

Phase 1 public consultation, 4 April 2017 to 22 May 2017

1. Overview

This Community Consultation Statement sets out how Herefordshire Council (the Council) proposes to undertake Phase 1 of (non-statutory) consultation with the people of Hereford in relation to a proposed bypass and walking, cycling, bus improvements and public space improvements, referred to as the Hereford Transport Package (HTP). This first phase of consultation will commence on Tuesday 4th April 2017 and run for a seven week period, closing on Monday 22nd May 2017.

2. Summary of Proposals

The HTP would combine a bypass to the west of Hereford city, and walking, cycling, bus and public space improvements, to encourage people to travel more sustainably for short distance journeys within the city.

The aim of the HTP is to address a number of the current transport challenges in Hereford including:

- The need to accommodate planned housing and employment growth which will generate additional travel demand and congestion as set out in the Local Plan Core Strategy;
- Extended and unreliable journey times on the A49 corridor through the city, and on other major roads (such as the A438 and A465);
- Heavy reliance on the car to make short journeys (less than 2 miles) in the city, and an under-utilisation of walking, cycling and bus travel;
- A single major river crossing by road, which is heavily trafficked and vulnerable to disruption;
- Long distance road freight using the A49 to cross the city centre, which contributes to increased congestion and more emissions;
- The need to improve local and regional connectivity, particularly within the Marches and between North and South Wales and the Midlands
- Current high maintenance and operational costs.

The proposed bypass would provide additional network capacity and a new river crossing, thereby reducing congestion in the centre and freeing up road space for active travel measures and public realm improvements. The bypass would also support delivery of 6,500 new homes, 6,000 jobs, a new university and expansion of the Hereford Enterprise Zone – all key initiatives in the *Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011 - 2031*.

A broad corridor for a bypass is identified in the Local Plan. New or improved infrastructure for pedestrians, cyclists and bus user will only be made possible by development of the bypass, as the bypass would enable vehicles to go around Hereford and free-up much-needed road space in the city. The extent and location of the walking, cycling, bus and public space improvements have not been decided at this time, and will be planned based on the outcomes of public consultation.

3. The Planning Process

The route to secure planning consent is yet to be determined through discussion with the Department for Transport, and will be subject to further legal advice. As the project would involve the construction of a major highway, the Council may seek a direction from the Secretary of State for Transport that the project be designated a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). The NSIP process comes with specific requirements for pre-application (statutory) consultation with consultees and the local community.

Regardless of the planning process undertaken, in addition to the first phase of consultation (the focus of this Community Consultation Statement), the Council will undertake two additional phases of consultation:

- A second phase to present possible bypass routes and the possible walking, cycling, bus and public space improvements.
- A third phase to present the proposed bypass route, and walking, cycling, bus and public space improvements. This final round of consultation will be the statutory consultation period which would be required as part of the planning consent process.

The consultation requirements of the *Planning Act 2008* (which governs the approval of NSIPs) have informed this Community Consultation Statement.

4. Previous Consultation

The principle of the HTP has been developed and tested through extensive stakeholder engagement and public consultation as an integral element of the Council's growth proposals, which are now set out in the adopted *Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011 - 2031*, adopted in early 2016. The Strategy also mentions the proposed development of a bypass to the west of the city.

The HTP has broad public support and the Council has received specific support from a number of businesses and representative organisations including the Hereford Enterprise Zone Board, Highways England, Welsh Assembly, Powys, Gloucestershire and Monmouthshire County Councils, the Hereford and Worcester Chamber of Commerce, the Herefordshire Business Board and promoters of NMITE University.

5. Proposed Consultation

The aim of consultation is to provide an opportunity for people to learn about the HTP project, comment on the proposals and suggest alternative options / solutions for considerations. The HTP will involve three phases of consultation with the public and key stakeholders described below.

Phase 1 consultation

The first phase of the HTP consultation will:

- Raise awareness and inform local residents and businesses about the proposed bypass including:
 - the project objectives;
 - planning and design process; and
 - their opportunities for input.
- Raise public awareness of the benefits of walking, cycling and bus travel, with the ultimate aim of contributing to behaviour change in Hereford.
- Invite people who may have an interest in or may be affected by the proposals to have a say.
- Facilitate feedback about the proposals including:
 - the benefits and constraints of the bypass;
 - the type and location of walking, cycling, bus and public space improvements; and
 - other matters we need to consider prior to undertaking further planning and design work.
- Inform the three key stages of the Department for Transport's WebTAG (transport appraisal process).

Phase 2 consultation

The second phase of the HTP consultation will:

- Explain how Phase 1 consultation feedback has informed development of the HTP.
- Present the possible bypass routes
- Present the possible walking, cycling, bus and public transport improvements.
- Provide information on the identified possible positive and negative impacts.
- Seek feedback about:
 - The possible bypass routes
 - the possible walking, cycling, bus and public transport improvements
 - Issues and constraints
 - Alternative bypass route suggestions.
 - Demographic and travel behaviour.

Phase 3 consultation (statutory consultation)

The project would be classed as Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) development under the Infrastructure Planning (EIA) Regulations 2009 or Town and Country Planning (EIA) Regulations 2011 as amended. The EIA would consider the potential impacts of the project including on air and water quality, noise, townscape, traffic, ecology, archaeology and heritage, socio-economics, and cumulative impacts. If the project is determined to be an NSIP, as part of the third phase of consultation, Herefordshire Council would publish a Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR). The PEIR would present preliminary assessments of the likely significant environmental effects, both positive and negative, of the construction, operation, maintenance and decommissioning phases of the Project, as well as provisional mitigation measures. It will not set out the final findings; these will be included in the Environmental Statement that will accompany the application.

The consultation approach for the third phase of consultation will be documented in a Statement of Community Consultation which will be an updated version of this document.

The third phase of the HTP consultation will:

- Ensure compliance with requirements of 2008 Planning Act if required.
- Explain how Phase 2 consultation feedback has informed the development of the HTP.
- Present the proposed bypass route.
- Present preliminary environmental impacts and proposed avoidance and mitigation measures.
- Present proposed walking, cycling, bus and public transport improvements.
- Seek feedback about:
 - The proposed bypass route
 - The proposed walking, cycling, bus and public transport improvements.
 - Issues and constraints.
 - Demographic and travel behaviour.

After all phases of consultation, a Consultation Report will be prepared to document how the consultation was undertaken, who was consulted and to outline the feedback received. The Consultation Report will be submitted with the planning application as evidence of stakeholder engagement and public consultation.

6. How Herefordshire Council will promote the consultation

The Council will promote phase 1 consultation by:

- Distributing a letter to landowners that lie within the Core Strategy bypass corridor inviting them to the public exhibition (see landowner letter distribution area in Appendix A).
- Placing newspaper advertisements in the Hereford Times (see Hereford Times outlets map in Appendix A).
- Distributing press releases to the local press at key milestones (consultation periods, surveys and other works the community should be aware of).
- Putting up posters in the local area.
- Promoting the consultation via the Council's and Hereford Times' paper and website, Radio and social media channels.

Information panels, a leaflet and a questions and answers document will be prepared to support phase 1 consultation. All consultation material will be available on the project website. Consultation materials will also be written in plain-English and can be translated upon request.

7. Who Herefordshire Council will consult

The consultation will provide an opportunity for the following to have a say on the proposals:

- Landowners, residents and businesses that may potentially be impacted by the proposed bypass and active transport measures being implemented.
- Residents across Herefordshire, as the proposal will have benefits beyond this area, and extend to those living, working or visiting the local area will also be consulted.
- stakeholders including members, parish councils, relevant environment, transport, economic and community stakeholders
- A broader range of community members including workers, road users, pedestrians and cyclists.
- Identified Tenant and Resident Associations.
- Minority, hard to reach and seldom heard groups.

8. How Herefordshire Council will consult

During the consultation, the Council will provide opportunities for the above parties to understand and comment on the proposal and its likely positive and negative effects.

The consultation will include the following activities.

Public exhibitions

- Three public exhibitions during the first week of the consultation. These exhibitions will be held at The Courtyard, Edgar St, Hereford HR4 9JR at the following times:
 - Tuesday 4 April 2017 11am- 7pm
 - Wednesday 5 April 2017 11am- 7pm
 - Thursday 6 April 2017 11am- 7pm
- At the public exhibitions there will be an opportunity to discuss the proposals with a member of the project team and to record comments in writing.

Display exhibition

- Unmanned Information panels will be on display at Hereford Library, Broad St, Hereford HR4 9AU between Tuesday 11 April 2017 and Friday 19 May 2017.
- Members of the project team will be at the display exhibition every Wednesday afternoon between 2pm and 4pm.

Website

Background information on the proposal, copies of the consultation materials and a link to the online survey will be available on the Herefordshire Council website at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/HerefordConsultation.

Consultation survey

A consultation questionnaire has been developed to collect feedback on the proposals. This questionnaire will be available online and will be available for completion at the public exhibitions. A hard copy of the questionnaire will be posted to people upon request.

Written feedback

Written feedback will be able to be submitted to a HerefordConsultation@balfourbeatty.com.

Responses may be made public, subject to data protection laws, once the application has been submitted either to the Local Planning Authority or to the Planning Inspectorate, or during any subsequent public examination.

The first phase of consultation will close on Monday 22nd May 2017 and comments should be received by Herefordshire Council by this date.

9. Outcomes of the consultation

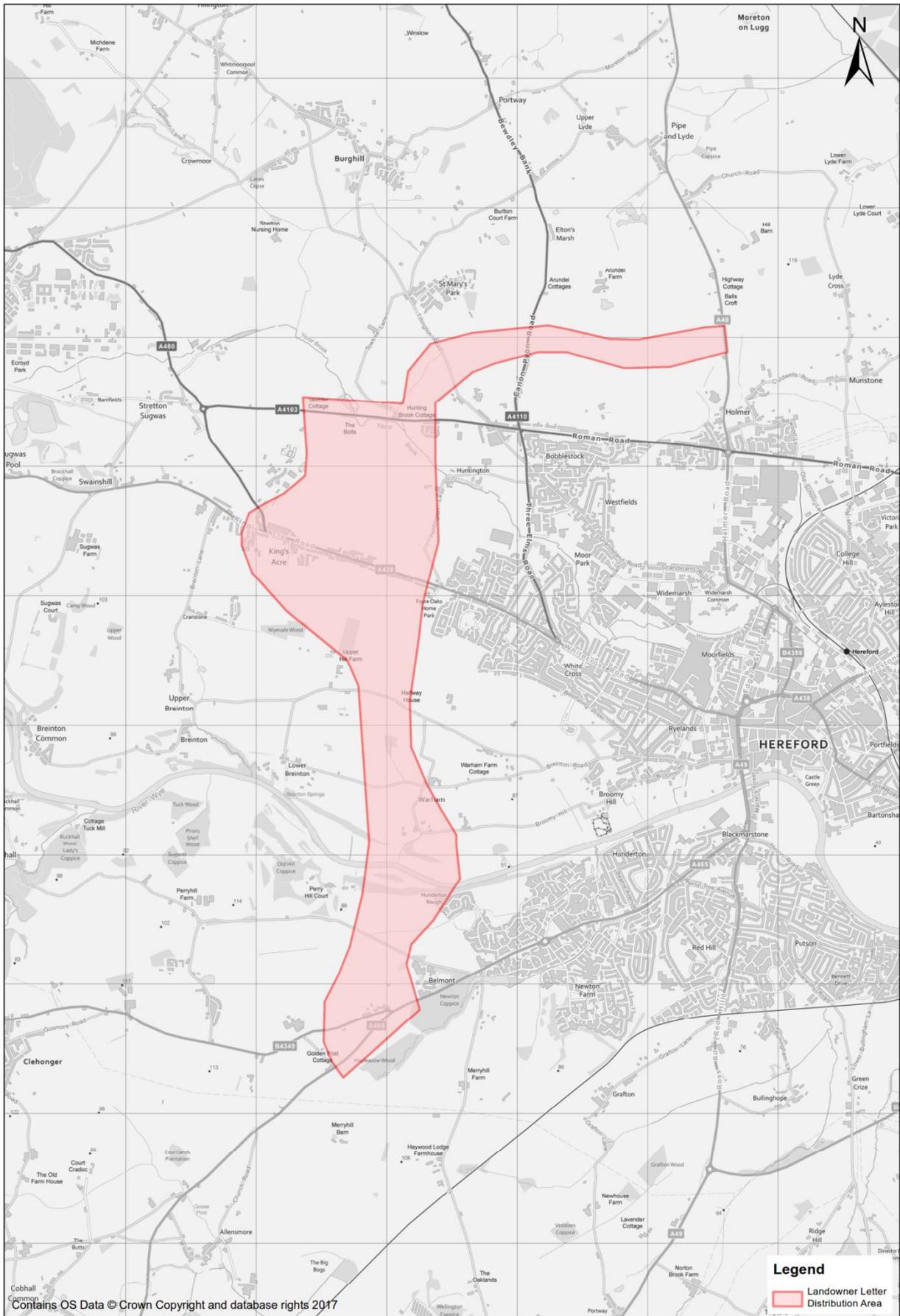
The outcomes of the consultation will be analysed and published in an Interim Consultation Report. The purpose of this report will be to document the approach taken to the first phase of consultation. This report will be made publically available on the project website and will include:

- A summary of the consultation process undertaken.
- Details about how Herefordshire Council met the relevant consultation commitments as outlined above.
- A summary of the feedback received during the consultation.
- A summary of the key issues to be considered when progressing the planning and design of the crossings.

APPENDIX A

- Landowner letter distribution area map.
- Hereford Times outlets, Hereford.

Landowner letter distribution area map



Newspaper advertisements distribution map

