this project.

8. Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 8.1 Under the general equality duty as set out in the Equality Act 2010, public authorities are required to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation as well as advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 8.2 The protected grounds covered by the equality duty are: age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation. The equality duty also covers marriage and civil partnership, but only in respect of eliminating unlawful discrimination.
- 8.3 The law requires that this duty to have due regard be demonstrated in decision making processes. Assessing the potential impact on equality of proposed changes to policies, procedures and practices is one of the key ways in which public authorities can demonstrate that they have had due regard to the aims of the equality duty.
- 8.4 In responding to this consultation, it is being recommended that the Council responds in accordance with its published policy position. It should also be noted that it will not be the decision maker on this project.

9. Financial Considerations

- 9.1 There are no financial implications directly associated with this report.

10. Legal Considerations

- 10.1 There are no legal implications directly associated with this report.

11. Performance Monitoring

- 11.1 In the event that the recommendation within the report is agreed, the consultation response will formally be submitted by 13th September 2019.

12. Conclusions

- 12.1 The Ipswich Northern Bypass is supported within the Council's main policy documents. The report advocates that the Council responds positively to the current consultation and that it does so in a manner that is in keeping with its policy position.
- 12.2 There is considerable work that will need to be undertaken prior to any scheme starting on site and the Council should seek to play an active role in that work.

13. Recommendations

13.1 That the Chief Executive be authorised to respond to the consultation in keeping with the position set out within paragraph 4.5 of this report.

Reason: To ensure the County Council (and others) are aware of the Borough Council's position on this important topic.

Appendix 1: Relevant Extracts of Draft Minutes from Area Committee meetings

Central Area: 31st July 2019

22.1. Ms Suzanne Buck, Project Manager for the Ipswich Northern Route, gave a presentation with the following key points:

- Project would seek to address journey reliability and support ambitions for significant future growth
- Proposals would seek to relieve traffic on the A14 in general, which was operating close to its capacity, not just when the Orwell Bridge was closed
- In 2016, Public Sector Leaders Group provided £200k for an initial study, and then a further £550k in 2018 to develop a Strategic Outline Business Case, which would now include scope for the provision of up to 15,000 new homes
- 4 objectives: improve experience of using A14 and provide additional route resilience; support existing local economy through improved connectivity; provide additional travel options to optimise road capacity in Ipswich leading to environmental improvements; support new homes and jobs growth in Suffolk
- 31 options were considered, which resulted in 3 route options to the north of Ipswich
- Outer route: likely to attract fewer vehicle trips, but would offer an East-West route without passing through Ipswich
- Middle route: would attract more vehicle trips as an alternative to using A12/A14; however, increased cost as existing A14 junctions did not have capacity
- Inner route: would provide greatest benefit as an alternative route to driving through Ipswich, but higher cost due to constraints from existing infrastructure; cost could be reduced if Park and Ride relocated
- Cost of the 3 routes fell within £500million - £560million, based on 2027 prices
- Recent declarations of Climate Emergency by SCC and district councils were likely to increase the environmental examination of the proposals
- 10-week public consultation would run up to 13 September 2019, with a variety of public engagement events, and a consultation questionnaire was available for the public to provide their views on the principles of the project
- Project website, including Q&As, was available at: www.ipswichnorthernroute.org.uk

22.2. Councillor Leeder: How do the project objectives, e.g. economic development, environmental improvements, sit within the business case; are some objectives considered more important than others? The objectives were currently given equal weight, but this could change

going forward, for example, if growth was to be given a higher priority.

- 22.3. Councillor Leeder: Would a preferred option be recommended in the Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) or later? The SOBC would be presented to the Public Sector Leaders Board, together with the consultation report, for consideration; the SOBC would not be making a recommendation on whether or not to proceed, but would provide an outline of the potential benefits and issues relating to the 3 routes.
- 22.4. Councillor Holmes: Will the new route be a bypass/relief road or a strategic road? The outer route could be considered as a strategic road as it would complete the ring with the lower road. The road would be a strategic road as it would be for all users, including cyclists and pedestrians; the term 'bypass' has gone out of favour these days.
- 22.5. Councillor Holmes: In the highways modelling data published in January, it stated that the A12 and A14 would exceed their capacity by 2031. It would be difficult to build a business case if these roads were not considered significantly congested by 2031. The Local Plans across the Ipswich Strategic Planning Area (Ipswich, Suffolk Coastal, Babergh, Mid Suffolk) were currently considering the period up to 2036. Much of the road network would be under stress by 2026, and with the proposed growth, there would be difficulties by 2036.
- 22.6. Councillor Holmes: All the Local Plans state that they could be accommodated within the current road network. The Local Plans might be accommodated, but there could be a detrimental effect on the road network. The SOBC would need to demonstrate impacts and benefits of the proposals.
- 22.7. Councillor I Lockington: I have asked for data for Tuddenham Road on behalf of a resident, as figures were provided for Henley Road and Westerfield Road, but not Tuddenham Road, and the resident was concerned as they live near where the inner route would pass, if this was to be the preferred route. This request has been passed onto the consultants and the information would be forwarded when received. Connectivity with the wider network has been based on how traffic currently travels; as Tuddenham Road has a pinch point, the outcome from traffic modelling could change where the new route would be located.
- 22.8. Local resident: Little weight was given to Climate Emergency in the presentation. There would need to be more investment in sustainable transport if carbon neutrality was to be achieved by 2030. Will these proposals achieve that? The Climate Emergency declaration by SCC was made in March 2019 after all of this work had been done, so consideration of Climate Emergency declarations would have to be done at the next stage of the project. At its July Cabinet meeting, SCC outlined how it would develop its Climate Emergency Strategy. The

environmental impact of any new road would be a key consideration regardless; for example, the proposed Sudbury relief road project was not progressed past the second stage because the environmental impact on AQMAs outweighed the benefits of the project.

- 22.9. Local resident: Is there a road issue or could there be other ways to deal with the future challenges? 31 different options were considered in terms of meeting all the objectives, and the 3 options that addressed the objectives were all for a new road. Costs have been based on 2027 estimates and bids for funding would need to be submitted, plus a local funding element of 15% of the costs, which could be generated through a roof tax from new developments. It would be easier to obtain funding for infrastructure than for wider environmental/sustainability improvements. SCC have been pushing for rail improvements and Ipswich Buses have also been looking at what could be done to improve sustainable transport.
- 22.10. Local resident: This project is in the early stages; when would people next have a chance to give their views? The paper would be presented to the Public Sector Leaders Board in October 2019, but people could have a say on the proposals now as part of this consultation; either online or via a paper copy of the consultation questionnaire.
- 22.11. Local resident: When would the road get built? Consideration of the SOBC and proposals for future growth would identify a preferred option; further development of the business case, applications for funding and the detailed submission for planning consent would all need to be done, and providing that all of these steps progressed without issue, the earliest the road could be delivered would be in 2027.
- 22.12. Councillor T Lockington: Has consideration been given to providing infrastructure alongside mitigation? It would be helpful to see how this could be integrated with other mitigation strategies rather than just providing a new road. Do SCC still support Park and Ride? There would be integration of the road with 'business as usual', and opportunities from future infrastructure. SCC does support Park and Ride; the closure of Bury Road was a complex matter. There needs to be a review of car park pricing in town centres in order for Park and Ride to work. Chelmsford has high car parking prices and a successful Park and Ride, whereas Colchester, who have similar car parking prices to Ipswich, did not see a good take up of its Park and Ride service.

22.13. Councillor Kreidewolf: Does this project conflict with the Highways England plans to make improvements to 5 junctions on the A14? A funding bid was submitted by SCC and Suffolk Chamber of Commerce to improve the key junctions of the A14 between Seven Hills and Copdock, plus Bury St Edmunds and Newmarket. These improvements would provide additional capacity at these junctions. The Ipswich Northern Route project would also seek to improve road capacity, but would still require the proposed A14 junction improvement works to go ahead.

North West: 18th July 2019

23.1 Suzanne Buck, Project Manager at Suffolk County Council, provided a presentation on the Ipswich Northern Route Consultation. The project had begun following a number of long standing challenges regarding the reliability and quality of the A14 and to accommodate the effect of economic and housing growth.

23.2. In 2016 the Public Sector Leaders Group provided £200k funding for an initial study into the road network, in May 2017 the Group provided a further £550k for the development of a strategic outline business case and then in November 2018 the scope of the work was updated to include the future expected growth of 10-15,000 new homes. In February 2019 the Leader of Suffolk County Council confirmed that a consultation regarding the Ipswich Northern Route would be held over the Summer and following this, a decision would be made as to whether the project should proceed.

23.3. There were four objectives which included road, infrastructure and supporting growth. The routes had been designed to consider the capacity of the A14, and Ipswich overall, and to provide a link to the north of the town to free up traffic and accommodate future growth. This also included economic growth and ensuring Ipswich would be an attractive place to businesses.

23.4. Three routes (inner, middle and outer) had been identified for consultation and all three had been based on a desktop study with input from Environmental Officers and Highways. It was possible that the alignments could change in the future and full details of each of the routes could be accessed via the Suffolk County Council website. All routes had been modelled on the basis that the road would be opened, at the earliest, in 2027. Consultations would be held at every stage and a robust process would be in place throughout the development of the scheme.

- 23.5. The consultation would remain open until 13 September 2019 and a number of information events had been programmed around Suffolk, East Suffolk and Ipswich, of which residents were all welcomed to attend.
- 23.6. In response to a Councillor, the Officer confirmed that proposals had been put forward as a separate body of work to consider improvements between Seven Hills Crematorium and Wood Lane.
- 23.7. The Officer confirmed that projected traffic flows had been considered on a County Wide model which detailed how people could change their routes as a result of new options being available to them, and advised that traffic flows would be considered in more detail at the next stage.
- 23.8. With regards to Henley Road, it was envisaged that the minor rural road and the major road would have a roundabout connection. However, this would be developed in more detail as the project progressed and therefore would be open to possible changes.
- 23.9. It was confirmed that there would be an adjacent cycle lane on the routes to provide more connectivity to surrounding villages. In response to a question about air quality, the Officer advised that mitigating circumstances such as this had been considered, however they were outside of the scope of the project. It was possible that an alternative development to consider these kinds of issues could be proposed in the future.

South East: 10th July 2019

- 25.1 Suzanne Buck, Suffolk County Council Highways, gave a presentation regarding the Ipswich Northern Route project. The aim of the project was to provide increased capacity and an alternative to the A14 and also to support growth in the local economy.
- 25.2 Ms Buck explained that there were three possible alignments for the route and that a consultation on these was currently underway. Each route had different benefits, with the inner route having the clearest benefits for Ipswich.
- 25.3 Councillor Barber asked whether an estimate of costs for each route had been developed. Ms Buck explained that the new route was estimated to cost £500-560 million but that there was relatively little difference between the different alignments with the inner and middle routes the more expensive because of the required junction works.

- 25.4 Councillor Barber asked whether the number and location of additional homes and the potential traffic generation had been modelled. Ms Buck explained that these assessments would be part of a future stage in the project.
- 25.5 Councillor Cook noted that the route was expected to carry 14,000-23,000 vehicles per day and asked whether any figures were available to make that number more comprehensible. Ms Buck explained that the Orwell Bridge currently carried 70,000 vehicles per day. Councillor Cook commented that more detailed cost estimates and traffic modelling for Ipswich would be useful to allow residents of Ipswich to respond. Ms Buck agreed to look into whether any further information could be made available via the consultation website.
- 25.6 A resident asked whether anything was being considered to prevent the Orwell Bridge from being closed. Ms Buck reported that Highways England were investigating options for reducing the number of restrictions and closures on the Orwell Bridge but noted that the Ipswich Northern Route had wider benefits.
- 25.7 A resident commented that building the Ipswich Northern Route would undermine Suffolk County Council's objective of being the greenest county.
- 25.8 Councillor Richardson left at this point in the meeting.
- 25.9 A resident asked whether the Ipswich Northern Route would relieve the pressure on the roads in the centre of Ipswich. Ms Buck commented that the cancelled Upper Orwell Crossings Project would have alleviated pressure on the Star Lane Gyratory and whilst this project would have some benefits for the town centre that was not its intended purpose.
- 25.10 The Chair thanked Ms Buck for her presentation to the committee and encouraged those present to respond to the consultation.

South West: 9th July 2019

- 29.1. Katherine Potts, Consultation Officer at Suffolk County Council, provided a presentation to the South West Area Committee regarding the Ipswich Northern Route Consultation. The project had begun following a number of long standing challenges regarding the reliability and quality of the A14 and to accommodate the effect of economic and housing growth.
- 29.2. In 2016 the Public Sector Leaders Group provided £200k funding for an initial study into the road network, in May 2017 the Group provided a further £550k for the development of a strategic outline business case and then in November 2018 the scope of the work was updated to include the future expected growth of 10-15,000 new homes. In February

2019 the Leader of Suffolk County Council confirmed that a consultation regarding the Ipswich Northern Route would be held over the Summer.

- 29.3. Some early option assessment work had been undertaken for what would be a long term project and this consultation had been agreed to allow feedback and input from the public. The strategic outline business case would then be completed in the Autumn and, should it be agreed that the project be progressed further, funding would be sought from the Government and the next stages would commence.
- 29.4. The overall objectives of the route included the improvement to businesses and people's experience of the A14 and the provision of additional travel options to optimise traffic. With regards to the environmental objectives, the aim of the route would be to relieve traffic within the town and all environmental constraints had been considered when planning of the potential routes had been undertaken.
- 29.5. Three routes would be consulted: an outer route, a middle route and an inner route (all of which could be viewed in more detail on the Suffolk County Council website). All routes had been modelled on the basis that the road would be opened, at the earliest, in 2027.
- 29.6. The consultation would run until 13 September 2019 and many information events had been programmed around Suffolk, East Suffolk and Ipswich of which residents were welcome to attend. The consultation questionnaire was available to ensure that the public could provide their views on the objectives, alternate routes and to raise any concerns.
- 29.7. Ms Potts confirmed that a Q&A page was available online which would provide further information on areas such as the cost, traffic model, routes and next steps. A full report on the consultation findings would be published following the results.
- 29.8. Councillor C Smart asked for clarification on the inner route and the junctions. It was confirmed that the junctions would not be grade separated and instead would most likely be roundabouts however, the plan showed very early stage alignments and changes could be made in the future. It was confirmed that the type of junction used along the route would not have a great effect on the figure for the expected amount of time saved for using a particular route.