

**EXECUTIVE**

**TUESDAY, 23RD MARCH, 2021**

**SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA INFORMATION**

**Agenda No    Item**

11. **Ash Road Bridge - Project Update Part 1 Report (in public) (Pages 1 - 42)**

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Executive Report

Ward(s) affected: Ash South and Tongham, Ash Wharf

Report of Director of Strategic Services

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Date: 23 March 2021

## **Ash Road Bridge – Project Update Part 1 Report (in public)**

### **Executive Summary**

The Ash Road Bridge Scheme comprises a long-term infrastructure solution to the current and future issues posed by the Ash level crossing, including increased usage associated with housing growth in the Ash and Tongham area and greater barrier downtime resulting from enhanced rail use of the North Downs Line.

The Executive is asked to approve the Council entering into a legal agreement with Homes England which will secure additional Homes England funding towards the delivery of the Ash Road Bridge Scheme, in addition to the £10 million of Homes England funding that has already been secured.

The Executive is also asked to recommend that the Council approve the new budget for the Ash Road Bridge Scheme, which has been revised to £33.77 million for Stage 1 (road bridge) and £5.02 million for Stage 2 (footbridge) and the funding strategy for both Stages which includes the additional Homes England funding to ensure that the scheme is satisfactorily funded. The details of the additional funding are set out in the Part 2 report published with the agenda for this meeting and Homes England approval will be required to release information concerning the additional funding. This is expected to be the case when the Funding Agreement has been entered into and this information can then be made publicly available.

In accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16 (h), the Managing Director has designated the decision in respect of this matter to be urgent and the chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Paul Spooner, has agreed that, due to the urgency, the call-in procedure should not apply in respect of the proposed decisions to be taken in respect of this matter. The Executive is also asked to confirm that the call-in procedure should not apply.

### **Recommendation to Council (13 April 2021)**

- (1) That the Council approves the budget and funding strategy as set out in the budget and funding sections of the exempt (Part 2) report published with the

agenda for this meeting.

**Recommendation to Executive**

- (1) That the Executive agrees to proceed with the project, including the Council entering into the Deed of Amendment to the Homes England Funding Agreement and grants delegated authority to the Director of Strategic Services to negotiate to an agreed form and sign this draft Deed of Amendment with Homes England on behalf of the Council.
- (2) That the Executive approves the transfer of funds from provisional to approved programmes as set out in the funding section of the exempt (Part 2) report published with the agenda for this meeting to allow the road bridge and footbridge to proceed.
- (3) That the Executive approves the budget and funding strategy as set out in the budget and funding sections of the exempt (Part 2) report published with the agenda for this meeting (in so far as they fall within the Executive's power to approve).
- (4) That the Executive delegates to the Strategic Service Director, in consultation with the Lead Councillor, authority to enter into such other contracts and legal agreements connected with this project as may be necessary within the approved budget.
- (5) That the Executive agrees that, due to the urgency of this matter, the call-in procedure shall not apply in respect of the decisions referred to in paragraphs (1) to (4) above.

**Reason(s) for Recommendation:**

This is a unique opportunity to secure this level of central government funding towards the Ash Road Bridge Scheme and the land required to deliver an alternative road crossing of the North Downs railway line in close proximity to the Ash level crossing. The Ash Road Bridge Scheme forms a requirement of Policy A31 of the Council's Local Plan which allocates land for housing in Ash. Delivery of this scheme will also enable the closure of Ash level crossing, which will improve safety for highway and rail users and significantly reduce traffic congestion on the A323 and the use of alternative local roads to avoid the Ash level crossing in Ash.

**Is the report (or part of it) exempt from publication?**

Yes, the Part 2 report is exempt.

- (a) The content of the Part 2 report is to be treated as exempt from the Access to Information publication rules because the proposed transaction is commercially sensitive and is therefore exempt by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 as follows: "Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)";
- (b) The content of the Part 2 report contains details of legal advice provided to the

Council and is therefore exempt by virtue of paragraph 5 of Part 1 of the Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 as follows: “Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings”;

- (c) The content of the Part 2 report is restricted to all councillors.
- (d) The exempt information in the Part 2 report is not expected to be made public because the reasons for the exemption will remain live for the duration of the project. This decision will be reviewed at the end of the project.
- (e) The decision to maintain the exemption may be challenged by any person at the point at which the Executive is invited to pass a resolution to exclude the public from the meeting to consider the exempt information.

## **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 This report asks the Executive to approve the Council entering into a Deed of Amendment to the existing Funding Agreement which the Council has entered into with Homes England, which will enable the Council to drawdown additional funding from Homes England towards the delivery of Stage 1 of the Ash Road Bridge Scheme, in addition to the £10 million that has already been secured. The details of the additional funding are set out in the Part 2 report published with the agenda for this meeting and Homes England approval will be required to release information concerning the additional funding. This is expected to be the case when the Funding Agreement has been entered into and this information can then be made publicly available.
- 1.2 The report also asks the Executive to transfer sums from the provisional capital programme to the approved capital programme, as set out in the recommendations and to approve a capital supplementary estimate for the footbridge as set out in the detailed recommendations set out in the Part 2 report .
- 1.3 The report also requests that the Executive recommends to Council that the Council approves the new budget and funding strategies for both Stages of the Ash Road Bridge Scheme at the next Council meeting, which is scheduled to take place on 13 April 2021.
- 1.4 The Executive is provided in the Part 2 report with information on the up to date position with regards to:
  - a) securing the land needed to deliver the Ash Road Bridge Scheme; and
  - b) the procurement strategy which the Council proposes to follow in appointing the contractor who will deliver Stage 1 (the road bridge) of the Ash Road Bridge Scheme.

The Executive has already given approval to secure the land (in October 2018) and further approval is not required in respect of the procurement strategy to be followed but an up to date position is provided.

## **2. Strategic Priorities**

2.1 The recommendations in this report support the delivery of the following priorities from the Council's Corporate Plan 2018-2023:

### Place-making

- delivering the Guildford Borough Local Plan and providing the range of housing that people need, particularly affordable homes, and
- adopt and implement the Local Plan and supporting policies
- making travel in Guildford and across the borough easier

2.2 ARB will provide significant, identified, community safety benefits and supports the Council's strategic priorities by:

- being an integral part of Policy A31 of Guildford's Adopted Local Plan to mitigate existing and planned development;
- allowing quicker delivery of housing within the total 1750 homes policy allocation; and
- making travel in the Ash and Tongham area easier by relieving congestion caused by the level crossing down-time, improving safety by closure of the level crossing and providing the infrastructure to accommodate the increase in housing proposed under Policy A31.

## **3. Background and approvals sought**

### 3.1 Background

- a) Ash is located to the west of Guildford, approximately two miles east of Aldershot. Ash station is located on the North Downs line, between Reading and Gatwick. A level crossing is located immediately to the east of Ash Station on the A323 Guildford Road. Accordingly, when trains pass through the station the level crossing is closed, causing considerable delays to all users of Guildford Road.
- b) The level crossing is a Network Rail safety hotspot and its frequent closures encourage rat running on rural roads that are not designed to take this level of traffic. Closure of the level crossing has and will increase as the number of trains using the line increases – from September 2020 Great Western Railway increased the number of trains on the line to three per hour on Saturdays in each direction and some off-peak weekday hours. Great Western has targeted extending this, to further off-peak weekday services and then (once platform work is finished at Gatwick in 2022/23) to additional peak hour services.

- c) Significant development is already occurring in Ash and Tongham and is proposed in Guildford's Adopted Local Plan, Policies A30 and A31. At the time of writing 1,335 homes have been granted planning permission in the Policy A30 and A31 areas of Ash and Tongham (with those that have been granted since the adoption of the Local Plan having committed to providing section 106 contributions, or works in kind, towards Ash Road Bridge). A requirement of Policy A31 is that a new road bridge and associated footbridge are provided to enable the closure of the level crossing. This road bridge and footbridge comprise Stages 1 and 2 of the Ash Road Bridge Scheme respectively. The Scheme Plan at Appendix 1 to this report shows the approved layout for the road bridge (Stage 1) and an indicative layout for the footbridge (Stage 2).
- d) Planning permission for the road bridge (Stage 1 of the Ash Road Bridge Scheme) (19/P/01460) was granted on 13 January 2021, by the Planning Committee.
- e) The footbridge and closure of the Ash level crossing form Stage 2 of the Ash Road Bridge Scheme. The road bridge has to be completed before the footbridge is built so that the level crossing can be closed to motorised traffic, which provides the necessary workspace and conditions to enable the footbridge to be built. It is envisaged that a planning application for the footbridge will be made in summer 2021 and progress has been made in discussions with Network Rail on design and responsibilities, whilst a pre-application meeting has been held with the Local Planning Authority to establish the parameters for the application. An application will be made for closure of the level crossing, once the necessary land for, and alignment and form of, the footbridge are fixed and the responsibility for its ongoing maintenance is secured. This is likely to be after planning approval is received.

### 3.2 Benefits

- a) The Ash Road Bridge Scheme is expected to deliver a wide range of benefits for the Council and its residents, workforce, business and visitors, as well as providing positive opportunities to support Guildford's response to the climate emergency. The objectives of the Ash Road Bridge Scheme and its benefits are summarised in Appendix 2.

### 3.3 Budget

- a) A detailed budget for the Ash Road Bridge Scheme (road bridge and footbridge) has been prepared in line with industry best practice, including accounting for optimism bias and analysing the impact of risk to the project based on a fully costed risk register.
- b) As a result, the full scheme budget cost for Stage 1 (the road bridge, excluding VAT and the footbridge) has increased to £33.77 million. Following this budget increase, additional funding has been secured

from Homes England (in addition to the £10 million already secured), subject to the Council entering into a Deed of Amendment. This will ensure satisfactory funding for the scheme to proceed.

- c) A detailed budget has also been prepared for Stage 2 (the footbridge) of the Ash Road Bridge Scheme on the same basis as the road bridge. This shows a budget of 5.02 million (excluding VAT).
- d) The Executive is asked to approve the new budget figures for both the road bridge and the footbridge, together with the Funding discussed below and set out in detail in the Part 2 Report.

### 3.4 Funding

#### Stage 1 – the road bridge:

- a) Homes England has agreed to provide additional funding towards the Ash Road Bridge Scheme, in addition to the £10 million of funding already being provided by Homes England. To secure this funding, the Council needs to enter into a Deed of Amendment to the existing funding agreement with Homes England. The Executive is asked to approve the Council entering into the Deed of Amendment with Homes England.
- b) Network Rail has committed to seeking funding to cover the cost of the footbridge and closure of the Ash level crossing in their next funding period (April 2024 – March 2029). A decision on the level of funding from Network Rail will not be available until 2022/23. In the interim, it is important that Stage 2 of the ARB Scheme is progressed so that it is 'shovel ready' as soon as funding is available and that risks in regard to programme, e.g. a public inquiry for stopping-up of the Ash level crossing to motorised vehicles, are mitigated. At the time of writing, it is expected that construction of the footbridge would not commence until April 2024; although the ongoing development of the delivery strategy with Network Rail may allow Stage 2 to come forward sooner.

In this respect, the Corporate Programmes Team (CPT) is seeking approval to forward fund the work required to continue to progress Stage 2 to a point that planning approval for the footbridge has been granted and the application for closure of the Ash level crossing progressed.

### 3.5 Land strategy update

The CPT has secured two of the four parcels of land needed in order to deliver Stage 1 (the road bridge) of the Ash Road Bridge Scheme. It has agreed heads of terms in relation to the remaining two parcels of land and is progressing the agreements needed to secure those parcels.

### 3.6 Procurement strategy update



- a) In relation to the road bridge (Stage 1), the procurement strategy which has been adopted by the Council is to appoint its preferred contractor on a two-stage appointment basis.
- b) The first stage involves the Council and its preferred contractor entering into a Pre-Construction Services Agreement ('PCSA'.) This enables contractor input to the detailed design and costing to be progressed. Following this work the main contract for the works will be entered into in Autumn 2021, prior to the works starting on site in November/ December 2021.

#### **4. Consultations**

- 4.1 The principle of the ARB Project was included in two public consultations on Guildford Borough's emerging Local Plan, which took place in 2016 and 2017. The Local Plan was adopted on 25 April 2019, having been considered at examination by an Inspector.
- 4.2 As part of the road bridge (Stage 1) and prior to submission of the planning application, regular public forums and two pre-application public exhibition events were held. Over 4,000 people were invited to the public exhibition events, with 490 people attending over two days and 207 providing formal response forms (217 if post event feedback is included) with a Statement of Community Involvement prepared to document the consultation and to identify how results have informed the strategy for the road bridge where feasible. Post-submission of the application an additional public information event was held where members of the public could ask any questions and the Applicant and their design team could provide an update on the proposals to members of the public.
- 4.3 A full planning application was submitted in August 2019 for Stage 1 (the road bridge) and three rounds of statutory consultation were completed by the Council as local planning authority to ensure that statutory consultees and stakeholders receive a full opportunity to appraise the proposals and submit their representations in respect of the Ash Road Bridge Scheme.
- 4.4 As part of the planning application for the footbridge, it is the intention that the public will be consulted through a public exhibition event or similar given ongoing Covid-19 restrictions.
- 4.5 Members of the Executive including the Leader of the Council and the responsible Lead Councillor for the scheme have been regularly briefed on the budget for the project, funding and risks associated with progression of the ARB Scheme throughout.

#### **5. Key Risks**

- 5.1 A full costed risk register for the project has been produced to support the management of the project and the calculation of budget for the road bridge and footbridge schemes in regard to contingency. The risk register forms an integral part of the management strategy for the ARB scheme as discussed at Appendix 8, with risk workshops to be held bi-monthly throughout the project to ensure that

risk and the associated actions for mitigating risk are regularly reviewed and updated. Further details are set out in the Part 2 report.

## **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1 With the additional Homes England funding, the project is considered satisfactorily funded from a variety of sources. Further details are set out in the Part 2 report.

## **7. Legal Implications**

- 7.1 The Council has the legal power to enter into the Deed of Amendment with Homes England under section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 and section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 7.2 The Council proposes to enter into a Pre-Contract Services Agreement with its preferred contractor and the main Lump Sum contract with the contractor appointed to deliver the Ash Road Bridge Scheme in compliance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and the Council's procurement strategy and in compliance with the principles of delivering best value for money.
- 7.3 The section 106 contributions towards the Ash Road Bridge Scheme, which have been and will be secured by the local planning authority through section 106 agreements entered into by landowners and developers with the local planning authority, will be compliant with regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010.
- 7.4 The Council will be bound by the terms of the Homes England Funding Agreement as amended by the Deed of Amendment and should ensure that it fully complies with the terms and any issues with compliance should be notified to Homes England at an early stage. In addition, the Council should ensure that contracts with contractors and consultants in relation to this matter contain, as much as possible, protection for the Council for non-compliance where this is due to a breach by the contractors and consultants.
- 7.5 Legal advice in detail is contained in the Part 2 Report.

## **8. Human Resource Implications**

- 8.1 There are no anticipated Human Resource implications.

## **9. Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 9.1 The Council has a legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 (in particular, the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of that Act) to have due regard to the following matters in the exercise of all its functions, namely the need to:
- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act;

- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a "relevant protected characteristic" (i.e. age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation) 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.
- 9.2 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was prepared for the road bridge (Stage 1) at the time of the planning application. Appendix 10 to this report sets out the key findings of this EqIA and includes, as an Annex, a copy of the EqIA. This EqIA provides evidence that equality duties in relation to the PSED have been fulfilled in developing Stage 1 of the Ash Road Bridge Scheme. It provides a consideration of potential direct and indirect equality impacts (both negative and positive) associated with the new road bridge.
- 9.3 As part of the continuing design and delivery of the road bridge, the recommendations outlined in the EqIA will be reviewed and developed to realise the benefits outlined and to help to further minimise any adverse impacts of the proposed development.
- 9.4 A further EqIA will be prepared to support the application for the footbridge (Stage 2) to ensure that the design is accessible and equality compliant. This EqIA will be prepared in accordance with EqIA guidance and Network Rail's guidance on Diversity Impact Assessments.

## **10. Climate Change/Sustainability Implications**

- 10.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency on 23 July 2019, setting out a commitment to reduce emissions, particularly from vehicles, energy use and construction processes.
- 10.2 The road bridge (Stage 1) provides for the creation of a water-sensitive site, green corridors, high quality biodiversity and habitat creation. Through consultation with the proposed contractor, opportunities for biodiversity net-gain will be further explored whilst construction activities will be sensitively planned to minimise emissions and to mitigate environmental impacts where feasible.
- 10.3 Further details of the landscape design are set out in Appendix 11 to this report, together with an explanation of how the scheme design has considered climate change impacts, particularly with regard to the need for flood compensation storage.
- 10.4 An Environmental Statement (ES) (August 2019) and ES Addendum (June 2020) were submitted to support the planning application (19/P/01460) for the road bridge (Stage 1). The ES and ES Addendum summarise the likely significant environmental effects arising from construction and operation of the proposed development and are included as background papers. Key identified significant environmental effects are summarised in Appendix 11 to this report.

- 10.5 These have all been considered as part of the planning application for the road bridge (Stage 1) and planning permission was granted following approval by the Council's Planning Committee on 13 January 2021.
- 10.6 The position following progression of the footbridge (Stage 2) was also considered as part of the ES and ES Addendum, with the delivery of the footbridge expected to lead to Ash level crossing accident and road safety benefits being upgraded from minor beneficial (not significant) to major beneficial (significant) and vulnerable road user delay, amenity and ambience being upgraded from minor beneficial (not significant) to moderate beneficial (significant). No other changes are anticipated in regard to significant effects. The delivery of the footbridge is therefore expected to be beneficial overall in environmental terms.

## **11. Summary of Options**

- 11.1 The Executive is asked to approve the Council entering into a legal agreement with Homes England (a Deed of Amendment) which will secure additional funding from Homes England towards the delivery of the Ash Road Bridge Scheme, in addition to the £10 million of Homes England funding that has already been secured. This is the option that is being recommended to the Council.
- 11.2 If the Executive does not follow this recommendation then alternative options available to the Executive are:
- (a) To decide to fund the Ash Road Bridge Scheme itself, without the additional or any HIF funding.
  - (a) To decide not to proceed with the Ash Road Bridge Scheme.
- 11.2 The Executive is also asked to recommend that the Council at its meeting on 13 April 2021 approves the new budget for the Ash Road Bridge Scheme, which has been revised to £33.77 million for Stage 1 (road bridge) and £5.02 million for Stage 2 (footbridge) and the funding strategy for both Stages.

## **12. Conclusion**

- 12.1 The CPT recommends that the Executive approves the Council entering into the Deed of Amendment to the existing funding agreement with Homes England, in order to secure additional Homes England funding towards the Ash Road Bridge Scheme.
- 12.2 The Executive is also asked to recommend that the Council approves the budget and funding position presented to the Executive in this report, in respect of both the road bridge (Stage 1) and the footbridge (Stage 2) of the Ash Road Bridge Scheme.
- 12.3 The Council has a desirable and likely one-time opportunity to secure significant central government funding and land towards essential infrastructure which is

required by the Council's adopted Local Plan and will benefit the residents of Ash and Tongham.

### **13. Background Papers**

- 13.1 The following background papers are referred to in this report and links are included here:
- a) Guildford Borough Local Plan: strategy and sites 2015-2034, adopted 25th April 2019 [here](#) (see Policy A31);
  - b) Guildford Borough's Corporate Plan 2018-2023 [here](#);
  - c) Strategic Development Framework SPD, adopted 21 July 2020 [here](#);
  - d) Environmental Statement and ES Addendum submitted as part of the road bridge (Stage 1) application [here](#)

### **14. Appendices**

- 14.1 The following Appendices are attached to this report. These give further detailed information on the main areas for discussion set out in this report:

Appendix 1: Scheme Plan

Appendix 2: Scheme Objectives and Benefits

Appendix 3: Budget (Part 2 exempt)

Appendix 4: Funding Road Bridge (Part 2 exempt)

Appendix 5: Funding Footbridge (Part 2 exempt)

Appendix 6: Land Strategy (Part 2 exempt)

Appendix 7: Procurement Strategy

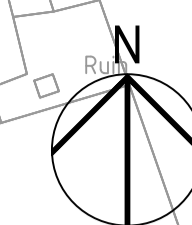
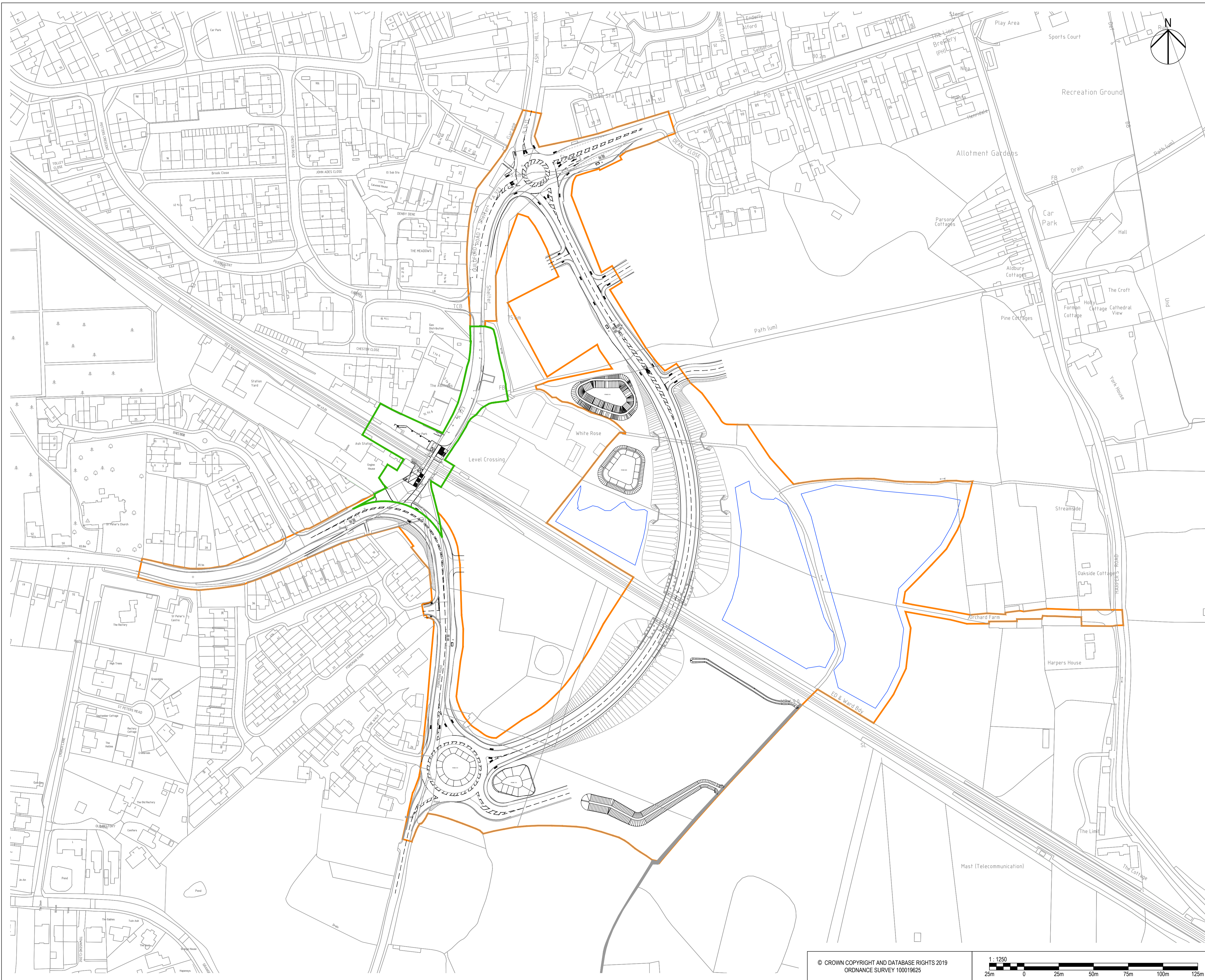
Appendix 8: Management Strategy

Appendix 10: Equality and Diversity

Appendix 11: Climate Change/Sustainability Implications

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**AECOM**

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**ASH ROAD BRIDGE**  
**CLIENT**  
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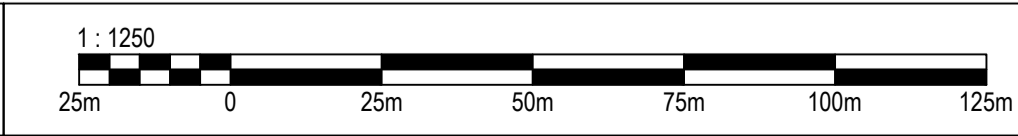
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- LAND OWNERSHIP BOUNDARY
  - STAGE 1: ROAD BRIDGE
  - STAGE 2: FOOTBRIDGE AND CLOSURE OF LEVEL CROSSING (INDICATIVE LAYOUT)

**ISSUE/REVISION**

NO	DATE	DESCRIPTION
P01	24.02.2021	FIRST ISSUE
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## Ash Road Bridge – Appendix 2 Document to Exec Report

Appendix Title: **Scheme Objectives and Benefits**  
Subject: Road Bridge and Footbridge  
Author: ARB Project Team  
Date: 9 March 2021

### 1. Strategic Background:

1.1 The Ash Road Bridge ('ARB') Scheme comprises a long term infrastructure solution to the current and future issues posed by the Ash level crossing, housing growth and enhanced rail use of the North Downs Line.

1.2 The ARB Scheme forms Requirement 9 of Policy A31 of the 'Guildford Borough Local Plan: strategy and sites 2015-2034', adopted in April 2019 ('GBLP'). Policy A31 allocates land within Ash and Tongham, including land for the ARB Scheme, for approximately 1750 homes. Requirement 9 of Policy A31 is as follows:

*"Land and provision of a new road bridge which will form part of the A323 Guildford Road, with an associated footbridge, to enable the closure of the level crossing on the A323 Guildford Road, adjacent to Ash railway station."*

1.3 Providing the range of housing needed, including affordable homes, through the GBLP and making travel in Guildford and across the borough easier are strategic priorities of the 'Guildford Borough Council Corporate Plan 2018-2023'.

1.4 It is also the Office of Road and Rail (ORR) - and consequently Network Rail - policy to remove risk to the rail network, where practicable, through the elimination of level crossings in favour of bridges, underpasses or diversions. The ORR<sup>1</sup> (2011) state:

*"Level crossings account for nearly half of the catastrophic train accident risk on Britain's railways and risk control should, where practicable, be achieved through the elimination of level crossings in favour of bridges, underpasses or diversions."*

### 2. Problems and Opportunities:

2.1 The key issues that have driven the requirement for the scheme:

- (a) Ash level crossing is classified as a medium-high risk level crossing and is within the top 20% of riskiest crossings on the Wessex Route.
- (b) Existing barrier downtime averages between 20 to 25 minutes an hour creating delay and congestion on the A323.
- (c) Misuse of the crossing is high with 34 incidents at the Ash level crossing between 1st January 2014 and 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020. There are multiple incidents that also go unrecorded as reported by the signalling team and Station Staff at Ash which result from delays.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.orr.gov.uk/sites/default/files/om/level\\_crossings\\_guidance.pdf](https://www.orr.gov.uk/sites/default/files/om/level_crossings_guidance.pdf)



- (d) Planned increases in rail frequencies (an increase from 2 to 3 trains per hour on the Gatwick to Reading Line) will result in longer barrier downtimes.
- (e) Demand and consequently queuing at the Ash level crossing by all user types is predicted to increase as a result of background population growth and committed and planned housing in the area.
- (f) The use of unsuitable local roads occurs as motorists seek to avoid delay at the Ash level crossing.

2.2 Through the GBLP the opportunity has arisen to provide a collaborative long term infrastructure solution to the constraints posed by the Ash level crossing in regards to safety, movement and congestion, which has blighted the operation of both the highway and rail network in this area for a number of years.

2.3 The scheme is an opportunity to address existing transport issues; to mitigate the impacts of committed development; and accommodate remaining planned growth in the Ash and Tongham area.

2.4 It also offers the opportunity to deliver broader economic and social outcomes through supporting the local economy (through job creation and additional high level skills qualifications), increasing affordable housing stock and increasing expenditure and contributions to public finances.

### **3. Requirement for the Scheme:**

3.1 The need for an alternative means of crossing over the railway at Ash was identified and examined through the GBLP and supported by Guildford Borough Council, Surrey County Council and Network Rail, as well as the Planning Inspector.

3.2 The ARB Scheme was proposed to address the existing capacity and safety constraint of Ash level crossing and to mitigate the impact of housing already committed and proposed by GBC local plan policy A31.

3.3 The principle of ARB Scheme is therefore established by the adopted local plan, and has also subsequently been endorsed by inspectors for two recent planning appeals in the area.

3.4 Stage 1 (road bridge) is the most complex and cost intensive element of the project. Without the delivery of the road bridge and the diversion of motor vehicles away from the Ash level crossing, the necessary land and space for construction of the footbridge and subsequently closure of the Ash level crossing will not be available.

3.5 Both the availability of land (available to April 2024) and Homes England funding for the road bridge (available to March 2023) constrains the programme for delivery and therefore it is essential that action is taken now to secure the delivery of the road bridge, and the required conditions for construction of the footbridge and closure of the Ash level crossing.

3.6 Without the progression of the road bridge, the opportunity to provide an alternative crossing across the North Downs Line close to the location of the A323 may be lost. Furthermore, cumulative traffic impacts associated with committed development in the Ash and Tongham area will go unmitigated at the Ash level crossing and on local roads where 'rat-running' occurs to avoid the crossing.



- 3.7 Network Rail has confirmed that Ash level crossing has the highest level of protection in place, therefore meaning that no further improvements are feasible to reduce risk or improve performance at this location. In their response to GBLP, Network Rail also highlighted that with planned growth in traffic associated with housing they considered that the level crossing will become prohibitively unsafe.
- 3.8 With the planned increases in rail frequencies already underway and committed housing being built, user delay at the Ash level crossing and consequently risk for pedestrians, cyclists and motor vehicles, will increase. Without the ARB Scheme, Ash level crossing will remain a constraint for years to come and the opportunity to provide an alternative crossing will be lost.

#### **4. Scheme Objectives**

4.1 The objectives of the ARB Scheme are as follows:

1. To support the growth aspirations of the Guildford Borough Local Plan and in particular Policy A31 relating to the delivery of housing and employment
  - Manage the impact of both committed and potential future housing development.
  - Deliver access and/or capacity to support Local Plan housing development
  - Improved journey reliability benefiting the local economy and employment
2. To alleviate congestion and delay associated with the Ash level crossing
  - Relieve a key congestion hotspot on the A323 and in Ash
  - Reduce delays from the Ash level crossing for the local community
  - Deliver journey time savings for all users travelling to, from and through Ash
  - Contribute to improved air quality on the A323
3. To better manage the routing of vehicles through Ash
  - Remove delay and queuing at the Ash level crossing which encourages rat-running
  - Reduce the use of inappropriate residential and rural roads to avoid the level crossing
4. To improve safety for drivers, pedestrians and cyclists crossing the North Downs Line and using Ash Station
  - Mitigate the increased risks to users at the Ash level crossing resulting from the increase in train services on the line; and a predicted increase in vehicular traffic in the locality.
  - Facilitate safe and suitable access across the North Downs railway line for all users.
  - Reduce volumes of traffic at Ash Station.
  - Improved access and platform interchange for Ash Station users.
5. To improve connectivity across the North Downs Line and through Ash
  - Improve local connectivity and access by removing the 'barrier' effect caused by the North Downs Line and Ash level crossing.
  - Make Ash more resilient in the event of an incident at Ash Station or at the Ash level crossing.
  - Facilitation of improved public transport services through increased reliability in journey times.

## 5. Strategic Benefits / Outcomes

5.1 Delivery of the ARB Scheme is expected to deliver a range of strategic benefits and positive outcomes. These are summarised against the scheme objectives in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of Benefits / Outcomes of ARB Scheme

Objective	Benefits associated with Road Bridge
1	<p>To support the growth aspirations of the Guildford Borough Local Plan and in particular Policy A31 relating to the delivery of housing and employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mitigates impacts from increased housing committed and proposed in the area under Policy A30 and 31 of Guildford's Adopted Local Plan (Reg 22)</li> <li>• Unlocks the development potential of land allocated in Policy A31 (estimated at a minimum of 698 homes).</li> <li>• Additional local expenditure from the new housing units is likely to have a beneficial, long-term, permanent effect on the borough economy</li> <li>• New housing units will contribute to local public finances through tax revenues generated by developers and residents.</li> <li>• The ARB Scheme will create and safeguard construction jobs through construction of the project and delivery of new housing.</li> <li>• Creation of indirect jobs associated with the delivery of new housing.</li> <li>• Delivery of additional high level qualifications through construction of the Scheme and delivery of new housing.</li> </ul>
2	<p>To alleviate congestion and delay associated with the Ash level crossing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The removal of an existing traffic congestion and delay hotspot for road users (closures 8 times p/hour, or 150 p/day).</li> <li>• Mitigation of impacts for road users associated with additional passenger train services on the line and longer trains.</li> <li>• Mitigation of transport impacts associated with development traffic already committed and being delivered in the vicinity of the proposed development, and the remaining homes associated with Policy A31 of the GBLP.</li> <li>• The reduction in congestion and rat running will also have air quality benefits for local residents, particularly around the Ash level crossing where there will be a reduction in queuing and idling traffic.</li> </ul>
3	<p>To better manage the routing of vehicles through Ash</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The road bridge and associated traffic management will help limit the level of traffic that uses unsuitable routes along residential roads and narrow lanes to avoid the level crossing.</li> <li>• The ARB scheme mitigates the risk of further increases in rat-running associated with growth in background traffic, committed development and barrier closures</li> </ul>
4	<p>To improve safety for drivers, pedestrians and cyclists crossing the North Downs Line and using Ash Station</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete removal of the safety hazard posed by the present level crossing, categorised by NR as a medium-high risk</li> <li>• Reduction in traffic around Ash Station, which will improve the station realm environment and conditions for station passengers and non-motorised users.</li> <li>• The removal of interaction effects with upstream junctions and a reduction in risks taken by motorists to avoid delay.</li> <li>• Provision of two new pedestrian and cycle connections across the North Downs Line (road bridge and footbridge) linked to the NMU facilities within the various residential developments which come forward on sites adjacent to the road bridge.</li> </ul>
5	<p>To improve connectivity across the North Downs Line and through Ash</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved journey time reliability for those using the A323 including buses</li> <li>• Relief from severance for residents on the A323 Guildford Road between Foreman Road and Ash Hill Road as a result of a reduction of traffic and HGVs on this link</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Access improvements over the North Downs Lines which coupled with wider GBLP measures for Ash will improve connectivity between Aldershot, Farnborough and west of Guildford thereby supporting economic activity.</li><li>• Support to the Local Enterprise Partnership's 'Unlocking Guildford' project in creating accessibility and delivering infrastructure improvements to improve capacity of Guildford to generate wealth and high quality jobs.</li></ul>
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5.2 In addition to the benefits listed above, Stage 1 of the scheme offers positive opportunities to support Guildford's climate change emergency through the following:

- The creation of a water sensitive site;
- The creation of green corridors and high quality biodiversity and habitat creation;
- The implementation of design measures to address future forecast climate change impacts; and
- The protection and formalisation of functional floodplain to the north of the North Downs Line.

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## Ash Road Bridge – Appendix 7. Document to Exec Report

Appendix Title: **Procurement Strategy**  
Subject: Procurement Strategy for the Project  
Author: ARB Project Team  
Date: 9 March 2021

### 1. Procurement Summary:

- 1.1 The Ash Road Bridge ('ARB') Scheme comprises the construction of a road bridge over the North Downs Line (Stage 1) and construction of the footbridge and closure of the Ash level crossing (Stage 2).
- 1.2 To successfully deliver Stage 1 of the ARB Scheme, a Main Contractor will need to be appointed who has detailed knowledge of the site and the particular constraints that exist such that they are best placed to manage and mitigate the risks. The procurement strategy for Stage 1 has been developed over a number of months and is in line with previous reporting to the Executive.
- 1.3 As part of the consideration of the appropriate procurement strategy, it was noted that the overarching objectives for the Council were time certainty; cost certainty; good quality to meet the requirements of both the Council and third parties; and appropriate risk transference and compliance with governance requirements.
- 1.4 Following a review of the options, an appraisal was undertaken, which included interviews and evaluation of available Frameworks for the appointment of a preferred contractor.
- 1.5 It was confirmed that the procurement strategy that met the objectives was a Two Stage appointment route based on utilising the Council's preferred contractor.
- 1.6 The route to market for the appointment of consultants and a main contractor for this project has been agreed in consultation with the Senior Specialist Procurement Officer of GBC. The Executive therefore is requested to acknowledge the appointment of its preferred contractor, which will initially relate to a Pre-Construction Services Agreement and convert to a Lump Sum Contract prior to commencement of the works in late 2021.
- 1.7 In relation to the development of the design to support Stage 1 of the ARB Scheme, a further evaluation was carried out in relation to the optimum means of procurement of these services.
- 1.8 The outcome of this was to enter into a Contract with AECOM to develop the design through to RIBA Stage 4 in Autumn 2021 utilising the SCAPE Framework.
- 1.9 For Stage 2, the delivery strategy and procurement options for construction of the footbridge and closure of the Ash level crossing are currently being reviewed with Network Rail. It is the intention that the Executive will be updated on the procurement strategy for the footbridge and closure of the Ash level crossing at appropriate milestones.

- 1.10 One of the approvals sought from the Executive today is that the Executive delegates to the Strategic Service Director authority to enter into contracts and other legal agreements connected with this project within the approved budget in consultation with the Lead Councillor as long as these are within the approved budget. These contracts/agreements include both the PCSA and the main contract for the works which the Council proposes to enter into.



## Ash Road Bridge – Appendix 8 Document to Exec Report

Appendix Title: Management Strategy  
Subject: Management and Governance approach for the Project  
Author: ARB Project Team  
Date: 9 March 2021

### 1. Summary:

1.1 The Ash Road Bridge ('ARB') Scheme will be managed within the remit of the Council's Corporate Programme Portfolio. The Corporate Programmes Team ('CPT') acts as the programme management office internally. The CPT has the capacity to oversee and project-manage the Scheme with support from other relevant teams across the Council, or external support if required. The purpose of the CPT at the Council is to:

- Focus resources on the implementation of property regeneration and infrastructure projects arising from the production of development and corporate mandates and plans and to implement the agreed projects; and
- Undertake direct development in commercial, housing, infrastructure and other uses on behalf of the Council by identifying sites and projects to be put into the Capital Programme requiring implementation; and work with third party developers and occupiers to stimulate a collaborative approach to delivery.

1.2 The Council Corporate Programmes Portfolio Board consists of senior officers and Councillors which oversee and monitor the Corporate Programme Projects. The Board receives overall programme updates and highlight reports across the project portfolio and at each monthly meeting focus on individual project updates. An overview of the Council's Corporate Programmes project management arrangements for the ARB Scheme is as follows:

Gate 0/1: Strategic Assessment: The Ash Road Bridge Project was subject to an initial bid for funding through the Council's budget process which sets out the strategic fit of the project with the Council's Corporate and Local plan priorities. The bid was evaluated by the Council's Corporate Management Team, Joint Executive Advisory Board, Executive and Council before being accepted as a project and an initial budget being included on the Council's provisional capital programme.

Gate 2: The Outline Business Case: The outline business was previously prepared and presented to the Council's Corporate Management Team following delegation from the Executive for final approval.

Gate 3: Procurement: The Council has undertaken a process in line with its procurement procedure rules to find the best value approach for the appointment of consultants and a contractor for the project. The Council has a Corporate Procurement Board and Head of Procurement who has approved the best value process of a route to market and selection of a preferred contractor in line with the approved business case.

Gate 4: Final Business Case: and Investment Decision: This is the stage we are now at. Following the procurement and selection of a preferred contractor, the business case will be updated and finalised. The scheme will seek approval from the Council's Executive Committee and subsequent Full Council to proceed with the project.

Gate 5: Benefits Realisation: Through the implementation of the project regular monitoring and progress reports will be prepared and submitted to the Council's Corporate Programmes Portfolio Board.

## 2. **Project Governance:**

- 2.1 This project is owned by Director of Strategic Services – Dawn Hudd
- 2.2 The lead Councillor is John Rigg – Council Lead for Infrastructure & Regeneration
- 2.3 The following measures (covering inputs, outputs, outcomes and impacts) will be monitored:
- Scheme build
  - Delivered scheme
  - Costs
  - Scheme Objectives
  - Travel demand / usage
  - Travel times and reliability of travel times
  - Impacts on housing and the economy; and
  - Carbon impacts
- 2.4 These will be reported in both a 'One Year After' and a 'Final' evaluation report.

## 3. **Project Team:**

- 3.1 The Council have appointed a number of leading private sector partners to assist and advise on the project. These include:
- AECOM – Planning, Technical & Cost Lead
  - Pinsent Masons - Legal
  - Savills – Land Acquisition and CPO advice
  - MKTP – Transport Planning
- 3.2 A table showing Project Team (roles and responsibilities **for this stage**) is provided below:

Table 1: Project Team Roles and Responsibilities

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>
Senior Responsible Officer	Dawn Hudd – Director of Strategic Services	Approve the overall project direction together with the proposed procurement strategy and development principles. Approval of Change Control Proposals.
Project Leader	Mike Miles	Overall management of the project, giving direction to the Project Team. Day to day management of the project including payments, procurement, and reporting. Liaison between project team and Council.
Design, Project Management and QS Support	AECOM	Design, Project Management and Cost Management Support to assist the Client, develop the technical design information for the new bridge and associated works. Design and technical support to respond to relevant conditions detailed in the planning permission for the proposed development. PQS (Project Quantity Surveyor) to manage overall cost of the project.
Land Advice / Agent	Savills	To provide Specialist Land advice on procuring the land required to build the bridge by negotiation with the land owners. Giving advice relating to CPO position.
Legal Advice	Pinsent Masons LLP	Planning, Environment, Highways, Compulsory Purchase legal advice in relation to promotion of the Ash Road Bridge Project. Property title and related advice in relation to the Ash Road Bridge Project. Agreement with Network Rail and Guildford Borough Council in relation to the Ash Road Bridge Project. Associated funding agreement advice, including HIF with Homes England and other related advice as required, including potentially State Aid, Procurement, Construction and Freedom of Information advice.
Specialist Support (As required)	MK Transport	Road & Transport advice and recommendations, including interface with Highways Authority and statutory consultations.
GBC Legal (As required)	Diane Owens / Beejal Soni	Legal advice in relation to contracts / planning, financial & constitutional issues.
GBC Procurement (As required)	Faye Gould	Advice on procurement issues and compliance with appointment of contractors and consultants to the project.

#### 4. Assurance:

- 4.1 Due to the complex nature and cost of the ARB Scheme, Independent external assurance may be necessary for this project. If required the project leader will include this activity in the project plan.

#### 5. Timescales and Plan:

- 5.1 The project leader has developed a project plan showing key activities, milestones and gateway's for completion of the project.

#### 6. Dependency Management:

- 6.1 The project leader will agree key dependencies as identified with owners of those elements and build milestones into the project plan.

#### 7. Stakeholder Engagement & Comms:

- 7.1 There are a range of external stakeholders involved in this project including: Homes England; Surrey County Council; Local Residents and Residents Groups; Land-Owners; Developers; and the Environment Agency.

- 7.2 Internal stakeholders include: Local and All Councillors, GBC Finance, GBC Procurement, GBC CPT PMO, GBC Comms Team, GBC Planning Policy and GBC Legal.

- 7.3 The key stakeholders with whom the Council are undertaking significant liaison are:

- **Surrey County Council** – are the highway authority for the Scheme and are a key stakeholder in respect of the planning, design and technical consents and agreements. They have been supportive of the ARB Scheme and are being consulted regularly as the design is progressed. Surrey County Council are expected to adopt the new road bridge and associated works, through a Section 38 / 278 agreement.
- **Network Rail** – are a key stakeholder as their infrastructure is being crossed by the proposed road bridge and footbridge. They have been supportive of the Scheme. Regular collaborative meetings with Network Rail are being undertaken to take the Scheme forward and a joint delivery strategy is being developed for the footbridge and closure of the Ash level crossing.
- **Homes England** – are a key stakeholder in providing significant funding towards the Scheme and the project team. The project delivery timescale is influenced by the Council's successful achievement of £23.90 million funding from the HE Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF), which has a requirement to be utilised by the end of March 2023.
- **Landowners & Developers** – the project team are in regular contact with landowners and developers impacted by the road bridge in respect of the progress and design of the Scheme. The most significant of these at this stage is Bellway Homes at 'Land South of Guildford Road' who are constructing the improvements to the Guildford Road / Ash Hill Road roundabout and the section of road associated with Ash Road Bridge that falls within their land. Design checks of the work have been completed by the ARB Project Team and regular meetings have been held with the

landowner and Surrey County Council, as highway authority, to ensure an acceptable scheme is progressed.

- **Local Community** – A number of presentations have previously been given to the local community as well as question and answer sessions including with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council and local resident groups. Moving forward it is the intention to positively re-engage with the community to maximise the potential social value accrued through Stage 1 of the ARB scheme and to engage the community in regards to the plans for the footbridge and closure of the Ash level crossing.

7.4 A ‘communications strategy’ has been developed by the ARB Project Team and is considered a live document. Moving forward it is the intention that the project team will regularly update the ‘communications strategy’, as well as the Scheme web pages and produce an FAQ document. The Council will also continue to maintain dialogue with resident groups.

7.5 During the mobilisation of the construction stage, it is anticipated that the construction delivery partner will take ownership of the stakeholder engagement using a combination of drop-in sessions, letter drops and updates to the Council web pages. The contractor will manage the stakeholder engagement with oversight by the CPT project Leader for the remainder of the construction process.

7.6 GBC CPT is also seeking Homes England Capacity Funding to support the part-time appointment of a Community Relations Manager for Stage 1 of the scheme, based on the recommendations of the Equality Impact Assessment. Their role will be to take ownership of engagement with the community prior to and during the construction stage to consider any specific needs.

## 8. **Contract Management, Change Management & KPIs:**

8.1 The project leader has developed an approach to contract management with the project and procurement team for pre-construction and construction phases of work as detailed below.

8.2 KPI’s will be in place for the construction contractor in line with the Framework appointment parameters.

8.3 The project leader will work within agreed tolerances and delegated authorities against the baseline agreed and will manage any requests for changes from the agreed baselines through formal change control.

8.4 The project leader, along with the project team and where required the contractor, will manage risks and issues and report on them as required as follows:

Pre- Construction Phase - Management of Change & Risk:

- Risk management profiling will be implemented to reflect the HM Treasury ‘Green Book’ 5 case business model. (However, the project did not follow the HM Treasury model from inception).
- The Implementation of a robust costed risk register including OB (Optimism Bias) to be used as a management tool.
- The Implementation of OB (Optimism Bias) using approved Algorithm methodology for calculation (OB included in costed risk modelling).

- Regular risk workshops set up to be undertaken to review, mitigate and revise the risk modelling.
- Monthly reconciliation finance meetings have been set up and undertaken with GBC finance to review, appraise and report on project finances. These will continue for the duration of the project
- The Implementation of a change control model (approved by GBC Finance), to manage project finances to include management of workstreams including the use of risk and OB (Optimism Bias), as required.
- Change Control model, identifies the hierarchy for delegated authority sign off of discretionary and non-discretionary spend on the project, by implementation of standard forms.

#### Construction Phase Management of Change & Risk:

- It is envisaged that the construction phase of the project will be undertaken using an NEC (National Engineering Contract) 4.
- A risk and OB (Optimism Bias) budget has been identified to form part of the overall project budget required to deliver the scheme and identified as workstreams within the overall budget provision.
- The current risk management tool will become the 'Early Warning Risk Register' during the construction phase.
- Regular risk workshops will be undertaken (Bi-Monthly) during construction to review, mitigate and revise the 'Early Warning Risk Register' as required. These meetings will include the contractor as required.
- Monthly reconciliation finance meetings to continue with GBC finance to review, appraise and report on project finances.
- Continue change control model (approved by GBC Finance), to manage project finances to include management of workstreams including the use of risk and OB, as required.
- Change Control model, identifies the hierarchy for delegated authority sign off of discretionary and non-discretionary spend on the project, by implementation of standard forms.

## 9. Realisation of Benefits:

9.1 Appendix 2 considers the strategic objectives and benefits of the project, which in summary include:

- Facilitating the delivery of new homes which is an important factor recognised in securing continued economic growth. This is particularly important within Guildford Borough which has poor affordability and Ash is typically a more affordable area within the Borough. The delivery of new homes will assist in ensuring that there is a varied workforce, including highly mobile and qualified 25 – 34 year olds, available to local businesses supporting economic growth.

- Reducing congestion, its cost to local businesses, community and hindrance to economic growth. Congestion is estimated to have a significant cost per annum in Surrey and many businesses found congestion and accessibility to be a significant issue for their business.
  - Reducing the use of local roads by vehicles seeking to avoid delay at the Ash level crossing.
  - Improving safety for drivers, pedestrians and cyclists crossing the North Downs Line and using Ash Station which will include mitigating the increased risks to users at the Ash level crossing resulting from the increase in train services on the line; and a predicted increase in vehicular traffic in the locality.
  - Increasing connectivity by reducing congestion on the A323, which has the potential to improve local and wider connectivity between Ash and the surrounding Step Up and Growth Towns, including Aldershot, Farnborough, and Guildford. This will improve connectivity between employers and potential employees.
- 9.2 The benefits of the Project will start to be realised at the start of construction in November 2021 in respect of construction jobs created by the delivery of the Project with potential for construction jobs associated with the delivery of housing already in progress. Other benefits will start to be realised following practical completion and opening of the road bridge and associated works in March 2023, which will enable the A323 to be diverted along the new road alignment, which will immediately reduce risk from motor vehicles at the Ash level crossing.
- 9.3 Through the procurement of the project there is also the opportunity to deliver broader social outcomes. The proposed contractor will commit to delivering a number of KPIs relating to social value, which include creating jobs, providing opportunities for local small and medium enterprises, working with local schools to educate and supporting the training of individuals and additional high level qualifications.
- 9.4 As per similar schemes in Guildford, we will be looking to work with stakeholders to identify opportunities to provide a lasting social value legacy. A recent successful example is engagement with The Lockwood Day Care Activity Centre that was developed at Slyfield, with the proposed contractor continuing to work with GBC to add social value, which includes the community garden.
- 9.5 There are also many wider economic benefits to the delivery of an infrastructure scheme such as this, including but not limited to:
- Direct construction employment and training opportunities.
  - Indirect construction employment - the construction of dwellings facilitated by the Scheme would create and support employment opportunities in the wider supply-chain.
  - Additional local expenditure from the new housing units is likely to have a beneficial, long-term, permanent effect on the borough economy; and
  - New housing units will contribute to public finances through tax revenues generated by developers and residents.



- 9.6 The construction of new housing units will trigger the provision of social infrastructure to support both the existing residents of Ash and those residing in the new residential units. Each residential plot unlocked by the Ash Road Bridge will be required to provide sufficient primary and secondary school places, GP healthcare facilities, open space and children's play space or contributions towards these, which will be beneficial to the existing baseline population of Ash and the surrounding areas as well.



# Ash Road Bridge (ARB Project Board)

## Terms of Reference

Annexe 2. To Appendix 8.

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### 1) Purpose of the Terms of Reference:

The Council is engaged in a project to construct a road bridge over the railway in Ash to enable development of the local surrounding area under Planning Policy A31 of the adopted local plan and enable the closure of the level crossing and provision of a footbridge (subject to agreement). This is a large infrastructure project requiring engagement with landowners, developers, internal and external stakeholders.

The purpose of the Scheme is to provide infrastructure needed in connection with the provision of approximately 1,750 new homes in accordance with Policy A31 of the adopted local plan. Implementation of the Scheme will contribute to the proper planning of Ash and Tongham. It will also bring economic, social and environmental well-being benefits to Ash and Tongham and wider areas of the Borough.

In October 2018 the Executive authorised officers to commence the processes to assemble the land and rights, to be able to deliver the scheme, including the opening of negotiations with third party landowners, entering into Licencing agreements to acquire land necessary to facilitate the build. These negotiations are currently continuing, with a view to conclude in the coming months. In addition, in September 2019 the Executive also gave the go-ahead to enter into a HIF funding agreement with Homes England and to progress the scheme from planning permission (once granted) to pre-construction stage.

Ash is located to the west of Guildford, approximately two miles east of Aldershot. Ash station is located on the North Downs line, between Reading and Gatwick. The station sits within the Wessex region and the operator in this area is Great Western Railway.

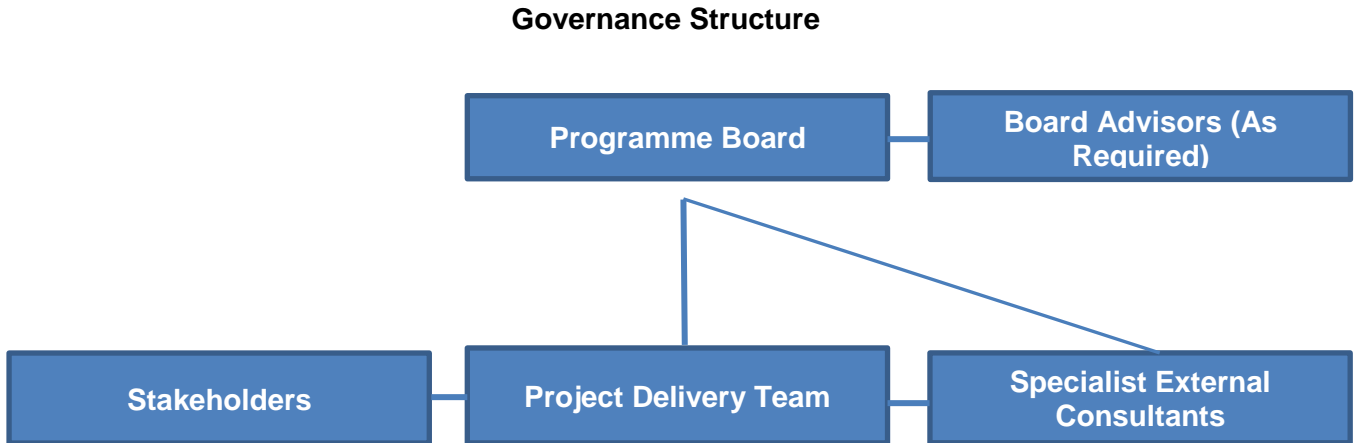
A level crossing is located immediately to the east of Ash Station on the A323 Guildford Road. Accordingly, when trains pass through the station the level crossing is closed, causing delays to all users of Guildford Road.

The level crossing in Ash is currently closed for substantial amounts of time during peak times and throughout the day. Improvements being considered by the rail operator, including service frequency increases ( *A 3<sup>rd</sup> train per hour has commenced operating on this line on Saturday's only with a view to increasing the service to a 3<sup>rd</sup> train on week days pending completion of the new Gatwick terminus*), line electrification and longer trains could all potentially add to the amount of level crossing down time and therefore delays on Guildford Road. There is also a current interface with the proposed Guildford West station, which is proposed on the same line, close to Ash.

The Ash level *crossing* is a Network Rail safety hotspot and its frequent closures encourages rat running on rural roads that are not designed to take this level of traffic.

As stated, significant development is already occurring in Ash and Tongham and is proposed in Guildford's Adopted Local Plan, Policy A31. A new road bridge, link roads and footbridge are planned to allow closure of the level crossing and to alleviate the existing and future traffic congestion and level crossing safety concerns.

It is critical that a project of this size receives oversight from officers and senior managers from across the Council alongside nominated Councillors, hence the suggested requirement of a Programme Board. The purpose of the Programme Board is to assist the GBC Project Leader with managing the project and assisting with making key decisions through the project stages. The need to form a Governance Structure for a project of this size will also assist with ensuring that this project continues to meet the corporate governance requirements.



**2) The Programme Board:**

The Programme Board provides strategic direction for the project and along with the SRO will have delegated authority to decide on the project changes and Governance procedures.

**3.2 Programme Board Members:**

- |                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Dawn Hudd            | Strategic Services Director & SRO       |
| Elizabeth Fleming    | Interim Corporate Programmes Consultant |
| Claudia Frost        | Senior Programme Manager                |
| Mike Miles,          | Interim Project Leader                  |
| Sarah White          | Principle Solicitor                     |
| Martin Knowles       | Transport Consultant                    |
| Cllr John Rigg       | Lead Councillor for Regeneration        |
| Cllr Caroline Reeves | Deputy Leader of the Council            |
| Cllr Joss Bigmore    | Leader of the Council                   |
| Cllr Paul Spooner    | GBC Councillor                          |
| Cllr Ramsey Nagaty   | GBC Councillor                          |

**3.3 Board Advisors: (As required)**

- |                    |                            |
|--------------------|----------------------------|
| Faye Gould,        | Procurement Manager        |
| Victoria Worsfold, | Financial Services Manager |

**4) Project Delivery Team:**

The Project Team consists of both council officers and external consultants employed that are actively working on the ARB project on a daily basis.

**4.1 Project Team:**

Mike Miles,	Interim (Consultant) Project Leader
Martin Knowles (MKTP)	Consultant
AECOM	Consultant
Pinsent Masons	Consultant
Savills	Consultant
LRS	Consultant
EG Management	Consultant

## 5) Roles and responsibilities:

### 5.1 ARB – Programme Board:

- Approve the overall project direction together with the proposed procurement strategy and development principles.
- Approve the funding of the project and accept it as a line within the GBC's current agreed funding for each stage of the project.
- Delegate approval to the Project Team in respect of the procurement strategy; appointment methodologies; spend approval and the project delivery structure.
- Consider and manage the strategic context of the project in relation to other aspirations within Guildford and the wider area.
- Approve the processes of procurement; appointments and spend through the delegated authority from CMT and Members.
- Provide strategic project guidance in relation to the broader context of wider regeneration of Guildford.
- Approve key milestones in terms of budget and ongoing spend together with variations throughout all stages of the project.
- Receive project programme and budget update reports from the Project Team.
- Provide the appropriate level of performance monitoring and completion of timely outputs.
- Regularly review the resource requirements as the project develops and bringing in specialist advisors as required.
- Monitor / comment on the updated costed risk register and issues log.

### 5.2 ARB - Project Team:

- Provide strategic input to the project and provide the link to the Programme Board and the Corporate Programme Board.
- Champion and lead the delivery of the project against the agreed milestones and budget parameters to the outputs and deliverables of the Project.
- Provide the interface between the consultants, contractor and GBC's internal team.
- Continually monitor the progress of the project against the agreed deliverables and the expectations of the wider regeneration of Guildford.
- Provide connection into other external consultants and Council resource as required and coordinate the interface of this resource into the Project Team as and when required.
- Ensure that the project is suitably and appropriately resourced.
- Make budget and resource recommendations to the Corporate Programmes Portfolio Board
- Provide sign off for the project at key stages and against key milestones.
- Manage and oversee the development and progress of the project at a detailed level to all stages.

- Work directly with the Consultant Team to monitor the progress of the project and 'manage out' issues, challenges and risks, by maintaining a 'live' risk register.
- Manage and recommend all as required all changes, compensation events and applications for payment throughout the life of the project.

### **5.3 ARB - Specialist advisors / Consultants (to Construction Phase):**

- Provide ongoing external project resources (Transport, Legal, Planning and Design, Land & Value, CPO, Construction).
- Provide the detailed design of the Road bridge.
- Continue the process to secure external funding.
- Continue to progress negotiations with stakeholders.
- Continue to progress negotiations with landowners / developers to secure the land required for the development and S106 / CiL contributions.
- Undertake full planning application for the Footbridge (requires track side geotechnical investigation).
- Along with GBC continue to work with NR to agree the legal parameters and deliverables of the Footbridge and Road Bridge.
- procurement of a New Engineering Contract (NEC) Project Manager and Project Quantity Surveyor.
- Undertake Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) surveys to further detail and cost utilities diversions if required.
- Provide preconstruction services and preparing the procurement of the construction phase.
- Manage and Undertake the CPO process (If Required).

### **6) Meeting frequency and distribution of papers:**

The ARB Programme Board will meet every Quarter throughout the lifecycle of the project to completion. Meeting frequency can be reviewed as the project develops.

The meeting agenda and any papers will be distributed by either the ARB Project Leader or designated support officer 5 days before the meeting takes place. Where papers may require a significant review time, papers will be circulated a week in advance of the meeting.

The meeting minutes either will be circulated by the Project Leader or designated support officer within a week of the date of the meeting. Attendees will be given a week to respond to request any alterations to the meeting minutes, including the actions and decisions.

Issue Escalation: Where matters arising cannot be resolved by the Project Team, the Project Leader will escalate the issue to the SRO (Senior Responsible Officer) / Programme Board for a decision.

## Ash Road Bridge – Appendix 10 to Executive Report

Appendix Title: **Equality and Diversity Implications**  
Subject: Equality and Diversity  
Author: ARB Project Team  
Date: 9 March 2021

- 1.1 The Council has a legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 (in particular, the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of that Act) to have due regard to the following matters in the exercise of all its functions, namely the need to:
- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act;
  - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a "relevant protected characteristic" (i.e. age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation) 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.
- 1.2 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was prepared for the road bridge (Stage 1) – a copy of this is provided as an Annexe to this Appendix. An EqIA is a systematic assessment of the potential or actual effects of plans, policies, or proposals on groups with protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010. This EqIA provides evidence that equality duties in relation to the PSED have been fulfilled in developing the proposed development. It provides a consideration of potential direct and indirect equality impacts (both negative and positive) associated with the new road bridge and link road.
- 1.3 The EqIA for the road bridge (Stage 1) identified that the scheme is likely to provide a range of benefits that can be shared by groups with protected characteristics. This includes direct benefits such as improved safety, accessibility and journey time savings for drivers and bus passengers as well as indirect benefits such as facilitating accelerated housing delivery in the area. Specific benefits highlighted include:
- A decrease in noise levels for residential properties north of the station along Guildford Road to the roundabout with Ash Hill Road resulting in health and well-being benefits for residents;
  - A new cycle path along the new road bridge and connecting link road providing a safer and more seamless route for people to cycle in the area including those with protected characteristics including young people and other protected characteristic groups;
  - Provision of direct employment opportunities which can be shared by groups with protected characteristics; and
  - Accelerated delivery of the Local Plan including new housing opportunities. This includes provision for affordable housing, extra care and accessible housing and dwellings of varying sizes and types benefitting a wide range of households including young people, those on low incomes, older people, disabled people and families with children.

- 1.4 The EqlA also highlighted specific impacts for further consideration as follows:
- (a) An increase in day and night time exposure to construction and traffic noise for residential properties along the route with potential differential impacts for children and older people. Adverse noise impacts are also predicted for the traveller site on Guildford Road near to the station;
  - (b) Long diversions or continued use of the level crossing for pedestrians would occur should the planning application for the footbridge not be submitted or approved. This may have implications for people with mobility issues including older people and people with disabilities and people with pushchairs and /or young children; and
  - (c) An increase in walking distances to bus stops from Ash Station for bus passengers including older people and people with disabilities and people with pushchairs and /or young children.
- 1.5 Stage 2 of the ARB Scheme specifically seeks to address (b) through the delivery of an equality compliant footbridge and subsequent closure of the Ash level crossing. A further EqlA will be prepared to support the application for the footbridge (Stage 2) to ensure that the design is accessible and equality compliant. The EqlA will be prepared in accordance with the Council's EqlA guidance and Network Rail's Diversity Impact Assessment guidance to ensure that due regard is paid to the Equality Act 2010 and PSED for the planning application.
- 1.6 In regards to points (a) and (c) at paragraph 1.4, the following provisional high-level recommendations were set out in the EqlA to strengthen, secure or enhance positive equality impacts and to mitigate for potential negative equality impacts associated with Stage 1 of the scheme:
- Develop a renewed strategy for ongoing wide-ranging stakeholder engagement prior to and during the construction stage to consider any specific needs (including the traveller community on Guildford Road). This could include the procurement of a Community Relations Manager;
  - Preparation of a local employment and procurement policy to ensure opportunities are available to all groups with protected characteristics;
  - Preparation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan which accounts for the various needs of those with protected characteristics (e.g. information (language), accessibility, dangers of construction sites (schools));
  - Provide information with regards to the relocation of bus stops and any potential changes to bus services during construction and operation; and
  - Monitoring of equality impacts should be included as part of the proposed development's Monitoring and Evaluation Plan. This would include reviewing how the proposed benefits of the scheme will be realised by groups with protected characteristics once operational.



- 1.7 Further detail is provided in the full EqIA at the Annexe to this note. As part of the continuing design and delivery of the road bridge, the recommendations outlined in the EqIA will be reviewed and developed to realise the benefits outlined for those groups with protected characteristics and to help to further minimise any adverse impacts of the proposed development.

## ANNEXE 1 – EQUALITY AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT



## Ash Road Bridge – Appendix 11 to Executive Report

Appendix Title: **Climate Change and Sustainability Implications**  
Subject: Climate Change and Sustainability  
Author: ARB Project Team  
Date: 9 March 2021

### 1. Climate Change and Sustainability Summary

- 1.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency on the 23rd July 2019, setting out a commitment to reduce emissions, particularly from vehicles, energy use and construction processes.
- 1.2 The road bridge (Stage 1) provides for the creation of a water-sensitive site, green corridors, high quality biodiversity and habitat creation. Through consultation with the proposed contractor, opportunities for biodiversity net-gain will be further explored whilst construction activities will be sensitively planned to minimise emissions and to mitigate environmental impacts where feasible.
- 1.3 The landscape design proposes surface water mitigation measures such as filter drains at the base of embankments and wet grassland. Green buffers will separate the proposed new residential development sites and existing housing, and at site boundaries to merge urban and rural transitions. The woodland planted embankments will act as green infrastructure and green corridors enabling connectivity and permeability between habitats for wildlife, within the site and to habitats outside of the site. The new road embankments offer opportunities for this green corridor as permeable links for wildlife, vehicular traffic, pedestrians and cyclists. These habitats will also offer amenity value, interest, learning and an overall enhanced landscape quality and value.
- 1.4 The landscape design has also considered the landscape setting for future development, associated public and urban realm, amenity space and links to surrounding networks of roads, pathways and cycle routes.
- 1.5 There is a proposed net increase of 322 trees as part of the scheme, and the selection of species aims to provide a diverse landscape setting and wildlife habitat opportunity. Existing southern boundaries will also be bolstered, providing enclosure and visual impact mitigation / reduction particularly to Ash Manor.
- 1.6 The scheme design has also considered climate change impacts. The proposal will include attenuation basins, ponds and compensation storage to accommodate potential flood level waters which also diversify the site in character and create wildlife opportunity. Climate change projections within maintenance plans and drainage systems to account for projected rainfall increases have also been taken into account. The delivery of the proposed development will therefore formalise and protect areas identified as Environment Agency Flood Zone 3, a part of which is regarded as the functional floodplain (EA flood zone 3b 1 in 20 chance of flooding annually) to the north of the North Downs line.
- 1.7 A reduction in congestion and rat running will also have air quality benefits for local residents, particularly around the Ash level crossing where there will be a reduction in queuing and idling traffic.

## 2. ARB Scheme Environmental Impact Assessment

- 2.1 An Environmental Statement (ES) (August 2019) and ES Addendum (June 2020) were submitted to support the planning application (19/P/01460) for the road bridge scheme (Stage 1). The ES and ES Addendum summarise the likely significant environmental effects arising from construction and operation of the proposed development and are included as background papers.
- 2.2 Only effects classified as moderate adverse or beneficial or large/major adverse or beneficial have the potential to create significant environmental effects.
- 2.3 No significant environmental effects, classified as moderate or major adverse or beneficial effects, have been identified in relation to highway users during the construction period for the road bridge. During operation, a permanent moderate adverse effect in regard to traffic severance is expected as a result of the proposed development on Foreman Road between the A323 and Ellsworth Park and for those at Land South of Guildford Road (19/P/02197), assuming the site is occupied prior to opening of the road bridge. However, the reduction in traffic flows on Guildford Road immediately to the east of the Ash level crossing would result in a permanent major beneficial (significant) effect along this road link. Delivery of the road bridge and diversion of the A323 will improve journey time reliability for buses resulting in improvements in terms of public transport delay, the result of which is a moderate beneficial effect for buses.
- 2.4 In terms of noise, there will be a major adverse effect at properties at Ellsworth Park (Vyne Walk) during construction and following opening of the road bridge. Further identification of appropriate measures to minimise effects will be reviewed as detailed information relating to construction plant, timings and programme become available. These measures will be implemented through a Construction Environmental Management Plan, whilst it is also recommended that a subsequent assessment to ascertain if any residents are eligible for the offer of insulation under the Noise Insulation Regulations should be undertaken.
- 2.5 Once operational some other receptors will experience a significant effect in terms of traffic noise including properties close to Foreman Road between the roundabout and the A323 (moderate adverse) and the traveller site opposite the Ash Tree flats (major adverse). Properties close to Guildford Road, between the station and Ash Hill Road on either side of the level crossing will experience large beneficial decreases in traffic noise.
- 2.6 In terms of air quality, no significant effects are expected during construction. Once operational, whilst significant adverse effects are predicted at three individual receptors (R4 - 37 Guildford Road, R6 – 7 Foreman Park and R7 – Foreman Road Development), significant beneficial effects will also result at other receptors due to the potential changes in concentrations of nitrogen dioxide especially near to the Ash level crossing. The effects from road traffic emissions as a whole are not regarded as significant.
- 2.7 There will be adverse effects on cultural heritage during construction through impacts on the setting of the listed Church of St Peter and Ash Manor and Old Manor Cottage or through intrusive ground works impacting on previously unrecorded archaeological assets. However, the latter of these will be managed through archaeological investigation and recording during construction. Once operational, all effects are deemed not significant, apart from impacts to Ash Manor

and Old Manor Cottage which will be moderate adverse due to increased traffic noise.

- 2.8 Similarly, significant adverse effects on the landscape and visual receptors are predicted during construction. However, once the proposed planting scheme is considered established at year 15 there are no significant adverse effects anticipated, with the exception of a moderate adverse effect to receptors at Ellsworth Park (Vyne Walk) as a result of light spill from the new roundabout at Foreman Road. Operational lighting will be installed in accordance with guidelines, with the use of lighting shields to mitigate against light spill.
- 2.9 The position following progression of the footbridge (Stage 2) was also considered as part of the ES and ES Addendum, with the delivery of the footbridge expected to lead to Ash level crossing accidents and road safety benefits being upgraded from minor beneficial (not significant) to major beneficial (significant) and vulnerable road user delay, amenity and ambience being upgraded from minor beneficial (not significant) to moderate beneficial (significant). No other changes are anticipated in regards to significant effects. The delivery of the footbridge is therefore expected to be beneficial overall in environmental terms.

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