

EASTERN CORRIDOR JUNCTIONS IMPROVEMENTS - PLYMOUTH ROAD UPDATE

Executive Decision briefing report



PROJECT DETAILS

The Eastern Corridor Junction Improvements Programme (ECJIP) is a strategic transport scheme to reduce congestion and thereby improve journey time reliability for all users, improve infrastructure to encourage walking and cycling, reduce pedestrian severance and improve air quality. The scheme will achieve this by upgrading all the traffic signal controlled junctions in Plympton on Plymouth Road between Marsh Mills roundabout and Glen Road and through new and improved pedestrian and cycling infrastructure.

The scheme includes the following:

- The introduction of new traffic signals incorporating modern technology to replace aged equipment.
- Targeted road widening at key congestion points including the provision of a new A38 only lane on the eastbound approach to Marsh Mills roundabout and the extension of the Plymouth Road right turn lane for Cot Hill.
- New push button pedestrian crossings at the Woodford Avenue and Larkham Lane junctions and upgrading of the Plymouth Road Toucan crossing just west of Longbridge Road.
- Extensive resurfacing of footways (Larkham Lane, Plymouth Road approaching Cot Hill, Woodford Avenue and Coypool Rd).
- New on road cycle lanes installed along Plymouth Road from Larkham Lane to Dingle Rd in both directions. The bridge section between the Saltram and Plym Valley paths on the westbound Plymouth Road carriageway has also been widened and repaved to be a better off road facility. New advanced stop lines have been provided for on road cycle facilities.

Plymouth Road is a key strategic route and currently experiences very high traffic flows, congestion throughout the day and significant delays during peak traffic periods. It is also part of the city's strategic bus network and includes the Coypool Park and Ride. Bus services regularly experience delays which result in unreliable and inconsistent journey times contributing to public transport not being seen as an attractive option.

The new walking and cycling infrastructure improvements incorporated within the scheme are part of the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan. The scheme when completed will reduce journey times along the corridor for all modes which will help to unlock growth in the east of the city helping to encourage more sustainable trips to be made by better linking communities.

The project is one of the critical schemes that underpin the delivery of the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan (JLP) and complements other strategic transport projects such as the Forder Valley Link Road scheme which are needed to support the significant number of new homes and jobs planned for the east of the city over the next 15 years.

PROJECT COST

The costs of the project have increased due to the following complexities:

- Works being halted because of the Covid19 pandemic and the decision by the contractor, South West Highways, to temporarily close all construction sites in the city to review and risk assess work activities with respect to Government guidance for safe construction.
- Works taking longer or costing more due to the contractor needing to implement new ways of working to adhere to Government guidance for safe construction with respect to the Covid19 pandemic

- Works taking longer and therefore costing more due to disrupted supply lines during the pandemic
- Need to make safe a formerly unidentified underground structure at Coypool Road
- Need for additional monitoring and investigation works at the Cot Hill junction due to unforeseen ground conditions

The most recent cost estimate for the scheme indicates an £0.759m increase in budget from £4.644m to £5.403m is required.

FUNDING

The £0.759m increase in budget will be met from the annual Integrated Transport Block capital grant (£0.679m) funding for Transport and section 106 developer contributions (£0.080m) to support strategic transport improvements.

DELIVERY TIMESCALES

Construction of the scheme started in September 2019 with an original completion date of September 2020. The suspension of the works due to the Covid pandemic, the additional works required due to the unidentified structure at Coypool and the unforeseen ground conditions at Cot Hill have resulted in a potential completion date of March 2021 for the scheme.

MEMBER AND STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT

Public and ward member consultation was undertaken in on the proposed improvements in the spring and autumn of 2017 and has strong support from the local community.

The former City Council Investment Board (CCIB) recommended approval of the Business Case in November 2018.

Councillor Mark Coker, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning & Infrastructure was consulted on this budget increase in November 2020 and Councillor Mark Lowry Cabinet Member for Finance was consulted in January 2021.