

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Council
DATE	11 May 2016
DIRECTOR	Pete Leonard
TITLE OF REPORT	Berryden Corridor Improvements
REPORT NUMBER	CHI/16/100
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	Yes

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Council on the progress of the scheme including the specific option appraisal for the Caroline Place / Hutcheon Street Junction, and to see authority to proceed with public engagement which will allow the Council to subsequently approve the extent of land to be acquired through compulsory purchase order (CPO).

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Council:

- a) notes the content of this report;
- b) Instructs officers to proceed with public engagement on the current draft design and to report back on the public response to the various options after the summer recess, anticipated to be the August Council meeting, with the preferred design option and land requirements for inclusion in the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO);
- c) instructs officers, following due process, to arrange for the advanced demolition of any relevant property under Aberdeen City Council ownership in advance of the main scheme where there is a justification to do so subject to the approval of any contract by the relevant committee;

- d) Council amends Standing Orders to grant delegated powers to the Director of Communities, Housing & Infrastructure, after consultation with the Head of Legal & Democratic Services and the Convenor of Finance, Policy and Resources for officers to enter into negotiations with the developers of the Cornhill site to explore the possibility of incorporating advanced roadworks for the Berryden scheme within the proposed development site access and enters into an agreement to pay for such works where it would minimise network disruption and be economically advantageous for the delivery of the overall scheme.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Land acquisition will be funded from the project's capital budget allocation.
- 3.2 As with any construction project there is a risk that construction costs may exceed the current projected budget.
- 3.3 There is a risk that land acquisition & compensation costs may exceed the current projected costs.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Resources from both Communities, Housing and Infrastructure and Corporate Governance will be required to complete the land acquisitions required to implement the scheme.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

Background

The Berryden Corridor was identified as a key project within the Strategic Infrastructure Plan, which was approved in October 2013 and has been included in the Council's Non-Housing Capital Programme. As there have been many changes within the city that have a potential bearing on the project e.g. new and committed developments, the City Centre Masterplan (CCMP), the Local Development Plan, transport policies and priorities etc the previously approved design has been reviewed and updated to reflect the above factors.

Work to date

The draft design was subjected to a peer review by officers which highlighted a number of design critical aspects that needed to be considered for the scheme. In summary these included:

- Provision for pedestrians and cyclists to current standards
- Incorporation of appropriate landscaping in the built environment
- Dealing with surface water, in terms of sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) and possible strategic storage to relieve other areas in the city which may currently be affected by flooding incidents
- Linking to adjacent development
- Impact on adjacent properties including residential and commercial

Traffic modelling was updated to take account the above and to make an allowance for the CCPM projects as the original scheme was developed in the context of Union Street being closed to through traffic.

Hutcheon Street/Westburn Road/Berryden Road/Caroline Place was identified as a key junction for the corridor and the wider impacts of the CCMP and particular attention was paid to ensuring that the design for this junction would support the wider transport policies.

Some parts of the corridor are physically constrained, particularly at Caroline Place. The original design had intentionally reduced widths of the footway, carriageway and the proposed shared pedestrian/footway so as to offer an overall improvement over the current arrangement whilst minimising the potential for impacting upon existing properties.

The peer review centred around whether or not the proposed compromise was reducing the quality of the proposed facilities too much and was potentially contrary to policies and current standards. It was accepted that this needed to be counterbalanced with the potential impact on the adjacent properties which includes the Category C listed 'My Father's House' (former CLAN centre) and the properties that are within the conservation area, all of which are deemed to be of significant heritage value.

A number of different designs for the section from Bob Cooney Court to Rosemount Place were developed and an option appraisal undertaken which consider each of the alternatives against the relevant objectives from the Local Transport Strategy and other key documents

Although not as strategically critical when compared with the Caroline Place junction, the Berryden Retail Park north junction which was also reviewed. Originally it was proposed to remain as a roundabout but it is now considered that it would be more in keeping with current policies and aims to be converted to a set of traffic lights with pedestrian and cycling facilities incorporated.

Outline Description of Options Being at Caroline Place Junction

Option 1

A “Do minimum” scenario. Essentially considers very little alteration to the network as a baseline scenario.

Option 2

The design as proposed and approved in 2009.

Attempts to minimise the footprint of the scheme but has reduced carriageway, footway and shared cycle/footway facilities.

Option 3

An option that considered the removal of the proposed central reservation and consequently provide more width for the proposed carriageway, footway and shared cycle/footway facilities.

Removal of the central reservation leads to an increase length of crossing beyond which is recommended within relevant legislation.

Option 4

Similar to option 2 but includes a “walk with” pedestrian phase. This means that some of the pedestrian crossings would be active whilst some of the traffic lanes are running. The traffic model suggests that this will create a significant improvement in junction capacity.

Option 5

Similar to option 4 but seeks to improve the width of the proposed shared cycle / footway over a greater length and will result in improved visibility at the Skene Square business premises accesses.

Option 6

This option provides full width carriageway lanes and has improved footway and shared cycle/footway widths that should make them more attractive facilities to non-motorised users.

Securing Land Needed for the Project Delivery

It is recognised that it is unlikely that all land required for the project will be able to be secured through negotiation and therefore a Compulsory Purchase Order CPO will be required to secure the land necessary to progress the scheme. The use of CPO should be used as a last resort and where there are no other viable alternatives. In light of this the localised option appraisal exercise carried out for the Hutcheon Street /

Caroline Place junction is intended to identify the optimum solution for the project when considering all of the issues and provides a sound basis for the Council to make decisions around land required.

Current internal and external advice points to the Scottish Government policy in the use of CPO which lays down an expectation of sufficient engagement with those directly affected by the CPO. Best practice in regard to transport option appraisal would also point to a level of public engagement to contribute to the choice of the preferred option.

Officers would therefore propose to proceed with public engagement for the whole project from St Machar Drive to Rosemount Place via various means including follow up letters to those previously contact earlier this year. The final detail of how this engagement will be undertaken is still to be finalised but it needs to take account of the timing of other public consultation and engagement exercises also proposed in the coming weeks.

Officers will be expected to consider how any changes or alterations suggested by affected parties could be accommodated within the various options without detriment to the proposals.

As this is an important element of the option appraisal it will not be possible to finalise this important task until results summarised and incorporated into the wider appraisal summary. Once completed, the design and land take plans will be finalised and it is proposed that this will be reported to Council on the 17 August with a view to formally authorising the CPO to proceed.

The Council, or its predecessors, have managed to secure a number of sites/buildings that would be directly affected by any of the options. Some of these are now reaching a point where it makes sense to progress with demolition such as the derelict commercial premises 78 and 86 to 90 Powis Terrace.

Following a procurement processes it would be the intention to report the costs and preferred contractor to the relevant committee in due course to allow demolition to proceed during the course of this year, thereby reducing risks associated with inclusion at a later date.

Similarly the works have started on the redevelopment of part of the Cornhill Hospital site and officers would wish to engage with the developer to pursue possible opportunities to combine works and secure best value as well as possibility minimising impact and disruption in the longer term to people living in the area and travelling on this route.

6. IMPACT

Improving Customer Experience –

The Berryden Corridor Improvement would represent a substantial upgrade to the local and strategic transport network and would benefit a variety of users whether motor vehicle, bicycle or pedestrian. Improvement of this corridor also helps the delivery of other Aberdeen City Council policies.

Improving Staff Experience –

Improvement of this corridor helps the delivery of other Aberdeen City Council policies.

Improving our use of Resources –

The scheme would represent investment in our transport infrastructure and will extend the operational life of sections of existing road infrastructure thereby allowing for maintenance budget to be invested elsewhere on the network.

Corporate -

The project is in accordance with the Council's Community Plan where it assists in the delivery of the aim to "maintain and improve the range of transport choices available to, from and within the city" and it is a significant contribution to the achievement of outcomes 10, 12 and 14 within the Single Outcome Agreement which, in a local context, seek to improve sustainable travel options.

Aberdeen – The Smarter City has the priority of "provid[ing] and promot[ing] a sustainable transport system, including cycling, which reduces our carbon emissions." The project contributes to this.

The scheme is identified within the Local transport Strategy (LTS), the Strategic Infrastructure Programme and the City Centre Masterplan (CCMP).

Public –

There will be public interest in the scheme, in terms of its contribution to reducing congestion in the area, other local effects of the changes in the transport network and the impact it will have upon the built environment.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

A number of key risks are currently identified with the delivery of this project.

- Failure to progress the project will have an impact on Aberdeen City Council's aspirations to provide a sustainable transport network in and around the city centre.
- The failure to deliver the project will affect the efficiency of other Council strategies such as the CCMP.
- Normal construction risks apply, especially in the current vibrant construction market where costs are in many cases being increased due to local labour shortages.
- Underground utilities represent a significant risk to the construction timescale and cost of the project
- The land acquisition & compensation settlement costs may increase beyond what has been estimated at this time.
- The need for approvals from external bodies such as Scottish Ministers and Historic Environment Scotland.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure Committee - November 2009

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

Mike Matheson
Senior Engineer
mikem@aberdeencity.gov.uk
01224 522410