



CULLOMPTON TOWN CENTRE RELIEF ROAD

Preferred Route Options Report



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CULLOMPTON TOWN CENTRE RELIEF ROAD

Preferred Route Options Report

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CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1.	BACKGROUND	1
1.2.	PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT	1
2.	PUBLIC CONSULTATION OUTCOME	3
2.1.	INTRODUCTION	3
2.2.	PUBLIC CONSULTATION RESPONSE	3
2.3.	SUMMARY	3
3.	FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT	5
4.	ECOLOGY	7
4.1.	INTRODUCTION	7
4.2.	IMPACT ASSESSMENT	7
4.3.	SUMMARY	9
5.	HERITAGE	11
5.1.	INTRODUCTION	11
6.	TRAFFIC ASSESSMENT	13
6.1.	INTRODUCTION	13
6.2.	SUMMARY	13
7.	ALTERNATIVE ROUTES	15
7.1.	INTRODUCTION	15
7.2.	ALTERNATIVE ROUTE 1	15
7.3.	ALTERNATIVE ROUTE 2	15
7.4.	ALTERNATIVE ROUTE 3	15



8.	SCHEME DELIVERY	18
8.1.	LAND EVALUATION	18
8.2.	CONSTRUCTION COST	18
9.	PREFERRED ROUTE RECOMMENDATION	21
9.1.	INTRODUCTION	21
9.2.	REVIEW	21
10.	TECHNICAL VERIFICATION SCOPE	25
10.1.	TECHNICAL VERIFICATION	25

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX B

APPENDIX C

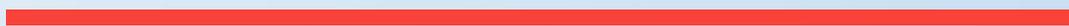
APPENDIX D

APPENDIX E

APPENDIX F

1

INTRODUCTION



1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND

A Relief Road east of the town centre of Cullompton has been included in the Local Plan since 2013 to divert north-south traffic away from Fore Street and through the town centre. The Relief Road will help to tackle Cullompton's long term issues of traffic congestion which impacts poor air quality and constraints on development which generate restrictions on the town's economic growth.

Assessments of the traffic patterns show that a high portion of the working population of Cullompton commute to work via the M5 motorway using junction 28, either travelling south to Exeter or north towards Taunton. Therefore, the morning peak traffic queues from J28 along Station Road and the High Street. The evening peak traffic also queues back from the signalised junction of High Street/Higher Street/Station Road; these queues extend back onto the junction 28 northbound off-slip.

A Relief Road will reduce queuing durations on both the local and national road networks, improving the air quality within Cullompton and supporting its sustainable growth for the future.

Assessments into the Cullompton Relief Road have been undertaken to support the public consultation which include:

- Cullompton Town Centre Relief Road, Route Options Report
- Comparative Environmental Assessment
- Land Impact Assessment

These documents and the options presented at public consultation can be found in Appendix A which provide more information on the background of the scheme and the development of the options selected for public consultation.

1.2. PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

This report summarises and assesses the available information to date to be able to make an informed decision on a preferred route for the Cullompton Town Centre Relief Road. This preferred route option report takes into consideration the information provided within the following reports and assessments:

- Cullompton Town Centre Relief Road (August 2018)
- Public Consultation Report (January 2019)
- Ecological Assessment, Cullompton Relief Road (Draft - December 2018)
- Preliminary Ecological Assessment, CCA Fields, Cullompton (April 2018)
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Land at East Cullompton (November 2016)
- Cullompton Relief Road, Heritage Assessment (December 2018)
- Cullompton Town Centre Relief Road, Traffic Modelling Report (September 2018)

2

PUBLIC CONSULTATION OUTCOME



2. PUBLIC CONSULTATION OUTCOME

2.1. INTRODUCTION

A public consultation was held between 13th September and 25th October 2018 which detailed the options which had been assessed for the Cullompton Town Centre Relief Road. The consultation made available reports, option plans, a summary leaflet, exhibition reports, questionnaires and FAQ's in order to give the public a chance to review the material collated and discuss queries on the scheme. All the materials provided at the public exhibitions were also made available online.

The report provides information on the responses received including those from potentially affected landowners and residents. Consultation with Key Stakeholders commenced prior to the consultation period and included meetings with affected landowners and Local Councillors.

The Cullompton Town Centre Relief Road, Report on Public Consultation can be found in Appendix B.

2.2. PUBLIC CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Public exhibitions were held between 14th September and 6th October to provide the public with an opportunity to discuss the different options for the scheme and provide feedback on preferred routes. It was found that over 600 residents from Cullompton and the local area attended these events and had the opportunity hold discussions with project representatives from Devon County Council (DCC), Mid Devon District Council (MDDC) and WSP.

In response to the public consultation, responses from Highways England, Natural England, Historic England and Sport England were received.

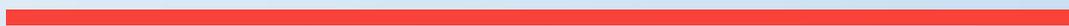
2.3. SUMMARY

The 6-week consultation for the Cullompton Town Centre Relief Road concluded on the 25th October 2018 and responses were received from 617 people, with 80% from the Cullompton area. In analysing the public consultation responses with the 2011 Census Data, it was also found that the results represented a fair sample of the demographic of the area.

It was found that the majority of the respondents preferred Option B from the Route Options Report.

3

FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT



3. FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT

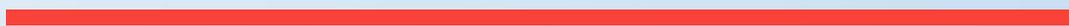
Flood risk assessments (FRA) for route options A, B & C are being prepared, including consultation with the Environment Agency (EA). It was expected that FRA for all options would have been now been completed, however that it not the case.

The FRA for Option A has been substantially completed, with the EA confirming broad acceptance of the findings, conclusions and recommendations within the document. FRAs for Options B & C have not yet been progressed to the same degree as that of the Option A FRA. Following initial feedback from the EA, the Option B & C FRAs are currently being developed to include mitigation measures and scenarios as advised. The expectation is that with further development and consultation with the EA, FRA's acceptable to the EA will be achievable for options B & C.

Preparation of FRAs is an iterative process, consequently the timescale for completion of the outstanding FRAs cannot be confirmed. To progress the project on a viable programme it will be necessary for a preferred route to be established ahead of completion of the FRAs, on the assumption that all routes will be acceptable to the EA with flood compensation and mitigation which are compatible with project delivery. It is proposed these assumptions are confirmed through the technical verification stage subsequent to a preferred route decision as outlined in Section 10 of this report.

4

ECOLOGY



4. ECOLOGY

4.1. INTRODUCTION

4.1.1. MDDC have appointed WSP to undertake an Ecology Assessment for the Cullompton Relief Road, Devon in December 2018. The purpose of the report is to identify whether the options will give rise to any likely significant ecology impacts. This assessment has been undertaken on the reports provided by MDDC which can be found in Appendix C.

4.2. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

4.2.1. Likely Impacts: Option A

Option A runs through cultivated/ disturbed land – amenity grassland. The amenity grassland consists of play areas and sports fields and the habitat had low botanical diversity and value for protected species is limited.

The option runs through mixed woodland which is semi-natural. At this site, mature mixed woodland is present and comprises of deciduous and leyllanli trees that are used as curtilage between playing fields and screening from the motorway and the railway line.

The route also cuts through hedges with trees that are species rich. The hedgerows comprise of mature well-established trees and are identified as adding significant ecological value to the site. There is a tributary of the River Culm that traverses the west boundary and south-west section of the site. This stream is heavily lined and shaded by deciduous trees on both banks, here the proposed route crosses over the stream.

The wider environment was assessed as high value for bats with a large network of fields, hedgerows and woodland, as well as roosting opportunities in nearby structures. The grassland and woodland provided moderate potential for foraging bats, with the mature trees having high potential for roosting bats.

The site was also assessed as having a moderate to high value for birds, with the scrub, grassland and woodland providing suitable nesting and feeding opportunities.

The site location was assessed as having a moderate value for reptiles, (the grassland tussocks and scrub fringes) and invertebrates (white clawed crayfish). There was no sign of badgers on site, however the overall site was assessed to hold potential for foraging badgers, hedgehogs and the River Culm had the potential to support otter and water voles. The pond on site provided potential for breeding habitat for great crested newts.

Direct impact on Priority Habitats.

Qualitative Assessment Score – Moderate Adverse

4.2.2. Likely Impacts: Option B

Option B also runs through hedgerows that are species rich with mature well-established trees that are identified as adding a significant ecological value to the site. This proposed route also runs through mature mixed woodland that comprises of deciduous and leyllanli trees that are used as curtilage between playing fields and screening from the motorway and the railway line.

There is a tributary of the River Culm that traverses the west boundary and south-west section of the site. This stream is heavily lined and shaded by deciduous trees on both banks.

The wider environment was assessed as high value for bats with a large network of fields, hedgerows and woodland, as well as roosting opportunities in nearby structures. The grassland and woodland provided moderate potential for foraging bats, with the mature trees having high potential for roosting bats.

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There was no sign of badgers on site, however the overall site was assessed to hold potential for foraging badgers, hedgehogs and the River Culm had the potential to support otter and water voles. The pond on site provided potential for breeding habitat for great crested newts.

Direct impact on Priority Habitats.

Qualitative Assessment Score – Moderate Adverse

4.2.3. Likely Impacts: Option C

The site is dominated by large fields of arable land, improved and semi improved grassland. The proposed option runs through hedgerows that are species rich with mature well-established trees that are identified as adding a significant ecological value to the site. The route also runs through mature mixed woodland that comprises of deciduous and leylandii trees that are used as curtilage between playing fields and screening from the motorway and the railway line.

There is a tributary of the River Culm that traverses the west boundary and south-west section of the site. This stream is heavily lined and shaded by deciduous trees on both banks.

The wider environment has been assessed as high value for bats with a large network of fields, hedgerows and woodland, as well as roosting opportunities in nearby structures. The grassland and woodland provided moderate potential for foraging bats, with the mature trees having high potential for roosting bats.

The site was also assessed as having a moderate to high value for birds, with the scrub, grassland and woodland providing suitable nesting and feeding opportunities.

The site location was assessed as having a moderate value for reptiles (the grassland tussocks and scrub fringes) and invertebrates (white clawed crayfish).

There were records of badgers within the data search. These included several records from the M5 Motorway to the north of the site. The habitats on site were assessed to provide good habitat for badgers with a mosaic of fields, woodlands and hedgerows.

The data search returned records of otter within the data search. The River Culm had the potential to support otter and water voles. The pond on site provided potential for breeding habitat for great crested newts.

The site was assessed to have diverse ecological habitats such as mature tree lined hedgerows, riparian habitats, broadleaved woodland of varying ages, and pasture cut for hay. These habitats



subsequently provide habitat suitability for a range of European Protected Species such as otters, bats, and dormouse.

There are likely to be direct effects on biodiversity as a result of habitat loss (including Priority Habitat) during construction, and indirect effects associated with increased disturbance (e.g. lighting and noise) during both construction and operation.

Direct impact on Priority Habitats

Qualitative Assessment Score – Moderate Adverse

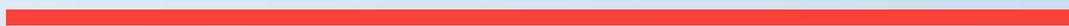
4.3. SUMMARY

The qualitative assessment of the information provided has shown that all options have a 'Moderate Adverse' effect on the local ecology. All schemes have identified direct effects on biodiversity as a result of habitat loss during the construction and operation of the scheme.

It should be noted that the Moderate Adverse impact on ecology for each of the routes, is the unmitigated impact. Mitigation of these impacts would be addressed during the next stages of the project through an Environmental Statement supporting a planning application, where the obligation is to eliminate or reduce the impact where reasonable possible.

5

HERITAGE



5. HERITAGE

5.1. INTRODUCTION

MDDC have appointed Cotswold Archaeology to undertake a Heritage Assessment for the Cullompton Relief Road, Devon in December 2018. The purpose of the report is to identify impacts on any significant heritage assets that the future relief road development may have and the relative heritage impact of each route option.

The Heritage Assessment report is included in Appendix D.

5.1.1. SUMMARY

5.1.2. Summary of findings

A review of heritage assets within the area of the route study determined that other than a Neolithic hammer and Romano-British coin recorded along the route of Option A, all other evidence was derived from the post -medieval and modern periods and to be of local and low heritage significant.

The settings of the following 8 heritage assets were also assessed:

- Church of St Andrews
- Nork House
- Old Chimes
- First Bridge
- 2 No. Roman Forts and 1 2 No. Roman Camps at St Andrew's Hill

Option A is considered to have low impact to the Grade 1 Listed Church of St Andrews and two Grade II Listed Buildings known and Nork House and Old chimes. Route Options B & C offered no impact to the settings of assessed designated assets.

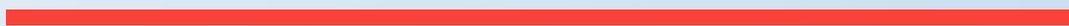
The report states that it was predicted that Route Option A would have an adverse impact to the landscape setting of Cullompton Conservation Area, specifically to the Mill Leat Character Area along its eastern edge. However, this impact was predicted to be more than offset by the benefits of reduced traffic flow through Cullompton town centre, which would provide significant enhancements to its character and appearance as experienced from within the historic core of Cullompton CA and other nearby designated heritage assets.

5.1.3. Conclusion

The report concludes that Option B presents the least potential impact to the historic environment, but that in all instances the proposed development would be consistent with the requirements of National Planning Policy (2018) as well as other relevant and local policy.

6

TRAFFIC ASSESSMENT



6. TRAFFIC ASSESSMENT

6.1. INTRODUCTION

DCC have undertaken traffic modelling for the 3 proposed route options, to determine the impacts upon traffic flows for each route. The modelling is based on traffic counts and a traffic model produced in proprietary software.

The purpose of the traffic modelling was to provide an assessment on whether each of the proposed route options would provide sufficient highway capacity to enable future developments identified in the emerging local plan, and their relative effect on reducing traffic flows from Cullompton High Street.

The Traffic Modelling Report is included within Appendix E.

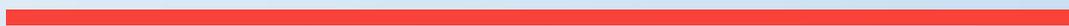
6.2. SUMMARY

The report concludes that all 3 route option alignments proposed would provide additional highway capacity to accommodate the remaining 750 new dwellings at NW Cullompton along with 500 new dwelling east of the M5 Motorway as part of a first phase of the Culm Garden Village.

The traffic modelling also assessed that options A & B are expected to remove 40% of the traffic from the High Street once the proposed developments are complete, with Option C expected to remove 30%. However, option C is likely to provide more relief to Junction 28 of the M5 Motorway.

7

ALTERNATIVE ROUTES



7. ALTERNATIVE ROUTES

7.1. INTRODUCTION

In response to the public consultation and the options presented, three additional options were submitted to DCC and MDDC for further consideration as alternative routes for the proposed relief road. The layouts and details of these proposals can be found in Appendix F.

7.2. ALTERNATIVE ROUTE 1

The first alternative route option depicts a new motorway junction located at the existing Duke Street/Old Hill bridge.

In preliminary consultation with Highways England, this arrangement would not be a viable alternative due to the location of Junction 28 and safety implications in providing new northbound entry and southbound exit slips in such close proximity to an existing junction.

In assessment of the current traffic challenges, this proposal would also not deliver the foreseen benefits of Options A-C in reducing congestion in the town centre and improving air quality in providing a relief road rather than a new motorway junction. The existing route options previously presented show their compatibility with a future new motorway junction to deliver the long-term strategies for the economical develop of the town.

7.3. ALTERNATIVE ROUTE 2

The second alternative route option is similar to Option D from the Cullompton Town Centre Relief Road, Route Options Report. It is located to the east of the M5 corridor and links Honiton Road with Duke Street, utilising the existing road and rail bridge.

As with Option D, which was not taken forward as an option for consideration, a route to the east of the town centre would not be viable in consultation with the EA due to the impacts on the River Culm and surrounding areas.

The proximity to the existing developments and the Cumming's Nursey would not provide sufficient width to accommodate the proposed road, which is estimated to exceed 16m in this location to be able mitigate impacts of flood water levels on the carriageway.

Due to the widths of the existing road and rail bridge, 3.5m and 5m respectively, this option would not be feasible without the use of controlled signalling which will limit the impact of relieving the traffic within the town centre and improvements in air quality. The weight restriction on the railway bridge would also mean this route would not be suitable for HGVs.

7.4. ALTERNATIVE ROUTE 3

The third alternative route which was submitted following a similar alignment proposed in Option B, with an additional length of carriageway to accommodate the change in elevation taken to the south of Duke Street. The proposed route includes an additional road and rail bridge across the M5 to connect the Relief Road to the east of the M5 corridor across the River Culm.

On assessment of this proposed route, the relief road element of this proposal has some potential merit and could be reviewed in the next phase of the project if Option B is taken forward. By taking the carriageway alignment south of Duke Street it would reduce the loss of the existing vegetation bordering Duke St, it will also give a greater clearance from First Bridge, reduce the number of affected landowners and reduce land take from the CCA fields. The section of Duke St up to the sport clubs access could be maintained thereby minimising accommodation works and alternative accesses. This is shown in Figure 7-1.

This proposal would need to be considered in consultation with the EA due to the location of the proposed carriageway, being located in the deepest part of the floodplain and the requirement of maintaining the existing bridge embankment which mitigates flooding in this area.

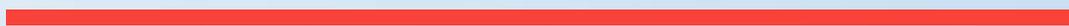
The crossing of the railway, M5 corridor and the River Culm shown in the sketch provided by the proposer is not considered to be feasible due to its alignment at 45 degrees to the railway and motorway complicating the lengthen the structure that would be required and incompatibility with motorway on and off-slip design standards.

Figure 7-1 - Alternative Route 3: Intergration with Option B



8

SCHEME DELIVERY



8. SCHEME DELIVERY

8.1. LAND EVALUATION

MDDC have instructed Drew Pearce 1748 Ltd to undertake a valuation report in respect of the estimated cost of acquiring the land necessary for each of the route options. The valuation has been undertaken in accordance with the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors Valuation – Global Standards 2017 (Red Book) in order to provide an informed assessment of future land costs on the basis of appropriate Market Value. The report is not appended as it is commercially sensitive, and for the same reason figures are not included below.

OPTION A

As identified in the Route Options Report (WSP, December 2018), 7 landowners were identified as being affected by Option A, with an estimated initial area of 27,800m². Option A is expected to have the lowest projected land compensation cost of the 3 options.

OPTION B

The Route Options Report (WSP, December 2018) identified 12 known areas of registered and unregistered land, impacting approximately 28,400m². The projected land compensation cost for Option B is significantly more in comparison to Option A, primarily due to the impacts upon the Cricket and Bowls club and the expected requirement to compensate them on an equivalent reinstatement basis as the whole of their land parcels would no longer be suitable for the current use.

OPTION C

As identified in the Route Options Report (WSP, December 2018), 11 known areas of registered and unregistered land are affected by Option C, with an estimated initial area of 40,000m². The total projected compensation for Option C is expected to be higher than Option A, but could be lower or higher than Option B depending on land costs east of the motorway. This is due to the land being potentially developable as part of the Culm Garden Village, and therefore having potential development value. However, the road enables the proposed development land value could be offset. The timing of the land acquisition in relation to planning policy and consents would determine this current uncertainty.

8.2. Construction Cost

Due to the indicative nature of the route options, detailed cost estimates of construction cannot be produced on the information available at this stage of the scheme development. An initial cost estimation was provided in the Cullompton Town Centre Relief Road, Route Options Report (December 2018) taking into account length of carriageway, number and type of structures and number and type of junctions.

Estimated costs from similar projects were applied to the identified elements along with allowances for identified risks and constraints to produce the initial costs estimates for each route. It has been assumed for each route that the highway will be constructed above flood water levels wherever possible.

In combination with the estimated costs of land purchase information provided by Drew Pearce Ltd, the construction costs of each option have been updated in Table 8-1.

8.3. SUMMARY

The current estimated delivery cost for each option are provided in the table below

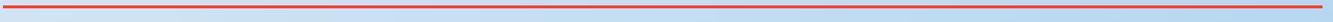
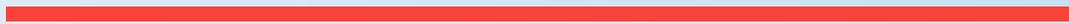
Table 8-1 – Combined Estimated Delivery Costs

	Revised Estimate (Approximate)
Option A	£10.5m
Option B	£14m
Option C	£51m - £53m

The anticipated primary mitigation costs have not been estimated and included due to insufficient information available at this stage. Professional fees have also not been included.

9

PREFERRED ROUTE RECOMMENDATION



9. PREFERRED ROUTE RECOMMENDATION

9.1. INTRODUCTION

The review of the route options and all the supporting information has been undertaken by the project team consisting of officers from MDDC, DCC and staff from consultant WSP. The relative advantages and disadvantages of each of the routes has been discussed taking into consideration the technical elements, community feedback and viability of delivery. The decision on the preferred route recommendation was by consensus, with all parties agreeing on the Option to be recommended.

9.2. REVIEW

9.2.1. Technical

9.2.1.1. Ecology

As discussed in Section 4, the qualitative assessment of the information provided has shown that all options have a 'Moderate Adverse' effect on the local ecology. Each option has identified direct effects on biodiversity as a result of habitat loss during the construction and operation of the scheme.

It should be noted that the Moderate Adverse impact on ecology for each of the routes, is the unmitigated impact and mitigation would be addressed during the next stages of the project to eliminate or reduce impact where reasonably possible.

9.2.1.2. Heritage

The Heritage Assessment discussed in Section 5 includes a review of heritage assets within the area of the route, determined that the impact of Option A would be greater, although still minimal than Option B & C. A Neolithic hammer and Romano-British coin was recorded along the route of Option A.

Option B presents the least potential impact to the historic environment, but that in all instances the proposed development would be consistent with the requirements of National Planning Policy (2018) as well as other relevant and local policy.

9.2.1.3. Air Quality

A Qualitative Environmental Appraisal was undertaken in the Cullompton Town Centre Relief Road, Route Options Report in August 2018 where the impacts on Air Quality were considered. The appraisal found that both Option A & B were found to have 'Moderate Benefit' on the Air Quality and Option C to have 'Moderate to High Benefit'. Sensitive receptors along the B3181 corridor are likely to experience moderate to high improvements in the air quality on Option B. The alignment of Option B will limit any potential changes to air quality on residential properties located on Meadow Lane, Chestnut Avenue and Rivermead in comparison to Option A which is located further west.

9.2.1.4. Noise

Within the Qualitative Environmental Appraisal, and assessment on the impact of noise of the proposed road was assessed on each option. Due to the change in environment, all of the options showed they would have a 'Moderate' or 'High' impact from noise. Through reductions in traffic, it is likely that Option B will provide a reduction in noise levels on the Cullompton high-street however residents to the west of the proposed route may experience higher levels. In comparison to Option A, Option B

provides betterment in its alignment along the rail way and the M5 corridor. As described in the Route Options Report, it is likely that mitigation measures would have the potential to reduce predicted increase in noise levels from traffic.

9.2.1.5. Flood risk

FRA information for each option has not yet been made available, however in initial consultation with the EA it is anticipated that each route will produce an FRA acceptable to the EA. Flood compensation and mitigation requirements will need to be confirmed within the technical verification stage.

9.2.2. Community feedback

Option B was favoured by the responses received to the public consultation questionnaire. Mainly because of the relatively small impact on the CCA fields whilst still providing a route which would reduce congestion and noise and air quality impacts.

All of the options impact upon the CCA fields. Whilst the impact to the CCA fields from each route is subjective, the general consensus from discussions during the public consultation and engagement with the CCA committee members is that route A has most impact, with option C having the least impact.

Option B would impact on the football, cricket and bowls clubs, where Options A & C do not directly affect any of the sports clubs. Both the cricket and bowls club have indicated their willingness to engage in negotiations regarding relocation should Option B be progressed, whilst the impact to the football club is expected to be limited and not significantly affect their current operations.

9.2.3. Delivery

Funding of £10m has been sought from Homes England through the Housing Infrastructure fund, with the £10m confirmed subject to due diligence that is expected to be announced imminently. The cost estimates for Options A & B lie within the amount sought through the Housing Infrastructure Fund and developer contributions.

Route Option C with an estimated cost in excess of £50 million, could not be viably funded by MDDC regardless of the £10m from Homes England. Whilst it could provide much of the strategic highway infrastructure to accommodate the proposed Culm Garden Village, there is little prospect of £50 million of funding becoming available before the first occupation of the Culm Garden Village as would be required.

9.3. RECOMMENDATION

Having considered each of the elements above the project team have determined that Option B is the preferred route that should be recommended to MDDC and DCC. The recommendation from the project team is on the basis of the work completed to date and expected outcomes of work underway, specifically the Flood Risk Assessments. A further Technical Verification stage is proposed and outlined in Section 10 of this report to validate the recommendation, incorporating the work currently outstanding and further detailed design/assessment work.

In summary Option B was selected for the following primary differentiating reasons:

- Option B was favoured by the local community through the public consultation
- Option B does not segregate the majority of the CCA Fields from the town centre and population of Cullompton
- The Cricket and Bowls clubs impacted by Option B have indicated a willingness to relocate
- The cost estimates for Option B are affordable within MDDC's budget
- Option B is viable to be delivered within the Home England – Housing Infrastructure Fund timescale

All routes have been assessed to provide sufficient highway capacity to support the development identified in the emerging Local Plan, are expected to be acceptable with regard to environmental impact, be compatible with a future new M5 motorway junction and be capable of mitigating flood risk so that it is not increased as a result of the scheme. Whilst each of the routes achieve these requirements with different levels of impacts, costs etc, they all ultimately meet the criteria and they are not differentiating factors in the preferred route option recommendation.

The intention is for the preferred route recommendation to be considered by the MDDC cabinet and DCC seeking a primary decision to confirm Option B as the preferred route. The cabinets would also be requested to confirm the scheme should be progressed to submission of a planning application subject to an acceptable Technical Verification process as detailed in Section 10 of this report.

MDDC would also be requested to confirm funding for the Technical Verification and Planning Application phases of the project. The current intention would be for DCC to act as the delivery partner for MDDC, and therefore a decision from Devon County Cabinet to agree to take on delivery of the project, with the funding from MDDC, would also be sought.

10

TECHNICAL VERIFICATION SCOPE



10. TECHNICAL VERIFICATION SCOPE

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10.1.1. Verification process

The outcomes and information produced from the technical verification tasks will be collated and reported on in a Technical Verification Report. The purpose of the report is twofold. Firstly, to reconsider the preferred route decision with the benefit of additional information and confirm whether the previous recommendation stands. And secondly, verify the viability of the project in terms of deliverability through updated cost estimates.

10.1.2. Scope

The scope of the technical verification is expected to comprise of the following tasks:

- Alternative route alignment – Detailed consideration of the alternative alignment for the southern section of the Option B alignment as proposed by Mr Roy Gould during the consultation as per Section 8 of this report. A preliminary alignment will be prepared and its viability in terms of highway design, flood risk, environmental and cost impact will be assessed to determine whether it has merit and should be adopted within the alignment design development.
- Preferred route design optimisation, including alignment and cross section – The option B alignment will be progressed to confirm the highway cross section (the widths and arrangement of the carriageway, footway and cycleways) and develop the horizontal and vertical alignment to optimise construction and land take.
- Flood risk – The completed FRAs for all options will be completed and the EA's acceptance or otherwise should be established. This will permit the viability for all routes to be considered in terms of flood risk and also the mitigation/compensation measures required for Option B to be incorporated in the preliminary design and updated cost estimates.
- Noise and Air Quality – Preliminary assessments will be undertaken for each route option based on the forecast traffic flows to predict the impact of each route option on sensitive receptors. The assessments will identify the sensitive receptors associated with each route and resultant change in noise levels and air quality. This information will be used to both verify the preferred route recommendation and potentially influence route alignment development.
- Offline highway improvements and access arrangements – Preliminary design details for improvements to the Meadow Lane/Exeter Road (B3181) will be developed, along with consideration of potential improvements to Meadow Lane to accommodate the additional traffic flows. New and revised highway access arrangements will be developed to maintain existing accesses, such as those to the sports facilities, Weary Traveller public house and also review the potential for a new access to the Tesco superstore.
- Updated construction and land cost estimates – All the additional design and information generation from the technical verification tasks outlined above will be used to review and update the previously prepared Option B cost estimates for construction and land acquisition/compensation.