

**ABBEY-CHESTERTON BRIDGE – APPROVAL TO CONSTRUCT**

**To: Economy and Environment Committee**

**Meeting Date: 16<sup>th</sup> December 2016**

**From: Graham Hughes, Executive Director – Economy, Transport and Environment**

**Electoral divisions: Abbey and East Chesterton**

**Forward Plan ref: 2016/067                      Key decision: Yes**

**Purpose: To seek approval to progress the scheme further into the construction phase, subject to gaining planning permission.**

**Recommendation: Committee is asked to:**

- a) Note the scheme progress being made in terms of planning approval, land procurement and stakeholder engagement;
- b) Give approval to construct the scheme, subject to gaining planning permission;
- c) Delegate powers to the Executive Director of ETE in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Committee to approve the construction contract and selection of the contractor;
- d) Support the continuation of land negotiations; and,
- e) Approve the proposal for a bridge naming process.

<b>Officer contact:</b>	
Name:	Mike Davies
Post:	Team Leader - Cycling Projects
Email:	<a href="mailto:Mike.davies@cambridgeshire.gov.uk">Mike.davies@cambridgeshire.gov.uk</a>
Tel:	01223 699913

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Abbey-Chesterton bridge forms an important part of The Chisholm Trail that seeks to provide a high quality strategic foot and cycle link between the existing and new railway stations in Cambridge, and a link at each end to the Busway cycle route. As well as having standalone value, a bridge would also support a strategic link between the Science and Business Parks to the north of the river Cam, and link to retail areas and business hubs to the south, and residential areas to the east. The location of the proposed bridge, and The Chisholm Trail are shown on **Plan 1**.
- 1.2 User modelling undertaken by consultants suggests that over 4,000 trips a day could be expected from a bridge in this location. The siting of a bridge here would make for reduced journey lengths across the city for certain trips, and hence would make walking and cycling more attractive than car travel.
- 1.3 With a station in place and without a new bridge, pedestrians and cyclists accessing the station could use Green Dragon Bridge, which is off the direct desire line for many trips. Currently the bridge is crowded at peak times, and this situation will worsen as further developments take place and the station opens.
- 1.4 On 17<sup>th</sup> November 2015 this Committee noted that further engagement work had been undertaken, and approved the submission of a planning application for the Bridge. It also approved the use of compulsory purchase powers, the use of a bridge navigation order, and it noted the programme. Endorsement was given to procure the project through the Eastern Highways Alliance contract, and support was given to the establishment of a Local Liaison Forum (LLF). The Committee report can be seen at this link <http://tinyurl.com/zbjho9p>

## **2. STRATEGIC AND ECONOMIC CASE**

- 2.1 In March 2014, Cambridgeshire County Council adopted the Transport Strategy for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire (TSCSC). TSCSC sits under Cambridgeshire's Third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) and alongside the Cambridgeshire Long Term Transport Strategy (LTTS). A refreshed LTP3 and the LTTS were both adopted in November 2014. Together, these set out the vision, high level principles, policies and strategy approach for transport in Cambridgeshire.
- 2.2 All of these overarching documents, particularly TSCSC, make reference to the need to invest further in expanding and improving the cycling network, and thus the new linkage created by the proposed Abbey-Chesterton bridge has a strong policy basis.
- 2.3 The TSCSC makes reference to cycling strategy, and specifically refers to:
  - Using the opportunity that the new developments in and around the city present to create a step-change in the level and quality of walking and cycling facilities that are provided, which can in turn be plugged into the wider network.

- Provision of additional links on the existing network to join up key destinations that are already partially served by the network (for example The Chisholm Trail).
- As part of the wider corridor treatment, seek to widen existing cycle and pedestrian paths and introduce new segregated paths where appropriate.

More details at this link: <http://tinyurl.com/qxjv5bd>

- 2.4 The Transport Strategy for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire was prepared in parallel with the Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Local Plans that were submitted for examination in March 2014. The submitted Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire Local Plans are planning for 33,000 new homes and 44,000 new jobs by 2031. The growth proposed in these plans will only be deliverable and supported if suitable transport measures and investment are led, coordinated and delivered. The Plans include policies requiring sustainable transport modes including cycling.
- 2.5 A new bridge would provide a direct, convenient link between employment, residential and educational establishments on each side of the river. On the north and west side:
- Cambridge Science Park
  - Cambridge Business Park and St John's Innovation Park
  - Cambridge Northern Fringe East Development Area (11,000-27,000 future jobs depending on the adopted scenario)
  - The new Cambridge North station
  - Cambridge Regional College
  - The Cambridge to St Ives Guided Busway link to St Ives and villages north of Cambridge
  - Kings Hedges, Arbury, East Chesterton, Milton, Histon and Impington
- On the south and east side:
- Retail Parks on Newmarket Road
  - Marshalls
  - Abbey, Romsey and Fen Ditton
  - Onward journeys to Addenbrooke's, the Biomedical Campus and educational establishments including VI Form colleges, the University Technical College and private schools.
- 2.6 Potentially more people walking and cycling between these key trip generators would reduce journeys by car, and hence reduce traffic congestion and improve bus journey times on routes such as Newmarket Road and Milton Road, as well as contributing to improved air quality, and independence for young people accessing education.
- 2.7 The Abbey-Chesterton bridge would be an important link in the cycling and walking network for shorter trips across the city, as well as longer commutes linking up with the northern section of the Busway cycle route.
- 2.8 In terms of public health, the city wards of East Chesterton and Abbey are amongst those with the lowest levels of physical activity. A new bridge would help people to build exercise into their daily lives, for instance by walking or cycling to work.

- 2.9 The narrative around improved journey ambience and improved linkages to key destinations has been tested further by independent consultants, and has been found to give a cost benefit ratio of 5.6:1. This is based upon the Department for Transport's Active Mode Appraisal Toolkit, and as such the scheme can be regarded as having a very high benefit cost ratio.

### **3. PROJECT PROGRESS**

- 3.1 Following Committee approval in November 2015 work commenced on compiling packages for the planning submission. A planning application was submitted in late July and (validated in mid August). Images of the bridge and other information about the project can be viewed at <http://tinyurl.com/o5d8ezs>. The application is currently programmed to be determined by the County Council's Planning Committee on 19<sup>th</sup> January.
- 3.2 As part of the planning process the bridge design was presented to the Cambridgeshire Quality Panel. The Panel provides scrutiny of development proposals for the major growth sites in Cambridgeshire. It assesses proposals against four core principles: community, connectivity, climate and character. It is made up of professionals with expertise around urban design and architecture. More details can be seen at this link: [www.tinyurl.com/zgsl3ar](http://www.tinyurl.com/zgsl3ar). The Panel were impressed with the bridge design and described it as 'beautiful'.
- 3.3 Fruitful discussions continue with the owners of land on either side of the river. On the Chesterton side negotiations are progressing to secure a license agreement with Network Rail, and also to reach an agreement with an individual for construction access across his land. On the Abbey side discussions are progressing with Gonville and Caius College regarding a license agreement for their land. Obtaining planning consent is likely to be a catalyst in finalising much of this work.
- 3.4 A Local Liaison Forum (LLF) is now established which combines The Chisholm Trail and Abbey-Chesterton Bridge. The Forum has met twice in public, following an initial set up meeting.
- 3.5 The Abbey-Chesterton Bridge project is progressing in parallel with the Chisholm Trail Phase One in terms of planning application, land agreements and procurement. It may be possible to combine the two schemes into one construction project which could give efficiencies. Approval to construct Phase One of The Chisholm Trail was granted by The Greater Cambridge City Deal Executive Board on 10<sup>th</sup> November.

### **4. PROGRAMME AND PROCUREMENT**

- 4.1 Processes to procure a contractor to build the scheme are underway. A 'mini tender' will be undertaken through the County Council's Eastern Highways Framework contract. Six companies will have the opportunity to bid for the work based on a 60/40 quality/cost split. Project Officers will evaluate the quality submission, and a moderation exercise will then be undertaken by Procurement staff.
- 4.2 The preferred tenderer will emerge as the company with the highest score from the quality/cost process. It is recommended that the final decision to

award the contract be delegated to the Executive Director of Economy, Transport and Environment in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Economy and Environment Committee.

- 4.3 Should the scheme gain planning consent then construction could commence as early as June 2017, and the Bridge project would take around a year to complete. Spokes and local Members will be kept informed as this process proceeds.
- 4.4 A £4.5m budget is currently in place for the bridge project. This reflects the complexities of working near to a live rail line, on a flood plain, and at a location that is difficult to access.

## **5. CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT**

- 5.1 An initial round of public consultation was undertaken in July 2014 showing outline bridge options and proposing a number of bridge locations. The results were reported back to the Economy and Environment Committee on 21 October 2014.
- 5.2 The Committee then asked that *“further consultation be conducted with all stakeholders with regard to the bridge’s role in the Strategic Transport Plan and the detail of its design, siting, approaches and construction, in recognition of the significant level of opposition to it and by doing so, ensure that the option that is submitted as a planning application meets the needs of the widest range of stakeholders”*.
- 5.3 Extensive further consultation was then undertaken on three bridge options that were developed by Knight Architects. This included public meetings, discussions with stakeholders, and an online poll run by Cambridge News. The general feeling was that segregation for users, provision of seating and an attractive design were all important and thus a hybrid of two of the options was felt to be the preferred way forward.
- 5.4 The Project Team have engaged widely and are confident that the main issues of concern have been captured, and as much as possible these have been addressed in the bridge design, the approach ramps and paths.

## **6. BRIDGE NAMING**

- 6.1 Some discussions have commenced around bridge naming with a number of initial suggestions emerging. Clearly some form of process needs to be agreed as to determining a suitable name.
- 6.2 For Willow Bridge, St Neots, completed in 2012, local school children were invited to make suggestions, and a recommendation was then determined by the Project Steering Group and endorsed by Cabinet.
- 6.3 For Riverside Bridge, Cambridge, completed in 2008, there was much discussion about names and the naming process, but finally the name given to the bridge early in the project was retained.
- 6.4 It is recommended that the LLF compiles a list of possible names for the bridge, and the list then be reported and voted on working in partnership with

a local media partner. The LLF will then consider the results of this exercise, and take a vote amongst its members to arrive at the chosen name. This process would allow a strong level of local input, with an element of voting, whilst empowering the LLF to make the final decision.

## **7. KEY PROJECT RISKS**

- 7.1 Land acquisition is a high risk. Negotiations with landowners are ongoing. While we will seek to acquire land by negotiation, Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) powers have already been granted by the Committee.
- 7.2 Access for plant and equipment for construction is very challenging due to limited space. Subject to engagement with our preferred contractor, construction would require a temporary haul road to be built across Ditton Meadows. This option is the most economical and practical. Discussions are underway regarding establishing a site compound area at the back of the Ditton Walk (Beadle) Business Park, which is preferable on environmental grounds to a compound sited on Ditton Meadows.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 A new bridge at this location would bring many benefits, and would link up with the new station and employment sites, providing an important link strategically and for the Chisholm Trail. The project offers very high value for money. Consultation has revealed strong general support, but some local opposition to the idea.
- 8.2 Clearly the attractive and historic setting of Stourbridge Common and Ditton Meadows is cherished by many people. Officers are confident that having engaged widely to explore local concerns the bridge design is of high quality and minimizes aesthetic concerns whilst still providing good quality transport infrastructure.
- 8.3 Colour A3 plans showing images of the bridge will be made available at the meeting.

## **9. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

### **9.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all**

More people cycling and walking contributes to a more active population, improved productivity, reduced traffic congestion, reliability of journey times and adds capacity into an already constrained road network, all of which contributes to economic wellbeing. A new bridge would link large residential areas to large employment sites and give improved access to the new station at Chesterton.

### **9.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives**

Currently many people feel unsafe cycling, although cycling is potentially a form of economic, reliable transport that allows them to access employment or training and hence have independence, and the opportunity to incorporate active travel into their lives. A new bridge at this location would improve accessibility to the new station and a large area of employment.

### **9.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people**

The new bridge would link the communities of Chesterton and Abbey, making for convenient journeys by foot and cycle and would give a means of access for wheelchair users. The bridge would be fully accessible in terms of approach paths and ramps. It could include seating which might be welcomed by less mobile people.

## **10. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

### **10.1 Resource Implications**

The scheme will be capital funded from Department for Transport Cycle City Ambition grant and Section 106 contributions, totalling £4.5 million. The bridge would be designed to ensure minimal maintenance and ongoing revenue costs.

### **10.2 Statutory, Risk and Legal Implications**

The bridge is subject to a planning application. If there is a high level of opposition it is possible that a planning inquiry would be needed. The key risks are set out in section 7 above.

### **10.3 Equality and Diversity Implications**

A new bridge would be available for everyone in the community to use.

### **10.4 Engagement and Consultation Implications**

A thorough and extensive period of consultation and engagement has been undertaken. A Local Liaison Forum has been established.

### **10.5 Localism and local member engagement**

A thorough and extensive period of consultation and engagement has been undertaken. A Local Liaison Forum has been established.

### **10.6 Public Health Implications**

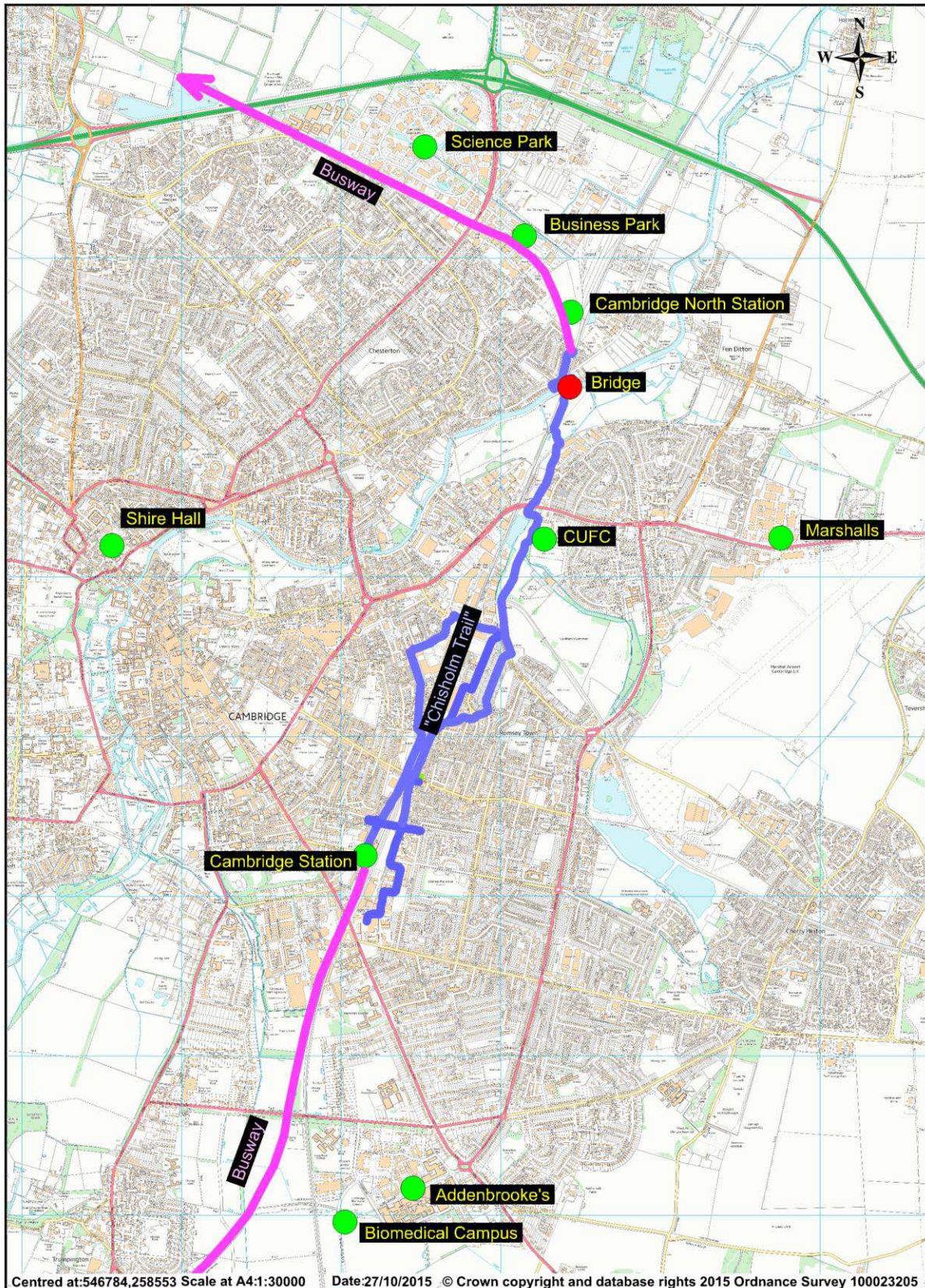
More people cycling and walking undoubtedly contributes to improved public health. Cycling is a physical activity that can prevent ill health and improve health. It is important that people are supported and encouraged to be physically active and any efforts should focus upon interventions that mitigate any barriers like perceived safety risks.

The Transport and Health Joint Strategic Needs Assessment makes reference to encouraging short trips of less than 2km within the city to be undertaken on foot or by cycle. The proposals support and encourage this.

<b>Source Documents</b>	<b>Location</b>
	Room 310 Shire Hall



**PLAN 1 - Map showing location of proposed Abbey-Chesterton Bridge in Cambridge (including the proposed route of The Chisholm Trail)**





<b>Implications</b>	<b>Officer Clearance</b>
<b>Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?</b>	Yes Name of Financial Officer: S Heywood
<b>Has the impact on Statutory, Legal and Risk implications been cleared by LGSS Law?</b>	Yes Name of Legal Officer: F McMillan
<b>Are there any Equality and Diversity implications?</b>	Yes Name of Officer: T Oviatt-Ham
<b>Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?</b>	Yes Name of Officer: M Miller
<b>Are there any Localism and Local Member involvement issues?</b>	Yes Name of Officer: P Tadd
<b>Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health</b>	Yes Name of Officer: T Campbell