

SOUTHWAY TO PLYMBRIDGE WALKING AND CYCLING IMPROVEMENTS – PHASE 2 SCOPE INCREASE

Executive Decision briefing note



PROJECT SUMMARY

The complete Southway to Plymbridge scheme, part of the Transforming Cities Fund programme, will provide 4.7 km of off-road strategic cycle network, connecting Southway, an area of deprivation to the Northern corridor and Eastern corridor growth areas along with leisure opportunities on the Plym Valley Trail. The route also connects the eastern corridor to employment opportunities on the northern corridor via the Plym Valley Trail. The first phase, completed in June 2021 consisted of walking and cycling improvements in Southway as well as substantial improvements to two shared use paths connecting Plymbridge Road to Miller Way.

Phase 2 and phase 3 of the project delivers walking and cycling improvements alongside Plymbridge Road and other roads that connect to Plymbridge Road.

DECISION TO BE TAKEN

To issue a compensation event to South West Highways to increase the scope of phase 2 of the Southway to Plymbridge road walking and cycling improvement scheme within the currently available budget for the project.

REASONS FOR DECISION

Executive Decision T27 21/22 provided authority to award a contract for the delivery of a reduced scope phase 2 scheme with a contract value of £850,480. The scope had been reduced in order to hold sufficient funds in reserve as local match for a funding bid that would have enabled delivery of Phase 3 of the Southway to Plymbridge Road walking and cycling scheme. Funding has not been awarded and therefore phase 3 is not affordable. This means that the local match funding that had been allocated to phase 3 can now be reallocated to increase the scope of the Phase 2 works through a compensation event, maximising the scale of improvements.

This decision will enable delivery of as much of the scheme as possible with the funds available within a single contract in order to maximise benefits and value for money and minimise overall disruption on the network.

These additional improvements that will be delivered through these additional funds have already been consulted on. They include:

- An additional length of traffic free walking and cycling route along the south side of Plymbridge Road.
- Traffic free walking and cycling route connecting the recently improved path to Miller Way via Yardley Gardens.
- Additional off-road improvements and crossings providing connections onto Estover Road.

The council will continue to seek funding opportunities to deliver phase 3 of this project.

SCHEME OBJECTIVES

Plymouth's population is forecast to reach 300,000 by 2034, an increase of 17%, with an accompanying increase in economic opportunity. Modelling forecasts show that by 2034, even with currently committed transport schemes and modal shift away from private car to sustainable transport of between 5 and 10%, congestion will worsen. Specifically, congestion is impacting on public transport reliability on the Northern corridor.

28% of Plymouth households do not have access to a vehicle, with this increasing to 45% in some neighbourhoods served by the northern corridor. An expanding and improving walking and cycling network, linking to new jobs in key growth areas will help create inclusive, low carbon growth, improve productivity and

address unemployment which is currently 4.7% –1.4% higher than the regional average, and 0.3% higher than the national average.

To address this sustainably, and help make Plymouth an attractive place in which to live, work and invest, the Joint Local Plan identifies that major infrastructure investments are needed. With 67% of Plymouth commuters working in the city, and with 38% of car journeys less than 2km, walking and cycling have a key role to play.

With transport representing around 28% of carbon emissions¹, a proportion that is set to increase substantially, investment in walking and cycling to reduce overall car trips through a substantial transfer from private car is essential if we are to meet the Council's pledge to make Plymouth carbon neutral by 2030. This scheme will also help address physical inactivity which is a major problem in Plymouth with just 18.6% of the adult population exercising for 30 minutes three times a week. Physical inactivity is estimated to cost the NHS £4.1 million pa with far greater costs to the wider economy.

TARGET COST AND FINANCE

The planned compensation event that is the subject of this decision, is entirely funded from the Northern Corridor SCN Growth Deal funding award.

COMPENSATION EVENT COST

This decision increases the expected value of the target cost by £591,000. This will increase the overall value of the contract with SWH to a total of £1,441,480.

DELIVERY TIMESCALES

The main works for the 2nd phase of the scheme is planned to start in April, 2022, with construction planned to finish in September with the additional scope.

MEMBER AND STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT

The delegated decision to approve the orders to enable the scheme to be implemented was made by the Cabinet member for Transport and Highways on 17th of November, 2021, details of which are available [here](#). This decision included the elements that are included in this increase in scope.

The Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure was consulted on the proposal to increase the scope of this contract on 30 March 2022.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The alternative option is to proceed with the reduced scope scheme but this would reduce the extent of the benefits achieved. To then deliver the additional elements at a later point would be substantially more costly.

¹ <http://naei.beis.gov.uk/>