

Meeting:	Cabinet
Date:	28 th July, 2005
Subject:	Petts Hill Bridge - Update
Responsible Officer:	Director of Area Services, Urban Living
Contact Officer:	Steve Swain, Transportation Manager
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Phil O'Dell, Environment and Transport
Key Decision:	No
Status:	Part 1

Section 1: Summary

Decision Required

To note the progress being made to secure funding for a new bridge.

Reason for report

To update Cabinet on the investigation of a more comprehensive solution.

Benefits

The benefits of a new bridge over the previously agreed Phase 1 (interim) scheme are:

- An additional (4th) traffic lane under the bridge.
- The avoidance of unpopular tunnels for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Increased headroom, bringing it up to standard clearance.
- Reduced overall cost, compared to building the project in phases.
- Reduced disruption to traffic, rail services and the local community by building the new bridge from the outset rather than in phases.

Cost of Proposals

The estimated total cost of a new bridge is £7m, which includes approx £0.76m for preliminary utility relocation works, scheme development and consultation already undertaken.

Risks

- Failure to secure the balance of funding
- Cost increase

Implications if recommendations rejected

N/a

Section 2: Report

2.1 Brief History

2.1.1 In order to improve this bottleneck on the borough boundary, Harrow Council promoted a partnership scheme with Ealing Council. Originally, the council was unable to secure the funding for a new wider bridge and thus promoted a phased approach. Phase 1, which Transport for London agreed to fund, widened the carriageway from 2 to 3 lanes, retained the existing bridge and relocated the footways into pedestrian tunnels either side of the bridge.

2.1.2 The 3 year programme for Phase 1 commenced in 2004-05 with preliminary works, which are largely complete. The preliminary works, mainly statutory undertaker plant diversions, were designed to accommodate Phase 2 (new widened bridge) without further diversions. These works caused considerable traffic congestion in the vicinity. The disruption that will be caused by the main contract is expected to be considerably less.

2.1.3 Design of Phase 1 encountered significant difficulty with reaching agreement with Network Rail, who own the bridge, on the detailed design and strengthening required to protect the existing 100 year old bridge. Network Rail's requirements were onerous and contributed significantly to an increase in estimated cost from £3.3m to £5.7m.

2.1.4 This increase brought into question the value for money of implementing the scheme in phases, which together with concern expressed by a resident group in Ealing about the security of the pedestrian tunnels, prompted a review of the scheme. On 17th March, 2005 Cabinet agreed:

“That the council:

1. Agrees to enter into discussions with Network Rail with a view to establishing a joint approach with TfL concerning implementation of a

possible alternative comprehensive scheme. These should include discussions with the elected representatives at all levels to enable such a scheme to be evaluated;

2. Needs to know the total cost of the scheme before work commences.”

2.1.5 Previously Network Rail had consistently refused to contribute any funding towards the Phase 1 scheme or a new bridge. However, following a meeting on 25th May between the Portfolio Holders of Harrow and Ealing and the Deputy Chief Executive of Network Rail, Network Rail agreed to contribute £1.3m towards a new bridge.

2.1.6 It remains necessary to secure the balance of £5.7m to enable the new bridge scheme to be built, although £0.76m of this for the preliminary works is already committed by Transport for London.

2.1.7 Whilst Transport for London had agreed to fund £3.3m for the Phase 1 scheme, their agreement is required to transfer this funding to the new bridge scheme. Given the additional benefits of the new bridge scheme the possibility of a larger contribution by TfL has been explored. To this end the Portfolio Holders of Harrow and Ealing met the Vice-Chair of the Transport for London Board, on 5th July. The Vice-chair of the Transport for London Board indicated support for a TfL contribution of £4m. Formal approval will be required from TfL's Project Review Group and a formal submission is being made via the council's annual Transport Spending Plan due to be submitted by 21st July.

2.1.8 The likely start on site for the new bridge scheme would be 2007, subject to TfL releasing funds to continue scheme development this financial year. Network Rail, who have provisionally agreed to build the bridge, are currently programming the works. The programme constraints include confirming funding, finalising agreements with Network Rail for design, procurement of the bridge itself and booking 'possessions' (temporary closures) of the railway to enable the new bridge to be erected.

2.1.9 For the benefit of the 4th lane through the bridge to be fully realised it would be necessary to widen the Northolt Road southbound approach to the bridge to provide a further straight ahead lane. The feasibility of this is being investigated and if feasible would be pursued as a subsequent and separate phase. Reference will be made to this subsequent phase in the Transport Spending Plan and Local Implementation Plan.

2.2 Options Considered

2.2.1 Apart from do nothing the two options are (i) to continue with the previously agreed scheme, subject to securing additional funding to meet the increased costs and (ii) the new wider bridge option, which is the preferred option in terms of benefits, subject to securing funding.

2.3 Consultation

- 2.3.1 Consultation on the Phase 1 scheme generated a favourable response overall. However the Danemead and Petts Hill Residents' Association objected strongly about security in the proposed pedestrian tunnels through the embankment and lobbied for the new bridge option.
- 2.3.2 Regular updates have been provided to local residents and business via leaflets and articles in local publications.

2.4 Financial Implications

- 2.4.1 The estimated total cost of a new bridge is £7m, which includes £0.76m of preliminary works already undertaken. Network Rail has agreed to contribute £1.3m. Transport for London have indicated that they are likely to contribute a total of £4m and a formal submission is being made.
- 2.4.2 The balance of £1.7m (£7m - £1.3m - £4m) would have to be met by Harrow and Ealing councils. Council funding could be spread over two or possibly three financial years, commencing 2006-07 and would be reviewed as part of the budget planning process. The intention is that the councils' contributions would be split equally and confirmation of Ealing's contribution is being sought.
- 2.4.3 There will be a need to re-phase some of the £2.48m funding allocated by TfL for 2005-06. The detail of this re-phasing is dependant on the outcome of the ongoing scheme review.

2.5 Legal Implications

- 2.5.1 A formal agreement will be required with Network Rail with respect to the funding of the new bridge, which they have agreed to build. Harrow will remain as overall project coordinators and will take specific responsibility for the bus, cycle, pedestrian, environmental and highway works.
- 2.5.2 Land acquisition with respect to two parcels of land, one in Harrow and one in Ealing, is on-going. These parcels of land are required for both the Phase 1 scheme and the new bridge scheme.

2.6 Equalities Impact

The proposals would provide benefits to all road users.

Section 3: Supporting Information/Background Documents

Background Documents: None.