

CABINET

Date of Meeting	Tuesday, 20 th June 2017
Report Subject	Flintshire County Council's response to the Welsh Government A55/A494/A548 Deeside Corridor Consultation Document
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Countryside
Report By	Chief Officer (Streetscene And Transportation)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In their National Transport Finance Plan which was published in July 2015, Welsh Government stated their intention to develop a scheme to improve the A55/A494/A548 Deeside Corridor. The A55 and A494 both form part of the National Trunk Road network and are owned and maintained by Welsh Government.

The A55/A494/A548 corridor currently carries more traffic than it was designed for which results in regular congestion along the route which in turn has a significant detrimental impact on the Council's own Highway Network. The current route is below modern standards with some of the junctions having slip roads that are too short or too close to each other with poor or restricted visibility.

A consultation process is being undertaken by Welsh Government which began in March 2017 on two possible options to improve this key route into North Wales from England. The closing date for the responses was Monday 5th June 2017 however, due to the impact of the Local Elections and the temporary suspension of Cabinet and other official Council meetings, a formal Council response could not be provided within this deadline. A request has been made by the Council to Welsh Government for the consultation closing date to be extended in order that the response can be considered by both Scrutiny and Cabinet, prior to submission.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1.	That Cabinet approves the Council's own options appraisal for the two proposed routes (shown in Appendix 1) and the proposed formal Council response to the WG consultation shown in Appendix 2
----	--

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	BACKGROUND TO THE CONSULTATION PROCESS
1.01	<p>Welsh Government (WG) is currently undertaking a period of consultation on two options to improve the A55/A494/A548 Deeside Corridor. A number of Public Consultation Exhibitions have taken place in the local area, which provided residents and businesses with details on the two options that have been developed and assessed by WG.</p> <p>Details on the two routes (The Blue and Red routes) can be found on the WG web-site and a copy of the consultation document is attached to this report - Appendix 3.</p> <p>Any individual or interested group can respond to the consultation document however given the impact of this key route on both the economy and road infrastructure within Flintshire, it was important that a full assessment and comparison of the two routes was undertaken by the Council. The internal study considered the benefits and disadvantages of both options and reached a conclusion on the preferred route to be put forward to WG - from Flintshire County Council's perspective only.</p>
1.02	<p>Previous consultation by WG had set the key Transport Planning Objectives for the project which were as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To reduce journey time variability and enhance the transport network resilience of the A55/A494 study corridor to periods of high demand, incidents and maintenance events.2. To improve transport connections for businesses within the study area to key economic centres and employment sites3. To improve access between employment sites and workforce catchment areas.4. To improve the actual and perceived safety and personal security of all transport users along the A55/A494 study corridor.5. To improve the permeability across the A55/A494 corridor for non-motorised modes at key points of desire.6. To ensure that the study area transport network facilitates necessary national and regional trip movements of people and freight.7. To reduce carbon emissions from transport along the A55/A494 study corridor.8. To minimise adverse impacts on the human environment including air, noise and light pollution, and landscape and townscape.9. To minimise adverse impacts on the natural environment including local air quality, water and soil pollution, and biodiversity impacts.10. To maintain and make more efficient use of the existing transport infrastructure along the A55/A494 study

1.03	<p>The A55/A494/A548 study corridor has been assessed using the WeITAG or Welsh Transport Planning Appraisal Guidance procedure. WeITAG was developed by WG and is aimed at ensuring that public sector transport proposals demonstrate the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A positive contribution to the objectives for transport; • Represent good value for money; • Provides overall economic, social and environmental benefits; • Provides maximum benefit and minimal impact. <p>There are three main stages of the WeITAG process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Planning Stage; • Appraisal Stage 1; • Appraisal Stage 2. <p>WG are currently at the Public Consultation Stage within WeITAG Stage 2 and responses from residents, Local Authorities and any other interested bodies will be carefully considered by WG before further scheme development can be undertaken.</p>
1.04	<p>Summary of the proposed Blue Option includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widening the existing A55/A494 route; • Junction improvements including at Ewloe Interchange; • Parallel link roads; • Removal, modification and improvement of junctions; • 3 lanes in each direction; • Approximate length 9.8km; <p>Summary of the proposed Red Option includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased capacity along the existing A548; • A new road between the A55 and A548; • Modification and improvement of junctions; • 2 lanes in each direction; • Approximate length 13.0km – partly online improvement and partly new alignment <p>Both Options will contain facilities for non-motorised network users, consideration for the local landscape, ecological requirements and human environmental factors.</p>
1.05	<p>The renewal of the A494 Dee Bridge is considered to be a separate scheme and any improvement work to this structure will be carried out independently of the outcome of the WeITAG Stage 2 assessment for the Blue and Red route options.</p>
1.06	<p>Whilst the outcome of Flintshire County Councils Option Appraisal favoured the Red Route, there are a number of elements which were included within the Blue Route Option that the internal study concluded would significantly improve the overall network by their inclusion in the final design layout for the overall project.</p>

	The internal study therefore recommended that the final decision should not be a final choice of 'one options over another' but should be a hybrid of the two options which would include key improvements along the route, taken from both of the two options.
1.07	The study concluded that this wider approach to the improvements on the National Trunk Road Network are essential if this 'once in a generation' improvement is to provide full benefit for the residents and road users within Flintshire and provide a resilient Gateway to Wales for many decades to come.
1.08	A full list of additional improvements suggested from the internal study are shown within the Councils proposed formal response to the WG proposals however the key elements include the following improvements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional 'Crawler Lane' along the incline West bound section of the A55 towards Halkyn. • The existing A494 to remain within the Trunk Road Network on completion of the Red Route in order to provide network resilience. • The inclusion of some of the environmental and safety measures along the Aston Hill section of the existing A494, which were detailed within the Blue Route Option • Amendments to the priority, design and capacity of Ewloe interchange.
1.09	WG have agreed to extend the closing date for receipt of the Councils response to July 7 th 2017.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	The scheme will be funded by WG.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	A full consultation process has been undertaken by WG.
3.02	Flintshire County Council's response has been shared with the Cabinet Member.
3.03	Flintshire County Council's response to the consultation document has been prepared by Officers from the following Council services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streetscene and Transportation. • Highway Strategy • Planning • Regeneration • Housing • Pollution Control

4.00	KEY RISKS AND MITIGATION
4.01	The decision will impact on the local road network and will have a positive impact on the economy of the County through improved transport links.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – FCC’s Options Appraisal Appendix 2 – Response and preferred option Appendix 3 – WG Consultation document

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE DOCUMENTS
6.01	Contact Officer: Stephen O Jones Telephone: 01352 704700 E-mail: stephen.o.jones@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	None.