

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
HIGHWAYS CABINET PANEL
WEDNESDAY 31 JANUARY 2018 AT 10.00AM

Agenda item
No:

3

NEW RIVER BRIDGE (ESSEX ROAD, HODDESDON)

Report of the Chief Executive and Director of Environment

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Executive Member: Ralph Sangster, Highways

Local Member: Tim Hutchings, (Broxbourne and Hoddesdon South)

1. Purpose of report

To seek the Panel's endorsement of the proposal to seek Cabinet authorisation to proceed with all necessary statutory processes, including applying for Planning Permission, Side Road Orders and Compulsory Purchase Orders to enable delivery of the New River Bridge project at Essex Road, Hoddesdon. To incorporate such scheme alterations resulting from the pre-planning consultation process as deemed necessary.

2. Summary

2.1 The report includes:

- i) An overview of the need and historic development of the scheme.
- ii) A preferred option for the proposed New River Bridge at Essex Road, Hoddesdon.
- iii) An outline of the issues raised at the recent consultation.

2.2 The report seeks authority to proceed with the statutory processes required to deliver the scheme and to make any necessary changes to the design during the design development.

3. Recommendation

3.1 The Panel is requested to recommend that Cabinet authorises:-

- (i) the Chief Executive and Director of Environment, in consultation with the Executive Member for Highways, to proceed with all necessary statutory processes and to take all necessary steps, including the seeking of planning permission and Side Roads Orders to enable the delivery of the New River Bridge (Essex Road, Hoddesdon); and

- (ii) the Director of Resources , in consultation with the Executive Member for Resources, Property & the Economy, to acquire the land interests necessary for delivery of the New River Bridge (Essex Road, Hoddesdon) and to make compulsory purchase orders should they be necessary.

3.2 The Panel's recommendation/s will be reported to Cabinet at its meeting on 19 February 2018.

4. Scheme Overview and development to date

- 4.1 Essex Road is the main route that provides access to the principal road network from the Hoddesdon Business Park ("the Business Park"), which is a mix of industrial and warehouse units. The Business Park is a very important income generator in Hertfordshire and plays a significant economic role in the wider region.
- 4.2 The Essex Road Gateway Study, completed in 2016 by Arup for Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) & Broxbourne Borough Council (BBC), placed the economic value of the Business Park at £0.8 – £1.5M per day (Gross Value Added).
- 4.3 The current problems on this section of Essex Road are:
 - i) It is the only access into the Business Park suitable for Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs). A vehicle breakdown on the bridge would cut the area off for hours; an accident which damaged the bridge could close the road for days or weeks.
 - ii) The existing bridge that carries Essex Road over the New River is 60 years old and does not meet modern standards.
 - iii) The road over the bridge is narrow, such that it is difficult for two HGVs to pass.
 - iv) The footway on the bridge is very narrow and there is no provision for cyclists.
- 4.4 Hertfordshire County Council and Broxbourne Borough Council have been working in partnership for a number of years to identify and deliver a solution at this bridge. A study was first commissioned in 2006 which identified the need for an improvement to the infrastructure at this site.
- 4.5 The scheme was subsequently identified within Hertfordshire County Council's Hertfordshire Infrastructure and Investment Strategy in 2009, as part of a package of infrastructure identified to support growth in the County to 2031 based on emerging spatial plans at that time.
- 4.6 Due to the high value of the scheme and economic climate the scheme was not significantly developed due to resource constraints. During this

period the majority of the land required for the construction of the project was acquired by Broxbourne Borough Council.

- 4.7 In 2013 Broxbourne Borough Council submitted a funding application to the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to deliver a scheme to improve the existing bridge, however, it was not funded at that time due to the scheme not being sufficiently developed.
- 4.8 Following this, further work was undertaken in partnership between the County Council and Broxbourne Borough Council to identify the correct highways solution and develop a wider planning brief for the Essex Road gateway site. This resulted in the completion of the Essex Road Gateway Study (“the study”) in 2016 and a further technical study in 2017.
- 4.9 The study considered the following design options to resolve the problems on Essex Road:
- i) Do Nothing Option: This would provide additional road signage and high friction surfacing on the approaches to the existing road bridge to warn of the hazard and the narrow lane widths. This would not improve the pedestrian or cycle facilities on Essex Road nor would it address the sub-standard structural elements of the existing road bridge.
 - ii) Online Option: This involves widening and strengthening the existing bridge. This option would cause severe disruption to the operation of the business park during the construction stage and is therefore not considered a deliverable solution given the road is the sole point of access for HGVs.
 - iii) Offline Option: This option includes proposals for a new access road over Woolens Brook and the New River to the south of the existing Essex Road.
- 4.10 Following analysis, the offline option is considered the preferred option as it provides the following benefits:
- i) Improved access to the Business Park.
 - ii) Increased resilience of the transport access to the Business Park to cope with incidents such as collisions, breakdowns and maintenance.
 - iii) Improved provision for pedestrians and cyclists which has both safety benefits as well as facilitating alternatives to car travel.
 - iv) Increased capacity at the A1170 Dinant Link roundabout would make it easier to get from Essex Road onto Dinant Link Road and other routes.
 - v) New bridge and road will be wide enough to allow HGVs to pass each other safely.
 - vi) Majority of the construction work is offline and will be less disruptive to users of Essex Road.

- 4.11 The total estimated cost of the New River bridge scheme is estimated between £5.2m and £7.1m excluding the land value, which is already in the Borough Council's ownership.
- 4.12 The variance in the estimate range is largely due to the engineering complexity of working around the New River and ground conditions. This figure will be refined in the coming year as the design develops.
- 4.13 A revised funding bid was submitted by the County Council to the LEP in 2017. Following additional scheme development, £6.4m was allocated to the County Council for the delivery of this scheme within the LEP's 2016-2021 Growth Deal to support the LEP's Strategic Economic Plan for Hertfordshire.
- 4.14 This LEP funding is supported by National Productivity Investment Funding (NPIF) and S106 funding in the scheme's locality. The upper limit of the cost estimate can be afforded with the existing funds; however, savings will be sought through the design process.
- 4.15 In order to progress a wider integrated land use plan and transport masterplan for the area, the County Council and Broxbourne Borough Council are working in partnership to produce a wider traffic study to consider transportation issues in and around the Business Park to complement the New River Bridge scheme.
- 4.16 The LEP funding currently requires scheme delivery in 2020 and, in order to achieve this timescale, a planning application must be submitted to the planning authority in Spring/Summer 2018.
- 4.17 In preparation for a planning submission, a pre-planning consultation was undertaken for the proposed New River Bridge between 15 November and 18 December 2017.
- 4.18 Key themes have been identified from the consultation and listed below. Where appropriate, consideration has been given to ways in which it is feasible and affordable to refine the design of the scheme to accommodate feedback received.
- 4.19 Key issues raised during the consultation were as follows:
- i) Provision of improved crossing facilities for pedestrians and cyclists at the eastern and western ends of the new access road.**
Proposed amendment - Further engineering analysis has been undertaken and it is proposed to incorporate signal controlled pedestrian and cycle crossings at both ends of the scheme.
 - ii) Drivers keeping to their lanes when going round the roundabout of Essex Road, Dinant Link Road and Charlton Way.**
Proposed amendment – A review of signing and lining on the approach to the new link road will be undertaken to provide clear advanced direction signing on approach to the roundabout.

iii) Concerns regarding long queues exiting Essex Road onto the roundabout.

Proposed amendment - Currently Essex Road has one lane approaching the roundabout. It is proposed that the new access road will have two lanes approaching the roundabout and a more detailed analysis will now be undertaken to refine the design solution. Whilst this is not expected to remove all queues on Essex Road, initial junction modelling shows that this will significantly reduce queues compared to the existing Essex Road. Detailed information on the transport implications and benefits of the proposed development will be included in a Transport Statement to support the planning application.

iv) Environmental impact of the new river bridge scheme.

A full suite of environmental surveys will be undertaken to identify any impacts and required mitigation measures. The results of the above assessments will be provided as part of the supporting documentation for the planning application.

v) Impacts of construction on the travelling public and local businesses.

Whilst most of the construction of the scheme is offline, Hertfordshire County Council have now sought early involvement from an experienced contractor in the development of the design to identify suitable construction methods that will reduce impact on the travelling public.

vi) Traffic congestion on Essex Road caused by the traffic signals at its junction with Pindar Road and Bingley Road.

This issue will be considered within the wider transport study being jointly commissioned by the County Council and Broxbourne Borough Council, with a view to identifying a solution to the congestion at this junction that complements the New River Bridge scheme.

vii) The proposed Energy from Waste Facility at Ratty's Lane, Hoddesdon.

Members of the public expressed a strong view that the delivery of the New River bridge scheme is now being progressed to facilitate the Energy from Waste Facility proposed at Ratty's Lane. The delivery of the New River Bridge scheme is independent of the proposal at Ratty's Lane. This scheme is funded through a combination of LEP and existing funds held from other developments within the area. Whilst the current highways response to the Ratty's Lane planning application does seek funds towards a list of transport improvements in the area, including the New River Bridge, it should be noted that the delivery of the New River Bridge scheme is not identified as a highways requirement of the Ratty's Lane application.

5 Next Steps

- 5.1 To maintain the current publicised programme, a planning application will need to be submitted in Spring/Summer 2018. The County Council as planning authority will then undertake a statutory consultation, providing the public (including stakeholders and interested parties) a further opportunity to comment. The application will be determined by the County Council's Development Control Committee.
- 5.2 If planning permission is granted the County Council will then seek to acquire the land required for the delivery of the scheme from Broxbourne Borough Council and Thames Water either by agreement or by Compulsory Purchase Order.
- 5.3 Subject to successful completion of the statutory processes identified above, a procurement process to appoint a Contractor will take place in 2019. Construction could commence in summer 2019 with the scheme operational by the end of 2020.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 A successful bid was made to the Hertfordshire LEP which allocated £6.4m funding for the delivery of this scheme within their 2016-2021 Growth Deal to support their Strategic Economic Plan. This funding is supported by National Productivity Investment Funding (NPIF) and existing S106 funding in the scheme locality.
- 6.2 The following table sets out the secured and the known potential future funding pot to help deliver complementary transport elements from the emerging masterplan around the business park.
- 6.3 Funding for the £5.2m - £7.1m New River Bridge scheme, which is the key project, will be the first call drawing down from this overall funding pot.

Funding Source	Value
NPIF	£100,000
LEP (Growth Deal 3)	£6,400,000
HCC Highways S106	£451,000
BBC Highways S106	£409,000
Current total funding available	£7,360,000
Potential future S106 receipts	£750,000
Potential future total	£8,110,000

7. Equality Impact Assessments (EqIAs)

- 7.1 When considering proposals placed before Members it is important that they are fully aware of, and have themselves rigorously considered the equalities implications of the decision that they are taking.

7.2 Rigorous consideration will ensure the proper appreciation of any potential impact of that decision on the County Council's statutory obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty. As a minimum this requires decision makers to read and carefully consider the content of any Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) produced by officers.

7.3 The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council when exercising its functions to have due regard to the need to:

(a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act;

(b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

and

(c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant, protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.

7.4 An EqIA was undertaken for this project and no equalities implications have been identified in relation to this report. The EqIA is appended to this report appendix 2.

Background Information

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/roadworks-and-road-closures/major-roadwork-projects/essex-road-improvements-hoddesdon.aspx>

NEW RIVER BRIDGE (Essex Road, Hoddesdon)

