

# Background and Benefits

## Rationale for Intervention:

The overall purpose of the investment is to reduce congestion and delays for all traffic along the A40 corridor specifically between M5 junction 11 and Benhall Roundabout.

The improvements will also support and encourage strategic housing and employment growth sites along the corridor.

This will be achieved by increasing the overall capacity of this section of the network and upgrading existing infrastructure. The proposals will help to optimise the efficiency of the network, whilst also improving infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists.



**Phase 1** - Arle Court roundabout currently creates significant delays and congestion for traffic travelling on the A40 into and out of Cheltenham. It is therefore considered essential that a scheme to improve congestion at the junction is progressed as a priority. The Arle Court roundabout is a focal point of ongoing congestion in the area, and this has previously called into question the value of implementing other schemes. Without addressing Arle Court congestion, the full benefit of other schemes would not be realised.

**Phase 2** - This section of the A40 between the M5 Junction 11 and Arle Court currently experiences significant congestion in both the AM and PM peak periods. This congestion would be increased with additional development. It is therefore considered essential that a scheme to alleviate congestion along this route is progressed as a priority.

## Potential Benefit for Local Area:

### • Local Businesses and Economic Growth

Cheltenham is a key driver for the economic prosperity of Gloucestershire, as well as the wider South West region. The County Council recognises the strategic west of Cheltenham development opportunities and is highly supportive of the emerging Cyber Park proposal. Enabling the development of strategic employment land and growing our economy also presents the opportunity for Gloucestershire to be a 'magnet' county – growing the working age population by keeping and attracting more 18-40 year olds with high level qualifications who want to live and work in the county.

The section of the A40 corridor between M5 junction 11 and Benhall Roundabout is the main route in and out of Cheltenham. Either side of this length of A40 there are some major employment zones and a park and ride facility, this leads to congestion during peak hours of traffic.

These businesses and many more rely this section on the A40 to access the wider regional and national road network, including M5 Junction 11. The businesses will benefit from reduced congestion and delays.

Improvements to the capacity of these junctions are essential in supporting the economic development of the local area.

### • Local and Regional Road Users

Traffic congestion already exists to the west of Cheltenham however, and this needs to be addressed through appropriate, sustainable transport improvement measures.

This includes key 'pinchpoints', which have been targeted for such improvements.

The improvements proposed will benefit local and regional road users:

- **Phase 1** includes capacity improvements to the Arle Court Roundabout which currently creates significant delays and congestion for traffic travelling on the A40 into and out of Cheltenham;
- **Phase 2** includes widening of the existing A40 carriageway eastbound from M5 junction 11 to Arle Court to alleviate existing traffic congestion and accommodate additional future demand.

### • Local Housing Development

The schemes will contribute to accelerating the release of the employment land associated with the 'West Cheltenham' Strategic Allocation along with the other strategic allocations adjacent to GCHQ which includes the proposed Cyber Business Park.

