

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**CABINET****DATE: 28 SEPTEMBER 2021****REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE****LEAD OFFICER: KATIE STEWART – EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ENVIRONMENT TRANSPORT & INFRASTRUCTURE****SUBJECT: MOLE BRIDGE REPLACEMENT SCHEME****ORGANISATION STRATEGY PRIORITY AREA: GROWING A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY SO EVERYONE CAN BENEFIT**

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Purpose of the Report:

Approval is required to procure services for the delivery of the Mole Bridge replacement scheme as part of the Capital Structures works programme in the 2022/23 financial year.

The scheme has been prioritised as part of the Structures Asset Management Strategy and requires approval as a standalone scheme due to the timescales for delivery with consideration of procurement outside of the Highways Term Partnering Contract.

The proposal supports the growth of a sustainable economy by preserving and improving a key part of Surrey's transport infrastructure.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Approve the procurement of services to deliver the Mole Bridge replacement scheme as part of the Capital Structures 2022/23 programme.

Reason for Recommendations:

The scheme will replace a bridge that has reached the end of its life and will make improvements to other aspects of the highway environment. This includes wider carriageway lanes and additional footway provision as well as improved visibility at the adjacent junction for all road users.

The termination of the existing Highways Term Partnering Contract and implementation of new Contract in April 2022 poses a risk to the delivery and the required timescales of this project. An alternative procurement route is therefore required, which will be determined through a procurement report.

Executive Summary:

1. Inspection and assessment have identified the need to refurbish or replace the wrought iron bridge on Esher Road in East Molesey. The bridge is at the end of its life and would need significant refurbishment to keep it functioning effectively. Any delay to this work runs the risk of it becoming unsafe for use, which could cause significant disruption given its importance as part of the local road network.
2. Mole Bridge carries the B3379 Esher Road over the River Mole in East Molesey, forming an important part of the road network due to its location and the relatively few river crossings across the River Mole.
3. In addition to the bridge condition, a feasibility study has identified other areas of concern, including:
 - a. deficiencies in carriageway widths
 - b. poor visibility for road users exiting the adjacent Summer Road
 - c. narrow footways causing issues for users with mobility aids or buggies
 - d. termination of footway to the west of Esher Road adjacent to Aldersgrove with no suitable crossing
4. Cost analysis has identified that replacement is the most cost-effective strategy for addressing these concerns because the anticipated cost and duration of the level of refurbishment work required (which would have to include strengthening works due to extensive corrosion) is disproportionate compared to the benefits.
5. The proposed replacement scheme will provide a bridge with minimal maintenance requirements and comply with modern standards.
6. Future increases in traffic or the introduction of cycle lanes should they become needed, are accounted for through the provision of a new structure, which the current structure cannot sustain.
7. There are operational and financial risks around using the Highways Term Partnering Contract to procure these works due to its renewal in April 2022. To minimise the risks around adverse weather and to provide more certainty of costs and timescales, the scheme should commence no later than June 2022. Current tender process timelines indicate that procurement will take in excess of 24 weeks for a complex scheme such as this and the new contract will not be suitably set up and operational when procurement is required to commence.
8. An alternative procurement route is required to minimise risk and increase competition and predictability of cost/timescales.

Consultation:

9. Internal consultation has been carried out with the Head of Service, Executive Director, finance, legal and procurement departments.
10. Local member Steve Bax and Cabinet Member Matt Furniss have been consulted.

11. Elmbridge Borough councillors were consulted through a briefing undertaken on the 13 August 2021 with overall support for the proposal.
12. Elmbridge BC planning, property, and conservation officers have been consulted regarding the proposal and have not indicated any significant concerns.

Risk Management and Implications:

13. The deteriorating condition means there is a risk of the bridge becoming unsafe for use, leading to an unplanned closure or emergency strengthening works. This would cause unnecessary cost and disruption. Planned replacement offers a more cost-effective asset management strategy.
14. The bridge in its current layout continues to pose a risk to road users due to sub-standard carriageway widths and poor visibility at the junction with Summer Road. Additionally, the width of the carriageway and approach footways are discouraging to walking and cycling. The proposed bridge and new layout offer much improved safety and will promote walking and cycling journeys.
15. There is a risk to cost and timescales if the scheme is procured through the Highways Term Partnering Contract leading to uncertainty and reputational impacts. An alternative procurement route is needed to mitigate these risks. The financial risks will be mitigated through a competitive tender process and the terms and conditions of the contractual arrangement.

Financial and Value for Money Implications:

16. An allocation of £3million has been made from the 2022/23 capital structures programme budget for this project.
17. A report undertaken by consultant quantity surveyors, based on outline design, has estimated that the scheme will cost in the order of £2.525million including a 10% risk contingency.
18. The new bridge will be designed to have a 120-year life and is expected to be relatively maintenance free with just the replacement of the parapet expected every 40 years or so at approximately £50,000 a time.
19. The new bridge will replace both the road bridge and separate footbridge with one structure, further reducing the future maintenance liability.
20. Additional cost analysis indicates that the alternative option of refurbishing the existing bridge could cost over a third of that to replace it (circa £800,000) with higher ongoing maintenance costs, without addressing the additional risks. The existing bridge is unlikely to meet future needs thus still needing replacement in the next 50 years. Refurbishment also has the highest associated road user delay costs because of the need to return for repeated maintenance operations.

Section 151 Officer Commentary:

21. Although significant progress has been made over the last twelve months to improve the Council's financial position, the medium-term financial outlook beyond 2021/22 remains uncertain. The public health crisis has resulted in increased costs which may not be fully funded. With uncertainty about the ongoing impact of this and no clarity on the extent to which both central and local funding sources might be affected in the medium term, our working assumption is that financial resources will continue to be constrained, as they have been for the majority of the past decade. This places an onus on the Council to continue to consider issues of financial sustainability as a priority in order to ensure stable provision of services in the medium term.
22. The Section 151 Officer supports the proposal to procure services to deliver the Mole Bridge replacement scheme. The capital financing costs have been factored into the Medium-Term Financial Strategy

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer:

23. This report seeks the approval of Cabinet to procure a contract to carry out works for Mole Bridge Replacement Scheme at an estimated total value of £3 million pounds.
24. Pursuant to the order 2.7 of the Procurement and Contract Standing Orders, works contracts over £1million but under the EU financial threshold must be procured competitively.
25. Procuring the contract using a framework agreement which was competitively tendered and complies with the Public Contracts Regulations is a compliant procedure and, pursuant to order 3.7.
26. Part 2 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 do not apply to this contract.

Equalities and Diversity:

27. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has determined that a full assessment is not required.
28. The works will be carried out in compliance with the Equalities Act 2010 and Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant access will be maintained.

Compliance against net-zero emissions target and future climate compatibility/resilience:

29. The improved layout and additional footways will promote walking and cycling journeys, in support of the Council's target of reducing transport sector emissions. The design of the bridge will account for any future need to introduce cycle lanes in line with LTN1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design.
30. To align with Surrey County Council's target of net zero carbon by 2030, the design of the bridge will seek to minimise the carbon impact through a detailed assessment of the embodied carbon. Proposals to reduce or eliminate carbon impacts will then be considered and implemented where viable.

31. Carbon reduction will be further stimulated through the procurement process to encourage the use of low carbon materials and construction methods.

Other Implications:

32. The potential implications for the following council priorities and policy areas have been considered. Where the impact is potentially significant a summary of the issues is set out in detail below.

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	No direct implications identified.
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	No direct implications identified
Public Health	<p>Increased congestion during the construction works is likely to have a negative impact on air quality on surrounding routes. Long term emissions will be reduced through the improved road layout and the safer conditions for walking and cycling.</p> <p>Unplanned restrictions or closures for bridge refurbishment/strengthening will cause higher levels of disruption and congestion than planned replacement.</p>
Environmental sustainability	<p>An Environmental Permit is to be sought from the Environment Agency prior to works commencing to ensure there is no increase to flood risk.</p> <p>An ecological survey has not identified any specific habitats or protected species at risk. The net loss of habitat area will be addressed through enhancements in the remaining surrounding habitats including tree planting.</p> <p>There is an opportunity to donate the existing road bridge for learning and research with Surrey University already expressing interest in the structure to research corrosion. The existing footbridge will be assessed for re-use elsewhere in the county.</p> <p>Construction works are likely to have negative impact on journey times and congestion, however the long-term impact will be positive as the wider carriageway will remove the informal give and take system, thus eliminating the need for braking and accelerating. Additionally, the wider footways will help promote walking and cycling journeys and provide a safer facility for pedestrians.</p>

What Happens Next:

33. The following are the next steps if Cabinet approve the recommendation in this report:
- a. Preferred route to market determined – October 2021
 - b. Design completion and tender documentation compiled - December 2021
 - c. Planning and land requirements agreed – January 2022
 - d. Invitation to Tender – February 2022
 - e. Contract award – April 2022
 - f. Construction period – commencing June 2022
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Report Author: Cameron Pimlow, Senior Structural Engineer, 07896 277919.

Consulted:

Environment Agency

Surrey Wildlife Trust

Elmbridge Borough Council – Planning & Estates

Cabinet Member for Transport & Infrastructure – Matt Furniss

Executive Director for Environment, Transport & Infrastructure – Katie Stewart

Director for Highways & Transport – Lucy Monie

Local county councillor – Steve Bax, East Molesey & Esher

Borough councillors for Molesey East, Thames Ditton and Hinchley Wood & Weston Green

Annexes:

None