

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>EXECUTIVE CABINET</b>
<b>Date:</b>	29 September 2021
<b>Executive Member:</b>	Councillor Warren Bray – Executive Member (Transport and Connectivity)
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Jayne Traverse – Director of Growth Gregg Stott – Assistant Director Investment, Development & Housing
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>THE A57 LINK ROADS INITIATIVE UPDATE</b>
<b>Report Summary:</b>	This report provides an update on the proposed A57 Link Roads Initiative and seeks approval for Tameside's input to the Planning Inspectorate as part of the Development Consent Order approval process.
<b>Recommendations:</b>	That Executive Cabinet be recommended to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Note the proposed Development Consent Order (DCO) programme and the work undertaken to date;</li> <li>(ii) Approve the submission of the Local Impact Report (LIR), once completed, in consultation with the Executive Member for Transport and Connectivity;</li> <li>(iii) Approve the submission of required documentation and responses to the Planning Inspectorate, in consultation with the Executive Member for Transport and Connectivity, including the Written Representation and input into the Statement of Common Ground, when required.</li> </ul>
<b>Corporate Plan:</b>	Key aims of the Corporate Plan are to ensure modern infrastructure and a sustainable environment that works for all generations and future generations. The A57 Link Roads Initiative will support the delivery of these aims.
<b>Policy Implications:</b>	The A57 Link Roads Initiative support the policy aims of the Council's Inclusive Growth Strategy (2021), the Council's growth priorities agreed at Council February 2020 and the emerging draft Greater Manchester Places for Everyone joint development strategy.
<b>Financial Implications: (Authorised by the statutory Section 151 Officer &amp; Chief Finance Officer)</b>	This report provides an update on the proposed A57 Link Roads Initiative. There are no direct financial implications arising from the report at this stage.  Members should note that if the initiative is subsequently approved at a later date, all infrastructure works undertaken will be wholly funded via Central Government
<b>Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)</b>	Participation by a local authority during the Development Consent Order process is not obligatory but is strongly advised by the Planning Inspectorate. In coming to a decision on whether or not to make a DCO authorising the project, they must have regard to any Local Impact Reports that are submitted by the deadline set down by the Examining Authority's timetable.

During the examination it is likely that there will be numerous deadlines for the local authority to submit further representations. These often require swift responses to ensure all matters can be fully explored before the close of the examination.

Guidance from the Planning Inspectorate warns that late submission of an important document such as the LIR or Statement of Common Ground may prejudice the ability of other interested parties to consider and comment on its content, potentially disrupting the examination timetable and resulting in additional costs for other interested parties.

Accordingly appropriate resources and project management need to be allocated to ensure delivery of this priority

**Risk Management:**

The A57 Link Roads Initiative is a Highways England led initiative and as such there are no specific risk management issues for the Council except to ensure any documentation is provided on an expedient basis.

**Background Information:**

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Mike Reed, Head of Major Programmes



Telephone: 07974111756



e-mail: [mike.reed@tameside.gov.uk](mailto:mike.reed@tameside.gov.uk)

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The “A57 Link Roads” project, formally known on the Highways England (HE) website as the “Trans-Pennine Upgrade”, is referred to as the “Mottram Moor Link Road and A57 Link Road project” in the Government’s second Roads Investment Strategy (RIS2).
- 1.2 The A57 and A628 strategic roads between Manchester and Sheffield currently suffer from heavy congestion, carrying more traffic than is appropriate and runs through a number of local towns and villages, resulting in unreliable journeys, poor air and noise quality and a general blight on communities. This restricts potential economic growth, as the delivery of goods to businesses is often delayed. The route is not appropriate for commuting, which limits employment opportunities and village and local centres struggle to retain a sense of place and provide a focal point for community activities.
- 1.3 The current projected scheme has evolved over more than 50 years as alternative ideas have been explored. In 2017, after a wide consultation around a number of different options, HE announced a package of Trans-Pennine Upgrade work, to improve the existing route connecting the M67 at Mottram in Longdendale to the M1, north of Sheffield.
- 1.4 HE’s Trans-Pennine Upgrade Programme is part of Government’s commitment to spend £27.4 billion during the RIS2 period. The A57 Link Roads project will include the creation of two new link roads:
  - Mottram Moor Link Road – a new dual carriageway from the M67 junction 4 roundabout to a new junction on the A57(T) at Mottram Moor; and
  - A57 Link Road – a new single carriageway link from the A57(T) at Mottram Moor to a new junction on the A57 in Woolley Bridge.
- 1.5 The proposed A57 Link Roads Scheme is identified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) under the Planning Act 2008. This means there is a requirement for HE (as the applicant) to make an application to the Planning Inspectorate under Section 37 of The Planning Act 2008 for a Development Consent Order to authorise construction of the scheme. Should permission be granted, HE estimate that construction work will begin in early 2023.

## **2. PROGRESS UPDATE**

- 2.1 The Planning Act 2008 sets out the decision-making process for major infrastructure projects. In 2012, the Planning Inspectorate became the government agency responsible for operating the planning process for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs). NSIPs are major infrastructure projects which require a type of approval known as “Development Consent” under procedures governed by the Planning Act 2008. Development Consent, where granted, is made in the form of a Development Consent Order (DCO).
- 2.2 The relevant Secretary of State, for final decision on the application for the A57 Link Roads, is the Secretary of State for Transport.
- 2.3 The DCO approval process consists of the following six separate stages:
  - Pre-application: Before submitting an application, potential applicants have a statutory duty to carry out consultation on their proposals.
  - Acceptance: Submission of an application for development consent to the Planning Inspectorate.
  - Pre-examination: The public will be able to register with the Planning Inspectorate to become an Interested Party by making a Relevant Representation.
  - Examination: The Planning Inspectorate has up to six months to carry out the examination.

- Recommendation and Decision: The Planning Inspectorate must prepare a report on the application to the relevant Secretary of State for a final decision.
- Post decision two months period in which the decision may be challenged in the High Court.

2.4 HE submitted an application to the Planning Inspectorate for an Order granting development consent on 28 June 2021. Prior to any decision on whether or not to accept the application the Planning Inspectorate must, amongst other matters, have regard to any representations received from any local authority consultees about the Adequacy of Consultation during the Pre-application stage. This application was accepted for examination by the Inspectorate (on behalf of the Secretary of State) on 26 July 2021.

***Adequacy of Consultation***

2.5 On 9 July 2021 the Council responded to the Planning Inspectorate following their request as to whether it considered that HE had complied with the adequacy of consultation requirements under Section 55 of the Planning Act 2008, in relation to the application, and complied with its duties under Sections 42, 47 and 48 of the Planning Act 2008. The Council has confirmed its opinion that HE have carried out adequate consultation at the pre-application stage in accordance with the requirements of the Planning Act 2008 HE has engaged extensively with the Council since 2015 in relation to consultation on the A57 Link Roads Scheme. Pre non-statutory consultation was undertaken between October 2015 and March 2017 comprising of early engagement with the Council and stakeholders. HE have consulted widely regarding a number of different options following which a proposed package of Trans-Pennine Upgrade work was identified and subject to consultation in 2018 via statutory consultation for 6 weeks from 12 February to 25 March 2018 and 4 weeks from 4 June to 1 July 2018. In 2020 HE consulted for a 6 week statutory consultation from 5 November 2020 to 17 December 2020 on changes to the A57 Link Roads scheme since the 2018 consultation focused on changes to design and anticipated environmental impacts.

2.6 HE produced a Statement of Community Consultation (SOCC) to which the Council formally responded on 19 October 2020 supporting the approach to consultation. HE engaged with the Council to identify the appropriate consultation target area for the distribution of relevant consultation materials.

2.7 As a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic and associated restrictions it was necessary to make arrangements for the consultation to be adapted accordingly, with HE responsive to the requirement to provide printed materials, host public webinars and facilitate a telephone line in lieu of what would ordinarily have been delivered in person.

2.8 The consultation ran from 5 November to 17 December 2020. HE shared full details of the consultation via the Council's engagement channels, including hosting on the Council's Big Conversation consultation and engagement webpages for duration of consultation period. The following specific engagement was also undertaken:

- Engagement Session with Tameside Executive Cabinet and Longdendale Ward Members (26 October 2020)
- Engagement Session open to all Tameside Ward Members (2 November 2020)
- Public webinars (Wednesday 18 November 2020 afternoon and evening, and Saturday 21 November 2020)
- Engagement at the Tameside Partnership Engagement Network Conference on 19 November 2020

2.9 It is considered that HE have demonstrated an extensive consultation programme in relation to the A57 Link Roads scheme that is adequate and in accordance with Sections 42, 47 and 48 of the Planning Act 2008.

### 3. LOCAL IMPACT REPORT

- 3.1 As part of the examination process, the Examining Authority will invite relevant local authorities to submit a Local Impact Report (LIR). The purpose of the LIR is to enable a local authority to give details of the likely impact of the proposed development in its area. In August 2021 the Council has procured Arup via STaR to undertake the LIR following Executive Cabinet approval in December 2020 to drawdown funding in support of the Council's input into the Development Consent Order approval process. The LIR document is programmed for completion by the end of September 2021.
- 3.2 In addition to Tameside MBC, where the vast majority of the proposed scheme sits, other local authority areas directly affected by the initiative are:
- High Peak Borough Council;
  - Derbyshire County Council; and
  - Peak District National Park Authority.
- 3.3 Each are preparing individual LIRs for their own areas.
- 3.4 The LIR will identify the delivery impacts of the proposed scheme within Tameside. In addition the LIR will need to ensure the positive and negative impacts are reported around the headings noted below:
- Economic Growth and Transportation, especially around:
    - Existing key businesses in and around the A57 including the Hattersley, Mottram, Hollingworth and local area;
    - Existing and potential strategic Housing Sites in the local area to include areas around Hattersley, Hyde and Godley Green;
    - The proposed Bredbury Industrial Estate on the Tameside/ Stockport boundary;
    - The effects of the initiative on land values / commercial property rental values at employment sites in and around the A57 as noted above;
    - Existing areas of underutilised economic development potential along the A57 corridor;
    - The benefits of the new initiative forming the first stage of a wider road programme around Mottram, Hollingworth and Tintwistle.
  - Noise and Vibration
  - Geology, Soil and Ground Condition as a result of the proposed scheme
  - Material impacts on the scheme
  - Air Quality especially linking in with the developing Greater Manchester Clean Air Plan
  - Landscape and Visual Impacts
  - Archaeology and Cultural Heritage
  - Ecological and Nature Conservation
  - Road Drainage and Water Quality
  - Construction Traffic
  - Road Safety
- 3.5 The LIR will be prepared in consultation with relevant Tameside officers, elected members, third parties and others as required for completion. The final version of the LIR will be agreed with the Executive Member for Transport and Connectivity prior to submission to the Planning Inspectorate. Subject to confirmation by the Planning Inspectorate, it is likely that the LIR will need to be submitted in November 2021.

#### 4. NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 Provisional dates supplied by HE below set out the next steps in the process for the A57 Link Roads Initiative. These dates are subject to confirmation and may change.

Pre-examination (3 months)	HE will advertise the Application has been accepted	October 2021
Local Impact Report	Local Authority Submission as part of Examination process	November 2021
Examination (6 months)	The application will be examined	December 2021
Report and Decision (6 months)	The Inspector will report to the Secretary of State	December 2022
Issue Secretary of State's decision letter confirming a made DCO, plus 2 month challenge period		
Proposed Start of Works on Site		March 2023
Roads open to traffic		March 2025

- 4.2 Once the Examination is underway there will be a need to respond to requests for representations from the Planning Inspectorate in a timely manner through the Director of Growth, in consultation with the Executive Member for Transport and Connectivity.

#### 5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The A57 Link Roads Initiative is a Highways England led initiative that supports delivery of the Tameside Corporate Plan and Tameside Inclusive Growth Strategy.

#### 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 As set out at the front of the report.