

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 20 July 2017

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community & Resources

SUBJECT: Warrington Western Link

WARD(S) Boroughwide (Adjoining Authority Consultation)

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1. Warrington Borough Council (WBC) recently made Halton Borough Council (the Council) aware of its intentions to consult on a scheme to address a number of major traffic congestion 'pinch points' affecting Warrington Town Centre and crossings of the River Mersey and the Manchester Ship Canal.
- 1.2. This report gives a summary of the information received from WBC to date, and makes recommendations to enable a timely response to the scheme consultation to be made by the Council.

2. RECOMMENDATION: That the Board notes the correspondence from WBC, and delegated authority is granted to the Strategic Director - Enterprise, Community and Resources, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Transportation, to respond to the WBC scheme consultation on behalf of the Council.

3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1. WBC has informed the Council that it has recently been awarded funding by the Department for Transport (DfT) to develop an outline business case for the Warrington Western Link proposal which will be presented to the DfT at the end of December 2017.
- 3.2. The business case considers several options, including a new link road to the west of Warrington town centre and a public consultation is being held from 30 June to 28 July, with 18 events being held at various locations around Warrington.
- 3.3. Following this initial consultation, a preferred route option will be included in the business case and submitted to the DfT for consideration. Subject to securing funding and necessary planning consent, construction of the road could commence in the early 2020s.

- 3.4. The event newsletter (see web link in section 3.5) summarises the possible approximate alignments of the link, and briefly sets out its purpose: that due to economic and population growth there has been a steady rise in local traffic congestion, but there are limited opportunities for improvement of the existing highway network. Therefore a case is being developed for a potential new link road around the south-west of the town. The proposed road could link the A56/A5060 Chester Road with the A57/A562 in Great Sankey, providing relief to the town centre and unlocking development.
- 3.5. It is expected that, during the consultation period, further details will become available regarding the different route options and consultees will be invited to give views on these options. Information is available at <https://www.warrington.gov.uk/westernlink>.
- 3.6. It is also understood that Warrington are developing a traffic model which will give a better indication of the implications for Halton's highways including the Mersey Gateway. In addition, the scheme may facilitate alternative access arrangements (from the north) to Port Warrington at Acton Grange (Moore). Once this further information is available, the Council will be better able to give a thorough response to the consultation.
- 3.7. It is therefore recommended that the Board notes the correspondence from WBC, and delegated authority is granted to the Strategic Director - Enterprise, Community and Resources, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Transportation, to respond to the WBC scheme consultation on behalf of the Council.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. There are no specific transport policy implications in relation to this consultation, although there are potential implications for traffic flow and transport routing on Halton's highway network, including the Mersey Gateway. There are potential implications for planning policy and land use allocations as the routes have potential to increase development pressures in south western Warrington, in close proximity to potential development sites in East Runcorn.

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Legal Implications – there are no specific legal implications resulting from the consultation.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

- 6.1 Children and Young People in Halton - There are no direct implications associated with this report.
- 6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton - There are no direct implications associated with this report.
- 6.3 A Healthy Halton -There are no direct implications associated with this report.
- 6.4 A Safer Halton -There are no direct implications associated with this report.
- 6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal – The proposed link may be relevant to Halton's spatial planning and development process, and its urban renewal/economic growth.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 The Council does not have a statutory duty to respond to this consultation, but it is considered that a dialogue between the two authorities on this scheme could result in benefits for both parties, and minimise any potential impacts.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 8.1 There are no Equality and Diversity issues in relation to this report.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

- Correspondence between WBC and the Council 16 June 2017
- Place of Inspection - Highways Division, Municipal Building, Widnes
- Contact Officer – Jonathan Farmer
- <https://www.warrington.gov.uk/westernlink>