

Classification: Open	Decision Type: Key
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Report to:	Cabinet	Date: 04 December 2024
Subject:	Part A Approval to award Milltown Street Bridge Contract	
Report of	Cabinet Member for Environment, Climate Change and Operations	

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek formal approval of a contract award for the replacement of Milltown Street Bridge in Radcliffe following a tendering process which was compliant with Contract Procedure Rules and Financial Regulations and was tendered via The Chest procurement portal.
- 1.2 The bridge and Public Right of Way have been closed since the floods caused by Storm Eva in December 2015. The scheme is a key element of the Greater Manchester ambition to deliver the UK's largest cycling and walking network, the Bee Active Network.
- 1.3 The bridge scheme is fully funded by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) with Department for Transport Funding (DfT) awarded to the GM Mayor through the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS).
- 1.4 The bridge replacement scheme has a Full Business Case (FBC) that has been approved by Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) under the agreed governance process for transport funding awarded to the GM Mayor by Central Government through the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS).
- 1.5 The Greater Manchester Bee Network Committee has the authority to release CRSTS funds and approved the release of £2.549m for Bury Council to design and deliver the scheme in July 2023 and will consider whether to release a further £650,000 on 28th November 2024, giving total funding of £3,199,015. A Delivery Agreement is already in place between Bury Council and TfGM for £2.549m dated 25 September 2023. Subject to the agreement of the Bee Network Committee a Deed of Variation will be signed by both parties to include the additional £650,000, giving a maximum commitment of £3,199,015. The funding spend deadline is March 2027.
- 1.6 The Milltown Street Bridge scheme is a key priority for Bury Council, TfGM and GMCA. It is a key element of the Greater Manchester Bee Active Network and is identified in the Radcliffe Transport Strategy (WSP September 2021) as a key element of the Radcliffe active travel network. It is also identified as a key commitment in the Bury Local Transport Strategy (October 2023).

- 1.7 If agreed at the Bee Network Committee, Construction will commence in Spring 2025 and will be managed by Engineering & Streetscene's Major Projects Team within Operations.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 Subject to the funding decision of the Bee Network Committee on 28th November:
- 2.2 That Cabinet approve the appointment of the winning bidder which has been procured via an open tender exercise under an NEC4 contract to deliver the replacement Milltown Street Bridge scheme and to delegate negotiation and finalisation of contracts to the Director of Operations in consultation with the Director of Law and Governance.
- 2.3 That the finalisation and sealing of the NEC4 contract together with any related documents, including the variation of the grant funding agreement from City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS), be delegated to the Director of Law and Democratic Services in consultation with the Executive Director of Operations and the Cabinet Member for Environment, Climate Change and Operations

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s)

- 3.1 The Milltown Street Bridge scheme is a key priority for Bury Council, TfGM and GMCA. It is a key element of the Greater Manchester Bee Active Network in Radcliffe and will complement the proposed CRSTS investment in cycling and walking infrastructure elsewhere in Radcliffe. It will provide improved connectivity for deprived communities and will form part of a wider programme to improve journey quality, reduce travel times, and improve health and wellbeing.
- 3.2 An open tender exercise was carried out by Bury Council under an NEC4 contract via The Chest in accordance with Contract Procurement Rules. The scheme is fully funded by GMCA with Department for Transport Funding (DfT) awarded to the GM Mayor through the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement.
- 3.3 The scheme has progressed to Full Business Case approval through the GMCA agreed governance process and is ready to be delivered. A delay in appointing a contractor could result in the loss of funding to replace the bridge and the risk of clawback of funding spent to date on design and development, as well as reputational risk to the Council. It could also impact on the Council's ability to secure future transport funding from GMCA and the DfT.

4.0 Alternative options considered and rejected

- 4.1 An alternative option would be to delay appointing a contractor and not to replace the bridge. This option has been discounted as it could result in the cost of replacing the bridge increasing and would risk non-completion within the funding timeframes.

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Background

1. Bury Council has secured £3.199m of transport funding allocated to the Greater Manchester Mayor through the City Region Sustainable Transport Fund for a replacement pedestrian and cycle bridge over the River Irwell linking Rectory Lane and Milltown Street in Radcliffe. The original footbridge was lost due to flooding in 2015. The Environment Agency require the bridge to be replaced and to be higher than the original for flood defence reasons.
2. The Milltown Street Bridge replacement scheme is a key priority for Bury Council, TfGM and GMCA. It is a key element of the Greater Manchester Bee Active Network and is identified in the Radcliffe Transport Strategy (WSP September 2021) as a key element of the Radcliffe active travel network. It is also identified as a key commitment in the Bury Local Transport Strategy, which states that *'Improving pedestrian links to the River Irwell, for example, would allow the Borough to reclaim an attractive natural feature and provide health and wellbeing benefits. A proposed new Milltown Street Bridge to replace the original bridge that was badly damaged by flooding in December 2015, will provide improved cycle links in Radcliffe and significantly improve connectivity in the area in general'*.
3. The bridge replacement scheme has a Full Business Case (FBC) that has been approved by Transport for Greater Manchester under the agreed governance process for transport funding awarded to the GM Mayor by Central Government through the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS). It will complement the proposed CRSTS investment in cycling and walking infrastructure elsewhere in Radcliffe.
4. The Greater Manchester Bee Network Committee approved the release of £2.549m for Bury Council to design and deliver the scheme in July 2023 and is expected to release a further £650,000 on 28th November 2024, giving total funding of £3,199,015. A Delivery Agreement is already in place between Bury Council and TfGM for £2.549m. A Deed of Variation will be signed by both parties following GM Bee Network Committee on 28th November to include the additional £650,000, giving a maximum commitment of £3,199,015. The funding spend deadline is March 2027.

5. The new bridge will provide high quality active travel infrastructure, re-connecting an existing public right of way across the River Irwell and providing a north-south cycle link through the east of the town.
6. The north bank of the River Irwell is the subject of a large housing-led regeneration scheme to create up to 400 homes on East Lancashire Paper Mill development site, and the bridge offers a route from the south bank to Radcliffe Metrolink Stop and new High School, via a proposed new crossing on Church Street West and a new Metrolink ramp, both of which have secured funding from Active Travel England. It will complement the CRSTS investment on Spring Lane with CRSTS funding having been secured for a new CYCLOPS junction and active travel links to the new DfE-funded secondary school.
7. The bridge scheme also links to earlier Cycle City Ambition Grant 2 (CCAG2) investment in Radcliffe providing better local connectivity and a continuous route to Bury town centre via the NCN Route 6 and proposed MCF Elton scheme (as yet unfunded).
8. The new bridge will provide improved access to retail and employment opportunities in Radcliffe town centre and to the Metrolink stop, and across the region via access to public transport nodes to benefit the local and regional economy. It will connect housing and businesses south of the river with existing and proposed housing, as well as schools and businesses north of the river, supporting economic regeneration.
9. Governance structures, a risk register with mitigations identified, and tendered scheme costs are in place.
10. The scheme delivery schedule is based on previous experience of delivering bridge structures in Bury and the scheme will be delivered within the CRSTS funding timescales.

Social value considerations

11. The winning bidder's tender submission outlined a number of social value initiatives they plan to deliver as part of the project, details of which are set out in Part B.
12. In line with this Council's social value policy, the bridge will be manufactured in the UK.

Links with the Corporate Priorities:

2. The Let's Do It Strategy sets out the Council's corporate priorities. This contract will support delivery in four key areas:
 - a. **Improved quality of life** – the Milltown Street Bridge is a key part of the Radcliffe active travel network and will provide improved access to the town including Metrolink, the new STAR Academy and the East Lancashire Paper Mill Housing Development.

- b. Improved educational attainment** – the replacement bridge will connect housing and businesses south of the river with existing and proposed housing, as well as schools and businesses north of the river. The scheme will provide an additional route to the STAR Academy secondary school which is being delivered on Spring Lane.
 - c. Inclusive economic growth** – there are several commercial units along Milltown Street, creating an employment hub south of the River Irwell. The scheme will provide improved access to retail and employment opportunities in Radcliffe town centre, and across the region via access to public transport nodes, to benefit the local and regional economy. It will also improve access to and within the town centre, complementing the Radcliffe Strategic Regeneration Framework (2021) which sets out the town’s priorities to enhance growth and productivity.
 - d. Carbon neutrality by 2038** – the scheme forms part of a wider programme of interventions that together will contribute to reducing carbon emissions by providing a high-quality active travel network that supports interchange with public transport nodes. It will also provide an additional route to the new STAR Academy secondary school, offering low-carbon route options for existing and future students who may otherwise have taken a private car.
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Equality Impact and Considerations:

- 3. The award of contract does not bring about any changes that would impact on one protected characteristic over and above another, it does not result in increased/decrease access to services or provision for any group of the population or cause any disadvantage to a community of interest.
- 4. The bridge scheme has been designed in accordance with regional and national design standards for cycling and walking infrastructure which focus on inclusive design and universal accessibility and has been through TfGM’s Design Assurance Process to assess compliance with these standards.

Environmental Impact and Considerations:

- 5. Carbon emissions: It will form part of a wider programme of interventions that together will contribute to reducing carbon emissions by providing a high-quality active travel network that supports interchange with public transport nodes.
 - 6. Biodiversity: The Irwell is the Borough’s main wildlife corridor, which the proposed bridge crosses. Although the proposed new bridge will be higher than the one it replaces, it uses the original abutments and pier so will have a neutral impact on biodiversity in the wildlife corridor.
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Assessment and Mitigation of Risk:

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
That the tender period expires without being awarded. A delay in appointing a contractor could result in the loss of funding to replace the bridge and the risk of clawback of funding spent to date on design and development, as well as reputational risk to the Council. It could also impact on the Council's ability to secure future transport funding from GMCA and the DfT. A delay could also result in the cost of replacing the bridge increasing and would risk non-completion within the funding timeframes.	December 2024 Cabinet approval will enable the council to award the bridge replacement contract before it expires.

Legal Implications:

7. The procurement has been carried in compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 by way of an open tender procedure under NEC 4. The successful tenderer had the highest overall score of the three substantive bids received.
8. The scheme is fully funded via grant funding from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS). A grant agreement is in place and will require a deed of variation to be entered into in order to provide for the additional funding mentioned above. The grant funding terms must be complied with to avoid any forfeiture of the grant, and in particular any deadlines or other conditions regarding the use of the funding. In receiving this further funding the Council should consider whether it complies with the Subsidy Control Act 2022.
9. It is also noted that a delivery agreement exists with TfGM. Consideration should be given to whether this agreement contains any terms, such as commencement and completion dates which must be coordinated with the timescales set out in the grant funding agreement, to ensure that any failure under the delivery agreement will not place the Council in breach of the grant funding agreement.

Financial Implications:

10. The Capital Programme includes £2.549m (£100k in 2024/25 and £2.449m in 2025/26), the additional £650k will be incepted into the capital programme once confirmation is received from TfGM and will then be included in the Budget Council papers in February 2025.

Appendices:

None.

Background papers:

None.

Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.

Term	Meaning
CRSTS	City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement
DfE	Department for Education
DfT	Department for Transport
FBC	Full Business Case
GMCA	Greater Manchester Combined Authority
MCF	Mayor's Cycling and Walking Challenge Fund
NCN	National Cycle Network