

Ash Road Bridge – Appendix 5 Document to Full Council Report (Part 1)

Appendix Title: **Funding Paper**
Subject: Funding for the Footbridge (Stage 2)
Author: ARB Project Team
Date: 1 April 2021

1. **Background:**

- 1.1 A budget of £5.02 million has been identified for the footbridge and closure of the Ash level crossing (Stage 2 of the Ash Road Bridge Scheme) as set out at Appendix 3.
- 1.2 Construction of the footbridge and closure of the Ash level crossing can only take place once the road bridge is constructed and motor vehicles are diverted away from the Ash level crossing.
- 1.3 Planning permission for the footbridge; an approval for closure of the Ash level crossing; and completion of detailed design, technical approvals and discharge of conditions are required prior to construction of the footbridge and closure of the Ash level crossing.
- 1.4 The approval for closure of the Ash level crossing is likely to comprise one of the greatest risks to programme, with the potential need for a full public inquiry depending on feedback to the application for 'stopping-up of the highway' and therefore appropriate float in the programme is needed for this risk.
- 1.5 The position on funding is set out below.

2. **Network Rail**

- 2.1 Network Rail has committed to providing £2.5million towards the cost of the footbridge and closure of the Ash level crossing based on the requirement for renewal of the Ash level crossing in Control Period 7 (April 2024 – March 2029).
- 2.2 Network Rail had previously advised that they would be able to bring funding forward from Control Period 7 to Control Period 6 to support the project; however, the impact of the pandemic has meant that they have had to revisit their capital programme for the Wessex Route, and as such the funding has been deferred to Control Period 7 (unless surplus becomes available in 2023/2024 FY).
- 2.3 The Council has requested that Network Rail consider if they can meet the whole cost of the footbridge. Network Rail has committed to making a bid for the full cost in the next funding cycle (Control Period 7), which runs from April 2024 to March 2029. A bid for funding will be submitted in 2021; however, a decision on funding for CP7 is not expected until 2022/2023.
- 2.4 In the meantime, Network Rail and the Council's Corporate Programmes Team ('CPT') continue to work together to progress Stage 2 of the Ash Road Bridge ('ARB') Scheme, with the intention that this should be 'shovel ready' by the time funding is available, which is expected to be April 2024. Network Rail has committed funding for internal resources in CP6 to support the Council in



progressing the footbridge design and planning application and application for closure of the Ash level crossing. A joint delivery strategy is currently being developed; this will formalise the responsibilities of both the Council and Network Rail moving forward.

2.5 See Annexe 1 for letter from Network Rail setting out their current position.

3. Opportunities to Increase Funding and/or Reduce Costs

3.1 CPT are exploring a number of opportunities to reduce costs or increase funding for the scheme.

3.2 CPT will continue to work with all partners and consultants and contractor to reduce the cost of the scheme as far as reasonably practicable.

4. Summary:

4.1 The total budget for the footbridge (Stage 2) of the ARB Scheme is £5.02 million.

4.2 Network Rail has committed to seeking funding to cover the cost of the footbridge and closure of the Ash level crossing in Control Period 7 (April 2024 – March 2029).

4.3 A decision on the level of funding from Network Rail is unlikely to be available until 2022/2023. In the interim it is important that Stage 2 of the Ash Road Bridge Scheme is progressed so that it is 'shovel ready' as soon as funding is available and that risks in regards to programme e.g. a public inquiry for stopping-up of the Ash level crossing are mitigated. The Executive has approved funding the footbridge on an interim basis to allow the planning application for the footbridge and closure of the Ash level crossing to progress.

ANNEXE 1 LETTER FROM NETWORK RAIL



Catherine Chesterman
Senior Commercial Scheme Sponsor
Wessex Route
Network Rail

25th February 2020

Elizabeth Fleming
Head of Corporate Programmes
Guildford Borough Council

By email only

Dear Liz,

Network Rail's position regarding funding of the Ash Project

Following on from the meeting between Guildford Borough Council and the Network Rail Sponsorship team on 8th February 2020, I write to confirm Network Rail's funding position with regards to the overall Ash Project; comprised of the construction of the road bridge, construction of the footbridge and closure of Ash level crossing.

As stated in the meeting, Network Rail (NR) wish to continue working collaboratively with Guildford Borough Council (GBC) to support the delivery of this project. Network Rail continues to recognise that this is a unique and one-off opportunity for both parties to work collaboratively to remove risk to both highway and rail users, as well as meet the housing development plans required of GBC in their local plan.

Previous discussions between NR and GBC had centred around £2.5m of NR funding being available in CP6 (2019-2024) to put towards the footbridge; a figure taken from the amount which would be required to renew the asset in CP7 (2024-2029). It was acknowledged by both parties that this would not cover the full amount required to deliver a new footbridge, which is estimated to be nearer £5m, and that both parties would need to work to source further funding.

In the meeting of the 8th February NR informed GBC that an executive decision had recently been made regarding the overall Level Crossing Closure Programme on the Wessex Route. The aforementioned £2.5m has now been re-allocated to other Level Crossing projects further along in their development and which have a higher risk rating than Ash. In addition to this, NR confirm that they will seek to retain some funding on the Ash project to continue some of the development works, in anticipation of the full funding early in CP7.

Due to the nature of NR's Funding Cycle, the earliest that funding will be available to put towards this project will be CP7 (April 2024). Whilst NR cannot guarantee that the required funding will be received from the Department for Transport in CP7, they are committed to applying for the amount required to cover the full delivery of the footbridge in the CP7 Business Plan. This does not



prevent the Road Bridge aspect of the project from progressing, nor the Level Crossing from being stopped up to vehicles and made good for pedestrians in advance of the footbridge delivery.

I trust the above clearly sets out Network Rail's latest position regarding our funding of the Ash project, however, please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any additional information from Network Rail.

Yours sincerely,

Catherine Chesterman,
Senior Commercial Scheme Sponsor