



REPORT TO	The Chairman and Members of the Cabinet to be held on 1 November 2005.	TITLE	East Cleveland Gateway
REPORT FROM	Director for Sustainable Communities.		
CONTACT Name	Tony Gordon	DATE	9 September 2005
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DECISION MAKER (S)	Cabinet		

TYPE OF DECISION
(Tick applicable box)

Policy Matter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Budget Setting	<input type="checkbox"/>	In-year decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Delegated Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>	Information only	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Key Decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Date in Forward Plan	September 2005		

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform Members of the outcome of consultations and a study jointly commissioned by Redcar & Cleveland and Middlesbrough Councils and undertaken by Faber Maunsell Consultants into the feasibility of a new road linking Swan's Corner with the A174 Parkway (known as the East Cleveland Gateway).

2.0 ANALYSIS

2.1 AIMS AND DESIRED OUTCOMES

2.1.1 The aim of this report is to advise members of the outcome of a recent study and to seek a decision to delete a long-standing road proposal.

2.2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2.2.1 The EMTC has been reserved for the construction of a highway scheme since the late 1960s, originally being known as the Marton Motorway and, subsequently, the East Middlesbrough Bypass. Several studies have been undertaken over the past 15 years to try to identify any practical solutions that would address transport objectives and be acceptable to stakeholders.

- 2.2.2 The route is shown on Figure 1. It begins at the A171 Swan's Corner Roundabout, crossing a field, cutting through Rothesay Grove and Hambleton Hill and bridging the Esk Valley Railway Line to connect to Stainton Way in Middlesbrough. There is then a proposed northwards connection on the eastern side of the railway line from the Stainton Way Extension to the A174(T) Parkway, B1380 Ladgate Lane and A1085 Longlands Road.
- 2.2.3 The Council has historically acquired assets to support the delivery of this scheme including the field at Swan's Corner (8hectares) and four houses on Rothesay Grove. Some of these assets were purchased under blight conditions. The land is currently occupied under a temporary agricultural licence and two of the bungalows have residential tenants in place.
- 2.2.4 The development of a scheme has always been constrained by:
- Ownership of part of the land by the National Trust as part of the Ormesby Hall Estate and the impact on the setting of listed buildings;
 - Constraints on access to the A174(T) Parkway – a new junction would need to fit into a restricted length between the existing full junction at the A172 Stokesley Road and the half-junction at the A171 Ormesby Bank;
 - The proximity of the Esk Valley Railway Line – a scheme would need to bridge the line at Nunthorpe to connect to Stainton Way and would require rebuilding of the bridge at the A174(T) Parkway;
 - Environmental sensitivity and impact on Ormesby Beck and the Ormesby section of the transport corridor.
- 2.2.5 Local highways authorities including Redcar and Cleveland and Middlesbrough Borough Councils have submitted their Provisional Local Transport Plans (LTP) to the Department for Transport and are required to submit their full LTPs in March 2006. The Council is also in the process of creating its LDF to supersede the Tees Valley Structure Plan 2004 and the Redcar and Cleveland Local Plan 1999. Decisions need to be made on whether the Council would wish to seek major scheme funding for a proposal and on whether the proposed route should continue to be protected. It is, therefore, an opportune time to review the proposed scheme and make some important decisions for the future.
- 2.2.6 Discussions with Middlesbrough Council approximately a year ago, involving both Officers and Members, revealed that Middlesbrough Council no longer wished to proceed with the building of that section of the bypass which lay within Middlesbrough but were keen to see the section in Redcar & Cleveland built to improve access to the A174, potentially relieving congestion on Dixons Bank. This section would extend from Swans Corner to the A174.
- 2.2.7 Following these discussions, the two councils jointly commissioned Faber Maunsell Consultants to conduct a study of a proposed scheme for this southern section of the route. This was referred to as the East Cleveland Gateway. The study included the investigation of options for the construction of an all directions junction with the Parkway. The aim of this scheme would be to improve access from Guisborough

and East Cleveland to the trunk road network and to relieve congestion on the A171 Ormesby Bank and A172 Dixons Bank.

2.3 CONSULTATION

- 2.3.1 Consultation was undertaken with key stakeholders to gather information on which to base decisions. These were the National Trust, the Highways Agency, Network Rail and Government Office for the North East. In addition to face-to-face meetings, written comments were provided by the first three of these consultees. These are attached as Appendix 1.
- 2.3.2 The National Trust indicated that they own part of the land that would be required for the construction of the scheme and that the scheme would have a detrimental impact on the listed buildings and the conservation area. They hold inalienable land on behalf of the nation that could only be released if a scheme was of overriding public interest. They do not consider that the proposal comes anywhere near to fitting into that category. A "Special Parliamentary Procedure" would be required for the Council to try to acquire the land and it is unlikely that this would be successful.
- 2.3.3 The Highways Agency have serious concerns about the ability to construct a safe junction with the A174(T) Parkway and the impact on existing sliproads and safe weaving movements. A standard grade-separated junction would have a serious impact on the Ormesby Hall estate and the Esk Valley Railway line. Western slip roads would be too close to the sliproads for the existing junction at the A172 Stokesley Road leaving substandard, and potentially dangerous, weaving lengths for traffic joining or leaving the main carriageway. A compact grade-separated junction would not be an acceptable traffic solution as the new road has been predicted to carry around 20,000 vehicles per day, around seven times the acceptable level for this sort of junction. There is, therefore, no realistic possibility of creating an acceptable junction on to the A174(T) Parkway which would be capable of gaining approval from the Highways Agency.
- 2.3.4 Network Rail indicated that it would not be acceptable to close the Esk Valley Railway to allow the construction of a new railway bridge at the Parkway and that only limited track possession times would be available that would be insufficient to enable the works to be carried out. The alternative of relocating a section of the railway line would impact on housing in Marton or on Ormesby Hall, it would raise safety concerns regarding forward visibility and track speeds and would require a Transport and Works Act approval through Parliament to allow it to proceed. Again, there would be limited probability of an acceptable solution being identified
- 2.3.5 Government Office for the North East (GO-NE) would be required to consider fully any funding bid that is made but they are able to give an indication of what they think of a proposal during the feasibility stages. They have seen several variations of the proposal over the years and a scheme that would simply enable traffic to move more easily on the road network would not be acceptable in transport policy terms. The East Cleveland Gateway would not provide significantly better access to many areas in East Cleveland that are not already served by the existing A174. There are, therefore, no policy benefits that would enable them to support an application for funding, preventing the scheme from proceeding,

2.3.6 In wider public consultation on a previous proposal, residents of Ormesby indicated concerns about the level of severance from Nunthorpe, in particular, the serious impact on access to the primary and secondary schools that serve a wide catchment area. Residents of Nunthorpe were very concerned about the level of environmental impact, both on their own properties and the wider impact on the green wedge.

2.4 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

2.4.1 As stated in para 2.1.1, several options have been considered over the years, none of which has been able to develop a case to proceed. A full East Middlesbrough Bypass option from Swan's Corner to Longlands Road, with a junction at the Parkway, falls foul of all of the objections in Section 2.3 and has serious environmental implications through Ormesby in East Middlesbrough. It is also not currently supported by Middlesbrough Council. Omitting the Parkway junction would remove the objections from the Highways Agency and Network Rail but strengthens the objections from GO-NE as it is seen as a route to take traffic to Middlesbrough Town Centre more easily. It would also fail to provide the desired benefits for Redcar and Cleveland residents so these options are, therefore, discounted.

2.4.2 The East Cleveland Gateway option that has been examined most recently would attract traffic but has raised serious objections from key stakeholders that would prevent the scheme from being implemented. This option also needs to be discounted.

2.4.3 A previous study examined whether the route should be constructed for buses only, to improve public transport access to Middlesbrough Town Centre. However, this did not indicate a satisfactory financial case. Furthermore, the major bus operator, Arriva, said that they would not use the route as it would take buses away from the routes where their passengers are located.

2.4.4 The remaining option would be to do nothing in the reserved corridor and instead, to implement less substantial physical measures together with policy initiatives that would help to manage traffic better on the existing highway network. Improvements to bus infrastructure are already being implemented on the Route 65 Quality Bus Corridor and improvements can be made to walking and cycling networks. The Council is also supporting the Esk Valley Railway Development Company to try to increase the number of rail services from Nunthorpe to Middlesbrough. This is the recommended option.

2.4.5 It is recognised that there are still growing concerns regarding congestion on the A171 and A172 corridors. The recent study recommended consideration of the following actions:

- Undertake a local feasibility study regarding scheme options to improve the efficiency of the Swan's Corner Roundabout. This is likely to require local widening and would utilise part of the land reserved for the transport corridor.
- Undertake a full strategic signing review, in particular, to and from the A19(T), A174(T) and at the Swan's Corner Roundabout.

- Liaise with the Highways Agency regarding improvements to the A174(T) / A19(T) junction.
- Identify and implement a prioritised programme of on line improvement measures, in particular for buses, pedestrians and cyclists along the A171.
- Investigate Intelligent Transport Solutions including Urban Traffic Management Control (UTMC) to relieve congestion on the A171 and A172 corridors and, in particular, on the A172 Dixon's Bank corridor.
- Embrace the key finding of the Tees Valley Bus Network Review Study, including increasing and improving the quality of bus services along the key radial corridors of the A171 and A172.
- Undertake a feasibility study for a Park and Ride site located in the vicinity of Nunthorpe including the possibility of bus and rail connections to and from central Middlesbrough.

2.5 REASON FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

- 2.5.1 The recommended option is to rescind all proposals to construct a new road in the East Middlesbrough Transport Corridor. There is no realistic possibility of a route ever being constructed and, consequently, reserving the transport corridor creates unnecessary blight on many properties in the area. It is, therefore, recommended that all proposals should be rescinded and that the corridor should no longer be safeguarded for future transport development in the Local Development Framework. In making this decision, the properties on Rothesay Grove will immediately be released as surplus to the Council's future operational requirements. Only a small part of the land at Swan's Corner is likely to be required in the future to improve the highway links in this area and, therefore, the release of the surplus area of land is recommended.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Cabinet and Council should:

- 3.1 Rescind all proposals for the construction of a transport route in the East Middlesbrough Transport Corridor.
- 3.2 Omit the East Middlesbrough Transport Corridor from the list of safeguarded routes in the emerging Redcar and Cleveland Local Development Framework.
- 3.3 Declare the properties on Rothesay Grove that were purchased for the East Middlesbrough Transport Scheme as surplus to requirements, together with the land at Swan's Corner that is not required to deliver highway improvements identified in the future feasibility work proposed in 3.4.
- 3.4 Agree to further feasibility work to be carried out at Swan's Corner Roundabout.
- 3.5 Continue to explore other possible measures to assist in relieving traffic movements from Swan's Corner into Middlesbrough.

4.0 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

4.1 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- 4.1.1 There are no performance issues relating to the implementation of the proposed recommendations.

4.2 TIMESCALE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.2.1 The decision that the Council would no longer intend to pursue the construction of a route would become effective immediately. The deletion of the corridor as a protected route will occur as the LDF is developed to supersede the existing Structure Plan and Local Plan.

4.3 RESOURCE APPRAISAL

- 4.3.1 There will be no financial requirements arising from the proposed decision. The Council's Asset Management Plan outlines the manner in which the Council will deal with surplus assets. The decision will immediately release the houses in Rothesay Grove for alternative use or disposal. The future use of part of the land at Swan's Corner will be informed by further feasibility work, with the remainder of the site being released as a surplus asset. These assets will, therefore, be declared surplus to highways requirements and will be appropriated to the Department of Finance and Procurement as non-operational surplus assets.

4.4 COMPLIANCE WITH LEGISLATION & REGULATIONS

There is no negative impact on:	Please tick
Human Rights Act 1998	<input type="checkbox"/> ✓
Crime and Disorder Act 1998	<input type="checkbox"/> ✓
Children Act 2004	<input type="checkbox"/> ✓
Diversity and Equalities Impact Assessment form attached	<input type="checkbox"/> ✓

4.5 RISK

- 4.5.1 The decision will remove the risk of the Council being served with blight notices arising from private homeowners being unable to sell their properties.

4.6 REVIEW PROCEDURE

Responsible Council (or other) Officer	Tony Gordon
[Appropriate] Member's monitoring committee	Sustainable Communities
Deadline for Review	

5.0 APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Consultation responses from the National Trust, Highways Agency and Network Rail

6.0 INFORMATION SOURCES

Information held on file in Sustainable Communities Department.

Author & Designation
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