



SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL Cabinet Highways Report

11

Report of: Simon Green, Executive Director, Place

Date: 12th August 2010

Subject: Waverley Link Road

Author of Report: J Bann, Head Transport & Highways 27 36030

Summary:

To report on feedback about the proposed Waverley Link Road since the last time the issue was discussed at Highways Committee in February 2010.

Reasons for Recommendations:

The recommendations have been made with regard to the significant level of local opposition to the Link Road and the Council's resolution of 28th July 2010. The major advantages of a new road in terms of traffic reduction on roads within Sheffield and improvements to the environment especially as regards air quality and the economic regeneration benefits are significant to the recommendations, as is the significant financial restrictions at present, which means the scheme is not likely to proceed for some considerable time.

Recommendations:

- The contents of this report be noted.
 - The uncertainties caused by the likely impact of significant reductions in Capital funding for Major Road Schemes be noted.
 - The resolution of the Council on 28th July 2010 be noted.
 - A detailed review of the routing of the Waverley Link Road scheme and alternative modifications to the existing highways network to accommodate the predicted increase in traffic from the Waverley development be undertaken.
 - Further development work has regard to the resolution of the Council.
 - Rotherham MBC be advised accordingly.
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Background Papers: Previous reports to Cabinet Highways Committee and Scrutiny Board

Category of Report: OPEN

Statutory and Council Policy Checklist

Financial Implications
NO Cleared by: Liam Gilligan
Legal Implications
NO Cleared by: Julian Ward 30/7/10
Equality of Opportunity Implications
YES Cleared by: John Hendley 3/8/10
Tackling Health Inequalities Implications
YES/NO
Human rights Implications
YES/NO:
Environmental and Sustainability implications
YES/NO
Economic impact
YES/NO
Community safety implications
YES/NO
Human resources implications
YES/NO
Property implications
YES/NO
Area(s) affected
Relevant Cabinet Portfolio Leader
Relevant Scrutiny Committee if decision called in
Is the item a matter which is reserved for approval by the City Council?
YES/NO
Press release
YES/NO

PROPOSED WAVERLEY LINK ROAD

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report describes feedback about the proposed Waverley Link Road since the last time the issue was discussed at Highways Committee in February 2010.

2.0 WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE PEOPLE OF SHEFFIELD

- 2.1 A new road would be used by a considerable number of motorists who would have travelled on the B6200 through Handsworth. As such, a new road would contribute to the “Protecting and Enhancing the Environment” objective of the Council’s Corporate Plan “A City of Opportunity”, particularly the “Reducing Congestion” priority. It would contribute to the “Leading Sheffield Transformation” objective by creating the infrastructure for a modern, strong economy including better transport links.
- 2.2 A new road on the currently approved alignment would involve the construction of a new signal controlled junction onto the B6200 Retford Road within Sheffield, which will cause some short term disruption to local residents whilst under construction, and is likely to require some extension of existing waiting restrictions.
- 2.3 A new road would require Rotherham to acquire some private properties within Rotherham, but no privately owned land within Sheffield is required.
- 2.4 A new road would require part of the recreation ground land which is within Rotherham but it is managed by Sheffield City Council.

3.0 OUTCOME AND SUSTAINABILITY

- 3.1 Residents along much of the B6200 through Sheffield would see a reduction in through traffic. A significant benefit of WLR would be to reduce traffic flows on residential parts of the B6200 Retford Road through Woodhouse Mill and Handsworth. Traffic modelling predicts that over a 24 hour period there would be a saving in the order of around 38% of trips in the Woodhouse Mill area, with reductions decreasing across the network as far as Sheffield Parkway.
- 3.2 Congestion levels at junctions along this route would be reduced, which would both benefit journey times and help reduce the negative environmental impacts of congestion. The introduction of the link would also provide peak hour journey time savings along this route, which could be up to 23% in the morning peak and 9% in the evening.
- 3.3 Access to the proposed Waverley Park & Ride site from the south would be greatly improved.

- 3.4 The new road would join Europa Link to create a strategic access road serving major economic sites within both Sheffield and Rotherham.
- 3.5 It would clearly result in the loss of a popular area of public open space enjoyed by local residents at Woodhouse Mill. The Waverley new community proposal which now has planning permission from Rotherham Borough Council would provide alternative replacement open space of a high quality.

4.0 **BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The Waverley Link Road (WLR) is a proposed 1.9 km stretch of new highway in Rotherham between the European Union funded developments at Waverley and the B6200 Retford Road at Woodhouse Mill in Sheffield. Most of the length of the road is on land that was part of the Orgreave Colliery which UK Coal has recently completed restoring after open cast mining. It would form part of a route between the M1 Junction 31 and the Lower Don Valley. Other parts of this route have already been improved or are programmed to be improved by a combination of local authority contributions, developer contributions and other funding.
- 4.2 The WLR was initially identified by a study undertaken by Babbie Consulting Engineers in 2000 entitled "The Sheffield/Rotherham Motorway Corridor Study". The study was jointly commissioned by the City Council and Rotherham MBC and made a number of recommendations as regards infrastructure improvements to permit development to proceed within the proposed South Yorkshire Technology corridor Strategic Economic Zone. A new link road into the Waverley development site was one of these proposals.
- 4.3 The new link road is a Regional Transport Priority, and has received Regional Board scheme approval. It is also a national priority for the Coalfields Community Campaign and the more recent South and West Yorkshire Multi Model Study (SWYMMS) recommended the need for a new road in a package of Local Authority road improvements.
- 4.4 The scheme is designed to improve access to local employment zones, provide relief to local residential areas and provide an alternative route to the M1 motorway. It is anticipated that the road will bring significant benefits to existing communities in both Rotherham and Sheffield areas.
- 4.5 WLR is one of a number of proposals to mitigate the effect of additional traffic arising from Objective 1 investment including industrial development and job creation in the M1 Strategic Economic Zone.
- 4.6 WLR was one of the transport interventions agreed between the Highways Agency and the SY authorities in a Memorandum of

Understanding to allow O1 development to go ahead prior to providing any mitigation measures.

- 4.7 WLR is part of South Yorkshire's Local Transport Plan (LTP) as prepared by the South Yorkshire LTP Partnership. It has the support of the Regional Transport Advisory Board (RTAB) and has approved Regional Funding Allocation.
- 4.8 Although the scheme is largely in Rotherham, and is therefore being promoted by Rotherham Council there will be significant transport benefits for Sheffield's residents. These benefits will improve access to jobs, provide additional road capacity leading to reduced congestion and improve access from the Europa Way area and the Lower Don Valley to the M1 Junction 31.
- 4.9 In 2005, local residents were consulted about two routes for the link road: one crossing the playing fields and a longer route connecting to the roundabout at Fence. A postal vote to some 9,422 local residents indicated over 80% support in favour of a link road but their preference was divided between the two options. Taking into account comments received, a third option, crossing the River Rother, an existing Yorkshire Water sewage works and the site of a formal petrol filling station later became the preferred option.
- 4.10 A report was approved by Cabinet Highways Committee on the 14th January 2010 indicating the City Council's continued support for the scheme, based on the revised alignment.
- 4.11 The Cabinet Highways Committee decision was then called into the Culture, Economy & Sustainability Scrutiny Board on the 2nd February 2010, where the decision made by Cabinet Highways Committee was endorsed, but concerns over the potential charitable trust status of the land were raised, together with a request that the views of the joint South East & Darnall Area Panel meeting held in December 2008 be taken into consideration and recognises the local opposition to the realignment.
- 4.12 The decision of Scrutiny Board was reported back to Cabinet Highways Committee on the 11th February 2010. The Committee went on to resolve that the comments of Scrutiny Board and the numerous concerns expressed by elected members and local residents be noted. The South East and East Community Assemblies were requested to hold a further round of consultation meetings and consider the petition received and that following the Assembly meeting a further report be brought back to this Committee.

5.0 **DEVELOPMENTS SINCE THE FEBRUARY HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE**

- 5.1 The potential charitable trust status of the land has been investigated in detail, and it is now clear that no charitable status exists for any of this land.

- 5.2 The City Council have contacted Yorkshire Water directly, and the response received does make it clear that no feasible potential now exists to use land between the sewage works and the river owned by Yorkshire Water for the link road to avoid most of the playing fields.
- 5.3 If a link road is to be built then the only option available is the route now under consideration. The alternative route to Fence would not meet the Department for Transport's current financial rate of return for a road scheme as well as passing through an environmentally sensitive area (SSSI).
- 5.4 A joint meeting of the South East and East Community Assemblies was held on the 22nd April 2010, the unanimous vote of the meeting where around 200 residents were present was that not only should the revised alignment be opposed, but that no new link road should be provided. The minutes of the joint meeting are included as Appendix A of this report.
- 5.5 The development proposals for new housing and office development within Waverley have now been reviewed by the Secretary of State for the Environment, who has concluded not to call these proposals in for a potential public enquiry; as such these proposals are now fully approved. Details of predicted traffic flows on the local network based on these development proposals will be made available at the meeting.
- 5.6 Because of the recent reductions in Central Government expenditure, many new highway schemes that were not fully committed (such as the WLR) have been put on hold. Funding for Major Schemes is now uncertain. It is not clear if the scheme will proceed. The planning application for WLR has been deferred.
- 5.7 The local residents are seeking to get additional protection of the whole of the playing field area by having it designated as a Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee recreation ground. Protection of residential playing fields is to be encouraged. The impact of such status is currently unclear.
- 5.8 At the full meeting of the Council on the 28th July 2010, a motion was put forward and approved that the Council:
 - a) Notes that following consultation with the local community at the joint meeting of the East and South East Community Assembly on 22nd April 2010, the local community are overwhelmingly opposed to the proposals for a link road through Woodhouse Mill playing fields; and
 - b) Resolves that:
 - i. All plans to build a link road on or around Woodhouse Mill playing fields should be opposed;

- ii. The local Community Assemblies will be the first point of consultation before any new proposals for a different alignment of the link road is formulated; and
- iii. Woodhouse Mill playing fields should be nominated as a Queen Elizabeth II Field.

6.0 THE WAY FORWARD

- 6.1 It is unfortunate that the alignment of the proposed link road did have to be amended, but even with these changes, the traffic and regeneration benefits of this scheme still remain. A new road should continue to be supported as an important highway improvement scheme.
- 6.2 The current alignment minimised the impact on the recreation ground by skirting along its edge, with landscaping to minimise any visual intrusion. All play facilities were to be retained and a much larger recreational area created on the Waverley site, immediately adjacent to this field, which would have been open to the public.
- 6.3 Before the scheme can proceed any further Rotherham MBC would need to submit a planning application for the road. As part of the planning application process, further public consultation on the route would take place: Residents directly affected by the scheme would have further opportunities to comment on these proposals. As would residents on the surrounding network roads.
- 6.4 The delay in progressing this scheme due to the present economic climate, should be seen as an opportunity to undertake a detailed review of this scheme to see if the route can be further amended, or if the existing highway network can be modified (with the support of local residents) to accommodate the predicted increase in traffic.
- 6.5 Once future funding levels for major capital projects are established, the City Council should in co-operation with Rotherham MBC undertake more detailed consultation on all the options that have been considered as part of the review, with this consultation undertaken in partnership with the local Community Assemblies.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no financial implications to this report.

8.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

- 8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been conducted. No negative impacts have been found. The scheme is considered to provide universal benefit to all regardless of ethnicity, disability, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation etc. In addition, the scheme should provide significant positive benefits for disabled people, wider community cohesion and social inclusion. Occupational segregation should be reduced via improved access to local employment zones.

9.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The scheme is intended to contribute to environmental improvements, by reducing congestion on the adjacent road network.

9.2 A detailed air quality assessment was undertaken as part of the Major Scheme Business Case. This indicated that the scheme would be beneficial to Air Quality; in fact for the LTP2 Study of all South Yorkshire Transportation Schemes undertaken in 2006, the scheme was identified as being the second best scheme in the whole of South Yorkshire for having positive benefits on Air Quality.

9.3 Rotherham have undertaken a detailed environmental impact assessment as part of their funding bid, this will be reviewed and updated as part of the planning application process.

10.0 PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The road alignment will require part of the recreation ground that is owned by the City Council.

11.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no legal implications to this report.

12.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

12.1 Alternative alignments for the link road have been considered, but to date these have all been discounted following a detailed assessment which has clearly demonstrated that these alternatives are not viable at the present time.

12.2 The original alignment which missed the existing housing but passed through the centre of the playing field area is still potentially a viable alternative; however it has been discounted due to its impact on the playing fields.

12.3 Both the above two options would still have the same significant level of local opposition, as local residents have clearly expressed their view that they do not support any new highway, irrespective of the route.

12.4 The option of undertaking no improvements at all has been considered, but this has not been promoted as the level of traffic flow increase, predicted for Handsworth Road/Retford Road/Rotherham Road, would significantly increase congestion on these routes, and would have serious environmental implications for the area.

12.5 The alternative of simply improving the existing highway network has also been considered; This would reduce the serious consequences of doing nothing, but would still lead to extra through traffic using these

roads, and would potentially cause major local concern where improvements were proposed. The more strategic network benefits of a new link road would also be lost, of economic regeneration and access to the M1 and Lower Don Valley.

13.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1 The recommendations have been made with regard to the significant level of local opposition to the Link Road and the Council's resolution of 28th July 2010. The major advantages of a new road in terms of traffic reduction on roads within Sheffield and improvements to the environment especially as regards air quality and the economic regeneration benefits are significant to the recommendations, as is the significant financial restrictions at present, which means the scheme is not likely to proceed for some considerable time.

14.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

14.1 The contents of this report be noted.

14.2 The uncertainties caused by the likely impact of significant reductions in Capital funding for Major Road Schemes be noted.

14.3 The resolution of the Council on 28th July 2010 be noted.

14.4 A detailed review of the routing of the Waverley Link Road scheme and alternative modifications to the existing highways network to accommodate the predicted increase in traffic from the Waverley development be undertaken.

14.5 Further development work has regard to the resolution of the Council.

14.6 Rotherham MBC be advised accordingly.

Simon Green
Executive Director, Place

2 August 2010

APPENDIX A

JOINT MEETING OF THE EAST AND SOUTH EAST
COMMUNITY ASSEMBLIES

Notes of an Inquorate Meeting held on Thursday, 22nd April 2010, at
Handsworth Grange Community Sports College,
Handsworth Grange Road, Sheffield S13 9HJ

PRESENT: Councillors Mazher Iqbal, Martin Lawton, Mary Lea, Bryan Lodge, Mick Rooney, Chris Rosling-Josephs, Gail Smith and Chris Tutt.

Also in attendance: Councillor Ian Auckland, Cabinet Member for Sustainable Transport and Streetscene.

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1. **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR**

RESOLVED: That Councillor Chris Rosling-Josephs be appointed Chair of the meeting.

2. **WELCOME TO THE MEETING**

The Chair (Councillor Chris Rosling-Josephs) welcomed members of the public to the Joint Community Assembly meeting.

3. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors David Barker, Marjorie Barker, Helen Mirfin-Boukouris, Mike Pye, John Robson, Lynn Rooney, Ray Satur, Ian Saunders and Jan Wilson.

4. **WAVERLEY LINK ROAD**

The Chair informed members of the public that, although they had been invited to attend, no officers from Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council were present at the meeting, due to that Council's policy of not holding public meetings in the six week period prior to an election. He stated that the purpose of the meeting was to consult with residents regarding the proposed Waverley Link Road, at the request of the Cabinet Highways Committee. He introduced John Bann and Ian Wheeldon, Sheffield City Council Transport and Highways Service, who were present at the meeting to provide information to residents, regarding the proposed development.

The Chair opened the meeting to questions from members of the public and the following issues were raised and responses given:-

Football Pitches and Changing Facilities on the Playing Fields

Ian Wheeldon stated that he had been reassured that there would be enough land for a full-size football pitch on the bottom plateau, and also on the plateau above that, if necessary. Sheffield City Council would make a decision on whether to provide one or two pitches. They would also be responsible for the provision and maintenance of any changing facilities at the ground. He stated that the football pitch/es would not be sited as close to the main road as shown on the plans.

Regarding the amount of land to be taken for the proposal, Mr. Wheeldon stated that all the land on the north side of the playing fields would have to be taken, this was approximately 40%.

Land Owned by Yorkshire Water

Ian Wheeldon stated that the use of Yorkshire Water land adjacent to the River Rother was no longer an option. The Yorkshire Water Land and Planning Officer had stated that they would need the land themselves for future expansion to meet European clean water standards. This had been confirmed in a letter received by the Council from the Yorkshire Water Land Manager.

Clive Betts stated that Rotherham Council had chosen the playing fields option when the Yorkshire Water land became unavailable. Yorkshire Water intended to extend their sewage works to include taking waste from the 4000 planned homes at Waverley, and to use part of the land to accommodate site traffic. A member of the public stated that Yorkshire Water had originally said that sewage from the 4000 homes would be diverted to Blackburn Meadows. Mr. Betts stated that further discussions should have taken place between Rotherham Council and Yorkshire Water regarding the Yorkshire Water land, to avoid the playing fields being used. Mr. Betts advised the meeting that he had spoken to a representative of Yorkshire Water Public Relations, who had stated that the land adjacent to the water treatment was not required by the company.

In response to a question regarding compulsory purchase of the Yorkshire Water land, Ian Wheeldon stated that, as a statutory undertaker, Yorkshire Water would have more protection from a compulsory purchase order than residents did.

Land Owned by Sheffield City Council

In response to comments from members of the public regarding their belief that Sheffield Council was giving the land to Rotherham Council, and their motives for this action, Ian Wheeldon stated that no agreement had yet been reached regarding the land. He added that, from a highways point of view, there would be significant benefits if the proposal went ahead, particularly regarding traffic congestion on Handsworth Road.

Councillor Ian Auckland confirmed that no final decision on the proposal had been made, and the consultation was taking place because of the representations that had been made by residents to the Council's Cabinet Highways Committee regarding inadequate consultation by Rotherham Council. He stated that the land in question had been sold to Rotherham Council for £44,000, so did not belong to Sheffield Council. He informed residents that a scheme that cost more than £5m would have to go through many stages before it was approved by the Department for Transport.

Traffic Flow/Congestion Problems

Regarding traffic flow on Furnace Lane, Ian Wheeldon agreed that it had increased, and stated that it would increase slightly more with the construction of the new link road. Traffic flows on Handsworth Road

and Retford Road would be reduced when the new link road was opened.

In response to a question about whether the Mosborough Bypass had been a waste of money, Ian Wheeldon stated that people should remember how much extra traffic had used Handsworth Road when the bypass had been closed for maintenance works.

A member of the public asked if there were any technical reasons why the road could not be rerouted to the roundabout at Fence Hill, and in response Ian Wheeldon stated that it wasn't possible due to the costs which would be incurred. He added that when the initial assessment had been undertaken by Rotherham Council in 2003-04, the link to Fence Hill had been discounted due to environmental issues and cost. Sheffield Council had then been responsible for the amended proposal to use land adjacent to the River Rother, but this proposal was no longer viable because Yorkshire Water had stated that they needed the land for their own use.

On the question of traffic surveys, Ian Wheeldon stated that the data displayed at the meeting was up-to-date.

John Bann stated that, looking at future traffic projections, the 21,000 vehicles currently using Retford Road each day would increase to around 28,000 in a few years time. If the link road proposal went ahead this could drop to 19,000. He added that the same model was used all over the City for testing traffic projections. In response to a question about how a t-junction and traffic light system would stop traffic from backing up, Ian Wheeldon stated that the main road would be widened, as would the right turn onto Furnace Lane. There would be two ahead lanes, not a dual carriageway. The new junction would be able to cope with traffic flow, but it was also necessary to reduce traffic on Handsworth Road.

In response to a question regarding road safety issues, Ian Wheeldon stated that it was not possible to widen Furnace Lane, and that the new junction would cope with traffic using a traffic light system. There may be road safety issues on Furnace Lane due to extra traffic use, but this was something that the East and South East Community Assemblies would take up. The crossing points on the proposed new road would be controlled crossings not zebra crossings.

A resident of Falconer Lane stated that, over a period of time, nine vehicles had gone through the wall on her road, and questioned whether increased traffic flow would make this situation worse. She added that slurry gulper vehicles were travelling up and down Faulkner Lane throughout the day and at night, because the sewage works were unable to cope.

Pollution Issues

A member of the public stated that Woodhouse Mill already had a pollution problem due to its proximity to the river, and asked how much assessment work had been undertaken regarding pollution caused by additional traffic using the proposed link road.

Ian Wheeldon stated that a detailed assessment on air quality, both for the present and the future, had been undertaken as part of the Waverley application. He stated that the prediction was that the increase in traffic due to the Waverley new development was likely to be

offset by the use of less polluting vehicles. He added that, as the link road would reduce congestion, it would give rise to some improvement in air quality generally.

John Bann stated that Sheffield Council were concerned about air quality and were developing an action plan to deal with it. He added that lorries and buses created high levels of pollution. In response to a question about lorries using Retford Road instead of the Parkway, John Bann stated that he would take the issue of imposing weight restrictions on Retford Road back to his officers, who would report their findings to the East and South East Community Assemblies.

With regard to Sheffield's road system, John Bann stated that improvements were required to be made. He referred to the Drive Me Crazy project which allowed members of the public to contact Sheffield Council by letter, phone or via the internet, regarding congestion problems in the City.

Waverley Residential Development

A member of the public stated that very little information had been provided regarding the 4000 properties to be built at Waverley, and asked whether there would still be a need for the proposed link road if the houses were not there. He added that the properties were going to be built at the side of the River Rother, which was prone to flooding.

Ian Wheeldon stated that the proposed link road was entirely disconnected from the residential development, and would go ahead even if the houses were not built. He added that planning consent had been given for the residential development on condition that it would be designed to be built above the level of the river. He stated that some land drainage adjacent to the river was still to be completed, as not all drainage links were in place yet.

A member of the public asked whether the catchment area of the new development would be within the Rotherham or Sheffield boundary. She questioned how Handsworth Grange School would cope with the additional pupils if it was in the Sheffield catchment area.

When members of the public were asked if they were in favour of the present proposal for the link road, or any proposal for a road in the area, they voted against it unanimously with a show of hands.

The Chair stated that he would write to Rotherham Council, on behalf of residents across the area who would be affected by the Waverley Link Road proposal, to register their disappointment at the failure of Members and officers from Rotherham Council to attend the meeting, and their wishes that, if possible, all work on the proposal should cease.

The Chair informed members of the public that the next meeting of the South East Assembly would be held on Thursday, 24th June, 2010, at 7.00 p.m., at a venue to be confirmed, when further information regarding the proposal may be available to them.