

# **A426/A4071 Avon Mill and Hunters Lane Transport Improvement Scheme Development Summary**

## **1. Scheme history**

- 1.1. The proposals for the scheme have been developed over a long period of time. Work to consider the opportunity for an improvement scheme at Avon Mill and Hunters Lane started during construction of the Rugby Western Relief Road which was completed in 2010.
  
- 1.2. The scheme was identified in the Warwickshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 as the highest priority county road improvement within the Rugby area. Rugby Borough Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), which listed the infrastructure required to support the delivery of housing and employment development identified in the 2011 Local Development Framework Core Strategy, categorised a scheme at Avon Mill / Hunters Lane as being critical to the planned development at Gateway Rugby on the A426 Leicester Road corridor and at Houlton to the east of Hillmorton.
  
- 1.3. Whilst work continued in the intervening period paid for primarily from developer contributions, the project gathered momentum from 2018 when the A426 was named by the Department for Transport (DfT) as being part of the Major Road Network (MRN), a classification of road comprising the country's busiest and most economically important local authority 'A' roads. Importantly, a new funding programme for MRN roads was announced at the same time. In 2019 the Council made the case to Midlands Connect that the Avon Mill and Hunters Lane project be considered for MRN funding, and the scheme was subsequently submitted to the DfT as one of seven priority MRN schemes for the midlands area. This led to the County Council being awarded £260,000 grant funding by DfT to pay for further development work on the scheme and this work has led to the current proposals. You can read more about the County Council's response to the MRN programme in a June 2019 report to Cabinet.

[Meeting of Cabinet on Tuesday 11 June 2019, 1.45 pm – Warwickshire County Council](#)

## **2. Options identification and assessment**

The remainder of this document summarises the options identification and assessment process which led to the selection of a preferred option. More detailed and technical appraisal of this process is contained in the A426 Avon Mill / Hunters Lane Improvement Scheme Options Assessment Report (November 2022).

### **2.1. How were options identified?**

An initial long list of options with the potential to deliver the scheme objectives were identified through workshops involving Warwickshire County Council, consultants from Atkins and key external stakeholders.

### **2.2. What options were considered?**

The options identified were:

- An additional bridge over the River Avon for all vehicles plus a separate foot/cycle bridge with the following sub-options:
  - Avon Mill roundabout either enlarged or replaced by a T-junction controlled by traffic signals.
  - Newbold Road/Hunters Lane junction either controlled by traffic signals or replaced by an oval or elliptical roundabout.
- Provide additional capacity for traffic at Avon Mill roundabout, but no new bridge over the River Avon.
- Downgrade the A426 and direct traffic onto Lawford Road.
- Introduce a grade-separated junction which would allow traffic on the primary route to continue straight through with traffic joining and leaving the main route via slip-roads.
- Provide an additional railway crossing on Newbold Road.
- Provide an additional bridge for walking and cycling only.
- Provide an additional bridge for public transport only.
- Focus the scheme on providing measures which prioritise buses.
- Introduce a park and ride.

### **2.3. How were options assessed?**

The long list of options was initially reviewed to ensure only those which represented realistic options were taken forward for further work. Options which would clearly fail to meet the objectives, were considered inconsistent with local, regional or national programmes and strategies, or were considered unviable or unacceptable for reasons such as cost, environmental impact or land requirements were discounted. This led to all but two options being discounted.

#### 2.4. Which options were taken forward?

The remaining options were:

- **Roundabout scheme:** Additional bridge over the River Avon for all vehicles with an enlarged roundabout at Avon Mill and an oval roundabout at the Newbold Road/Hunters Lane junction along with a new foot/cycle bridge.
- **Traffic signal scheme:** Additional bridge over the River Avon for all vehicles with a traffic signal controlled junction at Avon Mill and an oval roundabout at the Newbold Road/Hunters Lane junction along with a new foot/cycle bridge.

Both schemes would provide the same level of facilities for walking and cycling. This includes a new cycle route to connect the existing cycle route on the west side of the A426 Leicester Road to Wood Street via an upgraded signal-controlled crossing over Leicester Road, a new foot/cycle bridge set back from the road and a shared use footway / cycleway on the eastern side of the A426 Newbold Road to Wood Street.

#### 2.5. How was a preferred option chosen?

These two options underwent further assessment, including through detailed traffic modelling to understand how they would affect journey times, traffic queues and bus journeys across the Rugby area. This assessment showed that overall, the roundabout scheme performed better than both the traffic signal scheme and the current arrangement. It showed the roundabout scheme has the greatest potential to reduce network delay, improve journey times and reduce queuing on the most congested arms of the roundabout. The traffic modelling also indicated the traffic signal scheme would increase journey times and queues compared to the current layout. As both options provide the same standard of facilities for cycling and walking the roundabout scheme was selected as the preferred option based on the results of the traffic modelling.

#### 2.6. Was any additional testing carried out?

Following the selection of the roundabout scheme as the preferred option, further assessments were carried out to understand its impact on public transport and carbon emissions. This showed:

- **Public transport impacts:** The traffic modelling indicated the scheme would improve average bus journey times overall and make public transport a more attractive mode of transport.
- **Carbon emissions impact:** The assessments indicated the scheme would deliver a 0.42% reduction in Carbon Dioxide Equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e) by reducing traffic emissions linked to congestion. This assessment did not take account of the improved walking and cycling facilities which can be expected to encourage more people to walk or cycle in preference to driving and result in further reductions in CO<sub>2</sub>e.