MEETING OF THE BERKSHIRE LOCAL TRANSPORT BODY (BLTB) – THURSDAY 11 NOVEMBER 2021

CONTACT OFFICER: TIM WHEADON, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, BRACKNELL FOREST COUNCIL

Item 8: 2.21 Slough: Langley Station Access – One Year Evaluation Report

Purpose of Report

1. At your meeting in March 2017, you approved guidance for the preparation of one- and five-year-on impact reports for BLTB funded local transport schemes.

2. Per reports received at the March and July 2021 BLTB meetings, it was agreed that due to the Covid pandemic, the pending one-year impact reports would be temporarily suspended until a sufficient resumption of normal, or near normal, traffic movements resumed. It has been agreed by the Berkshire Transport Officers that we are probably now at this point, enabling reports to be drawn up and submitted.

3. This report introduces the one-year impact report for scheme 2.21 Slough: Langley Station Access.

Recommendation

4. You are recommended to note the reports from the scheme promoter and the independent assessor.

Other Implications

Financial

5. There are no direct financial implications of this report.

Risk Management

6. The government requires all LEPs to have Assurance Frameworks which set out governance arrangements and financial procedures. One of the specific requirements for transport schemes is to require scheme promoters to submit impact reports one- and five-years post implementation.

Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

7. Slough Borough Council will provide legal support for the BLTB should any questions arise on the application of the Assurance Framework.

Supporting Information

8. Slough Borough Council received £1.5m in LGF towards the cost of this £5.26m scheme (including £3.5m from Network Rail).

9. The one-year on impact report is attached at Appendix 1; and the independent assessor's report is attached at Appendix 2.

Conclusion

10. The Independent Assessor concludes the SBC one-year impact report is a well-constructed and balanced document, making good use of the available evidence at this stage. Whilst the agreed delay in producing this report was agreed with TVB LEP and Berkshire Local Transport Body no quantitative evidence or survey data was provided at this stage.

11. The report also provides very helpful photographs of the before and after context for the scheme which brings to life the changes which have been implemented because of TVB LEP and SBC investment. While the report helpfully outlines how the scheme has addressed the multiple issues and challenges surrounding safety and access to Langley station, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists.

12. SBC recognises that undertaking a one-year impact report is too soon to provide a realistic assessment of the actual outcomes of the scheme. The Council expects to be able to provide a much more detailed review of the scheme at the five-year evaluation report milestone.

13. The key points for consideration, both to enhance the future outcomes of the project and to facilitate wider learning, include:

    - While the report provides a positive indication of the scheme improving the safety and accessibility to Langley Station, providing quantitative data for the five-year report will be important to evaluate the impact and outcomes of the scheme. Data includes measuring the uptake in public transport in the area, walking and cycling counts and usage numbers of the cycle docking station in Alderbury Road. This approach to future monitoring would provide greater assurance on project impacts and outcomes to TVLEP and SBC.

    - The scheme focussed on addressing a number of challenges to do with accessibility and safety to Langley Station. Going beyond qualitative and inferred assessments of these types of observed changes, future monitoring and evaluation could also consider local survey data, air quality and road safety data along the corridor compared to pre-investment.

    - For future monitoring reports, providing clarity on whether the revised start date of the scheme was on time. It will be helpful to see if the revised timeframe for a project of this nature was met.

    - For future monitoring reports, provide a breakdown of costs to show that the estimated costs and costs incurred from the scheme align and show that the scheme was delivered on budget.

    - For future monitoring reports, the report should include key maps and locations of the scheme interventions and, where possible, visual evidence to help contextualise the pre-scheme investment position and the post-investment position

14. There is no further action required.

Background Papers: None.

Appendix 1

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Slough Borough Council

Growing a place of opportunity and ambition

Slough: Langley Station Access

Berkshire Local Transport Body (BLTB)

One Year On Evaluation report

Bill Hicks

October 2021

GROWTH DEALS

Thames Valley Berkshire
LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP

Table of Contents

1. Introduction

1.1. Overview

The original core scheme was designed to increase connectivity and accessibility within Langley and across the borough, as well as to improve links with neighbouring areas, through the development of facilities and infrastructure for the promotion of active travel, and in support of public transport patronage.

A central element of the scheme was to improve accessibility, and in particular to promote active travel links to the station, which would lead to more sustainable travel. The public realm / access enhancements facilitated a more sustainable approach to travel. In addition to travel related concerns and modal shift, the scheme at this site also sought to address social inclusion, wellbeing, safety, and environmental requirements. The scheme was also expected to deliver growth related benefits, as well as social and environmental benefits, and generally to make the location more vibrant and attractive.

The project scope for the SBC project was subsequently amended at the detailed design stage to include more extensive highway improvement changes in Station Road, the Harrow Market roundabout and the junction with Waterside Drive. This comprised further measures to improve access for pedestrians and cyclists, as well as facilitating traffic improvements which became an additional priority due to the anticipated imminent closure of Hollow Hill Lane. Without any mitigation measures, this closure was expected to lead to severe traffic congestion in Langley. The focus therefore shifted to some extent, however the amended / combined scheme remained part of a much larger vision for the town, which is dedicated to the reduction of travel by private car, and increased use of public transport, cycling and walking.

The Council managed scheme ran alongside station re-development which came under the responsibility of Crossrail and Network Rail (NR). This element of the overall project for Langley Station is essentially not covered within this evaluation, though some further references will be made where directly relevant.

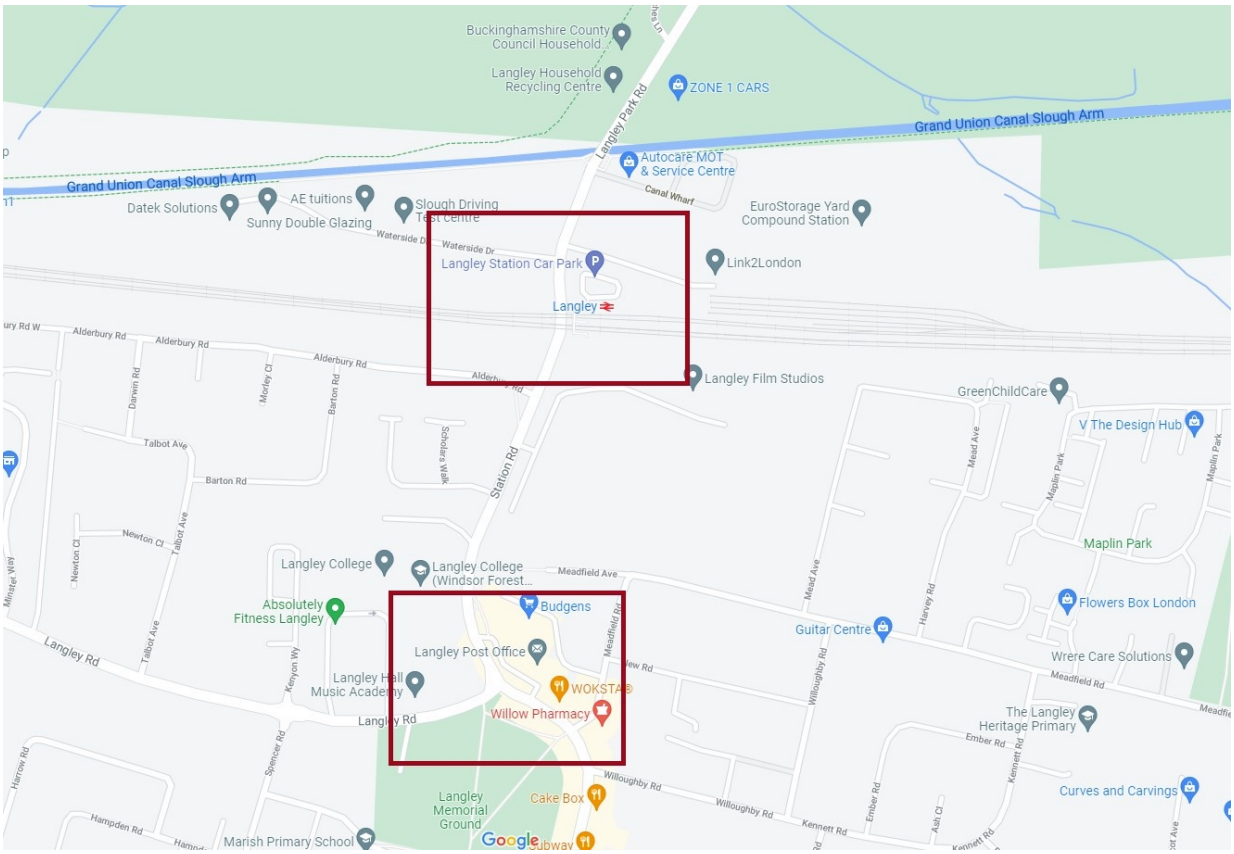
1.2. Location

Slough borough is characterised as a dense urban environment bounded by green belt, situated in the east of Berkshire and in the Thames Valley Berkshire sub-region. Langley is approximately two miles east of central Slough. Whilst primarily residential, Langley also includes light industrial, commercial, retail and leisure use. Key sites within Langley include the Langley Hall Primary Academy & Langley College, Langley Park Memorial Recreation Ground, Langley Business Centre & Waterside Drive Business Park, Harrow Market and Langley Rail Station (which is on the Great Western Main Line to London Paddington and which will soon be on Crossrail, providing connectivity into London).

Langley is one of three rail stations in the borough, along with Burnham and Slough. The area around Langley Station is a mixture of residential and light industrial land use.
Langley station is served by Great Western Railway mainline trains, but frequency is limited and the fastest journey time to Paddington is approximately 30 minutes. Services are expected to increase in frequency when Crossrail is fully operational.

Station Road is a north/south link running from Langley Station to the Harrow Marker junction (previously a roundabout) in the heart of Langley Village. This connects with Langley Road, to the west, and High Street (Langley) which ultimately connects with the A4/London Road.

Langley Station, via Station Road (above)



Map of Langley showing the locations of the main interventions delivered in the scheme

1.3. Historic Problems

1.3.1. Accessibility and Mobility

Accessibility around the station has historically not been conducive to more socially inclusive and environmentally focused modes of travel. Linked to this, the station approach area was not previously helpful overall to people with reduced mobility. The scheme was therefore designed to address both aspects; to improve access to the station, improve accessibility at the location, and specifically to encourage walking and cycling as well as public transport. In addition, to increase accessibility in its widest sense and to encourage the further uptake of rail travel, a new car park was originally planned, although this element was ultimately not pursued.

1.3.2. Public Image

The public realm area around the station was previously generally considered to be not particularly attractive and hence did not encourage people to travel by public transport or by active travel modes. This was addressed throughout the scheme, including the layout and landscaping.

1.3.3. Congestion

The highway network in this area is subject to high volumes of traffic and there have been problems with congestion at peak times. Localised congestion can be attributed to both the relatively high car use across the borough, especially for short journeys, and the proximity to motorways links. Increased levels of congestion were expected to arise from the proposed closure of Hollow hill Lane by Network Rail. The Langley Station Access Improvement scheme was therefore designed and subsequently amended to include measures to relieve localised congestion through traffic management, alongside pedestrian and cycling access to and around the station.

1.4. Objectives and outcomes

The overall objectives of the SBC scheme included measures to increase access to Langley Station with enhanced infrastructure to promote active travel, and to make the adjacent public realm areas more attractive. The scheme was also design to improve traffic congestion levels and to improve the location as an eastern point of access to the wider borough, as well as enhancing cross-boundary connectivity with adjacent areas.
The key / specific objectives stated in the business case were as follows:

Objective
1. Improve pedestrian access to Langley station
2. Improve access for cyclists to Langley station
3. Provide reconfigured parking arrangements and drop off facility for Langley Station
4. Improve the perception of safety and security at and around Langley Station

The Highways and Transport specific outcomes included 400m of road resurfacing and 400m of new cycle ways. More widely, the growth outcomes anticipated as a result of this scheme were focused on the expected number of new housing units (500 new units).

This report evaluates the impacts of the project with reference to the overall and specific, stated objectives.

1.5. Evaluation Period / timetable for this review

This is the formal, one-year-on evaluation review. The scheme was completed in September 2019, however, due to the impacts of COVID-19, notably on traffic levels across the network, it was agreed with the Thames Valley Local Enterprise Partnership and the Berkshire Local Transport Body that this review would be delayed until all the COVID restrictions had been lifted.

2. Funding

The majority of the funding for this scheme came from the LEP Local Growth Deal. Additional funding was provided by the Council from S106 contributions and capital funds. The full figures are shown in the tables below:

Source of funding	Total
LEP Local Growth Deal	£1,500,000
Local contributions:	
- Section 106 agreements	£50,000
- Council Capital funds	£210,000
Total Scheme Cost	**£1,760,000**

An additional £3.5m was identified as funding for wider improvements at the station, proposed by and under the control of Network Rail. The cost and expenditure for this element have not been reviewed in this report.

3. Scheme details

The original core scheme included a range of measures design to improve accessibility to the station, including shared use areas for pedestrians and cyclists, improvement cycling facilities both within and around the station, improved landscaping in the public realm area, and

redevelopment of the car park on Network Rail land. Ultimately, the car park element was removed from the plans on the grounds that it would deliver no nett benefit in parking provision and overall outcomes.

3.1. Design elements

The final SBC scheme included the following main infrastructure changes:

Improved cycle parking facilities within and around the station:

- Introduction of a Cycle Hire Slough docking station within grassed area just north of Alderbury Road.

Improvement of cycling facilities on-street in the vicinity of the station, including:

- Provision of a zebra crossing on Station Road adjacent to Alderbury Road;
- Introduction of shared use areas on Station Road and the junction with Alderbury Road; and
- Introduction of Advance Stop Line (ASLs) on the Waterside Drive arm of the Waterside Drive / Station Road junction.

Improved pedestrian facilities to and from the station, both from the north and the south approaches:

- Provision of a new, signalised, diagonal Toucan crossing at Station Road/ Waterside Drive junction;
- Provision of a new, signalised, Toucan crossing across the Access Road, at Station Road/ Waterside Drive junction;
- Provision of a new zebra crossing facility on Station Road adjacent to Alderbury Road; and

- Provision of improved non-signalised pedestrian facilities at the Waterside Drive / Station Road junction to the north of the railway bridge.

- Provision of a new traffic island on Waterside Drive, as an uncontrolled crossing point;

Conversion of the Harrow Market roundabout into a signalised junction

Harrow Market connects the approaches to Langley Village from Station Road (to the north), Langley Road (to the west) and High Street, Langley (to the south). This ultimately became the first stage of the overall mitigation measures on the network in preparation for the anticipated closure of Hollow Hill Lane by network Rail. Hence, better traffic flow through Langley went hand in hand with access to the station, and safer, more efficient travel to the station for all road users, including cyclists and pedestrians.

The main elements left out of the final design were the reconfiguration of station car park including a new drop-off (kiss-and-ride) area in the station forecourt.

Crossrail Scheme

Along the SBC managed scheme, Crossrail/Network Rail proposed a scheme including elements undertaken as part of their On-Station Improvement Programme Step Free Access programme.

Nb: This wider scheme and its direct impacts have not been evaluated in this report, though they have relevance to the combined effect of the respective improvement schemes.

4. Project Management

4.1. Key dates

Construction started on site in March 2018.
The work was completed in September 2019.

4.2. Construction team

The main extent of the construction work was carried out by Amey, the Council's term maintenance contractor, with the final construction tasks completed by SBC's Direct Service Organisation (DSO), who took over from Amey as the main contractors.

An excellent health and safety record was maintained for the duration of the project, with no serious incidents on site during the project.

4.3. Programme variations

The commencement of the construction period was delayed to a certain extent due to concerns about the value of re-developing the car park at the station. Additional modelling was carried out which showed that there would be no nett benefits as a result of this specific element of the proposal. Furthermore, there was increasing awareness and concern about the expected closure of Hollow Hill Lane. As a result, with approval from the Local Enterprise Partnership, the plans were redeveloped to broaden the scope of the highway improvements, to incorporate further improves to station access and also benefit in terms of traffic movements.

The original station access work had been due to be completed within 2018. Following the revised scope for the scheme, the end date for full completion was revised to September 2019. Once the detailed designs were revised, there were no significant delays at the construction stage.

4.4. Costs and financial control

The SBC elements of the project were completed on budget, with a total expenditure of £1,760,000. This included the original station access features as well as the revisions to the designs for the junction improvements which were accommodated within the eventual overall scheme.

The actual costs of the related Network Rail element of the project have not been made available to the Council.

5. Review and evaluation of the outcomes

5.1. Overall outcome

The scheme was completed satisfactorily, to a high technical standard. Due to the revised scope of the scheme, the construction work took somewhat longer than had originally been anticipated. However, the final scheme delivered provided additional improvements, which further enhanced the accessibility features and also served as the first phase of a more extensive highway improvement programme. All of this was achieved within the budget for the original scheme proposal.

The infrastructure across the site has provided better, safer controlled crossing points for both cyclists and pedestrians, including both new zebra crossings and signalisation phases at key junctions. These have left to an improvement in road safety, both actual and perceived. The crossings have been backed up by refreshed cycle lane markings and all necessary signage.

Limited quantitative data has been available for this evaluation exercise. In this case, modal shift was not a specific objective in the business case, though this is always an important high level aspiration and increasingly a necessity in terms of sustainability. However, it is challenging at this stage to confidently state the level of modal shift from private car to active travel and public transport achieved by this scheme. This level of assessment is particularly challenging at the time of writing this report, given the recent impacts of the COVID-19 situation and the likelihood of ongoing changes to behavioural patterns.

The Langley Station Access scheme has delivered an attractive, safe, more efficient and better connected area of public realm to facilitate access to the station. This includes infrastructure designed to meet the needs of all road users, many of whom engage in onward travel via rail.

The scheme specifically includes enhanced facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, notably for those who might otherwise struggle to access the station. Active travel improvements also contribute to linked journeys and hence serve to promote the uptake of public transport, in this case mainly by rail travel. The wider, economic imperatives have also been addressed with the measures designed to deliver better traffic management.

The redesign of the Harrow Market roundabout to a signalised junction, and the improvements to the junctions with Alderbury Road and Waterside Drive have also contributed to the improvement in traffic flow. However, further changes are required to build on these

improvements, and these are currently being delivered in an extended scheme (on site at the time of writing).

Overall, through a combination of measures, the station approach is now more accessible to all road users, and the measures implemented have increased both accessibility and mobility. The full benefits (notably modal shift) will only be fully realised, though, when backed up by ongoing, long-term behavioural changes. In support of active travel and public transport, especially, the Council is increasingly committed to promoting behavioural change. Most notably this is through extensive engagement and travel planning, carried out by the Access team, which works closely with schools, businesses and other members of the community, learning about their travel experiences and habits and making appropriate recommendations on all aspects of travel. All of this work is essential in order to build upon the opportunities, and the actual success, provided by infrastructure measures including this Langley Station Access scheme.

Railway station project and the combined impacts

The outcomes of the improvements within the station have not been assessed in this report, since these come under the responsibility and management of the Crossrail / Network Rail team.

5.2. Specific objectives of the Station Access scheme

Objective
1. Improve pedestrian access to Langley station
2. Improve access for cyclists to Langley station
3. Provide reconfigured parking arrangements and drop off facility for Langley Station
4. Improve the perception of safety and security at and around Langley Station

5.3. Improve pedestrian access to Langley Station

A major element of the scheme was the promotion of walking and cycling, with the specific objective of improving access to the station. Most notably, this included new or amended road crossings, in Station Road and also in Alderbury Road and Waterside Drive.

This crossing point enhancements have also created safer passage for pedestrians, as well as more efficient routes, particularly for students, children and other vulnerable road users. The new layout of the various junctions and overall approach to the station have enhanced the area of public realm in the vicinity, making it generally more amenable and attractive, as well as accessible.

Junction of Station Road and Waterside Drive

The improvements delivered at this location include a re-configured signalised crossing, with a new pedestrian phase, plus tactile paving, resurfaced footway, and new signage indicating shared pedestrian/cyclist usage permitted.

New crossing island in Waterside Drive

5.4. Improve access for cyclists to Langley station

To further promote cycling, a new cycle docking station was installed on the verge at the junction with Station Road and Alderbury Road. This is part of the borough wide cycle hire scheme. The advisory cycle lane on Langley Road has been refreshed. Overall, the scheme design has made the area in front of the station safer and easier to navigate. For cyclists, especially, there is also now a better link with cycle routes in the surrounding network.

At the time of riding, a review of cycle hire usage is being undertaken. The early indications are that cycle hire numbers have declined to a certain extent in recent times. This is likely to be due in part to the impacts of COVID-19, are renewed uptake of hire bikes is anticipated. There has, however, been considerable uptake in the use of e-Scooters, currently on trial across the borough. Again, more information has been requested with specific reference to Langley, and this will be provided at the earliest opportunity.

New cycle docking station in Alderbury Road

Active Travel – connectivity

The improvements to accessibility by active travel have positive impacts on the uptake of public transport. The measures introduces in the scheme promote rail travel for all purposes, but especially commuting, enhancing connectivity, the trading estate and the town centre.
This helps to create or take advantage of existing commercial opportunities, but in a more socially inclusive way and without the damaging impacts that would otherwise arise from travel by private, motorised means. This provides better connectivity for travellers making multi-modal journeys, again in a safe and easily accessible way.

5.5. Reconfigured parking arrangements and drop off facility for Langley Station

Noting the removal of the redevelopment of the car park at the station from the designs, the scheme as delivered does not formally increase parking capacity. However, the potential for on-street pay-and-display bays on Waterside Drive has been unlocked. These bays were previously underused and continue to be an option to increase access to the station via car travel. Although travel by private car is generally not considered *sustainable*, it would not be realistic to exclude this mode of travel from the Langley station area (or indeed across the borough), given the need for growth and economic sustainability.

5.6. Improve perception of safety / security at and around Langley Station

The objective to improve safety and perceptions of safety relates most closely to the related Rail managed scheme at the station itself, rather than the SBC access and public realm scheme. Levels of reported crime at Langley Station and its car park are currently not available. However, the objective to reduce crime levels is more closely related to the internal station improvements, managed by Network Rail and the Crossrail team, though some studies suggest that only a marginal change may result from the type of measures implemented within the station. Hence, crime levels are not considered to be an appropriate evaluation metric for the SBC scheme.

In terms of perception of safety in the vicinity of the station, the SBC development of the station access scheme has improved the location. Although somewhat subjective, this has created a more welcoming environment, and one which appears to be safer as well as more attractive and better designed. It is reasonable, therefore, to consider that the scheme has improved the perception of safety. To validate this, it will be necessary to conduct extensive public engagement, and to seek their views and perceptions directly.

5.7. Road Safety

Although not considered a high risk site, the Council has provided increased road safety measures within the scheme designs. This includes the introduction of two new zebra crossings in Station Road, near to the entrance to Langley College and at the junction with Alderbury Road, also a number of new crossing islands at various locations.

In addition, the scheme includes new pedestrian crossing phases at the signalised junction of Station Road and Waterside Drive, as well as the installation of tactile paving at the crossing points. Furthermore, resurfacing of the footways has improved the quality of surface for pedestrians and cyclists throughout the site.

New zebra crossing point in Station Road near to the junction with Alderbury Road

New crossing island in Station Road, approaching Harrow Market

Nb a full accident assessment was not provided in the original business case. However, the lowering of the speed limit (to 20mph in the area around the station, the footway and cycleway improvements and the increased number of formal pedestrian crossings are all expected to result in an improved level of safety, particularly for vulnerable road users. Overall it is expected that the impact of the scheme on safety will be slightly positive. The location will continue to be monitored and any appropriate action will be taken.

5.8. Additional measures resulting from the change in scope

The redesign of the Harrow Market roundabout, along with the junction improvements at Waterside Drive were successfully completed.

In the light of the ongoing traffic management relating to the High Street (Langley) highway widening, the current state of the road network does not allow for meaningful assessment of the traffic related impacts of the additional highway improvements referred to above.
However, from network management overviews carried out prior to the commencement of the scheme extension, the new junction layouts are considered to be operating well.
A comprehensive assessment of the impacts of the full Langley scheme will be carried out at the appropriate intervals following completion of all outstanding elements.

The old roundabout at Harrow Market, shortly before being replaced

Approaching the new signalised junction at Harrow Market, from Langley Road

6. Growth related outcomes

6.1. Growth Forecast and Actuals

In terms of growth, the predicted outcomes of the project included new housing units, along with two highways outputs.

Predicted Outcomes	**Planned**	**Actual (to September 2021)**
New housing units	500	TBA
Transport and Highways Outputs		
Total length of resurfaced roads	400m	400m
Total length of new cycle ways	400m	400m

The proposed Transport and Highways measures have been delivered as planned.

The actual new housing number to date is not yet known. This is due in part to the ongoing development of the highway network in this location, as part of the overall plans to mitigate the increased levels of traffic in response to the closure of Hollow Hill Lane by Network Rail in the next few years. The date for this closure has not yet been determined.

Furthermore, as stated in the business case, *"Objectives relating to economic growth through investment in business and housing will be difficult to measure in the short-term, and cannot be directly attributable to this scheme in particular. However, longer term evaluation will seek to monitor economic, employment and housing growth*."

7. Further / Ongoing Monitoring recommended

Cycle hire scheme / docking station usage

The number of passengers accessing the station will continue to be measured and compared against forecast background growth to determine whether the accessibility improvements have been as beneficial as anticipated.

Community Safety

Subject to availability, studies of police crime numbers for the area are required in order to gain a greater understanding of the wider impacts of the introduction of the scheme.

Overall, the Council is committed to ongoing studies to determine the actual figures for the combined impacts of all completed LEP funded schemes. Ongoing monitoring will be necessary, along with an agreed formula to come up with the most relevant and most accurate figures for these outcomes.

As a general rule, the Council also considers that a one year period is too soon to provide a realistic assessment of actual outcomes of this type. The five year evaluation report is expected to produce a much more helpful review of actual growth.

Furthermore, in this case in particular, due to the extension to the Langley scheme, currently ongoing (the Langley Highway Improvement scheme), the expected outcomes and evaluation periods are all likely to require revision.

8. Links to wider Growth Fund projects and Network activity

The Langley Station Access / Public Realm scheme is part of a wide-ranging programme of schemes being delivered by Slough Borough Council. This programme is a collective response to the diverse challenges and opportunities, including the need for improved traffic management, promotion of public transport, increased levels of active travel, improved air quality and related environmental requirements, and so forth.

The Langley Station Access scheme is an important contribution to the promotion of rail travel, and to intermodal journeys on the network.

However, the high level of commuting across the borough and the various needs of residents inevitably mean that travel by private car remains a necessity for many at present. Hence the original Langley scheme is part of an overall package of measures.

In developing an integrated, sustainable transport solution, the Langley scheme connects mostly closely with the SMaRT projects, phases 1 and 2, which promote public transport patronage. Phase two is currently in construction, with the MRT element due to be completed by March 2022. Phase one proved MRT infrastructure on the A4/London Road (tangential to High Street, Langley). Phase two extends the infrastructure towards Heathrow Airport, and also includes highway improvements to the Sutton Lane gyratory.

In addition, an experimental bus lane scheme has been in progress on the A4, between Uxbridge roundabout and the west of the borough, since the summer of 2020. This was an emergency response to the Government's call for scheme to ensure the post-COVID recovery period is not car led.

Hence, the level of connectivity is becoming more comprehensive for both motorists and bus users. Junction re-designs are also making better provision for cyclists and pedestrians.

In terms of active travel, the cycle dock station in the public realm area at Langley station is one of many across the borough. Further cycling and walking schemes are expected to be developed in Slough, and these will draw on the emerging Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

All of these schemes and potential schemes form part of an overall plan to create a more economically active and environmentally and socially inclusive town. This sustainable approached is underpinned by a safer, more resilient, more accessible transport network, with reduced congestion, better air quality, and more attractive alternatives for business, workers and residents.

9. Langley Highway Improvements – scheme extension

The subsequent scheme, currently in progress in Langley, is an extension to the highway improvement measures that were ultimately incorporated into the original Langley Station Access scheme (LEP ref 2.21), following design changes and additions.

This extension to the original Langley scheme focuses more closely on the highway improvement elements. This comprises a more holistic response to the expected re-distribution of traffic from Hollow Hill Lane to High Street, which is due to be permanently closed. The scheme extension is therefore designed to increase capacity and to reduce additional congestion and delay through Langley.

Although it was originally presented as one overall extension project, this follow up development is split into three, interlinking sections, all of which have been designed to enhance the originally redeveloped site still further, as well as proving new capacity as part of the overall mitigation measures, and new features to further enhance the specific location.
At the time of writing this report, sections 1 and 2 are currently in construction. Section 3 is due to commence on site in late October 2021. All three sections are due to be completed by March 2022.

The overall aspiration over the medium term is to redevelop the whole route from Langley Station, via Station Road and High Street Langley, to the junction with the A4 / London Road. This will complete the mitigation measures set out above, and will provide an even more resilient and free flowing north/south link.

Plans for the future are expected to include consideration of reallocation of roadspace, for public transport and cyclists. Hence, the highway improvements are ultimately expected to facilitate more sustainable travel options for all road users.

10. Lessons Learnt and Recommendations

In relation to the removal of the station car park redevelopment from this scheme, changes in scope at a relatively advanced stage of the preparations are always likely to cause setbacks and delays to the completion of the programme. However, it was important to ensure that all aspects

of the scheme delivered satisfactory levels of benefit. The benefits arising from the revised scheme far outweighed the temporary delays to the overall programme.

Having noted the value of the additional measures, the traffic management improvements did not directly relate to the specific objectives of the original scheme, i.e. greater accessibility, promotion of active travel and improved connectivity with public transport. The eventual package of measures do all contribute to a wider, more sustainable transport solution designed to meet the needs of all road users, however the benefits were swayed to some extent in favour of traffic management improvements. There is a risk here of delivering a mixed message, here, and it will be important to provide a clear narrative and consistent policies in support of sustainable solutions as we go forward.

The need for mitigation of the expected impacts of the closure of Hollow Hill Lane was ultimately unavoidable. Rather than this being a lesson learnt, there is heightened awareness of the potential and actual impacts of national improvement projects which are not under the control of the Council. Comprehensive engagement with all parties concerned will continue to be essential.

11. Final comments

Slough Borough Council would like to express its appreciation to the Local Enterprise Partnership for the Growth Fund financial contribution and various other forms of LEP / Berkshire Local Transport Body support enabling the delivery of this project. The resulting infrastructure and supporting measures have been successfully constructed and implemented to good effect. The various features have created a safer, more attractive area of public realm, specifically improving social inclusion and accessibility to Langley Station. Increased connectivity has been achieved, with sustainable travel options, including public transport and active travel being made more realistic and attractive at this location. The scheme also offers actual and potential benefits to network users, commuters, and residents, increasing wider connectivity with the both the rest of the borough and with neighbouring locations including Heathrow Airport and beyond.

End of report

Appendix 2

Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership

Independent Assessment Summary Report: Langley Station Access

One Year Impact Report

October 2021

www.hatch.co.uk

Independent Assessment

i. This technical note provides an independent assessment of the one-year Impact Report submitted by Slough Borough Council (SBC) in relation to the Langley Station Access project.

ii. The scheme received £1.5 million funding through the Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (TVB LEP) Local Growth Fund deal. As part of the on-going assurance process, TVB LEP requires all funded schemes to produce one-year and five-year post-implementation impact reports to demonstrate how each scheme has performed against expectations.

Process

iii. The one and five-year impact reports are expected to assess the following elements of the scheme:
   a. did it get built?
   b. was it to plan?
   c. was it on time?
   d. was it to budget?
   e. is it working ok?
   f. what impact has it had?
   g. any learning points?

iv. Hatch have applied these criteria, but also sought to use the process as positive influence to identify specific ways in which project scheme design or delivery could be enhanced to enhance future value of this scheme or other future LEP funded schemes.

Scheme Summary

v. Slough Borough Council received £1.5m from the TVB LEP Local Growth Fund as part of an overall estimated scheme cost of £1,760,000. TVB LEP's contribution to the scheme accounted for 85% of all estimated scheme costs.

vi. Station Road is a north/south link running from Langley Station to the Harrow Marker junction (previously a roundabout) in the heart of Langley Village. This connects with Langley Road, to the west, and High Street (Langley) which ultimately connects with the A4/London Road.

vii. This specific project focusses on accessibility around the station which has not been socially inclusive and environmentally focused modes of travel. Linked to this, the station approach area was not previously helpful overall to people with reduced mobility. The scheme was therefore designed to address both aspects; to improve access to the station, improve accessibility at the location, and specifically to encourage walking and cycling as well as public transport.

viii. The planned work consisted of the following elements:

- Improved cycle parking facilities within and around the station:
  - Introduction of a Cycle Hire Slough docking station within grassed area just north of Alderbury Road.
- Improvement of cycling facilities on-street in the vicinity of the station, including:
  - Provision of a zebra crossing on Station Road adjacent to Alderbury Road;
  - Introduction of shared use areas on Station Road and the junction with Alderbury Road; and
  - Introduction of Advance Stop Line (ASLs) on the Waterside Drive arm of the Waterside Drive / Station Road junction.
- Improved pedestrian facilities to and from the station, both from the north and the south approaches:
  - Provision of a new, signalised, diagonal Toucan crossing at Station Road/ Waterside Drive junction;
  - Provision of a new, signalised, Toucan crossing across the Access Road, at Station Road/ Waterside Drive junction;
  - Provision of a new zebra crossing facility on Station Road adjacent to Alderbury Road; and
  - Provision of improved non-signalised pedestrian facilities at the Waterside Drive / Station Road junction to the north of the railway bridge.
  - Provision of a new traffic island on Waterside Drive, as an uncontrolled crossing point;
- Conversion of the Harrow Market roundabout into a signalised junction:
  - Connects the approaches to Langley Village from Station Road (to the north), Langley Road (to the west) and High Street, Langley (to the south).
  - The reconfiguration of the station car park including a new drop-off area was left out of the final design.

ix. It is important to note that the planned improvements were part of a much wider strategic programme being delivered by Slough Borough Council. This programme is a collective response to the diverse challenges and opportunities, including the need for improved traffic management, promotion of public transport, increased levels of active travel, improved air quality and related environmental requirements, and so forth.

x. The Langley Highway Improvement (scheme extension) is currently in progress will redistribute traffic from Hollow Hill Lane to High Street, which is due to be permanently closed. The scheme extension will increase capacity and reduce congestion and delay through Langley.

xi. The business case for the proposed scheme outlined how the performance of the scheme would be assessed against the project objectives to demonstrate the value for money for the funding of the scheme. These objectives related to improved pedestrian and cyclist access to Langley station, provide reconfigured parking arrangements and drop off facility for Langley Station and improved perception of safety and security.

xii. The scheme was completed in September 2019, however, due to the impacts of COVID-19 and the notably impact on traffic levels across the network, it was agreed with TVB LEP and the Berkshire Local Transport Body that the monitoring report be delayed until all the COVID restrictions had been lifted.

Review Findings

General Observations

xiii. The planned works started slightly behind schedule in March 2018 following the concerns about the value of re-developing the car park at the station. Additional modelling was carried out which showed that there would be no net benefit of this element of the scheme. The initial timeframe was for all work to be completed within 2018 but, with the revised scope of the scheme, the end date for full completion was revised to September 2019. The revised date of completion was met by Slough Borough Council.

xiv. The scheme was delivered on budget for a final cost of £1.76m. This included the original station access features as well as the revisions to the

designs for the junction improvements which were accommodated within the eventual overall scheme.

xv. The one-year report includes helpful visual evidence of the pre-scheme locations and post-scheme implementation of the improvements. These clearly bring to life how the project funding has made enhancements and changes to the area improving the access for pedestrians and cyclists, including both new zebra crossings and signalisation phases at key junctions. These have led to an improvement in road safety, both actual and perceived. The crossings have been added refreshed cycle lane markings and all necessary signage.

xvi. Limited quantitative data has been available and was not provided within the One Year evaluation report. Modal switch from private car usage to active travel and public transport was not a specific objective in the business case but was seen as a necessity in terms of sustainability. Given the impacts of COVID-19 at the time of writing this report, it was possible to investigate ongoing changes to behavioural patterns.

xvii. SBC's overall conclusion is that the infrastructure and supporting measures have been successfully constructed and implemented to good effect. The various features have created a safer, more attractive area of public realm, specifically improving social inclusion and accessibility to Langley Station.

Conclusions

xviii. The SBC one-year impact report is a well-constructed and balanced document, making good use of the available evidence at this stage. Whilst the agreed delay in producing this report was agreed with TVB LEP and Berkshire Local Transport Body no quantitative evidence or survey data was provided at this stage.

xix. The report also provides very helpful photographs of the before and after context for the scheme which brings to life the changes which have been implemented because of TVB LEP and SBC investment. While the report helpfully outlines how the scheme has addressed the multiple issues and challenges surrounding safety and access to Langley station, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists.

xx. SBC recognises that undertaking a one-year impact report is too soon to provide a realistic assessment of the actual outcomes of the scheme. The Council expects to be able to provide a much more detailed review of the scheme at the five-year evaluation report milestone.

xxi. The key points for consideration, both to enhance the future outcomes of the project and to facilitate wider learning, include:

- While the report provides a positive indication of the scheme improving the safety and accessibility to Langley Station, providing quantitative data for the five-year report will be important to evaluate the impact and outcomes of the scheme. Data includes measuring the uptake in public transport in the area, walking and cycling counts and usage numbers of the cycle docking station in Alderbury Road. This approach to future monitoring would provide greater assurance on project impacts and outcomes to TVLEP and SBC.
- The scheme focussed on addressing a number of challenges to do with accessibility and safety to Langley Station. Going beyond qualitative and inferred assessments of these types of observed changes, future monitoring and evaluation could also consider local survey data, air quality and road safety data along the corridor compared to pre-investment.
- For future monitoring reports, providing clarity on whether the revised start date of the scheme was on time. It will be helpful to see if the revised timeframe for a project of this nature was met.
- For future monitoring reports, provide a breakdown of costs to show that the estimated costs and costs incurred from the scheme align and show that the scheme was delivered on budget.
- For future monitoring reports, the report should include key maps and locations of the scheme interventions and, where possible, visual evidence to help contextualise the pre-scheme investment position and the post-investment position.