

2. Need for the Scheme

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 This chapter provides an overview of the policy context and strategic need for the proposed A720 Sheriffhall Roundabout, hereby referred to as the 'Proposed Scheme'.

2.2 Scheme Objectives

2.2.1 The following Scheme Objectives have been set to address the main issues encountered at Sheriffhall Roundabout and have been used in the assessment to help determine the performance of the options:

- A. Improve the movement of traffic on the A720 between Gilmerton and Old Craighall by providing grade-separation of the A720 at the existing Sheriffhall Roundabout
- B. Reduce the conflict between strategic and local traffic
- C. Minimise traffic impact of local proposed developments in Midlothian, East Lothian and City of Edinburgh on the A720 between Gilmerton Junction and Old Craighall Junction and approach roads
- D. Improve road safety for all users on the A720 and approach roads between Gilmerton Junction and Dalkeith Northern Bypass
- E. Minimise intrusion of the new works on the natural environment, cultural heritage and people whilst enhancing the local environment where opportunities arise
- F. Facilitate integration for different modes of transport along and across the A720 corridor between Gilmerton Junction and the Dalkeith Northern Bypass
- G. Reduce severance by improving accessibility across the A720 for all users.

2.2.2 These objectives have been used throughout the scheme development and at the Stage 2 Value for Money workshops evaluation sub-objectives were agreed for each to assist in the comparative assessment of scheme options. In addition, the objectives were assigned to the five appraisal criteria as set out in Table 2-1 'Scheme Objectives and Evaluation Sub-Objectives' below.

Table 2-1 Scheme Objectives and Evaluation Sub-Objectives

Topic	Objective	Evaluation Sub-Objective
Environment	E. Minimise intrusion of works on natural environment, cultural heritage and people whilst enhancing the local environment where opportunities arise	Minimise intrusion of works on natural environment.
		minimise intrusion of works on cultural heritage
		minimise intrusion of works on people
		enhance local environment where opportunities arise
Safety	D. Improve road safety for all users on the A720 and approach roads between Gilmerton Junction and Dalkeith Northern Bypass	Improve safety for non-motorised users (NMUs)
		Improve safety for motorised users (MUs)
Economy	A. Improve the movement of traffic on the A720 between Gilmerton and Old Craighall by providing grade-separation of the A720 at the existing Sheriffhall Roundabout	Improve movement of traffic on A720
		Minimise delays during construction
	C. Minimise traffic impact of local proposed developments in Midlothian, East Lothian and City of Edinburgh on the A720 between Gilmerton Junction and Old Craighall Junction and approach roads.	Minimise impact of local proposed development traffic on A720 and approach roads

Topic	Objective	Evaluation Sub-Objective
		Improve traffic movement along A7/A6106.
Accessibility	G. Reduce severance by improving accessibility across the A720 for all users	Improve accessibility across the A720 – non-motorised users
		Improve accessibility across the A720 – public transport
Integration	F. Facilitate integration for different modes of transport along and across the A720 corridor between Gilmerton Junction and the Dalkeith Northern Bypass	Facilitate integration with public transport along A720
		Facilitate integration with Shawfair Park & Ride
	B. Reduce the conflict between strategic and local traffic	Reduce conflict between strategic and local traffic

- 2.2.3 These objectives were also used to undertake a comparative options assessment at the Stage 2 Value for Money Workshop held on 9 February 2017. An option assessment matrix was used which enabled the scheme options to be comparatively scored.
- 2.2.4 These objectives were also used throughout the Stage 3 Scheme Assessment including at a series of three Wider Stakeholder Workshops which worked to identify the preferred non-motorised user (NMU) facilities to be included in the scheme. The first workshop held on 30 August 2017 looked at a total of 17 NMU options and used the scheme objectives as a basis to develop Walking, Cycling, Horse Riding Assessment and Review (WCHAR) Opportunities. The WCHAR Opportunities were then used to sift the NMU Options down to six options for further development. These six options were considered further at the second Wider Stakeholder Workshop held on 11 October 2017. The preferred NMU Option was then identified at the final workshop held on 14 August 2018. For further details on this process refer to Chapter 7 – Consultation and Scoping.
- 2.2.5 The objectives were also reviewed when undertaking the Stage 3 Value Management and Risk Workshop held on 24 October 2018.

2.3 Planning Policy Context

- 2.3.1 This section provides an overview of national and local policies relevant to the Proposed Scheme. The Proposed Scheme lies on the boundary between the City of Edinburgh Council and Midlothian Council and as such Local Development Plans for both these Council areas have been included.
- 2.3.2 Individual chapters also consider the planning policy context relevant to their topic assessment and carry out an assessment of the compliance of the Proposed Scheme against these policies and plans.

National Planning Policy

Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR) (Scottish Government, 2008)

- 2.3.3 The Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR) published in December 2008 included reference to improvements at Sheriffhall Roundabout. Intervention 22 Targeted Road Congestion/Environmental Relief Schemes recognised a number of corridors throughout Scotland which have been identified to reduce conflicts between strategic and local traffic. Section A222 targets specific locations on the road network where improvements would address these issues and includes measures such as junction improvements for the A720 Edinburgh City Bypass ('the A720') such as at Sheriffhall Roundabout. Additionally, section A225 recognises that the A720 improvements would help to maintain the 60-min commutable labour market area around Edinburgh and would provide benefits for journeys to or between two of Edinburgh's areas of economic activity, West Edinburgh and the Shawfair development. Journey time reductions of approximately 5 minutes are forecast with this improvement for all elements.

Scotland's Cities: Delivering for Scotland (Scottish Government, 2011)

- 2.3.4 The Scottish Government's Scotland's Cities policy document sets out an agenda for the development of major Scottish population centres, in line with the Government Economic Strategy, to optimise their contribution to sustainable economic growth for all of Scotland.
- 2.3.5 Scotland's Cities states that transport improvements shrink the *"effective distance"* between Scotland's cities, and between Scotland and the rest of the world. Initial improvements that *"provide the greatest potential for collaborative approaches that support growth include... working with and supporting Transport Scotland to continually improve inter-urban connectivity and reduced journey time between the cities"* (Pg. 19).

Fitting Landscapes: Securing More Sustainable Landscape (Transport Scotland, 2014a)

- 2.3.6 The Fitting Landscapes policy document defines Transport Scotland and the Scottish Government's commitment to provide good landscape design along transport corridors, promote sustainable travel objectives and deliver transport infrastructure that fits with its surrounding landscape.
- 2.3.7 The overarching vision is to *"promote the more sustainable design, implementation, maintenance and management of the transport estate and ensure that the landscapes we create and manage are of high quality, well integrated, bio-diverse, adaptable and deliver a meaningful contribution to national sustainability targets"* (Pg. 13).
- 2.3.8 This guidance has also been used to inform the landscape and visual assessments of the Proposed Scheme as reported in Chapter 8 – Landscape and Visual Effects.

A Long-Term Vision for Active Travel in Scotland 2030 (Transport Scotland, 2014b)

- 2.3.9 This active travel policy document sets out key objectives to promote walking and cycling in Scotland and then outlines a vision for what Scotland in 2030 could be like if these objectives are achieved.
- 2.3.10 These objectives include providing *"places that are pleasant and practical for walking and cycling, with better pedestrian and cyclist safety"* (Pg. 4).
- 2.3.11 The infrastructure vision for Scotland in 2030 states that *"main roads into town centres all have either segregated cycling provision or high quality direct, safe and pleasant alternatives"* and *"lighting, active and natural surveillance of routes increases the perception of safety"* (Pg. 6).

National Planning Framework (NPF3) (Scottish Government, 2014a)

- 2.3.12 The National Planning Framework (NPF3) was published in 2014 by the Scottish Government and outlines the key principles that guide the wider planning system in Scotland. NPF3 guides Scotland's spatial development for the next 20 to 30 years, setting out strategic development priorities to support the Scottish Government's central purpose of promoting sustainable economic growth. Plans that are beneath the NPF3 in the planning policy hierarchy are directly influenced by the goals and themes in the document.
- 2.3.13 NPF3 directly influences the content of Scottish Planning Policy (SPP), Circulars, Planning Advice Notes (PANs) and Development Plans produced by Local Authorities.
- 2.3.14 With regard to transport and infrastructure, the NPF3 acknowledges that improved internal transport links are necessary to facilitate growth. Particular attention is given to the A720 and Sheriffhall Roundabout where the NPF3 states:

- *“the longer-term spatial strategy for delivering housing land will need to acknowledge and address the region’s infrastructure constraints. To help unlock effective housing land in the city-region, strategic, cross-boundary transport infrastructure improvements are required.*
- *road network capacity, including the A720 where interventions are being taken forward at Sheriffhall Roundabout, has particular implications for future development” (Pg. 13).*

Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) (Scottish Government, 2014b)

- 2.3.15 The Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) document is a statement of the Scottish Government’s policy on nationally important land use matters.
- 2.3.16 SPP facilitates development while at the same time *“protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment”* and is considered to be essential to the Scottish Government’s central purpose of achieving sustainable economic growth (paragraph 2).
- 2.3.17 Transport is addressed as a subject policy within SPP at paragraph 269 – 291 and it is recognised that the relationship between transport and land use has a strong influence on sustainable economic growth. The strategic transport network, which includes trunk roads, is identified as being critical in support of a level of national connectivity that facilitates sustainable economic growth.
- 2.3.18 SPP also contains a number of other subject policies including economic development, historic environment, landscape and natural heritage, flooding and drainage and waste management.

Planning Advice Notes (PANs)

- 2.3.19 Planning Advice Notes (PANs) provide good practice advice supporting the SPP. There are various PANs that are considered relevant to the Proposed Scheme. Where relevant to individual chapter assessments this has been reported within the chapters.
- 2.3.20 PAN 75 ‘Planning for Transport’ (Scottish Government, 2005) aims to *“create greater awareness of how linkages between planning and transport can be managed”* (Pg. 1) and sets out guidance for policy development, proposal assessment and project delivery.
- 2.3.21 PAN 78 ‘Inclusive Design’ (Scottish Government, 2006) is intended to assist in achieving an environment that is designed for a wide user group and sets out the roles of those *“instrumental in delivering inclusive environments”* (Pg. 14).
- 2.3.22 PAN 3/2010 ‘Community Engagement’ (Scottish Government, 2010) provides advice on ways of effectively engaging with communities on planning matters. It links directly with the ‘National Standards for Community Engagement’ (SCDC, 2016) and the associated seven principles: Inclusion; Support; Planning; Working Together; Methods; Communication; and, Impact.
- 2.3.23 PAN 1/2013 ‘Environmental Impact Assessment’ (Scottish Government, 2013) provides guidance on the integration of EIA into the overall development management process and how to work towards an efficient and effective EIA. The PAN concerns EIAs undertaken within the Planning EIA regime and therefore should be supplemented by the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984; however the principle of the advice is still relevant.

Infrastructure Investment Plan (IIP) (Scottish Government, 2015a)

- 2.3.24 The Infrastructure Investment Plan published in 2015 sets out why the Scottish Government invests, how it invests and what it intends to invest in up to 2035 by sector. It is intended to support the objectives set out in Scotland’s Economic Strategy and the Programme for Government. The IIP recognises that *“investment in transport across*

Scotland will deliver the best possible connectivity across the roads and public transport network, improving journey times and tackling inequality by improving accessibility of services and opportunities” (Pg. 21).

Scotland’s Economic Strategy (Scottish Government, 2015b)

- 2.3.25 The Scottish Government’s Economic Strategy sets out four priorities, with associated actions, to ensure economic growth is shared and sustainable.
- 2.3.26 A key strategic priority in the policy is ‘investing in our people, infrastructure and assets in a sustainable way’, this priority recognises the importance of investment in infrastructure to drive competitiveness and create opportunities. It also recommends that *“investment must be sustainable, not only in terms of tackling emissions, enhancing our natural capital and supporting the transition to a low carbon economy, but also through ensuring the sustainability of our communities”* (Pg. 37).

National Transport Strategy (NTS) (Scottish Government, 2016)

- 2.3.27 The National Transport Strategy (NTS) provides a transport vision and associated long-term key strategy objectives and outcomes. The original NTS, which was intended to cover the period from 2006 until 2026, was refreshed in 2015.
- 2.3.28 Following the refresh the three key strategic outcomes were retained. They are as follows:
- *“improved journey times and connections, to tackle congestion and lack of integration and connections in transport which impact on high level objectives for economic growth, social inclusion, integration and safety”;*
 - *“reduced emissions, to tackle the issues of climate change, air quality and health improvement which impact on high-level objectives for protecting the environment and improving health”;* and,
 - *“improve quality, accessibility and affordability, to give people a choice of public transport, where availability means better quality transport services and value for money or an alternative to the car”* (Pg. 2).

National Transport Strategy 2 (NTS2) Draft Strategy for Consultation

- 2.3.29 A National Transport Strategy 2 (NTS2) *Draft Strategy for Consultation* was published on the 31st July 2019 and the consultation period closed on the 23rd October 2019. The NTS2 Draft Strategy for Consultation sets a vision for transport in Scotland that states: *“We will have a sustainable, inclusive and accessible transport system, helping deliver a healthier, fairer and more prosperous Scotland for communities, businesses and visitors”* (Pg.5)
- 2.3.30 The vision is underpinned by four Priorities, each with three associated Outcomes as listed below:
- *Promotes equality*
 - *Will provide fair access to services we need*
 - *Will be easy to use for all*
 - *Will be affordable for all*
 - *Takes climate action*
 - *Will adapt to the effects of climate change*
 - *Will help deliver our net-zero target*
 - *Will promote greener, cleaner choices*
 - *Helps our economy prosper*
 - *Will get us where we need to get to*
 - *Will be reliable, efficient and high quality*

- *Will use beneficial innovation*
 - *Improves health and wellbeing*
 - *Will be safe and secure for all*
 - *Will enable us to make health travel choice*
 - *Will help make our communities great places to live (Pg.5)*
- 2.3.31 The NTS 2 will be updated to take into account comments received during the consultation period and a final strategy is expected to be published in 2020 along with a delivery plan.

Regional Strategies

South East Scotland Strategic Development Plan (SDP) (SESplan, 2013)

- 2.3.32 The Strategic Development Planning Authority for Edinburgh and South East Scotland's (SESplan) Strategic Development Plan sets out a spatial strategy which recognises existing development commitments and promotes a sustainable pattern of growth across the City of Edinburgh, East Lothian, Fife, Midlothian, Scottish Borders and West Lothian Council areas.
- 2.3.33 The strategy promotes the development of strategic transport and infrastructure networks to support economic growth and to meet the needs of communities. Paragraph 45 of SESplan states that the South East Edinburgh Strategic Development Area (SDA) is served by the City Bypass and Sheriffhall Roundabout "*which are operating close to capacity and are severely congested at peak times*" and that the upgrading of Sheriffhall Roundabout has been identified as an intervention within Transport Scotland's Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR) whilst the expansion of park and ride facilities at Sheriffhall and a potential new park and ride facility to the north of the A68 /A720 junction are important to the 'Regional Core'. Paragraph 74 of SESplan identifies the grade separation of the Sheriffhall Roundabout as a "*key transport infrastructure project*" within the Midlothian/Borders Sub-Regional Area.

Proposed South East Scotland Strategic Development Plan (SDP2) (SESplan, 2016)

- 2.3.34 The Proposed Plan sets out the vision for the city region over 20 years from 2018. The intention was that the proposed plan, if approved, would replace the current Strategic Development Plan and will inform the next set of Local Development Plans. It should be noted that the Proposed Plan was submitted to Scottish Ministers for examination on 26 June 2017 and the examination was completed on 20 July 2018. On 16 May 2019, SESplan received notification that Scottish Ministers decided to reject the Plan, it is not clear if this plan will be revised in light of the Ministers decision, however the proposed plan has still been considered within this ES as a draft plan. The Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 was passed by the Scottish Parliament on 20 June 2019 and received Royal Assent on 25 July 2019. The new act removes the requirement to prepare strategic development plans and replaces them with Regional Spatial Strategies, however guidance on their implementation is yet to be provided by the Scottish Government.
- 2.3.35 The plan highlights A720 Improvements, including Sheriffhall Roundabout, as 'Potential Strategic Cross-Boundary Projects' to improve connectivity for the region. The SDP2 Proposed Strategic Development Plan published in October 2016 highlights improvements to the A720 including the Sheriffhall Roundabout upgrade as a potential strategic cross-boundary project supporting the vision for the plan of a 'better connected place'.

Strategic Cross Boundary Cycle Development (SEStran, 2015)

- 2.3.36 The Strategic Cross Boundary Cycle Development produced by South East Scotland Transport Partnership (SEStran) provides a *“strategy for guiding investment in cross local authority boundary sections of the cycling network, with particular focus on routes suitable for commuters”* (Pg. 3).
- 2.3.37 The strategy recommends an *“overpass/fully segregated bridge at Sheriffhall Junction”* incorporating *“the highest quality solution for cyclists”* and *“connection via A7”* (Pg. 5) to provide continuous cycle lanes throughout the Edinburgh South East and Midlothian East/Borders commuting corridors.

Regional Transport Strategy 2015 – 2025 Refresh (SEStran, 2016)

- 2.3.38 The Regional Transport Strategy (2008) provides a strategic framework for transport management and investment in the SEStran area over a 10-15 year period. The 2016 Refresh monitors progress of objectives and policies based on the overall changing context.
- 2.3.39 The Regional Transport Strategy includes a key priority to tackle major delays around the ‘Edinburgh Outer Orbital Corridor’ (Corridor 8). This priority specifically refers to the A720 and recommends various approaches to managing congestion on the route including *“removal of obvious bottlenecks such as Sheriffhall through measures which are compatible with the capacity of the surrounding network and which also prioritise public transport”* (Pg. 95).

SESplan Cross Boundary and Land Use Appraisal (Transport Scotland, 2017)

- 2.3.40 The SESplan Cross Boundary and Land Use Appraisal identifies potential transport interventions required to mitigate the predicted cumulative cross-boundary transport impacts of current and emerging development plans in the SESplan area.
- 2.3.41 The appraisal has identified the Sheriffhall Grade Separation as a key development which would have a benefit in addressing the cross-boundary hotspots. The appraisal notes that *“targeted improvement at Sheriffhall Junction could offer significance operational benefit to the A720 and would be a substantial first step in any future route-wide improvement”* (Pg. XVIII).

Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal (Scottish Government, 2018)

- 2.3.42 The City Region Deal for Edinburgh and South East Scotland was signed by the UK Government and the Scottish Government in August 2018.
- 2.3.43 The Edinburgh and South-East Scotland City Region Deal is a mechanism for accelerating economic and inclusive growth in the City Region. The UK Government and Scottish Government are investing £600 million into the city region over the next 15 years. Alongside partners comprising: the six member authorities - The City of Edinburgh, East Lothian, Fife, Midlothian, Scottish Borders and West Lothian Councils; the city region’s universities and colleges; and the private and third sectors, £1.3 billion of investment will be delivered.
- 2.3.44 The Scottish Government is committed to investing £140m on strategic transport improvements as part of the City Region deal. This specifically includes up to £120m to support improvements to the A720 for the grade separation of Sheriffhall Roundabout.
- 2.3.45 The City Deal states that *“Transport Scotland will manage and deliver the upgrade of Sheriffhall Roundabout. The preferred option is a grade separated junction which separates local traffic from the strategic traffic on the A720 (city bypass) and when complete will allow the traffic on the bypass to flow freely, improving road safety and journey times for all road users, bringing improved economic benefits and inclusion across Edinburgh and South-East Scotland. It will improve accessibility for all modes of transport including walking and cycling.”* (Pg. 21)

Local Plans and Strategies

Edinburgh Local Development Plan (City of Edinburgh Council, 2016)

2.3.46 The Edinburgh Local Development Plan (LDP) (adopted 2016) contains a number of 'Transport Proposals and Safeguards' (Table 9 – Pg. 39). One of the named transport proposals is the Sheriffhall Roundabout Upgrade (Ref: T13) *"Grade separation of existing roundabout junction on city bypass should incorporate bus priority and safe crossing of the bypass for pedestrians and cyclists"* (Pg. 39). The LDP also notes through 'Policy Tra 10 (New and Existing Roads)' that planning permission will not be granted for development which would prejudice the proposed new roads and road network improvements listed in Table 9 and shown indicatively on the Proposals Map (Pg. 131).

Midlothian Local Development Plan (Midlothian Council, 2017)

2.3.47 The Midlothian LDP was adopted in November 2017. The LDP focuses on providing for, and managing, future change across the Council area in line with the SESplan requirements. It comprises a development strategy for the period to 2024 and a detailed policy framework to guide future land use in a way which best reflects SESplan's vision, strategic aims and objectives.

2.3.48 The Local Plan – Policy TRAN3 (Strategic Transport Network) states that Midlothian Council *"supports the early implementation of the grade separation of the A720 Sheriffhall Junction"* (Pg. 29). Policy TRAN2 (Transport Network Interventions) includes the safeguarding of land required for the 'A720 Sheriffhall Junction Grade Separation' and the 'Sheriffhall (Extension) Park and Ride' (Pg. 28).

2.3.49 The Settlement Statement for the SE (Shawfair) Strategic Development Area (Section 8.1), land allocated for approximately 4,000 houses, 23.5 hectares of employment land and a new town centre, states that *"there will be a need to upgrade the A720 Sheriffhall Junction and contributions are being sought from the committed development towards this future investment"* (Pg. 83, paragraph 8.1.6).

Midlothian Active Travel Strategy 2018 - 2021 (Midlothian Council, 2018)

2.3.50 The Active Travel Strategy provides a framework of objectives for investment, identifying improvements to the active travel network necessary to encourage and enable safer walking and cycling environments.

2.3.51 The strategy identifies the *"creation of new active travel infrastructure from Gilmerton Road roundabout to Sheriffhall roundabout"* and the *"widening of existing path from Sheriffhall roundabout"* (Pg. 42) as key actions to create a connection along the A7 between the Gilmerton Road roundabout and a new Gilmerton to Shawfair multi-user link.

2.4 References

- City of Edinburgh Council (2016) Local Development Plan (Adopted November 2016)
- Midlothian Council (2017) Local Development Plan (November 2017)
- Midlothian Council (2018) Active Travel Strategy 2018 – 2021 (Adopted April 2019)
- Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC) (2016) National Standards for Community Engagement
- Scottish Government (2005) Planning Advice Note (PAN) 75 'Planning for Transport'
- Scottish Government (2006) Planning Advice Note (PAN) 78 'Inclusive Design'
- Scottish Government (2008) Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR) (December 2008)
- Scottish Government (2010) PAN 3/2010 'Community Engagement'
- Scottish Government (2011) Scotland's Cities: Delivering for Scotland (December 2011)
- Scottish Government (2013) Planning Advice Note (PAN) 1/2013 'Environmental Impact Assessment'
- Scottish Government (2014a) National Planning Framework 3 (NPF3) (Adopted June 2014)
- Scottish Government (2014b) Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) (Adopted June 2014)
- Scottish Government (2015a) Infrastructure Investment Plan (IIP) (Adopted December 2015)
- Scottish Government (2015b) Scotland's Economic Strategy (Adopted March 2015)
- Scottish Government (2016) National Transport Strategy (NTS) (Refresh) (Adopted January 2016)
- Scottish Government (2019) National Transport Strategy 2 (NTS2) (Draft for Consultation) (31st July 2019)
- Scottish Government (2018) Edinburgh and South East Scotland Region City Deal. City Region Deal: Accelerating Growth (Adopted August 2018)
- SESpian (2013) South East Scotland Strategic Development Plan (SDP) (Adopted June 2013)
- SESpian (2016) Proposed South East Scotland Strategic Development Plan (SDP2) (October 2016)
- South East Scotland Transport Partnership (SEStran) (2015) Strategic Cross Boundary Cycle Development (Adopted June 2015)
- South East Scotland Transport Partnership (SEStran) (2016) Regional Transport Strategy 2015 – 2025 (Refresh)
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