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|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>TITLE</b>                | <b>Arborfield Cross Relief Road</b>                               |
| <b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b> | The Executive on 27 March 2014                                    |
| <b>WARD</b>                 | Arborfield  |
| <b>DIRECTOR</b>             | Heather Thwaites, Director of Environment                         |
| <b>LEAD MEMBER</b>          | Keith Baker, Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Highways |

#### **OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

Ensures appropriate mitigation of impacts from the development of Arborfield Garrison Strategic Development Location

Allows the Strategic Development Location to be developed as envisaged by the Core Strategy

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Executive approves the allocation of funds to progress with the refinement of the Arborfield Cross Relief Road Option B to gain greater confidence in scheme delivery ahead of a later Executive decision to proceed with a Preferred Scheme for detailed design.

#### **SUMMARY OF REPORT**

The Council has completed public consultation of options for an Arborfield Cross Relief Road. The public preference is for Option B connecting the A327 west of Arborfield Cross close to Bridge Farm, west of Greensward Lane, and the Langley Common Road south of the village and close to Ducks Nest Farm. The route would form a new junction with Swallowfield Road west of Greensward Lane and Arborfield Court.

Option B is one of four main route options presented during the consultation event and gained 71% of the stated public preference. This report summarises the requirements to refine engineering, environmental and planning issues prior to any formal preferred route decision by the Executive.

## Background

Policies CP18 and CP19 of the Council's Core Strategy, identified a requirement to enhance the A327 in order to effectively mitigate the traffic growth impacts that will be generated by the development of the Arborfield Garrison and South of M4 SDLs, as envisaged by the adopted Core Strategy.

The Council had indicated that a relief road to Arborfield Cross would provide the most effective form of mitigation against the impacts arising from the development of the SDLs.

In 2013 WSP was appointed by the Council to undertake a study to identify the most appropriate mitigation scheme. The study identified four alignment options based on traffic impacts, environment and property impacts, land requirements, engineering design and deliverability.

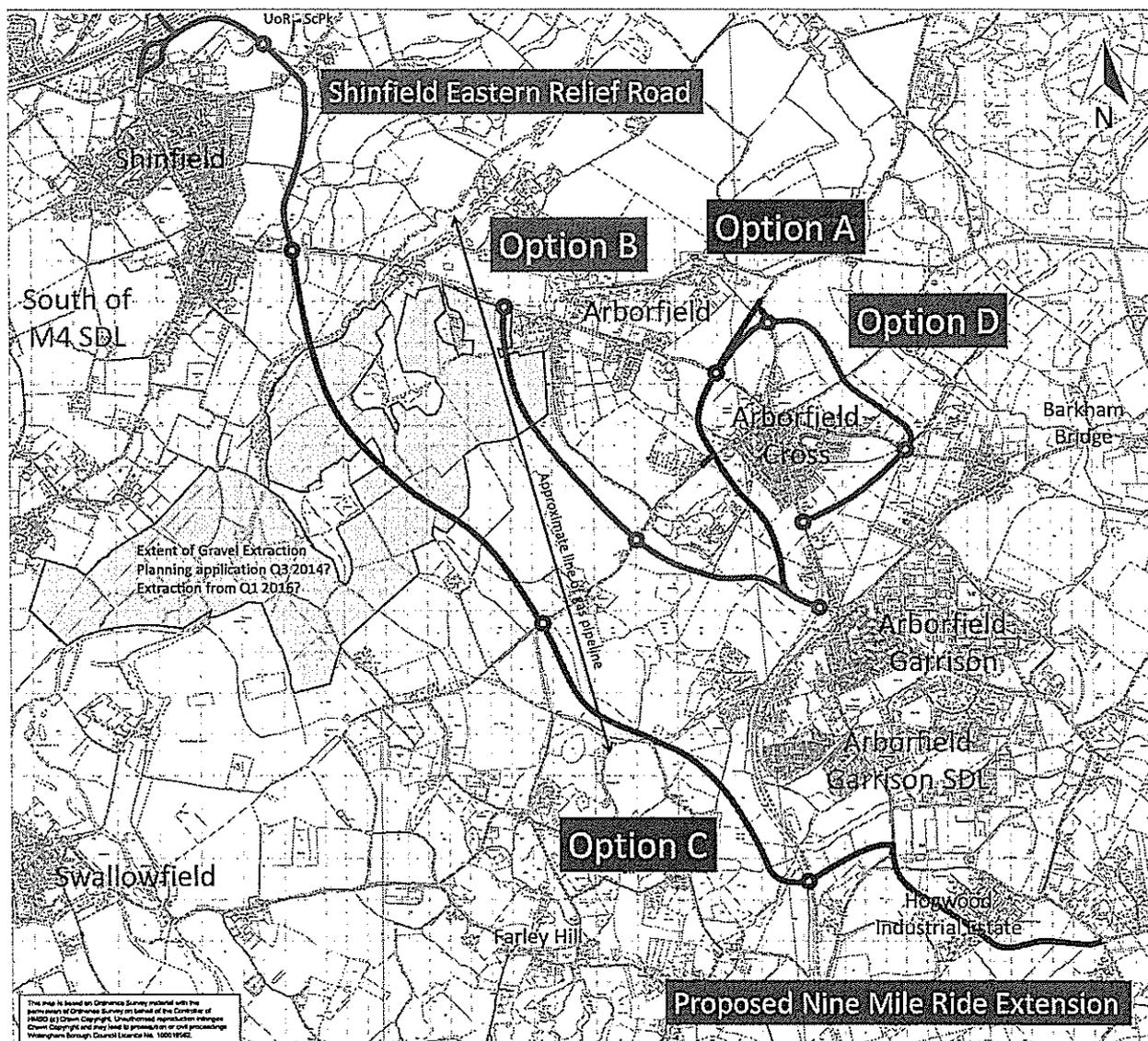
Public consultation was completed during September and October 2013. Around 1,300 questionnaires were returned to the Council with approximately 65 additional emails, letters and other correspondence. Of those that responded, 71% of the stated public preference was for Option B (see Figure 1).

There is also a proposal for gravel extraction that coincides with part of Option B with a planning application anticipated in Q3 2014. The timing and requirements of this extraction on the relief road option needs to be clarified as it may have implications for scheme and construction design and for the relief road construction programme.

The second public preference was for Option A that gained the support of 18% of respondents.

A draft report of consultation responses is available to the Executive for the purposes of this meeting. The report will be placed in the public domain in spring 2014.

Figure 1 Options Summary



### Scheme Refinement

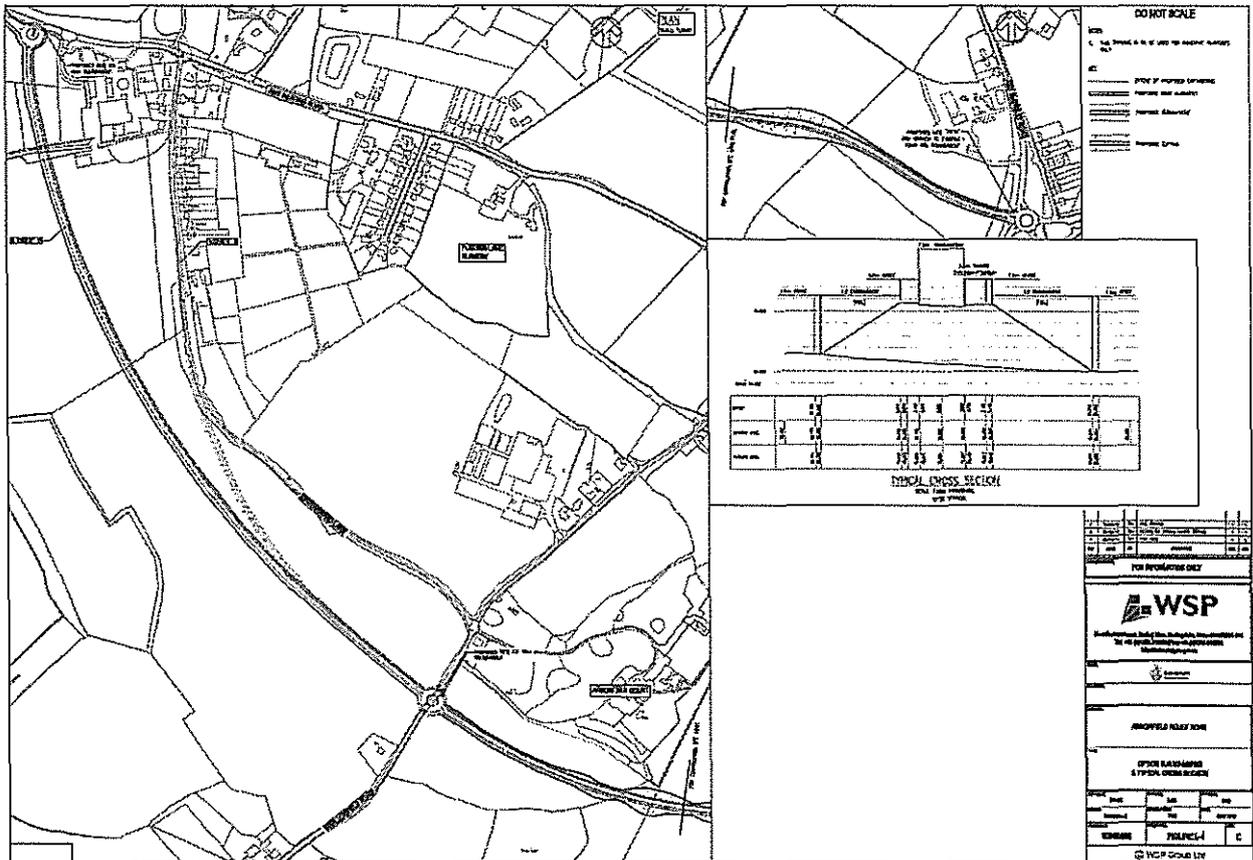
Executive will be asked to agree to a preferred alignment for the Arborfield Cross Relief Road. However it is recommended that the Council undertakes further work to gain clarity of the deliverability implications and costs of Option B before Executive agrees to this alignment as the preferred scheme. This refinement is referred to as Stage 1B of the overall project.

Tasks required in Stage 1B are as follows:

- **Environment:** Scoping for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA); outline Flood Risk Assessment; agriculture and soil assessment; noise and air quality modelling; street lighting design; landscape and visual impact assessment with outline mitigation measures for these items;
- **Engineering:** Preliminary junction arrangements; alignment refinements; topographical survey; earthworks refinement; drainage strategy; identification of utilities and diversions; risk workshop; geotechnical survey; consideration of

- gravel extraction and its programme; update scheme construction cost estimate;
- **Traffic modelling** to inform noise and air quality assessment and refine junction layouts, including potential changes at the Arborfield Cross gyratory;
- **Meetings with landowners;**
- A detailed understanding of the **gravel extraction programme** and implications for scheme design and delivery;
- Project management, meetings and consultation with members and officers, and overall reporting.

Figure 2 Option B



Stage 1B is anticipated to take between six to eight months to complete following a project Inception Meeting. On completion, the outcomes of the work would be referred back to the Executive for agreement to adopt the proposed alignment as a preferred scheme.

It is not proposed to undertake further public consultation or ecology surveys in Stage 1B. This will be undertaken in Stage 2 where the scheme will be taken to the next level of detail to support a planning application. Pre-application consultation may be appropriate at this time. Detailed Design would follow in Stage 3 assuming planning permission has been granted.

Ecology surveys and the preparation of an EIA will incur significant cost and should only be committed when Executive has a full understanding of the costs and implications of Option B and is prepared to agree to it as a Preferred Scheme. The EIA would therefore be undertaken in Stage 2.

Stage 3 assumes a successful planning application to enable the preparation of Detailed Design drawings and tender documents for construction.

Councillors are asked to note that the timescales described within this report should be treated as provisional estimates. Firmer estimates cannot be determined until the project is substantively progressed.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

A cost estimate has been made to complete phase 1B. It is intended to put this piece of work to the market and the final costs will be determined by the outcome of that procurement exercise.

Costs relating to later phases will be reported to executive in future reports

|                                   | How much will it Cost/ (Save) | Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall | Revenue or Capital? |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|---------------------|
| Current Financial Year (Year 1)   | 0                             | 0   |                     |
| Next Financial Year (Year 2)      | Circa £150,000                | Yes (HCA Funding)   | Capital             |
| Following Financial Year (Year 3) | 0                             | 0   |                     |

### Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

See Cross-Council Implications below.

### Cross-Council Implications

The Council's intention is that the scheme will be partially developer-funded, and will depend on the Council obtaining the full build cost of the scheme through relevant S106 agreements and (once operational) CIL and that enough developments come forward (or come forward early enough) to fund the scheme. There is therefore the risk that the Council will be required to fund (or forward fund) a proportion of the scheme. There will also be financial implications for the Council should a CPO inquiry be ordered by the Secretary of State during Stage 2. Accordingly, unless the Council is able to acquire funding through some alternative streams, there is a possibility that that the Council will need to redirect funding for other infrastructure into this scheme, should the need arise.

### List of Background Papers

Arborfield Cross Relief Road Consultation Report (Draft)

|                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
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