

Comments from West Berkshire Council on the WYG report for the A339 Widening and London Road Industrial Estate Access Scheme:

West Berkshire Council is pleased that WYG agree that the underlying case for the scheme is positive and will bring about benefits and that the business case is detailed and comprehensive.

The conditional approval proposed by WYG in 1.4.5 is welcomed and the Council are committed to continuing to work with WYG on the modelling and economic queries they have raised.

West Berkshire Council (WBC) has some brief comments on some of the aspects in the WYG report which may help members of the Berkshire Local Transport Body as they consider giving conditional approval for the funding for this scheme:

- i) The issue raised by WYG relating to whether a full or outline business case was submitted is one of interpretation of the DfT's guidance. WSP (consultants for WBC) referred to the case as outline rather than full purely because their understanding is that a full business case is usually only prepared once a contractor is on board for a scheme. All of the details expected in a full business case were submitted to WYG as confirmed in their report at paragraph 1.4.1. Information relating to minor areas that were not included originally (such as 'drivers for change' and 'human resources issues') were subsequently provided to WYG on 30th October but the table at Appendix A does not appear to have been updated.
- ii) Due to this scheme comprising works on an existing busy route which will not cause the creation of greater levels of traffic but alter how that traffic accesses an area of Newbury, it was originally considered that detailed noise and air quality assessments would not be necessary given the scale of the scheme. However, after further consideration a noise assessment has been carried out and the results show that there is no significant impact in terms of noise on the residential properties close to the scheme. Some properties would benefit from a reduction in noise levels due to vehicles slowing down on a different section of the road. It has been agreed with the Environmental Health Team at WBC that, on balance, an air quality assessment will be prepared for the re-submitted business case and to support the planning application.
- iii) The two areas of concern for WYG outlined in their report at 1.4.4 were addressed in detail by some additional work undertaken by WSP. WYG did not consider that this additional information completely satisfied their concerns. When further direction is received in relation to the work that will need to be carried out, this will be undertaken in order to satisfy WYG in respect of their modelling and economic queries.
- iv) It is likely that the picture has been complicated by the local impacts and benefits of the highway aspects of the scheme not being well represented by the strategic modelling tool. The Council will find the most appropriate way of addressing this so that the benefits of the scheme and their magnitude can be more easily understood.