

Sovereign Square Bridge – Construction Instruction

Date: 16th September 2021

Report of: Engineering & Infrastructure

Report to: Director of City Development

Will the decision be open for call in?

☐ Yes ☒ No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?

☒ Yes ☐ No

What is this report about?

Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions

- The City Council was successful in securing funds from the Getting Building Fund for the Grey to Green programme. The programme combines four interrelated investments which will make the city centre greener and more attractive; helping to unlock major commercial and residential development across South Bank and the centre of Leeds. New public realm will be created and pedestrian and cycle connectivity improved, particularly with the construction of the proposed Sovereign Square bridge.
- This report relates to the Sovereign Square bridge, in particular the timescales required with the funding. In order to maintain the programme of having a bridge deck in place by the end of March 2022, the contractor requires an instruction on 20th September to continue progressing the critical path activities of ordering the steelwork and completing the remaining detailed design of the structure. If this instruction is not provided, the programme could go beyond the funding timescales for the scheme.
- The project contributes to inclusive growth; reducing health inequalities and supporting active lifestyles; delivering sustainable infrastructure; making Leeds the best city for children and young people to grow up in; making Leeds the best city to grow old in; providing inclusive spaces for communities; improving the quality of lives and growing the economy through cultural and creative activities.

Recommendations

- The Director of City Development is recommended to approve the instruction for BMM JV Limited to order the steelwork and continue progressing the remaining detailed design of the bridge structure as part of the Sovereign Square Footbridge scheme.

Why is the proposal being put forward?

- 1 The scheme is reliant on a number of external approvals which are mainly concluded, but some matters remain outstanding. Whilst theoretically this exposes the Council to the risk of abortive costs, there is a very low likelihood of this occurring and so the proposal is to instruct the activities on the critical path to mitigate against the more significant risk that external funding for the scheme will be withdrawn if the programme is not maintained.

- 2 It should be noted that the Council's Executive Board at its meeting in April 2021 approved the design proposals for the Sovereign Street Bridge and, the submission of a planning application for the Bridge, together with Authority to Spend of £3.7m as the allocated funding for the project within the existing Capital Programme.

What impact will this proposal have?

Wards Affected: Hunslet & Riverside (Cllr Elizabeth Nash, Cllr Mohammeh Iqbal, Cllr Paul Wray)

Have ward members been consulted?

☒ Yes

☐ No

- 3 Progressing the activities on the critical path will maintain the programme meaning that external funding can be spent within the intended programme timescales.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

- 4 Ward Members have been consulted on the overall bridge construction project. Most recently Members were advised in April 2021 that a planning application for the bridge would be submitted. Planning permission for the Bridge has now been secured. It is not considered necessary to consult Ward Members in relation to the specific instruction to progress the critical path activities as it is a matter very much associated with construction of the bridge.
- 5 The Executive Member Resources has received regular updates and supports construction of the bridge.

What are the resource implications?

- 6 If the programme of the scheme is not maintained, there is a risk that a significant part of the £8.6m funding from the Grey to Green programme is not spent within the agreed programme timescales..

What are the legal implications?

- 7 Under Part 3, Section 3E(g) of the Council's Constitution (Officer Delegation Scheme (Executive Functions)) the Director of City Development has authority to discharge any function of the Executive in relation to Asset Management.
- 8 The proposal constitutes a Significant Operational Decision and is therefore not subject to call in.
- 9 The information contained in the confidential appendix is exempt under Access to Information Procedure Rule 10.4(3) as it relates to the financial or business affairs of a particular organisation (including the Council).

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

- 10 Please refer to the confidential appendix.

Does this proposal support the council's 3 Key Pillars?

☒ Inclusive Growth

☒ Health and Wellbeing

☒ Climate Emergency

- 11 Construction of the bridge supports the three Key Pillars as reported to Executive Board on 21 April 2021.

Options, timescales and measuring success

a) What other options were considered?

- 12 Option One is to wait until all of the remaining approvals are in place before instructing the contractor for all of the works. Although most of these are expected to be completed in approximately 2-3 weeks time, even this short delay will have an impact on the construction programme and there is also the potential that it may take longer than this to receive the confirmations.
- 13 Option Two (recommended) is to provide a part instruction to the contractor covering the critical activity for the ordering of the steelwork and the remaining detailed design. Whilst theoretically this exposes the Council to the risk of abortive costs if the remaining approvals are not confirmed, there is a very low likelihood of this occurring. The instruction would be for approximately £1 million although realistically if this needed to be recalled then the abortive costs would be vastly lower and be representative of when it was reversed in the context of the programme from the date of instruction to the delivery of the steelwork on site in early 2022. The instruction for the remaining activities could then follow once the remaining approvals have been confirmed.
- 14 Option Three is to provide an instruction to the contractor for all of the remaining works now. As the risk of being unsuccessful in receiving all of the remaining approvals is very low, an instruction could be provided to the contractor now. However this does not offer any programme benefits over and above Option 2 and so all things considered the recommendation is to wait until the approvals have been confirmed before instructing the non critical path activities.

b) How will success be measured?

- 15 That the construction programme is maintained to facilitate the bridge deck being in place by the end of March 2022.

c) What is the timetable for implementation?

- 16 The contractor requires an instruction on 20th September 2021.

Appendices

- 17 Sovereign Square Bridge – Construction Instruction – exempt under Access to Information Procedure Rule 10.4(3).

Background papers

- 18 None.