



Department
for Transport

Local Pinch Point Fund

Expression of Interest Form: 2021/22 and 2022/23 proposals

This form is for proposals to be funded by DfT in 2021/22 and 2022/23. Proposals should demonstrate the benefit to local businesses, and improvements to productivity on completing the project. The proposal should indicate the range of funding sought from the Department for Transport, e.g. £5 million to £10 million, £10 million to £15 million, or over £15 million.

The closing date for Expressions of Interest is **31 January 2020**.

For proposals submitted by components of a Combined Authority a separate EOI form should be completed for each one, then the CA should rank them in order of preference.

Applicant Information

Local authority name: Cornwall Council

Manager Name and position: Rick Clayton – Major Schemes Lead

Name and position of officer with day to day responsibility for delivering the proposal.

Contact telephone number: 01872 224685 **Email address:** rick.clayton@cornwall.gov.uk

Postal address: Room 4b,
Pydar House
Pydar Street
Truro
TR1 1XU

Combined Authorities – N/A

If the proposal is from a local highway authority within a Combined Authority, please specify the contact and ensure that the Combined Authority has submitted a Combined Authority Application Ranking Form.

Name and position of Combined Authority Co-ordinator for CA proposals:

Contact telephone number:

Email address:

Postal address:

Postcode

SECTION A – Description of works

A1. Name of proposal: Holmbush Road Rail Bridge

A2. Geographic area:

Please provide information about the location of the proposal (in no more than 50 words)

On the A390 in St Austell, some 250m east of Charlestown Roundabout and 330m west of the signalised Holmbush Road - Daniels Lane junction. See map in A3.

OS Grid Reference: SX 03250 52415

Postcode: PL25 3LF

You might wish to append a map showing the location (and route) of the proposal, existing transport infrastructure and other points of particular interest.

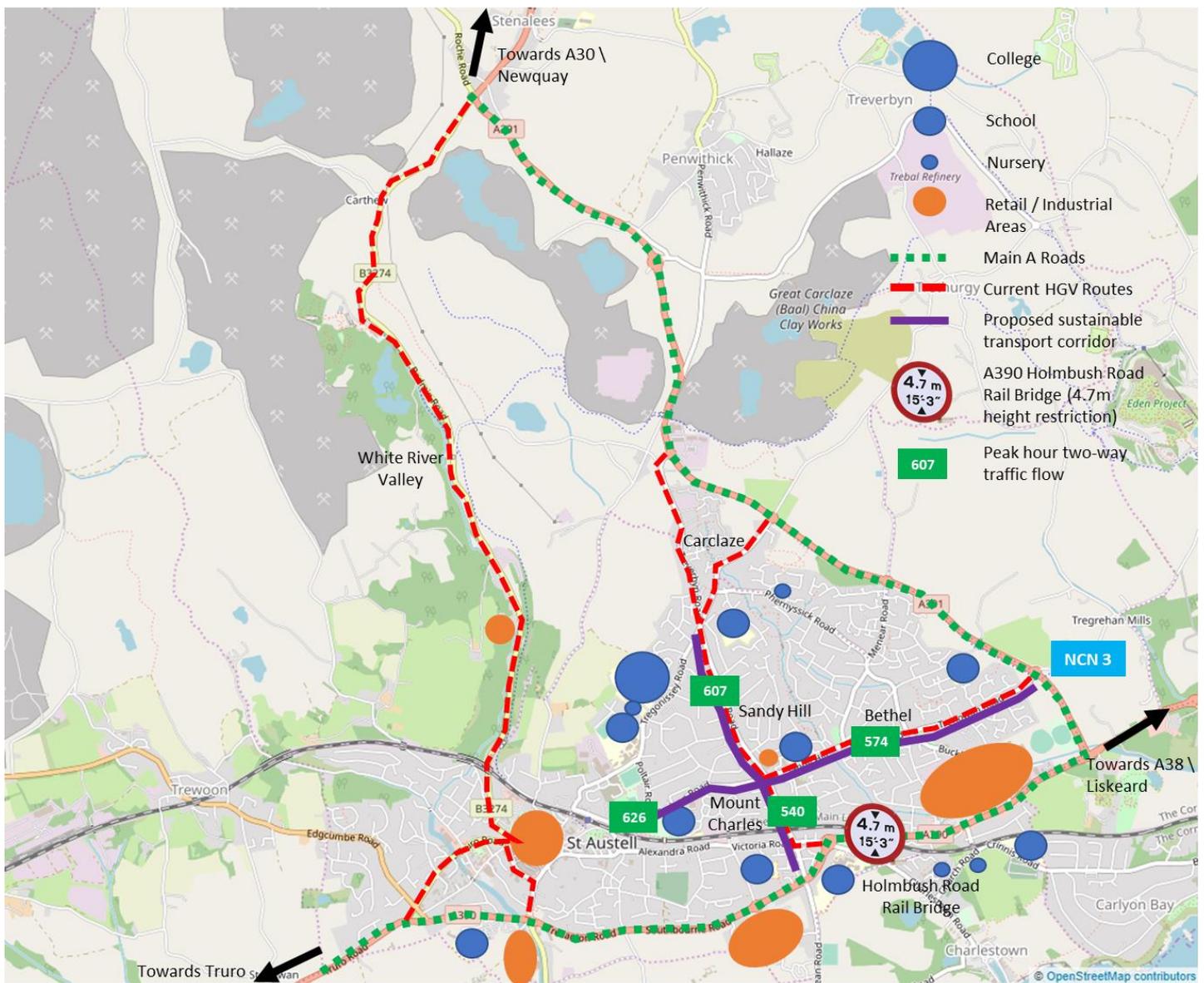
A3. Description of existing problems and how the proposal would address them. Please set out which other options have been considered:

With a population of almost 20,000 people, the town of St Austell in mid-Cornwall is one of the largest in the county. The local highway network is relatively constrained and experiences congestion in the peak. This is exacerbated in the peak tourist season when the number of people staying or accessing big tourist attractions around the town (The Eden Project, the Lost Gardens of Heligan and the coastal areas) increases traffic on the local highway network by up to 20%. This congestion is responsible for concerns over air quality in the town and as a result the town has been declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA).

Proposed development in both St Austell and at West Carclaze, along with the planned new link road between St Austell and the A30 will help to stimulate much needed economic growth in the town. However - despite planned highway improvements to facilitate growth - opportunities within the town are limited by physical constraints e.g. lack of available land to deliver schemes, and bridge height clearance.

Whilst there are various highway projects proposed, in order to get the most out of the existing transport network, measures to promote greater use of sustainable transport are vital to reduce congestion. Therefore, a key aim is to build on and enhance the existing public transport services, and to develop a comprehensive walking and cycling network to ensure greater integration of all transport modes.

As part of the recently adopted Local Plan, a town wide pedestrian and cycle network has been drawn up. This consists of new cycle way and footpath provision and improvements to the existing routes with crossing points and parking facilities which will link new housing developments to key attractors including employment retail and education. As part of this, a key potential north/south sustainable transport corridor has been identified through the residential areas of Carclaze and Sandy Hill (via Treverby Road, Slades Road and Polkyth Road) – as shown on the map overleaf.



Despite considerable support and momentum having been built through local Town Council, stakeholder and community engagement, the use of this potential route by large Heavy Goods Vehicles due to unsuitable alternatives continues to pose a major barrier to the delivery of sustainable transport improvements.

A substandard height clearance of 4.7m (15' 6") at Holmbush Road Rail Bridge currently prevents tall vehicles from the A30 and A39 Trunk Roads accessing St Austell town centre and adjacent retail areas via the main suitable A391 and A390 routes; instead they currently use unsuitable routes through residential areas in the town (including via potential sustainable transport corridors) and the White River Valley, bringing about concerns over safety and hindering the development of potential sustainable transport measures to help tackle congestion.

The current unsuitable HGV routes through the residential areas of Carclaze, Sandy Hill, Mount Charles, Bethel pass through shopping areas and amenities alongside the road, close to Cornwall College, primary schools, nursery schools, playgrounds, and along a heavily used pedestrian route to Penrice Community College. Alternative routes through the White River Valley (B3274) are also unsuitable due to their sinuous nature, passing through local villages and requiring large vehicles to negotiate a hairpin bend on entering St Austell which causes local congestion.

Given the lack of height clearance at Holmbush Road Rail Bridge the Council is currently unable to place meaningful restrictions on heavy goods vehicles passing through the specified local areas, nor are they able to implement the sustainable transport measures outlined in the Local Plan to help to ease congestion in the town – for which there is circa £1m Section 106 funding available. This is a matter of great concerns to residents, the St Austell Bay Economic Forum (SABEF) and Members.

The proposal in this bid is to lower the carriageway of the A390 Holmbush Road under and on the approaches to the rail bridge to allow full height HGV clearance, and open up this route as the primary HGV route through and to St Austell, thereby freeing up current unsuitable HGV routes to implement sustainable transport measures, and easing congestion in the town.

Site investigations have recently been undertaken with the feasibility report due in February 2020. The initial investigations show the bridge to have been widened since its first construction; footings extend to a reasonable depth below existing ground level. An initial proposal for Network Rail approval is being prepared, and will require both Cornwall Council and Network Rail approvals before the design can be finalised. The total cost of the proposal is £4,981,700 in nominal prices, including £143,700 already pledged by the Council up to feasibility stage, and Council Match contribution of £442,800. Costs include inflation at 3% per annum, 44% Optimism Bias, along with a 20% risk allowance to reflect the stage of the project. The programme would see design and Network Rail consultation being undertaken in 2020 to 2022 (which includes a contingency risk allowance), with construction taking place from September 2022 to March 2023.

One other option to raise the rail bridge to achieve the required clearance has been considered. However, this would involve significant works to the Penzance to London Paddington Mainline with a need to raise the tracks for several hundred metres in each direction, and increase the height of the abutments in order to raise the superstructure. This would cause a major disruption to rail services west of St Austell. Also, without a suitable turn around location after Plymouth, this raises the potential that all Cornwall's mainline services may need to be suspended for several weeks, undermining the recent service improvements and passenger growth. Compensation may also be due the rail operating companies for disruption to services. A significant period of road closure is also likely to be required to allow adjustment of the substructure and replacement of the superstructure. Hence this option was discounted at an early stage.

SECTION B – The Business Case

B1. The Financial Case – Project Costs and Profile

Please indicate the anticipated cost of the proposal in the table below. **Figures should be entered in £000s** (i.e. £10,000 = 10).

Funding profile (Nominal terms)

£000s	2021-22	2022-23
<i>DfT Funding Sought</i>	2197.6	2197.6
<i>LA Contribution</i>	442.8 (plus additional 143.7 contribution in 2019/20/21 to site investigation, feasibility)	
<i>Other Third Party Funding</i>		

Notes:

- 1) Department for Transport funding will be granted in the 2021-22 and 2022-23 financial years but local highway authorities may carry that funding over to following financial years if necessary.
- 2) There is no specific amount for a local contribution by the local authority and/or a third party but if additional funding is proposed please state what this is expected to be.

B2. Timetable

Proposed start date: Design commencing March 2020 (subject to funding availability), with construction commencing September 2022 (allows for Programme contingency for Network Rail consultation and design phase)

Estimated completion date Construction completion by March 2023

B3. Further information in support of the proposal

At this Expressions of Interest stage we will be looking at the impact of the proposal on traffic congestion, and its benefit to local residents and businesses. For example, details about the level of congestion on the route, delays at junctions, and evidence of queuing in the peak hours. You should set out the wider strategic benefits that the proposal is expected to address.

Many of the principal impacts are not at the Holmbush Road Rail Bridge but along the routes, described in section A3, relieved of through HGV movements. Fewer HGVs through the areas identified would relieve the General Wolfe Corner of regularly seizing up. Also, traffic signals in Treverbyn Sandy Hill and Mount Charles would be see fewer unsuitable vehicles passing through them and the narrow carriageways either side. Additionally, the implementation of sustainable transport measures and networks in these areas would be expected to result in modal shift from the private car to walking and cycling, thereby relieving congestion across the local network as a whole.

Census Travel to Work data for St Austell shows that around a third of all work trips originate and end in St Austell (around 5,800 trips), and that there are a higher proportion of shorter trips (up to 10km)

ending in St Austell compared with the Cornish average (54% in St Austell compared to 45% across Cornwall as a whole). Around 1,740 people currently commute on foot, with 151 cycling. The large majority of these walk and cycle trips (74%) are trips less than 2km. However, of work trips less than 2km (around 3,700 in total), only 37% are made on foot or by bike, with 53% made by car. This compares to Truro where a similar number of work trips less than 2km are made, but around 60% of these short trips are made on foot or bike, with only 31% made by car. This demonstrates the potential for shift to sustainable modes in St Austell – if walk and cycle levels for short trips were the same proportion as in Truro, this would mean 827 fewer vehicles on the local roads in the peak periods from work trips alone. Further shift could also be expected from other non-work trips (e.g. journeys to school, and local shops and amenities) currently made by car.

As well as reducing congestion, a shift of trips away from car to cleaner modes would also be expected to bring about environmental, health, wellbeing and safety benefits within the local community. This is particularly relevant to the area in question given the high number of schools and nurseries on or close to the potential sustainable transport corridors.

A sustainable transport movement in the Town will also be well timed with other local sustainable initiatives such as the development of nearby West Carclaze Garden Village, and the recently awarded Coastal Communities fund. This will see £1.1m used to fund the SABEF “Re-imagining St Austell - A Green and Ceramic Cultural Centre” project, using ceramics and planting in the public realm to create a vibrant new cultural centre covering the town and wider communities.

The improved height clearance at Holmbush Road Rail Bridge would also bring additional benefits to the strategic routing of high sided heavy goods vehicles. To the west there is no similar constraint on the network to the major settlements. To the east the only constraint to travelling on the strategic road network is at the A38 at Trerulefoot, where a 4.5m (15' 00") height clearance restricts access to Saltash and Plymouth. This means removing the restriction at Holmbush Road would allow operators to better plan the movements of their taller vehicles allowing a route, for example from Liskeard to Truro via St Austell, to be more direct.

The proposal is supported by the local Town Council, local stakeholders including St Austell Bay Economic Forum (SABEF), local councillors and businesses.

SECTION C: Declarations

C. Senior Responsible Owner Declaration

As Senior Responsible Owner for the Holmbush Road Rail Bridge project I hereby submit this request for approval to DfT on behalf of Cornwall Council and confirm that I have the necessary authority to do so.

I confirm that Cornwall Council will have all the necessary powers in place to ensure the planned timescales in the application can be realised.

Name: Nigel Blackler

Signed:

Position: Service Director, Transport and Infrastructure



Submission of Expression of Interest:

The deadline for the Expression of Interest submission is 5pm on **31 January 2020**
Successful proposals for EOIs in the Local Pinch Point Fund are to be funded by DfT in 2021/22 and 2022/23.

There are two phases to the application process:

- this Expression of Interest stage where we will assess the proposal based on the eligibility criteria as set out in Section 3 of the published Guidance.
- for authorities successful in passing to Phase 2, we will expect a further and detailed submission. Further guidance will be issued to the successful authorities when they are notified

An electronic copy only of the EOI should be submitted to:

LT.Plans@dft.gov.uk copying in Paul.O'Hara@dft.gov.uk