

Wigan Council

A49 Link - Shift Statement

Executive Summary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The proposed A49 Goose Green to Westwood Park Link Road is a connection from A49 Warrington Road at Goose Green to Westwood Park, north of Pearson's Flash.

The scheme comprises 2.3 km of new dual 2-lane carriageway which includes an upgrade from single 2-lane to dual 2-lane carriageway along the existing Westwood Park internal access road. Three new major structures to bridge existing watercourses, canals and a primary road are required plus the widening of an existing road bridge. Other structures include two new footbridges, a new culvert and headwall and two retaining walls.

The new road link is a major part of the Council's strategic plans to improve Wigan's transport network by providing fully connected east-west infrastructure across the borough. Not only will the A49 link road provide a new attractive dual carriageway gateway between the M6 and Wigan town centre, addressing congestion and air quality issues on current routes, but it will also complement and support other components of Wigan's transport strategy.

The proposed A49 link road itself incorporates a new shared use path along its length providing enhanced sustainable transport connections for local trips between communities and to the town centre. The scheme has also been designed to connect into the new M58 link road, thereby providing a continuation - supported by sustainable travel links - from the southern part of Wigan Town Centre, via the local facilities along the Poolstock corridor, the canal towpath and Wigan Flashes, through to Junction 6 of the M58 & Junction 26 of the M6.

More widely, the A49 link road is vital to unlocking new sites for residential and employment development such as the 22-hectare site at Westwood Park. This is a key part of the Council's economic growth objectives and will directly contribute to the Council's targets to deliver 10,000 new homes and increase the economy of the borough by £1 billion by 2024, as set out in its Economic Prospectus.

The A49 Link road is the Council's top transport priority and is fundamental to delivering economic growth in Wigan and ensuring Wigan contributes to the growth ambitions of Greater Manchester. The scheme has full political, business and corporate support and all necessary consents are in place to ensure the delivery of the scheme, including full planning permission and land assembly and Full Funding Approval.

Following an OJEU-compliant procurement process and tender evaluation, a preferred contractor, Jones Bros Ruthin (Civil Engineering) Co Limited, was formally appointed in early June 2018 under an NEC3 Option A 'Design and Build' contract to deliver the scheme.

Construction start on site is scheduled for Autumn 2018 and the scheme is programmed to be completed in Spring 2020.

Growth Deal funding will provide £10.295 million towards the overall scheme costs, with the Council funding the gap and committing additional contingency funding to ensure delivery of the scheme.

The A49 scheme has been shown to represent high overall Value for Money which is increased further when other infrastructure elements of the transport strategy, including the M58 link road and the completed Marus Bridge Pinch Point Scheme, are also taken into account.

The new A49 Link Road is fundamental to securing growth in the Wigan economy and to assist the growth ambitions in Greater Manchester to be realised.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The A49 Goose Green to Westwood Park Link Road is a new connection from A49 Warrington Road at Goose Green to Westwood Park, north of Pearson's Flash, providing 2.3km of dual carriageway link between J25 of the M6 and the southern part of Wigan Town Centre.
- 1.2 It provides a new high-profile gateway into Wigan Town Centre from the M6 and links a new 22-hectare employment and housing site, Westwood Park, to the strategic highway network.
- 1.3 The A49 link road is a priority project within the Council's transport strategy and has full political, business and community support. The principle of the road link has been accepted for many years and full planning approval is in place.
- 1.4 The new road link addresses a severe weakness in Wigan's transport network, namely a lack of connectivity between the M6 and the town centre, and is a major piece in the jigsaw to improve east to west connections across the borough thereby complementing and supporting the other components of Wigan's transport strategy.
- 1.5 The new link road will enable Wigan Council to deliver economic growth and will help Greater Manchester to realise its growth ambitions by directly and indirectly supporting housing and employment growth as well as underpinning investment in Wigan town centre.
- 1.6 At a regional level, the scheme also supports the Greater Manchester Strategy and the GM Growth and Reform Plan. It will assist in the delivery of the emerging GM Spatial Framework as well as the GM 2040 Transport Strategy.
- 1.7 As Wigan has now also been confirmed as a station hub for the new High Speed Rail (HS2) service, improved connectivity between the station and the strategic road network is more vital than ever to realise the full regeneration and growth potential of this.

1.8 Wigan Council submitted an Outline Business Case for conditional approval for Growth Deal funding for the A49 Link Road in mid-2015. Conditional approval was granted following a Gateway Review and TfGM and GMCA approvals which were concluded in September 2015.

1.9 Full Funding Approval for the scheme was granted by GMCA in February 2018.

2.0 STRATEGIC CASE

2.1 Strategic context and objectives

2.1.1 In March 2013 Wigan Council adopted a new comprehensive transport strategy which was developed in partnership with key stakeholders (including Transport for Greater Manchester, Highways Agency, Network Rail) and with support from the Department for Transport. The strategy highlights the importance of good transport connectivity into and through the borough to support the economic prosperity of the area and provides the evidence and the framework for a transformational change in transport in Wigan over the next 15 years.

2.1.2 The strategy identifies a number of key priority projects as being essential to deliver this change, including major public transport projects, sustainable travel initiatives and a number of major road schemes and improvements to be delivered with funding provided by central government, and by Wigan Council itself.

2.1.3 Some of these schemes have already been completed, such as the Leigh-Salford-Manchester Busway and DfT-funded Marus Bridge Pinch Point Scheme, whilst others are currently in progress including a number of new cycleway projects in and around Wigan town centre, the development of the Seaman Way – Phoenix Way Link and schemes in association with major development sites such as the North Leigh and South of Hindley links.

2.1.4 The strategy also identified two GMCA Growth Scheme proposals, the M58 link and the A49 link. Of these the A49 is the immediate priority, however the M58 Link Road scheme is also progressing well and has been developed up to Conditional Funding Approval stage with planning approval obtained in May 2018.

2.1.5 The A49 link road has political, business and community support and is a priority project not only within the Transport Strategy, but also within the Council's recently approved Economic Prospectus, the Council's Deal for the Future and the adopted Core Strategy. When complete it will provide a continuous high quality dual carriageway link between the M6 Junction 25 and the town centre, as well as promoting and sustaining growth in the town centre. It has been subject to full public consultation and is supported by the local community. It enables severe congestion to be relieved on an existing B road

into Wigan town centre and will therefore bring significant environmental benefits to the local community to the south east of the town centre.

- 2.1.6 The new link road will unlock a major 22-hectare brownfield site, Westwood Park, which has planning permission for up to 5 hectares of employment land and 430 new homes. As a clear indication of the level of demand for quality employment space, a major manufacturing company, Nice-Pak, has already taken occupation of part of the site specifically to take advantage of the locational benefits of the new road. Through development of the remaining employment land the site can support the creation of additional new jobs, and the new access and improved connectivity provided by the proposed A49 link road are critical to underpinning this level of development and economic growth on the site.
- 2.1.7 As Wigan has now also been confirmed as a station hub for the new High Speed Rail (HS2) service, improved connectivity between the station and the strategic road network is more vital than ever to realise the full regeneration and growth potential of this.

Project Description

- 2.2.1 The A49 Goose Green to Westwood Park Link Road is a new connection from A49 Warrington Road at Goose Green to Westwood Park, north of Pearson's Flash, providing a dual carriageway link between J25 of the M6 and the southern part of Wigan Town Centre.
- 2.2.2 The scheme comprises 2.3 km of new dual 2-lane carriageway which includes an upgrade from single 2-lane to dual 2-lane carriageway along the existing Westwood Park internal access road. Three new major structures to bridge existing watercourses, canals and a primary road are required plus the widening of an existing road bridge. Other structures include two new footbridges, a new culvert and headwall and two retaining walls.
- 2.2.3 From a recently completed new roundabout junction with A49 Warrington Road at Goose Green, the dual carriageway road follows the route of the old railway line to Westwood Park, crossing the B2538 Poolstock over a new bridge, into the Westwood site. It then runs northwards through Westwood Park along the existing highway alignment (which will be widened to dual carriageway), with connections to the existing roundabout, up to Chapel Lane and onwards to Wigan town centre (see **Fig. 1**).
- 2.2.4 The new roundabout at Goose Green has been delivered by the developer of the adjacent housing site as a requirement of the planning consent for that site and does not form part of this business case. However, the widening of around 100m of the existing highway access into Westwood Park from Chapel Lane from single to dual carriageway, and the widening of Lions Bridge over the canal, are included within the Growth Deal-funded scheme.

2.2.5 The proposed A49 link road itself incorporates a new shared use path along its length providing enhanced sustainable transport connections for local trips between communities and to the town centre. The scheme has also been designed to connect into the new M58 link road, thereby providing a continuation - supported by sustainable travel links - from the southern part of Wigan Town Centre, via the local facilities along the Poolstock corridor, the canal towpath and Wigan Flashes, through to Junction 6 of the M58 & Junction 26 of the M6.

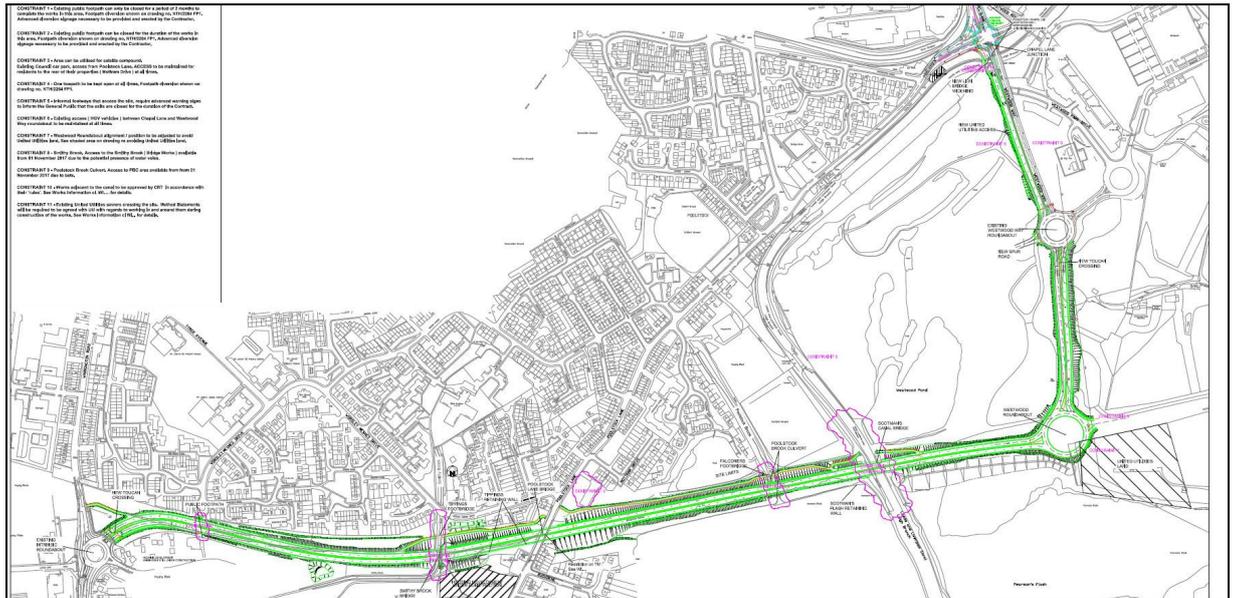


Fig 1. A49 Link Road

2.2.6 The new A49 link road is a vital part of the Council’s strategy to improve east west connectivity across the borough, as set out in the Council’s Transport Strategy. Accordingly, these proposals have been taken into account for the purpose of developing the plans for the M58 Link Road and also a possible future new link across the West Coast Mainline, known as the “Ince Link”. Although funding for the Ince Link has not yet been identified, the A49 link road proposals provide the opportunity for that Ince Link to come forward in the future.

2.2.7 The three strands of the three A49 link road main scheme objectives are:

- Enhanced Connectivity;
- Reduced Congestion; and
- Economic Growth.

2.2.8 These scheme objectives are a consistent element throughout the Council’s Transport Strategy and relate particularly well to the A49 Link, given the

improved connection to the M6 at junction 25, the existing congestion problems along Poolstock (a B road through a residential area) when accessing the town centre from Junction 25 and also the opening up of the Westwood Park site. Further detail on all of these elements was provided within the OBC submission and remains relevant to the current proposals.

2.2.9 There are only minor changes to scheme design between the Outline and Full Business Case submissions. These can be summarised as follows:

- to substitute a roundabout for the traffic signal junction at the southern end of the Westwood Park site that was contained within the OBC.

This change will enable more suitable connection to the Ince Link.

- the retention of the existing roundabout on the Westwood site, whereas it had been previously proposed that the junction would be converted to signal control.

This more appropriately reflects the need to accommodate the mix of development on the site, is consistent with the planning consent and reflects future connections from the Westwood site to the east.

2.2.10 All reasonable assumptions have been made for this stage of the project and are being addressed.

3.0 VALUE FOR MONEY ASSESSMENT

3.1 Overall, the scheme continues to be appraised as representing good value for money and is expected to support the core objectives of enhanced connectivity, reduced congestion and economic growth.

3.2 The analysis undertaken to understand the performance of the scheme suggests two areas of mitigation that could reinforce and strengthen the economic case.

3.3 The first concerns the potential to reconfigure Poolstock Lane following the opening of the A49 link road. There is much potential to lock in the long term benefits of traffic reassignment from Poolstock Lane by implementing traffic restraint and calming, capacity reduction measures and improved urban design measures. Such “healthy streets” measures could support the use of active modes and foster a more attractive local environment for residents and be of value in their own right but, if implemented, would also increase the value of the A49 link road investment.

3.4 The second concerns the identification of some localised traffic delays and journey time increases. While such localised impacts are to be expected when traffic reassigns through a network in response to new infrastructure of this type, it is concluded that the forecast levels of impact could be mitigated in the

event that a thorough review of signal timings and other treatments was undertaken in advance of the opening of the A49 link road. Such measures that are expected to be largely cost neutral would further increase the estimated strength of the economic case for investment.

3.5 The Value for Money Statement below summarises the performance of the scheme:

Monetised Benefits	Time savings to existing traffic and additional traffic from the Westwood Park development, from new highway capacity.
	PVB = £46.41 million (at 2010 prices and values)
Costs	£19.87 million at 2017 prices (cost excludes Sunk Costs)
	PVC = £17.29 million (2010 prices and values)
Initial BCR	NPV = £29.12 million (2010 prices and values)
	BCR = 2.69
Non-monetised benefits	Reliability of traffic journey times Reduced bus journey times Improved cycling environment and journey times – leading to increased cycling with consequent health benefits Slight overall reduction in traffic noise impacts on residential streets
Distributional Impacts	The overall effect on the Distributional Impacts assessment target groups will be broadly neutral.
Direct Economy Impacts	The new link road scheme will facilitate the realisation of the Westwood Park development, providing 430 residential units and substantial new office, distribution and retail developments creating 500 net new jobs.
Robustness of the Appraisal	Sensitivity tests show the appraisal to be robust against changes in assumptions relating to traffic growth, loss of private sector contributions and costs
Value for Money Category	High

4.0 DELIVERY CASE

- 4.1 Wigan Council Cabinet approved the appointment of Jones Bros Ruthin (Civil Engineering) Co Limited as the preferred contractor to deliver the A49 Link Road on 05 April 2018 and further approved the award of contract.
- 4.2 The preferred contractor, Jones Bros Ruthin (Civil Engineering) Co Limited, included strong delivery proposals within their Tender Submission, supported by a detailed construction methodology and programme.
- 4.3 Prior to the selection of the preferred bidder and subsequent appointment thereof, the Council has already completed various advance works to mitigate key project risks (including vegetation clearance, treatment of invasive species, ecological surveys and mitigation measures and utility diversions). This additional level of confidence has been reflected in the contractor's detailed delivery proposals.
- 4.4 Wigan Council formally appointed the preferred contractor, Jones Bros Ruthin (Civil Engineering) Co Limited, in early June 2018 under an NEC3 Option A 'Design and Build' contract to deliver the scheme.

5.0 GOVERNANCE AND ASSURANCE

GMCA Governance & Assurance

- 5.1 All district-delivered Growth Deal Major Projects are governed and assured in accordance with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) 'Growth Deal Majors Capital Programme Guidance' document dated 24 November 2014 and agreed by all districts in December 2014.

Wigan Council Governance & Assurance

- 5.2 All contracts procured and delivered by Wigan Council, including any project changes, are governed by the Council's standard Financial Procedure Rules and Procurement Strategy, which are available on the Council's website:
- <https://wigan.gov.uk/Council/Performance-and-Spending/Financial-Procedure-Rules.aspx>;
 - <https://wigan.gov.uk/Business/Council-Procurement/procurementstrategy.aspx>.
- 5.3 Within Wigan Council this scheme falls within the remit of the Council's Economy Board, chaired by the Council's Portfolio Holder for Economic Development & Regeneration.

- 5.4 Separately, the Council has established a dedicated Project Board for the A49 scheme which receives monthly scheme updates and includes senior managers and officers from Wigan Council and TfGM.

The Project Board is chaired by the Director Economy & Skills and is accountable to the Senior Management Team of Wigan Council, Places Scrutiny Committee and ultimately accountable to Cabinet. Any Key Decisions recommended by the Board must either be supported by a delegated Director decision where appropriate, or taken as a recommendation to Portfolio Holder/Cabinet in accordance with the Council's constitution and decision-making processes.

- 5.5 The scheme will be delivered through an industry-standard NEC3 Option A (Priced Activity Schedule) contract. Delivery of the scheme will be overseen by the Council's Major Projects & Regeneration team, with specialist support provided by TfGM (project management, risk management, scheduling, commercial) and external advisers.

Change Management

- 5.6 Changes will be managed in accordance with the contractual procedure set out in the NEC Option A contract and Works Information, and in line with the principles set out in the Project Controls Document which forms part of the Growth Deal Funding Agreement.
- 5.7 In relation to more general governance / assurance, the Council has mandatory internal processes and procedures for key activities including procurement, risk management and change control. Independent scrutiny is provided by the Council's Internal Audit section and is contained at:
<http://www.wigan.gov.uk/Council/Performance-and-Spending/Financial-Procedure-Rules.aspx>.

6.0 SCHEDULE AND RESOURCES

- 6.1 Resource levels for the scheme have been fully assessed against the delivery requirements, key roles and responsibilities and reviewed with TfGM via the project assurance process to ensure that proposals are robust and appropriate to deliver the scheme.
- 6.2 Any remaining gaps identified have been sourced appropriately via TfGM and professional team appointments. A strong partnership ethos has been created across all organisations and this is further supported by the preferred contractor's tender submission, which evidences a firm commitment to collaborative working in order to achieve a "one team" approach.
- 6.3 The overall project schedule incorporates all project development activities and associated timescales, including Full Funding Approval.

- 6.4 The preferred contractor, Jones Bros Ruthin (Civil Engineering) Co Limited, included a detailed construction methodology and programme within their tender submission covering all key milestones and deliverables from contract award through to contractual completion.

7.0 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 Risk Management for the scheme is in accordance with TfGM Risk Management Policy and Procedure and in line with industry best practice.

8.0 GROWTH DEAL FUNDING

- 8.1 On 31 March 2014 Greater Manchester submitted 'A Plan for Growth and Reform in Greater Manchester' to government as part of the Growth Deal process. Growth Deals build on City Deals and are part of the government response to Lord Heseltine's Review. Through the Growth Deal process, Local Enterprise Partnerships were invited to seek freedoms, flexibilities and influence over resources from government; and a share of the Local Growth Fund to target their identified growth priorities. The Growth and Reform plan incorporated a bid for enhanced funding of £204 million (£314 million in total) to enable all GMLTB major schemes investment priorities to be delivered.
- 8.2 On 7 July 2014, the 39 Growth Deals for Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) were announced, marking the culmination of months of negotiations between LEPs and central government, to allocate money available through the Local Growth Fund.
- 8.3 The GMLEP secured £476.7m from the Government's Local Growth Fund to support economic growth in the area which will see £476.7million invested in Greater Manchester. The GM Growth Deal is part of a £12 billion long-term programme to revitalise local economies.
- 8.4 Following receipt of the information provided regarding the A49 Link Road scheme, Ministers confirmed that given the wider devolution of funding and accountability granted to the GMCA Full (final) Approval of the scheme would be left to the GMCA. It was also confirmed that, subject to the scheme being approved (by the GMCA), a maximum Growth Deal Grant of £10.295 million would be made available based on a profile that could be adjusted annually to reflect progress on the scheme, and that the GMCA would be solely responsible for providing any further funding required.
- 8.5 The Growth Deal contribution towards the scheme is £10.295 million, therefore the Council has committed to gap funding the delivery cost of the A49 Link Road. Growth Deal Full Funding Approval was granted at the end of February 2018 and the Council's funding contribution was approved by Cabinet on 05 April 2018.

8.6 Grant funding conditions are covered by the Delivery Agreement between the Council, TfGM and GMCA. Grant funding will be provided under Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003.

9.0 HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE

9.1 All capital costs to design and construct the new link road are included within the scheme budget. The cost plan has been reviewed by TfGM and the Council's appointed Cost Consultant, Turner & Townsend, and confirmed as robust.

9.2 The new road will be designed and built to a standard that is acceptable for adoption by Wigan Council and the Council has confirmed that it will make provision within its revenue budgets to maintain the new highway. It is also anticipated that there will be a reduction in maintenance costs of those roads where traffic will reduce, however these savings have not been quantified.

9.3 The main construction contract will include a period of aftercare for soft landscaping and defects correction for all works.

9.4 Operation and maintenance liabilities will fall to the Council. These latter costs have not been included as part of the funding application as they will become part of the maintenance and operations costs for the highway authority's normal maintenance budget.

9.5 As a district-led scheme, future maintenance liabilities for traffic signals will be funded and managed by TfGM as part of an existing maintenance contract. TfGM will specify and approve all traffic signal works.

10.0 PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

10.1 The OJEU compliant invitation to submit an expression of interest took place using the 'Chest' procurement portal between April and May 2017 with shortlisted contractors selected to be invited to tender in July 2017.

10.2 Tender documents were published on 21 July and returns were received following a 12 week tender period.

10.3 Separate Quality and Finance evaluation panels scored each bid in line with the Invitation to Tender. Following completion of the procurement process, Jones Bros Ruthin (Civil Engineering) Co Limited was identified as the preferred bidder and Wigan Council Cabinet approved the award of contract on 05 April 2018.

10.4 The construction contract procurement strategy and process has been overseen by the Council's Procurement Manager and with TfGM procurement support to ensure compliance.

10.5 Ongoing Procurement and Contract compliance is monitored by the A49 Project Board.

11.0 POWERS AND CONSENTS

Traffic Regulation Orders

11.1 The introduction of any Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders required to enable construction to be carried out (e.g. temporary footpath closures and diversions) will be managed by the Council's Traffic Group in conjunction with the Council's Public Rights of Way (PROW) officer, with the appropriate notice being placed on the GMRAPS system to ensure prompt delivery of these orders.

11.2 Permanent Traffic Regulation Orders will also be managed by the Wigan Council's Traffic Group and PROW officer. They will be promoted in good time to ensure that they can be implemented as the scheme progresses.

Planning

11.3 Planning Permission, reference A/07/67989, was granted in November 2007. Works commenced in 2008 with the construction of a footpath at Westwood Way.

Land

11.4 On completion, the new road will form part of the adopted highway and the Council will offer for adoption the land upon which the road is located.

11.5 The Council has also acquired additional land adjacent to the Westwood roundabout to safeguard the ability to provide future capacity if required. Land has also been safeguarded to facilitate the construction of the Ince Link, subject to future funding being identified.

11.6 A further land transaction has resulted in the relocation of a major local employer, Nice Pak, to the Westwood Park site. The site comprises a further 5 hectares of land allocated for employment development, based on which it is anticipated that additional jobs will be supported through the development of the remainder of the site. This is a good example of how the new road and its improved connectivity is attracting employment to the site and its surrounding areas.

Design Approvals

11.7 Stage 1 & 2 Road Safety Audits (RSA) have been completed. The Stage 3 RSA will be carried out by the contractor and is set out within their programme, with the final Stage 4 RSA to be carried out by the Council.

- 11.8 Comprehensive approval was given to deliver the A49 Link Road Project by Wigan Council's Cabinet on 05 April 2018, including delegating to the Deputy Chief Executive / S151 Officer and Corporate Director of Economy & Skills the authority to:
- Commit the Council to funding the Local Contribution towards the delivery of the A49 Link Road, including the expenditure of contingency to be authorised by them, if required;
 - Negotiate and enter into contract with the preferred bidder, Jones Bros Ruthin (Civil Engineering) Co Limited to design and construct the A49 Link Road scheme;
 - Agree and enter into the Delivery Agreement with GMCA and TfGM in relation to securing the Growth Deal Funding Grant.
- 11.9 All delegated approvals were obtained prior to the preferred contractor being formally appointed in early June 2018.
- 12.0 GENERAL**
- Evaluation & Monitoring*
- 12.1 Given the close strategic and physical inter-relationship between the A49 Link Road scheme and the Council's other Growth Deal-supported scheme, the M58 Link Road, we propose that the schemes are monitored and evaluated as one.
- Stakeholder and Communication*
- 12.2 The A49 scheme has been well promoted as a major project and has been subject to significant public consultation and engagement. The scheme has had full support from the local business community and is fully endorsed by the local economic forum, the Wigan Forward Board.
- 12.3 It is a routine consideration for the Council when carrying out highway schemes that regular newsletters are utilised to inform residents of local issues along with social media and press releases. The council also publish an online Roadworks Bulletin which is also emailed to stakeholders informing them of planned road works that may cause delays or additional congestion. This method of dissemination of information has served the Council well when delivering infrastructure improvements such as the Southgate Scheme, Twist Lane/Atherleigh Way and the Marus Bridge Pinch Point Scheme. In the case of the A49 however, most of the works are off the current highway network and will not cause disruption. The roundabout at the western end of the new road which is on the existing highway network has already been completed.

- 12.4 The Council has established a joint communications plan for both the A49 and M58 Link Road schemes, which is led by the Council's Communications Team. The Council has set up a specific webpage for the A49 Link Road on which it publishes regular scheme updates and bulletins. Key project updates are promoted via social media channels and local media coverage. In addition, the project team provide regular internal reports for Senior Managers and Members.

Health and Safety

- 12.5 In conjunction with developing a Construction Phase H&S Plan, the preferred bidder will develop a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).

All appropriate SHE legislation has been considered and a plan identified to address this at each stage in the project as appropriate.

Handover / Transition

- 12.6 The Council's Infrastructure and Highways team have been fully involved at all stages of the project. During construction council officers will visit site regularly to ensure that the quality of finish is consistent with the Council's wider highways network requirements prior to being offered up for handover.

The contractor is required to provide a handover plan as part of the Works Information requirements in order to ensure a smooth and effective transition to Business As Usual.