

NEATH PORT-TALBOT COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

URGENT ITEM

CABINET

28th July 2022

Report of Head of Engineering & Transport – D. W. Griffiths

Matter for Decision

Wards affected: Cimla & Pelenna

Castle Drive Culvert Reconstruction

Purpose of Report

1. To inform members of the current status of the proposed re-construction of the Castle Drive culvert in Cimla and to further seek Members approval to underwrite a shortfall in the project funding following receipt of competitive tenders in order that the urgent repair work can commence with immediate effect.

Executive Summary

2. The report outlines the urgency requirement to commence work on the re-construction of the collapsed culvert and the actions taken by officers to secure additional funding from Welsh Government (WG) for the scheme.

Background

3. Members will recall the severe impact of storms in early October 2021 that affected communities across the County. Castle Drive in Cimla was one such location that was severely affected by flooding in the

Cefn Season Dingle which over topped Castle Drive causing the downstream embankment to the culvert to wash away and the road to partially collapse.

Castle Drive has been closed to traffic since the incident and will have to remain closed until the culvert has been replaced and the road reconstructed.

Funding of £100k was received from the Welsh Government Resilient Roads Fund in 2021/22 to undertake the clean-up work, to design its replacement and to undertake advanced tree clearance works. This in addition to the commissioning of statutory undertaker's diversion designs to facilitate the future reinstatement works required to re-open the Highway.

In February 2022 the Council submitted a further application for funding of circa £462K to Welsh Government as part of the bidding process to the Resilient Roads Fund 2022/23 to undertake the reconstruction. This application received a positive response from Welsh Government and funding was subsequently awarded.

Since the submission of the bid the final design was completed and the works were tendered through the South West Wales Regional Civil Engineering Framework. On receipt of the tenders, the scheme costs have now risen to circa £660K. There have been a number of factors that have resulted in the increased tender sum which are set out below:

- a) During the final design process the size of the precast concrete units had to be increased to future proof the scheme.
- b) The costs of the Statutory Undertakers Diversion work substantially increased.
- c) Further the majority of the cost increase is due to the large increase of all the construction items and current rates of inflation affecting transport and plant. The original bid project costs were calculated in December 2021 and did not foresee the factors which are now affecting the construction sector.

A further bid has been submitted to the Welsh Government Resilient Roads Fund for an additional £200K, officers have received informal feedback and note that currently there is no funding available, however, officers have been advised that the scheme will be added to a WG list of requests for additional funding and should there be any underspends against the fund or additional monies become available during the financial year that the scheme will be considered along with

all other applications at that time. It is noted that in the past WG have been supportive of such applications recognising some of the unforeseen circumstances now impacting the construction sector.

Turning to the current position it is now urgent that the works are progressed and the Council award a contract to the successful tenderer as soon as possible for the following reasons:

An order needs to be placed by the contractor for key construction elements in order for them to be delivered in time to complete the works by 31st March 2023 to satisfy the Welsh Government grant conditions and to avoid the potential loss of grant which would further impact on the current available funding.

That works commence before the winter period to avoid further damage to the highway should flooding occur.

That firm orders are placed with the utility companies to ensure that the critical path for construction is maintained and to allow the utility companies to plan their resources accordingly.

The current tender period for acceptance is due to expire on the 13th of August 2022 and the Council will be required to retender the works. This will impact on the delivery of the scheme and is very likely to increase the construction costs. Moreover the lead-in times for materials described above will be delayed which in turn will affect the time in which to deliver the project been exceeded potentially putting in jeopardy the loss or part loss of the current grant award.

Effectively if the Council have to re-tender the work it will delay the project by at least another two months. In all likelihood this would mean that works can't commence until the spring of 2023.

Funding needs to be in place before we can award the contract and commence the re-construction.

Lastly there has been considerable disruption to the local residents and wider community with bus services in the locality having to be re-routed. There is currently only one vehicular access and egress to the estate which at peak times causes local congestion. Should the area be affected by another incident over the winter period then there is no alternative vehicular access to the locality.

Subsequently due to the urgent reasons set out, Members are requested to consider underwriting the shortfall of £200K from the Capital Programme contingency budget to allow the exchange of the contract now to ensure the timely delivery of materials and expenditure of the currently awarded grant of £462K during the financial year 2022/23.

Financial Impact

5. If the additional funding bid, to Welsh Government, is unsuccessful then the capital programme funding underwritten from the contingency will need to be allocated on a permanent basis within the Capital Programme 2022-23.

Integrated Impact Assessment

6. A first stage impact assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties (under the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

The first stage assessment, attached at Appendix A, has indicated that a more in-depth assessment is not required. A summary is included below:-

A full impact assessment is not required, as the proposed reconstruction works will provide a benefit to the Community.

Valleys Community Impacts

7. There are '**No Implications**' associated with this report.

Workforce Impacts

8. There are '**No Implications**' associated with this report.

Legal Impacts

9. The Council have a statutory duty under the Highways act to maintain and keep open the adopted highway for public use.

Risk Management Impacts

10. The construction contract needs to be exchanged now for the re-construction works to be carried out to prevent the further collapse of the road (potential loss of utility services) and to reopen Castle Drive to traffic. Further to ensure expenditure of the current grant before the end of the financial year to comply with the WG grant conditions and to avoid any potential loss of grant.

Other Impacts

11. There are '**No Implications**' associated with this report.

Crime and Disorder Impacts

12. There are '**No Implications**' associated with this report.

Counter Terrorism Impacts

13. There are '**No Implications**' associated with this report.

Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

14. There are '**No Implications**' associated with this report.

Consultation

15. There is no requirement for external consultation on this item.

Recommendations

16. Having due regard to the Integrated Impact Assessment it is recommended that:

Members approve the underwriting of the shortfall of £200K for the reasons set out within the circulated report from the Capital Programme contingency budget to enable the project to commence with immediate effect.

Reason for Proposed Decision

17. To manage the risks and liabilities associated with the partial collapse of the existing road and to ensure that Castle Drive is reopened to traffic at the earliest opportunity and the current grant is expended in accordance with the Welsh Government Grant conditions.

Implementation of Decision:

18. The decision is proposed for immediate implementation.

Appendices

19. Appendix A – Integrated Impact Assessment.

Background Papers

20. None.

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