



**A24 HORSHAM TO CAPEL
(SURREY SECTION)
PROPOSED NEW ROUTE**

**MOLE VALLEY LOCAL COMMITTEE
26 May 2004**

KEY ISSUE:

To approve the layout of the A24 Horsham to Capel (Surrey Section) scheme and give authority to progress the Statutory Procedures including the Planning Application and Compulsory Purchase and Side Roads Orders.

SUMMARY:

The A24 Horsham to Capel scheme is a jointly promoted proposal with West Sussex County Council to improve the A24 between the Horsham Bypass in West Sussex and the southern end of the Capel Bypass in Surrey.

The scheme was approved in principle by the Mole Valley Local Committee in June 2001 and provisionally accepted by Government in December 2002 subject to the successful completion of the statutory procedures and approval by Ministers. Since that decision, the proposed off-line single carriageway scheme has been further developed in consultation with, amongst others, West Sussex County Council and the statutory environmental bodies.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Committee is asked to agree

- (i) **Approve the scheme layout (Drg. Nos. 3322/38 and 39) as shown in ANNEXE 1 subject to the completion of statutory procedures and detailed design.**
- (ii) **Authorise the submission of an application for Planning Permission.**
- (iii) **Authorise the use of statutory procedures to:**
 - a) **acquire the land necessary for the scheme using Compulsory Purchase powers**
 - b) **undertake alterations to the affected side roads and accesses using a Side Roads Order**
 - c) **enter into a Section 8 Agreement with West Sussex County Council**
 - d) **allow the promotion of any other Orders necessary for the scheme.**

1. INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The A24 is an important north to south route connecting Worthing, the south coast and Horsham with Dorking, Leatherhead, the M25 and London. The section between Horsham and Capel has long been identified as suffering from a poor safety record and environmental problems such as noise, pollution and the severance of existing communities.
- 1.2 The A24 Horsham Capel scheme is a joint project promoted by both Surrey County Council and West Sussex Council. During the 1990s both councils promoted a dual carriageway scheme but this did not receive government support.
- 1.3 Following the development of further options the Mole Valley Partnership Area Transportation Committee on 28 June 2001 resolved that a new single carriageway scheme, to be jointly promoted, be included in that year's LTP submission, that Option B (described below) be preferred for the Surrey section and that the dual carriageway scheme be abandoned. These resolutions were approved by the Executive on 9 July 2001. West Sussex County Council abandoned its section of dual carriageway in December 2003.
- 1.4 Option B followed the A24 southwards from Clark's Green roundabout before passing through the centre of Grenehurst Copse, bypassing Clockhouse Bends, crossing the line of the Dorking to Horsham railway at its junction with bridleway 171 and then southwards to a new roundabout south of Hunt's Bridge. South of the county boundary the route followed a line to the west of the railway before joining the existing A24 at Great Daux roundabout, Horsham.

2. SCHEME DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1 In 2001 the single carriageway Option B scheme was submitted to the Government Office for the South East (GOSE) for funding. However this bid was unsuccessful because of major environmental concerns expressed by the statutory environmental bodies such as the Environment Agency and English Nature, particularly in terms of the impact upon ancient woodland and the Boldings Brook floodplain in West Sussex. Two further options were developed, one of which, known as the Blue Route, was given Provisional Acceptance by GOSE in December 2002. The road standard was a 7.3m wide single carriageway with one metre wide hard strips.

- 2.2 In October 2002 a public consultation of the route options was held in Warnham and Capel. Although the route in Surrey was generally well received, concerns were expressed about the route in West Sussex, which are currently being assessed by West Sussex County Council. Amongst the concerns is the provision of a roundabout to the west of Kingsfold at the junction between the new A24 and Marches Road. Surrey councillors and officers have expressed their support for this roundabout to encourage the transfer of traffic from the A29 onto the A24. This is important because the A29 as well as the A24 has a very poor accident record.
- 2.3 Following discussions with the statutory environmental bodies, modifications have been made to the route in Surrey. The major change has been to reduce the impact upon Grenehurst Copse, which is ancient woodland, by moving the alignment eastwards.
- 2.4 To the north of the proposed improvement there is an existing accident problem on the A24 between Clark's Green roundabout and Dorking. The Local Transportation Office has carried out initial consultations on proposals to close existing central reserve gaps on this length, introduce a roundabout at the junction with Mill Road and improve the Clark's Green roundabout which itself suffers from accidents. Although not included in the scheme that was provisionally accepted by GOSE the addition of the Clark's Green roundabout improvement has been discussed with GOSE and they have given their initial support to this proposal.

3. CARRIAGEWAY STANDARDS

- 3.1 The carriageway standard included in the 2002 bid for government support was a 7.3m wide single carriageway with one lane in each direction and one metre wide hard strips. Recent traffic modelling work has shown that this carriageway standard would not have sufficient capacity for the predicted flows at peak periods in the opening year which would reduce the scheme benefits.
- 3.2 As GOSE has previously stated that it would not support a dual carriageway scheme, alternative single carriageway options have been considered. Initially a two lane 10m wide carriageway was considered but concerns regarding the likelihood of head-on accidents were expressed. A second option, three lanes of total width 10.5m with the middle lane allocated alternatively to each direction of traffic would reduce these concerns and is now the proposed standard. Opposing traffic streams would be separated by double continuous white lines. There would be one metre wide edge hard strips.

- 3.3 This three lane proposal is currently not an approved Department of Transport (DfT) standard. However, a draft DfT advice note has been produced which does include this configuration and examples of existing carriageways that have been successfully converted to the three lane standard exist. A meeting has been held with officers from the DfT and they did not have any objection in principle to the introduction of a three lane carriageway. They stated that approval of this standard would have to be obtained from the Highways Agency, a procedure which has commenced.

4. SCHEME DESCRIPTION

- 4.1 The proposed scheme layout is shown on Drg. Nos. 3322/38 and 39. In a north to south direction the main features are:
- 4.2 **Clark's Green Roundabout**
The proposed circular roundabout replaces the existing tear-shaped roundabout which will reduce vehicle speeds and the number of accidents. It would also facilitate the central reserve gap closures previously described. The southbound two lane carriageway immediately to the north of the roundabout would be reduced to one lane to help make drivers aware that a dual carriageway does not exist to the south of the roundabout.
- 4.3 **Clark's Green Roundabout to Clockhouse area**
The proposed road would follow the approximate line of the existing carriageway before clipping the eastern corner of Grenehurst Copse and heading towards the Dorking to Horsham railway. Access to Red Roofs and Knoll Farm would be allowed from the new road. The existing A24 would be stopped up to the north of the Clockhouse bends – vehicular access to this area would be via a new roundabout to the south of Hunt's Bridge. A shared foot/cycleway would be provided between the closure and the Clark's Green roundabout.
- 4.4 **Bridleway 171**
Bridleway 171 provides access to the Osbrooks area. To maintain this facility it is proposed to construct a bridge over the new A24. Some residents in the Osbrooks area have expressed a preference for their access road to run southwards to the new roundabout south of Hunt's Bridge. If this proposal were adopted, the access bridge would be retained for bridleway use only.
- 4.5 **Railway bridge**
Where it is proposed to cross the Dorking to Horsham railway, the railway is on an embankment. In order to reduce the visual impact of the proposed A24 the carriageway would pass under the railway. The

road would therefore be in a cutting as it passes to the west of the Clockhouse area which would reduce the impact of the road upon the local community.

4.6 South of railway

In order to provide vehicular access to the Clockhouse area a roundabout is proposed to the south of Hunt's Bridge with a link road to the existing A24. At the junction between the link road and the existing road the vertical alignment would need to be improved to ensure adequate sightlines are provided. Access to the Clockhouse brickworks and landfill site would also be via the roundabout. An underpass would allow Bridleway 173 to pass under the proposed A24. Vehicular access to Bonnetts would be provided from the roundabout.

4.7 Existing A24

The proposed scheme would greatly reduce the traffic flow on the existing A24. The opportunity would therefore be taken to provide improvements for equestrians, cyclists and pedestrians where appropriate. The introduction of traffic signals on Hunt's Bridge would be considered which would reduce future maintenance liabilities and permit the introduction of a footway where none exists at present. The road would also be reclassified.

4.8 Environmental mitigation and improvement

Drg. Nos. 3322/38 and 39 also indicate areas where environmental mitigation and improvement are proposed. These measures have been prepared by environmental consultants in discussion with officers from both county councils and the statutory environmental bodies. The measures are considered necessary not only to balance the impact of the proposals but also provide environmental enhancements for the community.

5. CONSULTATIONS

5.1 A public consultation was held in October 2002 which showed the line of the route submitted to GOSE in 2002.

5.2 As part of the scheme development, regular meetings have been held with the statutory environmental bodies; whilst they have reserved their opinion on the scheme, they have played a full role in its development.

5.3 A Joint Members Project Board consisting of the Chairman of the Local Committee, the member for Dorking Rural and members for West Sussex County Council has met several times. These meetings

have ensured that members from both county councils have a common understanding of the scheme objectives and the proposed scheme layout.

- 5.4 Both Mole Valley District council and Capel Parish Council have been consulted. The views of Mole Valley District Council will be reported at the committee meeting. Correspondence from Capel Parish Council can be found in ANNEXE 2.

6. STATUTORY PROCEDURES

- 6.1 Statutory procedures will be required for this scheme. They include Planning Permission, a Compulsory Purchase Order for acquiring land and a Side Roads Order for changes to highways and accesses. Land required for the scheme would, where possible, be negotiated by agreement.
- 6.2 A planning application for the section within Surrey would be made to the County Council under Regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992. The scheme as a whole is subject to statutory Environmental Assessment procedures. The application will therefore be accompanied by an Environmental Statement covering the whole scheme. The Planning and Regulatory Committee will determine the application unless the Secretary of State directs that the application be referred to him. In this case the planning application would be determined after a public enquiry.
- 6.3 As the scheme is partly in West Sussex and partly in Surrey, a Section 8 Agreement in accordance with the Highways Act 1980 will have to be entered into by both authorities. This gives one authority power to carry out works in the other authority's area.

7.0 PROGRAMME

- 7.1 The construction programme is dependant upon the satisfactory completion of the statutory procedures. The current programme is:

Apply for planning permission	July 2002 2004
Public consultation	July 2004
Planning application determined	November 2004
Publication of statutory orders (CPO/SRO)	January 2005
Public inquiry	August 2005
Confirmation of orders	November 2005
Starts of construction	November 2006
Road open to traffic	November 2008

8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The estimated total cost of the proposed scheme is £52 million, £19 million of which would be incurred in Surrey. Funding would be provided by government subject to satisfactory completion of the statutory procedures and their financial approval.

9.0 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The proposed single carriageway scheme does not encourage additional traffic movements. A significant reduction in the number of personal injury accidents on both the A24 and A29 would occur.

10.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 As part of the scheme appraisal an Environmental Impact Assessment is being undertaken. Mitigation proposals developed in consultation with the statutory environmental conditions together with environmental mitigation and improvement proposals will be submitted with the application for planning permission.

11.0 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are none for the purposes of this report.

12.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 There are none for the purposes of this report.

13.0 CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The existing A24 between Horsham and Capel suffers safety and environmental problems. Surrey and West Sussex Councils have therefore jointly promoted the construction of a new wide single carriageway designed to modern standards.

This would improve safety not only on the A24 but also on the A29 as it would encourage a transfer of traffic from the A29 which also has a poor accident record.

The new route would bypass existing communities and thus result in a reduction in noise, pollution and severance in these areas.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: **None**
