

CABINET

22 SEPTEMBER 2022

KEPAX BRIDGE – AWARD OF CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT

Relevant Cabinet Member

Councillor Marc Bayliss

Relevant Chief Officer

Strategic Director of Economy and Infrastructure

Local Members

Councillor S E Geraghty

Councillor M Allcott

Recommendation

- 1. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills recommends that Cabinet:**
 - a) Requests that Council approves amendments to the Capital Programme necessary to progress the Kepax Bridge scheme, including the virement of funds previously allocated as part of the approved Capital Programme along with additional sources of funding from Worcester City Council and the Towns Fund; and,**
 - b) Authorises the Strategic Director of Economy and Infrastructure in consultation with the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills to award construction contracts and enter into any other such agreements as are necessary to progress delivery of the Kepax Bridge scheme, within the approved funding envelope.**

Why is it Important to make this decision now

2. It is important that this decision is made now to ensure that there is no impact on the construction programme. The proximity of the works to the River Severn means that the programme is heavily constrained due to flood risk, navigation requirements and fish migration. In addition to this some of the environmental surveys, cost estimates and permissions are time-limited and any delay in making a decision to award the main construction contract could result in a disproportionate impact on the programme.

Background

3. Cabinet approved the development of a Business Case and the submission of a Planning Application for Kepax Bridge at its meeting on 14 November 2019 and allocated £1.5million towards the development of the scheme from the Walking and

Cycling Bridges fund in the Capital Programme. At its meeting on 18 March 2021 Cabinet welcomed the completion of the Business Case and noted the allocation of a further £2.5 million towards the scheme from the Walking and Cycling Bridges fund and the award of £1 million from the Getting Building Fund. This brought the total approved funding to £5 million. Cabinet also authorised the Strategic Director of Economy and Infrastructure to award construction contracts and to enter into any other such agreements as were necessary to progress delivery of the scheme within the funding envelope available at that time.

Update

4. Since the Cabinet meeting on 18 March 2021, further work has been undertaken on the design of the scheme and a Target Price has been received from the Contractor, meaning that the full estimated cost of the scheme is now available. The cost of the scheme has increased due to a number of factors including the delay in receiving planning consent, changes in scope to include improvements to Horsford Road and a ramp to the Severn Way, changes in fuel costs and inflation in the construction sector which have been exacerbated by the War in Ukraine leading to increased steel and fuel costs.

5. Extensive work has been carried out to scrutinise the Contractor's Target Price and to ensure the most efficient construction programme.

6. Kepax Bridge received Planning Consent on 28 September 2021 and a number of enabling works have been carried out since that time including the removal of invasive species, and other vegetation on the bridge alignment.

7. Progress has been made on securing the necessary land agreements with the relevant landowners on either side of the River Severn, together with the other statutory consents necessary to progress the scheme.

8. Funding, sufficient to cover the remaining costs of the scheme, has now been identified from within the existing capital programme and from external funding from Worcester City and the Towns Fund, which is detailed in paragraphs 15 to 17.

9. Sufficient progress has now been made to progress the award of the main construction contracts to enable work to begin on site in October 2022, subject to the approval of this report and the use of funds.

Next steps

10. Cabinet is being asked to recommend to Council to approve the allocation of the funds necessary to complete the scheme within the Capital Programme and for Cabinet to approve that the Strategic Director of Economy and Infrastructure, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Economy, Infrastructure and Skills, to be authorised to award construction contracts and enter into any other such agreements as are necessary to progress delivery of the Kepax Bridge scheme, within the approved funding envelope.

Overview and Scrutiny

11. N/A

Legal, Financial and HR Implications

Legal

12. The proposed landing points of the bridge are to be sited on Worcestershire County and Worcester City owned land. A parcel of land on the west side of the river is being acquired by negotiation. Powers will be exercised under Section 106 (3) of the Highways Act 1980 to construct the bridge to form a footpath/cycle track over the navigable waters of the River Severn.

13. Various agreements and consents have been secured from statutory undertakers and legislative bodies including the Canals and Rivers Trust and the Environment Agency.

14. No Human Rights issues have been identified. A small number of residential properties would be visible from the bridge. Although there are no specific standards for structures of this kind, a distance of 22m is commonly prescribed by local authorities to achieve adequate privacy between facing residential windows; in comparison, the proposed position of the bridge is 100m from the closest residential properties.

Financial

15. The total estimated cost of the scheme is £15.9 million including expenditure already incurred, but excluding any Quantitative Risk Assessment (QRA) allowance. Should there be a requirement for additional QRA expenditure, this will be funded from existing resources with the E&I Capital Programme and reported back via a subsequent Cabinet Resources report.

16. £5 million of this has already been allocated as part of the current approved Capital Programme of which £4 million was previously allocated from the Walking and Cycling Bridges fund and a contribution of £1 million from the Getting Building Fund. This now leaves a balance of £10.9 million to be funded. This can be funded from the existing approved E&I capital programme and external sources but will require reallocation of funding to cover the proposed increase.

17. This is proposed to be funded as follows, and Cabinet is being asked to recommend to Council to approve the following additions, allocations and subsequent virements within the Capital Programme:

- £0.813m – external contribution from Worcester City Council
- £2.325m – external contribution from Worcester City Council via the Towns Fund
- £5m virement from the existing allocation in the Capital Programme to address inflationary pressures on Major Projects
- £0.410 million from the unallocated Public Realm existing capital programme
- £1.781 million from the Strategic Infrastructure existing capital programme
- a £0.571 million allocation from the Highways Capital Maintenance Budget

Human Resources

18. There are no HR implications.

Risk Implications

19. The principal risks associated with the scheme are the usual construction risks such as the discovery of uncharted services, supply issues and the risk of adverse weather, particularly flooding, given the proximity to the River Severn. To mitigate the risks, extensive surveys have already taken place, it is proposed to appoint our existing Term Contractor to carry out the construction work and the programme has been designed to reduce flood risk.

Joint Equality, Public Health, Data Protection and Sustainability Impact Assessments

20. Full Equality, Public Health, Data Protection and Sustainability Impact Assessments have been carried out (Appendix 1). No negative impacts have been identified for Protected Groups and other impacts can be satisfactorily mitigated through existing policies and procedures.

Supporting Information

- Appendix 1 – Joint Impact Assessment Screening and Full Assessments

Contact Points

Specific Contact Points for this report

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Strategic Director for Economy and Infrastructure) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

Cabinet Reports of 14 November 2019 and 18 March 2021. Cabinet agendas and reports are on the County Council website:

<https://worcestershire.moderngov.co.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=131&Year=0>