

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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| Date of Meeting | Friday 16 June 2017 |
| Report Subject | Flintshire County Council's response to the Welsh Government A55/A494/A548 Deeside Corridor Consultation Document |
| Portfolio Holder | Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside |
| Report By | Chief Officer Streetscene And Transportation. |
| Strategic / Operational | Strategic |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Welsh Government stated in their National Transport Finance Plan, which was published in July 2015, that it would develop a scheme to improve the A55/A494/A548 Deeside Corridor. The road forms part of the National Trunk Road network and is owned and maintained by Welsh Government.

The A55/A494/A548 corridor currently carries more traffic than it was designed for, which results in regular congestion along the route and, in turn, impacts on the Council's own Highway Network. The current route is below modern standards with some of the junctions having slip roads that are too short or too close to each other, with poor visibility.

A consultation process, which is being led by Welsh Government, began in March 2017 on 2 possible options to improve this key route into North Wales from England. The closing date for the responses was Monday 5th June 2017; however, due to the impact of the Local Elections and the temporary suspension of Cabinet and other official Council meetings, a formal Council response could not be provided within this deadline. A request has been made by the Council to Welsh Government for the consultation closing date to be extended in order that the response can be considered by both Scrutiny and Cabinet prior to submission.

Recommendations

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| 1. | That Scrutiny supports the Council's options appraisal for the two possible routes shown in Appendix 1 and the formal Council response to the WG consultation shown in Appendix 2 |
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REPORT DETAILS

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| <u>1.00</u> | <u>Background to the Consultation Process</u> |
| 1.01 | <p>Welsh Government (WG) is currently undertaking a period of consultation on two options to improve the A55/A494/A548 Deeside Corridor and a number of Public Consultation Exhibitions have taken place in the local area, which provided residents and businesses with details on the two options which have been developed and assessed by WG.</p> <p>Details on the two routes (The Blue and Red routes) can be found on the WG web-site with a copy of the consultation document attached to this report - Appendix 3.</p> <p>Any individual or interested group can respond to the consultation document however given the impact of this key route on both the economy and road infrastructure within Flintshire, it was important that a full assessment and comparison of the two routes was undertaken. The study considered the benefits and disadvantages of both options and reach a conclusion on the preferred route and conclusions from the consultation to be put forward to WG - from Flintshire County Council's perspective only.</p> |
| 1.02 | <p>Previous consultation by WG had set the key Transport Planning Objectives for the project which were as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To reduce journey time variability and enhance the transport network resilience of the A55/A494 study corridor to periods of high demand, incidents and maintenance events. 2. To improve transport connections for businesses within the study area to key economic centres and employment sites 3. To improve access between employment sites and workforce catchment areas. 4. To improve the actual and perceived safety and personal security of all transport users along the A55/A494 study corridor. 5. To improve the permeability across the A55/A494 corridor for non-motorised modes at key points of desire. 6. To ensure that the study area transport network facilitates necessary national and regional trip movements of people and freight. 7. To reduce carbon emissions from transport along the A55/A494 study corridor. 8. To minimise adverse impacts on the human environment including air, noise and light pollution, and landscape and townscape. 9. To minimise adverse impacts on the natural environment including local air quality, water and soil pollution, and biodiversity impacts. 10. To maintain and make more efficient use of the existing transport infrastructure along the A55/A494 study |
| 1.03 | <p>The A55/A494/A548 study corridor has been assessed using the WelTAG or Welsh Transport Planning Appraisal Guidance procedure. WelTAG was developed by the Welsh Government and is aimed at ensuring that public</p> |

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| | <p>sector transport proposals demonstrate the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A positive contribution to objectives for transport; • Represent good value for money; • Provides overall economic, social and environmental benefits; • Provides maximum benefit and minimal impact. <p>There are three main stages of the WelTAG process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Planning Stage; • Appraisal Stage 1; • Appraisal Stage 2. <p>We are currently at Public Consultation Stage within WelTAG Stage 2 and responses from residents, Local Authorities and any other interested bodies will be carefully considered by WG before further scheme development can be undertaken.</p> |
| 1.04 | <p>Blue Option includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widening the existing A55/A494 route; • Junction improvements including at Ewloe Interchange; • Parallel link roads; • Removal, modification and improvement of junctions; • 3 lanes in each direction; • Approximate length 9.8km; <p>Red Option includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased capacity along the existing A548; • A new road between the A55 and A548; • Modification and improvement of junctions; • 2 lanes in each direction; • Approximate length 13.0km – partly online improvement and partly new alignment <p>Both Options will contain facilities for non-motorised network users; consideration for the local landscape and ecological requirements and human environmental factors.</p> |
| 1.05 | <p>The renewal of the A494 Dee Bridge is a separate scheme and any improvement work to this structure will be carried out independently of the outcome of the WelTAG Stage 2 assessment for the Blue and Red route options.</p> |

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| 2.00 | <u>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</u> |
| 2.01 | The scheme will be funded by WG |

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| 3.00 | <u>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT</u> |
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| 3.01 | A full consultation process has been undertaken by WG |
| 3.02 | Flintshire County Council's response has been shared with the Cabinet Member. |
| 3.03 | <p>Flintshire County Council's response to the consultation document has been prepared by Officers from the following Council services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streetscene and Transportation. • Highway Strategy • Planning • Regeneration • Housing • Pollution Control |

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| <u>4.00</u> | <u>KEY RISKS AND MITIGATION</u> |
| 4.01 | The decision will impact on the local road network and will have a positive impact on the economy of the County through improved transport links. |

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| <u>5.00</u> | <u>APPENDICES</u> |
| 5.01 | <p>Appendix 1 – FCC's Options Appraisal</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Response and preferred option</p> <p>Appendix 3 – WG Consultation document</p> |

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| <u>6.00</u> | <u>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE DOCUMENTS</u> |
| 6.01 | <p>Contact Officer: Stephen O Jones</p> <p>Telephone: 01352 704700</p> <p>E-mail: stephen.o.jones@flintshire.gov.uk</p> |

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| <u>7.00</u> | <u>GLOSSARY</u> |
| 7.01 | None |