

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Cabinet **DATE:** 13th July 2020

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WARD(S): Langley St Mary's, Kedermister and Foxborough

PORTFOLIO: Rob Anderson – Lead Member for Sustainable Transport & Environmental Services

PART I **KEY DECISION**

LANGLEY HIGH STREET IMPROVEMENT WORKS (FROM MEADFIELD ROAD JUNCTION TO ELMHURST ROAD)

1 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet's approval to progress implementation of the next stages of the Langley High Street Corridor Highway improvement works, to provide a resilient network infrastructure to support planned regeneration in the area, and to reduce congestion from Meadfield Road Junction along High Street thus reduce the negative environmental impacts.

2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

The Cabinet is requested to resolve:

- a) That the conditional offer of the Berkshire Local Transport Body (BLTB) to provide £1.324m for Harrow Market to Meadfield Rd and £1.033m from Meadfield Rd to Elmhurst Rd from the Local Growth funding stream towards the cost of these improvement works be welcomed;
- b) That it be agreed in principle the design of the scheme as outlined in Section 5 subject to the development of the designs through the detailed design process; and
- c) That further discussions be approved with the trustees of the Langley War Memorial Field and the Parks Team about small boundary adjustments on the eastern side of the field to accommodate the new highways design.

3. The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan

3a Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities

Protecting vulnerable children:

- 1.1. The combination of a reduction in vehicle speeds, high quality resurfacing with new road markings and the installation of traffic signals as part of the scheme will provide a higher level of road safety for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians.

Increasing life expectancy by focusing on inequalities:

Will improve accessibility between the areas of higher unemployment or social deprivation and areas of job growth in Langley.

Improving mental health and wellbeing:

The proposed scheme will help to encourage the Langley community to use active travel by providing safe and accessible walking and cycling facilities. These will be in the form of formal pedestrian crossings on the Meadfield arm of the junction and Advance Stop Lines on High Street. These facilities will be particularly pertinent during and after the COVID-19 pandemic where walking and cycling are emphasised as a safe means of travel and could potentially result in a long-term shift towards active travel.

The scheme is in line with Slough Borough Council's Low Emission Strategy (LES)¹⁴ which forms part of the Slough Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP). The LES aims to reduce emissions from road transport, and to improve the borough's air quality, by amongst other measures, promoting modal shift away from cars, and promoting the use of electric vehicles through the use of electric buses.

The proposed scheme supports the delivery of the long-term priority of investing in infrastructure that will have a positive impact on the regeneration of Langley and improve air quality. By reducing congestion along both High Street and Meadfield Road, the High Street will become a more attractive place to work and shop, in addition to the reduced emissions associated with the start-stop nature of congested traffic.

Housing:

The scheme will complement the ongoing transport infrastructure improvements in Langley, the combined effects of which will help to unlock new housing developments and support the TVB SEP Implementation Plan of delivering 21,060 jobs and 10,702 houses by 2021ⁱ. This includes the collaboration between the Borough of Slough and South Buckinghamshire District Council to develop proposals for the Northern Extensionⁱⁱ. The permanent closure of Hollow Hill Lane could prove detrimental to the Northern Extension business case if local roads prove unable to cope with additional vehicles. Slough Borough Council is taking a proactive approach to ensure that the roads remain efficient, for both short term benefits of closing Hollow Hill Lane and future developments such as the Northern Extension. Thus, the proposed signalisation of High Street/ Meadfield Road junction will prove valuable to the efficient movement of vehicles and wider housing developments.

3b

Five Year Plan Outcomes

Our people will be healthier and manage their own care needs:

The installation of traffic signals provided by the scheme will provide a higher level of road safety for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians.

Slough will be an attractive place where people choose to live, work and stay:

The scheme will play an important role in ensuring the ambience of Langley High Street remains inviting, by managing traffic, and therefore congestion, in a more efficient manner. Although the proposed scheme will not implement any specific

public realm improvements, the overall package of transport interventions will support Langley in retaining its status as a vibrant and prosperous centre.

Slough will attract, retain and grow businesses and investment to provide opportunities for our residents:

By replacing a priority-based junction with a signalised junction, the scheme will build upon Slough's existing transport infrastructure and will support the anticipated surge in demand as a result of the Hollow Hill Lane closure. By ensuring that High Street and connecting roads such as Meadfield Road can operate efficiently, the scheme will support the future growth in housing, businesses and retail, in a sustainable manner. Although the scheme does not directly unlock a significant growth in housing, transport and utilities, the efficiency and robustness of a transport network, which this scheme supports, underpins the foundations needed for effective and sustainable growth.

4 **Other Implications**

(a) Financial

The total scheme outturn cost, on which the business case for funding is based, is now estimated as £2.357m, including inflation and risk. This is based on:

- £1.324 million for Section 1
- £1.033 million for Section 2

(Please refer to Figure 2 layout plan and more scheme description under 5.10)

This outturn figure will be subject to any increase in design or construction costs due to unforeseen circumstances.

The BLTB has agreed to fund the scheme through the TVB local growth grant. £2.357m has been agreed for this expenditure year (2020/21).

The strategy for delivery of the preliminary and detailed design phases of the scheme is via the award of an agreement through the ESPO Consultancy Services Framework (reference 664-17).

The proposed strategy for delivery of the construction phase of the scheme is through the Council's Direct Service Organisation (DSO).

Risk Management

Risk	Mitigating action	Opportunities
Legal:		
Risk of challenge to land acquisitions.	Council to follow due process and secure full support where required. Major Infrastructure Projects Team have already discussed this matter with the	

<p>Delay/ failure in achieving Planning Consent.</p> <p>Objections to Traffic Regulation Orders required for elements of the scheme modifying the use of the highway.</p>	<p>trustees last year about the possibility of acquiring a small pocket of the land on eastern side of the park adjacent to Langley High Street currently belonging to Langley Memorial Park. Further discussion need to be conducted as soon as possible to confirm this requirement.</p> <p>Public consultation and close working with Ward Members, NAGs, Parish Councils and partners, bearing in mind that the affected land lies within the approved Widening Line. On-going dialogue with planning officers to address likely concerns and deal with planning consent related to the Memorial Park.</p> <p>Early identification of TRO requirements and subsequent early discussion with stakeholders to resolve issues / concerns</p>	
<p>Property:</p> <p>Delay in converting land belong to The Langley Memorial Park. Land transfer negotiations longer than expected.</p>	<p>The programme will allow time for the legal process to be carried out if necessary and time for land transfer.</p> <p>Continue to seek to acquire the park land by internal negotiation throughout process to avoid any delay.</p>	
<p>Human Rights</p>	<p>See below.</p>	
<p>Health and Safety:</p> <p>Road safety hazards during construction</p>	<p>No significant risks, outside of what would normally be expected for a construction scheme of this nature, identified at this stage.</p> <p>Traffic management measures to be utilised to minimise road hazards.</p>	
<p>Employment Issues</p>	<p>No risks identified.</p>	<p>Scheme is expected to generate job opportunities.</p>

Equalities Issues: Compliance with Equality Act 2010	This proposal is an integral part of Slough's LTP3 which was subject to an EIA in 2010.	Possible increase to future bus services will widen accessibility opportunities.
Community Support: Unfavourable response to wider public consultation.	Programme allows for detailed design to be modified where necessary to meet specific objections.	Public consultation offers the opportunity to sell the scheme to residents of the borough.
Communications: Public unaware of proposals	Appropriate consultation to be carried out before the works carried out. Keep public updated on progress of scheme via Council website. Involve SBC Communications team in the scheme from the outset.	
Community Safety	No risks identified	
Financial: The capital costs of the scheme increase as a result of factors uncovered at preparatory survey and design stages or unexpectedly high tender prices. Statutory Undertaker diversions cost underestimated Damage to statutory	As detailed site survey information is obtained, there will be further cost reviews as part of the design process. A Comprehensive QRA process will be undertaken as part of the detailed design work. Value engineering to be employed where necessary. Continual liaison with Statutory Undertakers. Value engineering of planned diversions at preliminary design stage. Ensure latest statutory undertakers plans are obtained; undertake trial holes; scan ground	

utility apparatus	prior to excavation. Undertake hand digging where required, in line with NJUG guidelines.	
Project Capacity: Delays during planning stage. Delays in procurement process. Sections of required land still in third party ownership. Lack of resource within Slough DSO. Delays during construction	Ensure robust scheme and orders presented at planning application and publication. Employ experienced team to prepare and complete the statutory process. N/A This paper will support further discussions to be had between MIP team and parks management team together with the trustee members to convert a small pocket of the Langley Memorial Park land to permissive path usage. Dedicated DSO team, installed to delivered other major projects in Slough, have the capacity to deliver this project. Continually review programme to ensure sufficient time allowance made to address potential delays. Constant dialogue with Slough DSO during scheme build. Seek early advice from SBC DSO on buildability issues. Liaison with external bodies to assist in development and acceptance of scheme design.	Dedicated DSO team assembled to deliver this project will be able to deliver future projects in Slough.
Other: Impact on local residents, businesses and the general public in the immediate vicinity of the construction works. Traffic congestion resulting from construction phase.	Construction Management Plan will be developed to protect their interests by minimising impacts, such as noise, vibration and traffic, during the period of construction Coordinate construction works with other planned highway schemes. Plan construction elements which have most impact on traffic to coincide with school holidays, where possible	

(b) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

Traffic Regulation Orders may be required and these will be subject to normal procedures under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.

The proposals are not considered to engage any rights protected by the Human Rights Act 1998, except possibly the right to protection of property in Article 1 of the First Protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights. Such rights are subject to derogations in the public interest which are in compliance with conditions imposed by law. All actions affecting property in connection with the proposals in this Report will be in compliance with any such conditions.

The Council have a general power of improvement of highways under Section 62 of the Highways Act 1980. Under this section the Council are permitted to carry out any work (including the provision of equipment) for the improvement of the Highways maintainable by the Council. The Council also have specific powers to carry out specific types of works in connection with the improvement of highways maintainable by them as set out in Part V of the Highways Act 1980. These powers will permit the specific works of improvement proposed in this Report.

(c) Equalities Impact Assessment

The aims of the scheme are to offer significant improvement to transport routes and public transport that will benefit all equality groups. The Langley High Street Improvement Business Case has also assessed the specific social and distributional impacts of the scheme and the results were:

- **Severance** - The impact was found to be neutral to equality groups, due to a very small number of roads experiencing an increase and decrease in traffic flows as a result of the proposed scheme;
- **Personal Security** – The scheme is expected to have a neutral impact on security. It will improve the overall reliability of bus services and have a positive impact on personal security as people have a reduced waiting time between buses.
- **Accessibility** - The impact on vulnerable groups was appraised as slightly beneficial because the scheme demonstrates an improved bus service frequency. Certain protected characteristics (disability, children and young people, older people and women) are more reliant on public transport than others; therefore improving access to public transport is a positive impact from the scheme. The 2011 census revealed that car ownership amongst Slough residents is lower than the regional average; therefore enhancements to public transport also address this point.

A separate EIA will be conducted on the detailed design proposals as the scheme progresses to identify, and mitigate against, any potential adverse impacts arising during the individual work programmes.

(d) Workforce

Slough DSO are increasing their workforce and their capacity to manage designers and subcontractors, in order to deliver the schemes. There will be an increasing move away from consultants and subcontractors to the use of directly employed staff and workforce as we develop our in-house capability.

(e) Property

It is anticipated that the land required for delivery of this scheme is already within the existing boundaries of the highway, with one exception:

- A small section of the Memorial Park land on the east side adjacent to Langley High Street is required. The trustee members and the park team have already been made aware of this requirement last year.

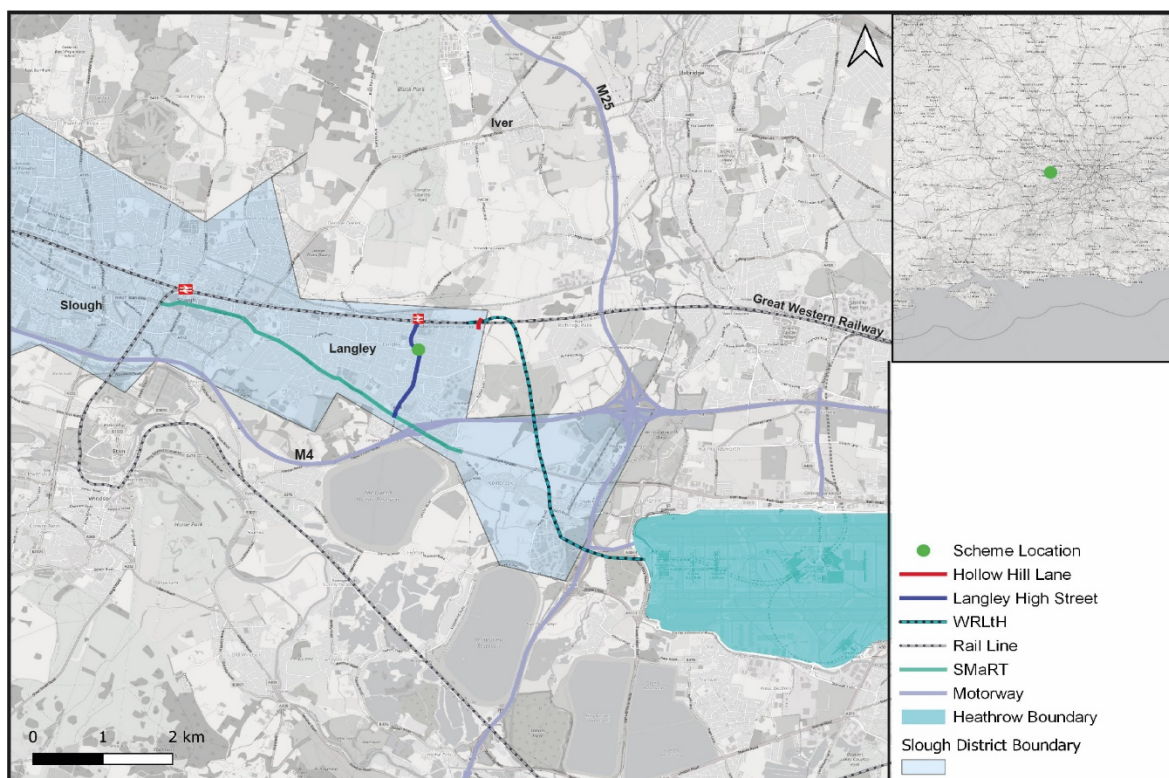
(f) Carbon Emissions and Energy Costs

The scheme is expected to deliver reductions in congestion particularly after the closure of Hollow Hill Lane. An Air Quality Assessment will be undertaken as part of the scheme, with a view to implementing any potential mitigation measures that are deemed necessary. An Air Quality Monitor Station is going to be installed on eastern side of footway pavement of Station Road, Langley this summer in order to provide the air quality data required for monitoring purpose.

5 **Supporting Information**

- 5.1 The TVB LEP Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) 2015/2016 – 2022/2021 rightly states that the close proximity of Heathrow airport provides a locational advantage for the region, particularly for Slough and Langley, by ensuring residents have access to highly-skilled and high wage jobs. The Western Rail Link to Heathrow (WRLtH) will provide a step change in supporting the employment growth within Slough and Langley by providing quick and reliable access to Heathrow. The TVB LEP's support for the WRLtH scheme is clearly articulated throughout the strategic planning documents including the SEP, the SEP Implementation Plan and the Evidence Base. This strategic support is continued through the creation of WRLtH project team and Stakeholder Steering Group, showing the TVB LEP's continued and dedicated support to the implementation of the WRLtH scheme.
- 5.2 Slough Borough Council appreciates the importance of this opportunity, although it is understood that improvements to the rail network should not be detrimental to other modes of transport. To successfully implement the WRLtH alongside the existing Great Western rail network, the road tunnel (Chequers Bridge) on Hollow Hill Lane will have to be permanently closed. As a popular commuter route, this will force current traffic to use alternative routes, potentially adding a significant amount of pressure on local roads. The scheme aims to support the WRLtH and economic prosperity in the TVB region whilst mitigating the impact that will result from the closure of Hollow Hill Lane.
- 5.3 Figure1 below highlights the key transport infrastructure surrounding the scheme including the Slough Mass Rapid Transit Phases 1 and 2 along the A4 and the M4 Smart motorway scheme to the south, Langley Station improvements, Crossrail and the WRLtH.

Fig1:



The proposed scheme, which is an extension to the original rail station accessibility and Station Road/ High Street/ Langley Road junction improvement scheme in Langley, will complement the SEP's overall vision ensuring that:

*"The ambition and creativity of our established businesses will be energised through strong, knowledge-rich, networks [and] our infrastructure will match the scale of our ambition and potential"*ⁱ

- 5.4 Slough Borough Council recognises that TVB is in the final stages of the current SEP delivery period, and whilst the scheme will be well progressed by 2021, there is confidence that the proposal will align with the subsequent SEP by delivering improved transport infrastructure, indirectly supporting economic growth in Langley, Slough and the wider TVB district.

In addition, this scheme extension will contribute to the delivery of the following packages within the Thames Valley Berkshire's (TVB) Strategic Economic Plan (SEP):

- 5.5 Langley High Street is the central north-south aligned road that links businesses and residents to Langley rail station and the strategic road network (A4, M4 and M25), and is a popular through route for commuters and public services. Langley High Street has a number of junctions with other major side roads. Most noticeably the former Roundabout junction with Langley Road and its junction with Meadfield Road suffer from congestion during the AM and PM peaks and in particular traffic turning right out of Meadfield Road onto High Street.
- 5.6 As mentioned above, Hollow Hill Lane will close at a date yet to be determined, but expected to be before 2027, as part of the planned Western Rail link work to Heathrow. Although Slough Borough Council has no influence over this closure, it is expected that the closure is due to start sometime in 2022.

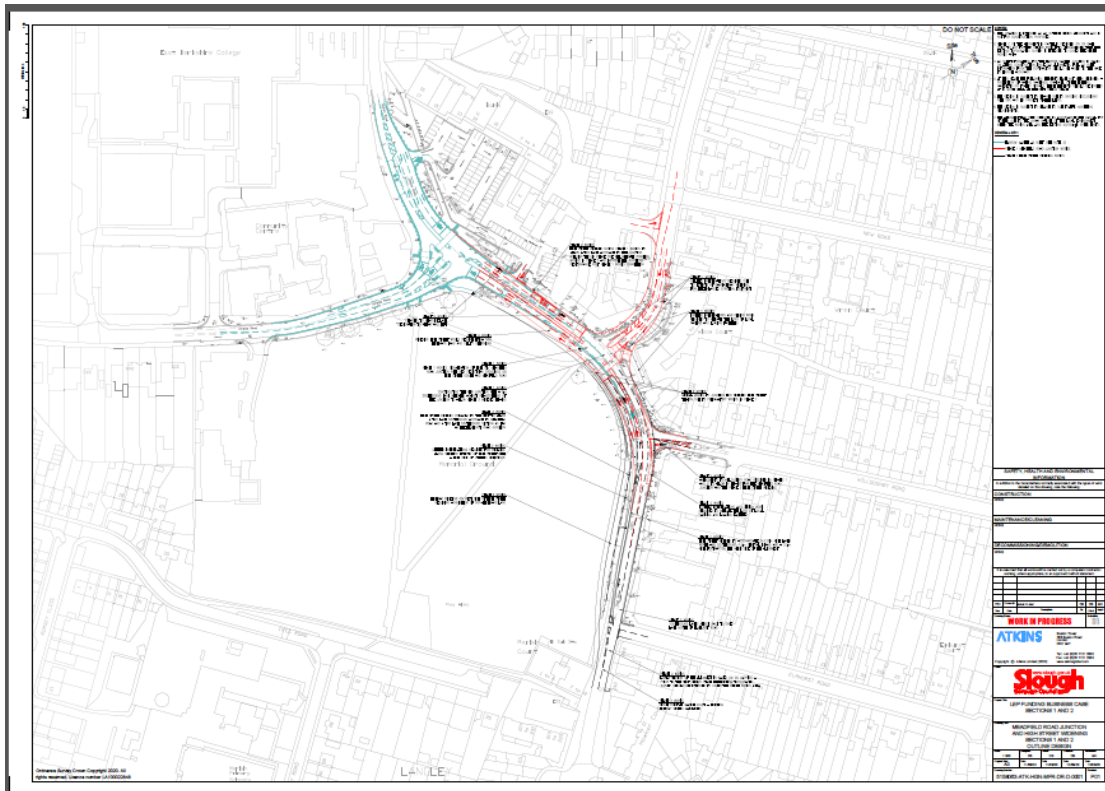
- 5.7 Between October 2015 and February 2016, an experimental closure of Hollow Hill Lane/Market Lane was carried out by SBC (not Network Rail) near the railway bridge to ascertain the impacts on the road network in Langley. We also canvassed residents' views. The feedback via direct contact from residents, councillors, parishes and commuters was focused on congestion at the Harrow Market roundabout and High Street Langley. The road closure revealed Harrow Market roundabout was unable to cope with the increase in traffic volume.
- 5.8 After the experimental closure, we have carefully considered the feedback and undertaken various modelling to identify how to improve journey times and reduce congestion in Langley before and after the closure of Hollow Hill Lane/Market Lane. It has been determined that removing the roundabout and replacing it with traffic light controlled three way junction with an exclusive left hand turn from Langley Road to Station Road, will create better traffic flows today and future proof the area for when Hollow Hill Lane/Market Lane is closed. As a result of this analysis, we were able to utilise the remaining LEP funding from the Langley Train Station Access/Approach Improvement Scheme (total funding for this scheme was £1.5M) to replace the Harrow Market roundabout with the traffic signal controlled junction as outlined above, this scheme was completed in Feb this year by our DSO.
- 5.9 When we carried out the local junction modelling, it has also become apparent to us that the increase in traffic on Meadfield Road, which currently uses Hollow Hill Lane, will adversely affect the flow of traffic at the High Street/ Meadfield Road junction, resulting in a bottleneck and long delays for vehicles. In addition, the model has forecast congestion further down along other sections of Langley High Street. We, therefore, decided that it would be prudent to seek further funding, to continue the mitigation measures to counter the expected closure of Hollow Hill Lane. We have also shared our aspiration with our park management colleagues and the trustee members of Langley Memorial Park and have discussed with them at one of their trustees committee meetings last year the possibility of converting some park land along the eastern boundary of the park to a permissive path usage due to future highway improvement works.

In January this year, the LEP announced that additional funding was available for extensions to existing schemes.

- 5.10 SBC submitted a bid for a scheme extension totalling approx. £5m, with match funding from SBC of £1m. To ensure that the Council secured as much funding as possible officers split the route into three sections to maximise our opportunity to secure funds..

The three sections were made up as per Figure 2 below (1 (approx. £1m), 2 (approx. £1.3m), and 3 (approx. £3.5m)).

Fig 2:



The LEP in late March advised Slough that they were awarding SBC £1.324m for section 2 Subject to a Final Business Case (FBC) for this, the BLTB has recently granted conditional approval, subject to provision of more detailed cost estimates by end of August 2020.

In May the LEP advised officers that they were awarding SBC a further £1.033m for section 1 again subject to a FBC and BLTB approval.

- 5.11 The proposed scheme aims to accommodate future demand as a result of the Hollow Hill Lane closure, on both High Street and Meadfield Road by enhancing the efficiency and flow of vehicle movement within Langley, thus improving access to the strategic road network. As part of the design for operational improvements at the junction, improvements for pedestrians and cyclists have also been incorporated.
- 5.12 This route will become increasingly important after the proposed closure of Hollow Hill Lane. Strategic traffic modelling has shown that the closure of Hollow Hill Lane will result in a re-routing of traffic onto Meadfield Road and High Street in Langley and this increased number of vehicles will make the High Street more congestedⁱⁱⁱ. If not tackled, the consequential effects of this congestion threaten to impact labour supply to local businesses, access to education i.e. Marish Primary School, Langley Hall Primary Academy and Langley College, connectivity to the wider TVB district and will inhibit future economic prosperity. Once implemented, these improvements will reduce congestion along High Street and reduce the negative environmental impacts that are associated with the slow-moving nature of congested traffic, notably noise and air quality.
- 5.13 Furthermore, as a result of completing the Slough Mass Rapid Transit (SMaRT) Phase 1 and 2 programmes the east-west corridor through Slough has been well

developed in recent years and is beginning to transform Slough, Langley and the wider TVB district. However, north-south connections through both town centre and other districts remain both a challenge and a priority to Slough Borough Council. The scheme once completed will improve the flow of traffic along the Langley High Street, supporting the north-south connection.

6 Comments of Other Committees

None

7 Conclusion

7.1 There are clear and significant social, environmental and economic benefits to the scheme and in line with the Council's aspiration to be a World Class Authority the scheme will indicate our intent to provide improvements to our local communities that allow them to thrive.

7.2 It is recommended that The BLTB's offer for Langley High Street Improvement Works be accepted.

7.3 It is recommended that officers continue in parallel the following:

- Scheme detailed design in readiness for installation by Slough DSO;
- Utility diversions, where necessary, prior to the main works;
- Construction of this scheme starts in 2020 as soon as the funding is confirmed and received.

8 Appendices Attached

None

9 Background Papers

None

ⁱ Thames Valley Berkshire Strategic Economic Plan Implementation Plan, August 2017, Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership.

ⁱⁱ Slough Northern Extension, Atkins, September 2017.

ⁱⁱⁱ Langley Junction Assessment and Outline Design Technical Note, March 2019.