



WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Name and date of Committee	<b>CABINET – 13 JULY 2022</b>
Report Number	<b>AGENDA ITEM No 10</b>
Subject	<b>APPROVAL OF FUNDING FOR WEST END LINK STUDY</b>
Wards affected	Witney (North, South, East, West and Central) Hailey, Minster Lovell and Leafield
Accountable member	Cllr Carl Rylett, Cabinet Member for Planning and Sustainable Development Email: <a href="mailto:carl.rylett@westoxon.gov.uk">carl.rylett@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Accountable officer	Chris Hargraves, Planning Policy Manager Tel: 01993 861686 Email: <a href="mailto:chris.hargraves@westoxon.gov.uk">chris.hargraves@westoxon.gov.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	To agree the release of additional funds from the Council's unallocated Housing and Planning Delivery Grant (HPDG) to part fund transport options appraisal work relating to Bridge Street, Witney including consideration of the West End Link Road (WEL2).
Annexes	-
Recommendation/s	<i>a) That Council be recommended to approve the release of £15,000 from the Council's unallocated Housing and Planning Delivery Grant (HPDG) to part fund the transport options appraisal work commissioned by Oxfordshire County Council.</i>
Corporate priorities	The transport options appraisal work will help to inform the delivery of the North Witney SDA – one of a number of strategic housing allocations contained in the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031.
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	The transport options appraisal work will be developed with input from a number of key stakeholders.

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1.** Members will be aware that the North Witney Strategic Development Area (SDA) is allocated in the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031 for the provision of around 1,400 homes and other supporting services and facilities.
- 1.2.** A key aspect of the allocation is the delivery of the West End Link (WEL2) which would effectively provide an additional river crossing, thereby reducing the current reliance placed on Bridge Street which suffers from traffic congestion and associated air quality problems, particularly at peak times.
- 1.3.** Oxfordshire County Council in their role as highway authority have recently commissioned an options appraisal study relating to Bridge Street and the WEL2 and have invited West Oxfordshire District Council to make a financial contribution to cover part of the cost.

## **2. WITNEY TRANSPORT OPTIONS APPRAISAL STUDY**

- 2.1.** As outlined above, land to the north of Witney is allocated for the provision of around 1,400 new homes in the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031. Given the size of the allocation, it clearly has the potential to impact on the local highway network, including Bridge Street which is a known area of traffic congestion and associated air quality problems.
- 2.2.** Evidence prepared in support of the Local Plan demonstrated that the provision of the WEL2 and Northern Distributor Road will, in combination with other strategic highway measures proposed at Witney, have a number of tangible benefits as well as mitigating the impact of the proposed development at North Witney.
- 2.3.** As such, Policy WIT2 requires development of the SDA to be phased in accordance with the timing of supporting infrastructure including the West End Link and Northern Distributor Road.
- 2.4.** The WEL2 is also identified in the current Local Transport Plan (LTP4) as one of four major schemes – the other three schemes being capacity improvements at the A40/A415 Ducklington Lane/Station Lane junction (completed in 2014) the A40/Downs Road roundabout (completed in 2018) and the Shores Green Slip Road scheme (due to be implemented in 2024).
- 2.5.** As the North Witney SDA allocation moves forward to the delivery stage (note: there are two current planning applications on parts of the site with the development of a comprehensive masterplan for the site also expected this year) the County Council has commissioned an options appraisal study to establish the optimal solution for the Bridge Street area of Witney.
- 2.6.** In essence, the appraisal will comprise an options generation exercise through which a range of different multi-modal options will be identified and assessed, including the WEL2, leading to the identification of a preferred option.
- 2.7.** The outputs are intended to inform the emerging Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP5) and are likely to be subject to a further detailed feasibility study in due course.

### **3. NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE**

- 3.1. Consultants have now been appointed with the options appraisal work expected to be completed around October 2022.

### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1. Cabinet is asked to recommend to Council the release of £15,000 from the Council's unallocated Housing and Planning Delivery Grant (HPDG) to part-fund the options appraisal study.

### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1. The report raises no direct legal implications.

### **6. RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 6.1. The report raises no specific risks.

### **7. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 7.1. The report raises no specific implications in relation to the public sector equality duty or Equality Act 2010.

### **8. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1. The report raises no direct climate change implications although the options appraisal study will consider various multi-modal solutions.

### **9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 9.1. The purpose of the options appraisal study is to identify and assess a range of different multi-modal options leading to the identification of a preferred option.

### **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 10.1. None.