

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Scrutiny
Date: 16th March 2022
Report for: Information
Report of: Director of Growth & Regulatory Services

Report Title

Carrington Relief Road Programme Update

Summary

The 2012 Trafford Core Strategy proposed a number of transport improvements around Carrington – including the provision of a new link road to provide better capacity, alleviate congestion and improve public transport and cycling.

The Carrington, Partington and Sale West area has been identified as a significant development location in the Places for Everyone (PfE) 2021 Plan. This builds on the need for the Relief Road from the Core Strategy

The area is proposed for approximately 4,300 homes in the plan period to 2037 and 5,000 homes overall, as well as approximately 350,000 square metres employment floorspace. The Strategic location covers land which is within the existing urban area, including a significant area of brownfield land from previous industrial uses and petrochemical works. The proposed PfE allocation includes this area, but also identifies significant land beyond this much of which is currently in the Green Belt and which PfE proposes to release.

This update is provided to Scrutiny Members to highlight the current work programme for the Carrington Relief Road and associated timescales. The update also contains the next steps to be undertaken with the project. Regular update reports could be provided to the Scrutiny Committee in future, if the Committee so desires.

Recommendation(s)

- 1. That Scrutiny Committee notes the report.**
- 2. That the Scrutiny Committee considers how best to be involved in the Carrington Relief Road project as it develops**

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

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Background Papers: None

Implications:

Relationship to Policy Framework/Corporate Priorities	<i>Carrington Relief Road is a requirement of Trafford Core Strategy (2012) Policy SL5, 'Carrington Strategic Location' and stated component of The Local Plan and it forms the baseline of new highway infrastructure set out in the emerging Places for Everyone (PfE) New Carrington allocation policy.</i>
Relationship to GM Policy or Strategy Framework	<i>Delivery of the scheme will support the growth ambitions articulated within the emerging Places for Everyone Plan and the GM Strategy. The scheme will be delivered in the context of the GM 2040 Transport Strategy, GM Congestion Plan, and Made to Move walking and cycling plan to identify improvements tackling traffic congestion, promote sustainable modes of travel and better integrate transport and new developments.</i>
Financial	<i>The scheme has received approval for grants of £6.0m and £8.4m from the Growth Deal fund and Housing Infrastructure Fund respectively. Further S106 contributions from forthcoming developments amount to approximately £2.8m and The Council is exploring mechanisms for addressing the residual funding gap.</i>
Legal Implications:	<i>None as a consequence of this report</i>
Equality/Diversity Implications	<i>None as a consequence of this report</i>
Sustainability Implications	<i>The delivery of the schemes will be required to meet current policy in relation to sustainability.</i>
Carbon Reduction	<i>The delivery of the schemes will be required to meet current policy in relation to carbon reduction.</i>
Resource Implications e.g. Staffing / ICT / Assets	<i>Existing resources have been identified to support the delivery of the schemes and related activity across all the partners.</i>
Risk Management Implications	<i>The delivery of the schemes will be supported by a risk plan setting out the key risks to delivery and proposed mitigation measures.</i>
Health & Wellbeing Implications	<i>The Carrington Relief Road will include new active travel infrastructure on the route, as well as the existing A6144 encouraging residents to make healthier choices in life and thereby improving the health and wellbeing of Trafford's residents.</i>
Health and Safety Implications	<i>None as a consequence of this report.</i>

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The improvement of transport in and around Carrington has been a key component of Council Policy since the adoption of the 2012 Core Strategy. This recognised that the opening up of the former Shell petrochemical site and related areas for development was dependent on improving access for all road users. A principal component of this is the Carrington Relief Road that is intended to take traffic away from the narrow A6144 Carrington Lane and Manchester Road – thus alleviating existing congestion, improving overall capacity and providing a safe and more effective route for cycling and public transport.
- 1.2 The local highway network within the Carrington area and specifically the A6144 Manchester Road is operating well above capacity and is subject to severe congestion and significant queueing of traffic at peak times. The proposed new road will address this capacity issue and open up large areas of land for development in accordance with Council's aspirations for the Carrington Strategic Location as set out in the adopted development plan – namely Policy SL5 of the Trafford Core Strategy.

- 1.3 Core Strategy Policy SL5 requires new road infrastructure to make development acceptable in the Strategic Location. Policy SL5.2 of the Core Strategy states that the Strategic Location can deliver new road infrastructure to serve the development area to relieve congestion on the existing A6144 and Policy SL5.4 states that in order for development to be acceptable 'contributions towards schemes to mitigate the impact of traffic... includ[ing] highway infrastructure schemes' will be required. A new 'link road' is identified in both Paras 8.66 and 8.73 of the Core Strategy and the evidence base that underpinned the Core Strategy identified that 'significant schemes' were required (Para 8.74). This 'link road' is what is now known as the Carrington Relief Road.
- 1.4 The delivery of new highway and sustainable transport infrastructure including the relief road is key to unlocking the development potential of the strategic allocation and without this new highway infrastructure the individual and cumulative impact of new development in the area would result in a 'severe' impact on the local road network (in accordance with advice in the National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 111) and therefore prevent development from coming forward. In this regard a number of existing planning consents in the Carrington / Partington area are already constrained by restrictive 'Grampian' planning conditions that are dependent on the relief road.
- 1.5 In addition to this, the 'Places for Everyone' plan, approved by the Council and submitted to Government in February 2022 includes the 'New Carrington' allocation for up to 5,000 homes & 350,000 sqm of employment space. The Plan assumes that the Relief Road is in place or is programmed (as it was a requirement of the Core Strategy) – but the additional development reinforces the need for the road as part of a wider package of transport measures.
- 1.6 In this respect, the road should not be viewed in isolation from other planned improvements. Whilst the road is necessary to facilitate existing access and planned development, it is being planned alongside significant sustainable transport improvements to mitigate the impact of the New Carrington development at Carrington / Partington, as well as on the wider network – particularly M60 J8 and A56 junctions. The Road will 'enable' the delivery of several of the proposed sustainable transport measures – such as improved bus routes / priority junctions.
- 1.7 Accordingly over a number of years the Council has been gearing up to plan and deliver the new road, with significant preliminary and feasibility work undertaken. On 18th December 2020, following the completion of a Preliminary Options Appraisal Report, approval was given to undertake a public engagement exercise and carry out further work to identify a preferred option from the two shortlisted route options for the Carrington Relief Road (CRR).
- 1.8 On the 27th September 2021, the Executive considered the results of the public engagement exercise and a range of technical considerations of the two shortlisted route options. After careful consideration of the options, the Executive recommended that Option F: Creating a newly built link between the Banky Lane junction and Route A1 at Isherwood Road would be taken forward as the preferred route.
- 1.9 In taking forward Route F, it has been necessary to engage external resources to assist in implementing the preparations and investigations for the relief road, including a range of professional consultants with specialisms to undertake the significant work attached to the scheme.

- 1.10 As part of the preparations for the relief road, it is essential to ensure that the route is clear of petro-chemical infrastructure. Accordingly the Council has worked alongside one of the major land holders on the Carrington site to ensure that planned rationalisation of the existing infrastructure associated with its former uses is able to proceed on schedule. This will also enable the wider site to be brought back in to productive uses such as for housing and employment.
- 1.11 The first phase of rationalisation was completed in October 2020, and the second phase is currently being designed. Subject to the necessary approvals and funding being in place, it is intended that work will start on site in the summer of 2022 and be completed within 12 months.
- 1.12 Once the rationalisation works have been completed, all the relevant industrial infrastructure associated with the Lyondell Basell plant will have been reconfigured and removed from the areas needed for the development and the road.

2.0 Revised Programme

- 2.1 Following approval to take the scheme forward to a planning application, the Council successfully negotiated an early drawdown of funds from the Housing Infrastructure Grant (provided by Homes England) to support the ongoing design and survey work.
- 2.2 Using the Amey Consulting under the One Trafford Partnership, a project team was formed which undertook a range of detailed reviews on:
 - Estimated construction cost
 - Key design issues
 - Project risk
 - Funding availability and requirements

- 2.3 Following this detailed review the delivery programme has been updated and the key milestones in the project are:

Summer 2022	Ongoing Design Work
Autumn/Winter 2022	Formal public consultation
Spring/Summer 2023	Submission of a planning application
Winter 2023	Determination of Planning Application

Should the planning application be approved:

Spring 2024	Full business case
Autumn/Winter 2024	Start of work on site
Spring 2027	Completion of construction

- 2.4 The programme remains under review as the project develops and further updates will be provided in the case of any potential significant changes.

3.0 Budget and Funding

- 3.1 The Council has pursued a range of external funding opportunities to support the project to date and is continuing to explore further funding sources. The support that has been received so far is summarised in Table 1 below:

Table 1

Funding Source	Value	Terms
Growth Deal 3 (TfGM)(GD3)	£6.0m	Conditionally awarded based on an Outline Business Case. Full Business Case to be submitted post planning consent
Housing Infrastructure Fund (Homes England)(HIF)	£8.4m	Conditionally awarded based on a Marginal Viability Appraisal supporting the Relief Road or Enabling Works
Evergreen Fund	£100k	Supports design development work
S106	£2.8m	Identified to date from forthcoming developments – each separate agreement details when the funding can be drawn down from the individual developers
Total To Date	£17.3m	

- 3.2 In terms of satisfying the conditions of the grants, The Council has been required to engage in monitoring processes set by each funding body to ensure that the grants achieve final approval.
- 3.3 The GD3 award is subject to a monthly reporting regime which tracks progress of the scheme development, and this will lead to the submission of a Full Business Case once the scheme acquires planning consent and a tendered price from a contractor.
- 3.4 In the case of the HIF award, there was originally a funding availability window that ended in March 2022. The Council has worked closely with Homes England to obtain an extension to this by 12 months to accommodate various delays which have been encountered.
- 3.5 To address the issue of the funding shortfall for the main works, The Council anticipates further s106 monies from future private developments which would benefit from the scheme as planning applications come forward. The Council is also developing proposals to attract funding from other central government sources and is preparing submissions accordingly which includes the City Region Sustainable Transport Fund.
- 3.6 As part of ensuring the Council has an up to date valuation of various parts of the scheme, the Council is in the process of appointing an external surveying firm to undertake various detailed costings of the various parcels of land which make up the site with a view to understanding the current market value of these land holdings. The specialists will also be tasked with ascertaining the likely market value costs of existing infrastructure on the route which may require purchasing to ensure the relief road can be delivered.
- 3.7 It should be noted that major Transport Infrastructure works invariably have a significant cost attached to their development and construction. The 10km A6/Airport Relief Road completed in 2018 cost an estimated £290M, the 3km Poynton Relief Road now nearing completion has an estimated cost of £53M and the 5.5km extension of Metrolink into Trafford Park cost around £350M. These schemes illustrate that there are significant cost challenges with all forms of transport improvements.
- 3.8 Once a planning application for the road has been prepared, a formal decision of the Council will be necessary before the project progresses – should planning consent be granted. This decision needs to be underpinned by a full funding strategy, which is currently under development.

4.0 Carbon Considerations

- 4.0 One of the concerns raised in the public engagement exercise related to the potential disturbance of peat with the offline option (Option F). From the detailed invasive ground investigation work that has taken place along this alignment, peat has been encountered at one isolated location. This was a small occurrence approximately 50mm thick at a depth of around 1.2m. It should be noted that whilst the area is generally known as 'Carrington Moss' the main area of historic moss land was located to the south of the proposed route alignment.
- 4.1 Having found peat, albeit in a small and isolated instance, the project will commission the necessary further ground investigation work to better understand its extent. From information available at the present time, however, it is unlikely to be disturbed as the excavation for the road construction is unlikely to reach the depth of the peat.
- 4.2 In terms of route choices, as the report to the Executive in September 2021 set out, no single route perfectly aligns with all of the project stated objectives. It is inevitable that certain trade-offs need to be made between transport efficiency, cost, land usage, carbon and other objectives. Whilst Route F performed better overall in terms of carbon, it does however involve a greater loss of agricultural land as a result of its construction.
- 4.3 In terms of wider carbon-related objectives, the relief road needs to be viewed in the context of Transport For Greater Manchester's Transport 2040 strategy. This seeks to encourage a 'right mix' of transport modes through to the middle of the century. It acknowledges however that road transport will continue to be vital in future decades – with selective improvements necessary alongside other transport interventions. In future decades, vehicles using our roads will be powered via electricity and other renewable sources – with corresponding reductions in carbon emissions. The optimum position over time, will still be to promote more public transport and use of rail and water for freight – but a full transition will take many decades to accomplish.
- 4.4 In respect of the more immediate carbon implications the road will achieve, a significant enhancement will be generated for the local area by creating an environment to encourage modal shift to various means of active travel such as cycling and walking and reduce dependence on motor vehicles. Concern over safety and ease of use is one of the principal barriers to wider take up of cycling. The creation of a new segregated 3.5km route linking the edge of Partington with Ashton on Mersey has the potential to markedly improve the safety and environment for cyclists. The project will provide significant relief to the A6144 through Carrington Village, where there are long-standing concerns from local residents about large polluting vehicles/HGV's, traffic speed and congestion which restrict opportunity for safe active travel.
- 4.5 Carrington Lane similarly experiences significant traffic related issues which severely impede opportunities for walking, cycling and horse-riding.
- 4.6 In the recent analysis, a suite of potential improvements has been identified to facilities for walking, cycling, public transport and for calming traffic generally. These measures

represent a value of approximately £1m which it is proposed to incorporate into the overall CRR project budget, with an opportunity for a further £400k of improvements. These would present significant steps towards the Council's stated objectives of reducing carbon use.

- 4.7 Feedback from residents in Partington has described significant frustration that the current road network effectively isolates the area due to poor road conditions, congestion, lack of sustainable public transport and safe cycling opportunities. The relief road will create a significant opportunity for the Partington community to benefit from improved sustainable transport access, and to embrace new and improved active travel modes linking to the wider area.

5.0 Next Steps in Delivering the Relief Road

5.0 The work undertaken to date on the scheme has been based on a level of design development sufficient to conduct an analysis of route options. The recommended next stage requires the development and refinement of the design on a pathway towards submitting a planning application, funded by the grant outlined above. In summary the stages of this process are:

- Resolving residual engineering issues to achieve a fixed alignment and a red line boundary – this work is currently underway with the objective of having the most significant engineering issues resolved in the summer of this year.
- Undertaking further traffic modelling work to enable junction layout design – a methodology has been agreed between The Highway Authority and partners including TfGM, and interim traffic data is expected to be ready in the summer of this year.
- Carrying out formal public consultation – the project team is currently updating the communications strategy, however, formal consultation is planned to be undertaken between October and December 2022.
- Preparing an Environmental Impact Statement – This is a complex piece of work which will take approximately 12 months to complete, commencing with various ecological surveys which are currently being arranged.
- The submission of Planning Application – the target date for this is April 2023.
- Preparation of a Full Business Case for the Growth Deal grant – this will be submitted only when the scheme has received planning consent and has been developed in sufficient detail to obtain a firm price from a contractor. The target date for this is the summer of 2024.

6.1 The Involvement of Scrutiny Committee

6.1 The Committee have asked how it can be involved in the ongoing development of the Carrington Relief Road Project

6.2 In this regard the Committee may wish to consider the stages set out in paragraphs 2 and 5 in terms of the key project milestones and the next steps - and how Scrutiny Members may wish to be involved.

6.3 There is the potential opportunity for Scrutiny Members to be engaged prior to the formal public consultation which is an essential step prior to the submission of the planning application. In this way, Members will be able to guide officers on the approach to public consultation – including its scope and the methods employed. This will help ensure the consultation is appropriate and is as effective as possible.

6.4 The Executive Decision of September 2021 commits the Council to progressing the project through the planning process, but reserves additional stages for further decision making. Should the project receive planning consent the Committee could be involved in the consideration of any draft business case for the scheme, as part of that later decision making process.

Consultation

This report provides background as to how the public have been engaged so far and considers how the Committee could guide future consultation.

Reasons for Recommendation

The recommendation of this report is to ensure Scrutiny Members are kept up to date and informed of key activities taking place with the Carrington Relief Road project and they are aware of the updated programme and where they may be able to input.