

Executive Report

Ward(s) affected: Friary & St Nicolas

Report of Director of Environment

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## Walnut Bridge Design

### Executive Summary

In July 2016, the Executive was presented with two specific design options for the Walnut Bridge replacement project: a “Cable Stay” with two mast location options (town side or station side) and a “Living Bridge”. The Executive decided that the Cable Stay design should be progressed.

This report recommends that approval be given to the principle of progressing with an alternative to the ‘Cable Stay bridge with mast on town side’ design, essentially removing the Cable Stay element. This report does not ask the Executive to give its specific approval to the detail of the bridge design submitted in the planning application ref. 18/P/01213.

There are two main reasons for the proposed change. First, there is an evolving situation affecting the land surrounding the bridge including a proposal to redevelop the station. These matters provide greater opportunity to introduce an enhanced urban realm over a wider area including better wayfinding between the station and town centre.

Second, following the Executive decision of 2016, an OJEU compliant procurement exercise was progressed incorporating the Cable Stay design. The market response was that the Cable Stay aspect of the design was technically challenging. As a result, the majority of tenderers withdrew from the process leaving an insufficient number to continue with the procurement. The exercise was halted whilst alternative approaches were explored.

### Recommendation to Executive:

- (1) That the Executive approves the progression of a new design for the Walnut Bridge, which does not include the Cable Stay element.
- (2) That the Director of Environment, in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Infrastructure and Governance, be authorised to make any further changes that may be required.

Reasons for Recommendation:

- In recognition of changes to the local area and the planned redevelopment of the station
- To respond to the technical challenges of a Cable Stay design highlighted during the procurement exercise
- To ensure the successful delivery of the Project

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to highlight the recent changes to the planned development of the area, explain the challenges of the Cable Stay design option and discuss an alternative of progressing with a different design solution.

**2. Strategic Priorities**

- 2.1 Within the Corporate Plan 2018-2023 the 'replacement of Walnut Tree Bridge' is mentioned as a key project as part of the Strategic Priority 'Making Travel in Guildford Easier'.

**3. Background**

- 3.1 In July 2016, following a review of bridge design options by consultants WSP, the Executive was presented with two design options and were invited to select the one which should be progressed. The options presented to the Executive were of a Cable Stay or a Living Bridge design.
- 3.2 On the basis of the two options proposed and the recommendations at the time, the Executive resolved to proceed with the Cable Stay design (with mast on the town side).
- 3.3 Following the decision, the Cable Stay design was progressed through to the initial stages of an OJEU procurement in late 2017 and early 2018.
- 3.4 Feedback from the tendering parties highlighted that the Cable Stay design was technically challenging. As a result, only two companies were willing to engage with the procurement process and they required assurances and additional funding before they would proceed i.e. they wanted the Council to pay for all the design costs incurred by both companies prior to final tender submission.
- 3.5 As a result, the procurement process was temporarily halted to review the alternatives available to the Council.
- 3.6 At the same time, other matters affecting the immediate area had arisen.

- 3.7 One of these relates to land ownership in the area where the bridge will land on the Bedford Wharf side. This resulted in a decision by the Executive in May 2018 to prepare to apply for a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) of the land at the front of the Odeon and the plaza area.
- 3.8 In addition, the Solum regeneration development (Ref 14/P/02168) comprising “A mixed use redevelopment comprising 438 residential dwellings” was approved at appeal on 27 February 2018. This development will provide a new focus for the area and will generate increased footfall and cycle use across the Walnut Bridge. An alignment of the station entrance and the bridge will further assist in directing pedestrians and cyclists to the town centre.
- 3.9 These recent developments provide the Council with an opportunity to enhance the wider area through landscaping in association with the bridge replacement. This will aid wayfinding and enhance the user experience of those travelling to and from the Bedford Wharf plaza.
- 3.10 Our consultants were subsequently asked to develop designs that responded to the feedback from the procurement exercise and which took account of the re-development of the station and land issues on Bedford Wharf. The design options produced were for a design which removed the Cable Stay aspect.
- 3.11 The consultants were further asked to prepare and submit a planning application. This was to provide confidence that the design would be considered acceptable in planning terms.
- 3.12 The options being put forward for consideration by the Executive are therefore as follows:

**Option 1 – Proceed with the principle of a design that excludes the Cable Stay aspect**

- 3.13 A revised design has been developed and discussed with the Lead Councillor and at the Major Projects Programme Board. A planning application, Ref, 18/P/01213, has been submitted. Designs in relation to the application may be viewed online and a link to the Design and Access Statement is included in the Background Documents section below.
- 3.14 The Executive is not being asked to approve the detail of the scheme contained within in the application, but to approve the principle of progressing with an alternative design, removing the Cable Stay aspect. The planning application provides an indication of what a design without a Cable Stay looks like.
- 3.15 The bridge forms part of the Guildford Town Centre Transport Infrastructure Package’ (GTCTP) with the aim being to encourage and increase cycling and pedestrian travel within Guildford. This proposed change does not detract from this aim.
- 3.16 There would remain an important element of landscaping and provision of public art around the bridge structure to ensure that the bridge facilitates wayfinding

between the station and the town. This will be developed to ensure the bridge achieves a distinctiveness from other bridges/areas and would be progressed separately from the bridge construction project.

## **Option 2 – Revert to A Cable Stay Design**

- 3.17 There would be a significant risk to the successful delivery of the project if this option was chosen. As already explained, the technical engineering challenges raised in the procurement process could result in no parties being willing or capable of delivering the project due to the Cable Stay aspect. If a company was willing to take on this project there will be an additional cost which could not, at this stage, be quantified.
- 3.18 Choosing this option would require the submitted planning application to be withdrawn.

## **4. Consultation**

- 4.1 The Lead Councillor for Infrastructure and Governance has been consulted on the principle of an alternative design.
- 4.2 Organisations that were consulted when proposals for a new bridge were originally developed have been contacted again regarding the potential change of design. These organisations will also be approached as part of the planning application process.

## **5. Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 5.1 The existing bridge is not compliant with current DDA requirements and does not facilitate movement between the station and the town centre for those with mobility issues or other disabilities.
- 5.2 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken as part of the Planning Submission. The report provides recommendations regarding impaired users, which have been/will be incorporated in the design. The new bridge is to replace the existing substandard bridge: the gradient of the existing ramp at Bedford Wharf is steeper than 1:20 gradient (approx. 1:10 gradient) and existing access staircases are narrower than the minimum required.
- 5.3 The new bridge and associated access structures (ramp and stairs) are/will be designed in accordance with BD 29/04 “Design Criteria for Footbridges” DMRB, which is compliant with the Equality Act 2010. Other technical standards and guidance in relation to addressing equality have been used for the design of the bridge and associated structures throughout the various stages of the design i.e. Equality Act 2010 and Inclusive Mobility.

## **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1 The current financial projections indicate that the project is progressing on budget.

## 6.2 Spend to Date vs Budget

Budget £3,341,000

Spend to date £1,024,737

## 7. Legal Implications

7.1 No legal implications apply.

## 8 Human Resource Implications

8.1 There are no HR implications as a result of this report.

## 9 Summary of Options

9.1 Option 1: Proceed with an alternative design  
Option 2: Revert to the Cable Stay design

## 10 Conclusion

10.1 The decision of the Executive in 2016 was one based on the options considered at that time and with limited knowledge of the markets' capability to deliver a project of this nature. The response of tenderers and recent developments affecting the surrounding area has meant that officers recommend that the 2016 decision of the Executive in relation to the Cable Stay design be revisited.

10.2 Officers further recommend progressing with the principle of an alternative design, which will deliver a modern, DDA compliant, route between the station and town centre, increase opportunities for cycling and walking around Guildford, responds to recent developments in the local area and which is more attractive to tenderers.

## 11 Background Papers

Design And Access Statement

[http://www2.guildford.gov.uk/publicaccess/files/D3D0D18AD17A56D13E5137B63CDB3E1B/pdf/18\\_P\\_01213-DESIGN\\_ACCESS\\_STATEMENT-1174476.pdf](http://www2.guildford.gov.uk/publicaccess/files/D3D0D18AD17A56D13E5137B63CDB3E1B/pdf/18_P_01213-DESIGN_ACCESS_STATEMENT-1174476.pdf)

## 12 Appendices

None