

## HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Decision Report

<b>Decision Maker:</b>	Executive Member for Environment and Transport
<b>Date:</b>	31 March 2016
<b>Title:</b>	Project Appraisal Update: Petersfield to Queen Elizabeth Country Park Cycle Route
<b>Reference:</b>	7294
<b>Report From:</b>	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

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### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. The purpose of this paper is to gain approval for the increase in costs associated with the delivery of a complete cycle route linking Petersfield to Queen Elizabeth Country Park.
- 1.2. This paper seeks to present the case for the amendment of the existing Project Appraisal approval value of £1,088,000.

### 2. Background

- 2.1. The Queen Elizabeth Country Park (QECP) is the biggest Country Park within Hampshire with 2,000 acres of open access to woodland and downland. Over 300,000 people visit the park each year. There are a range of facilities that are open all year round including a visitor centre with shop, café, theatre and activity area. In addition there are two play areas, barbeque sites, picnic areas and 22 miles of trail for walking, cycling and horse riding.
- 2.2. There are a number of drivers for this scheme including the need to provide cycleway links not only between Petersfield and the Country Park but also with Clanfield, Horndean and the South Downs where there are considerable links to other cycle routes. It is expected that when this cycle route is completed it will be used by cycle commuters between these areas and encourage more sustainable transport options. At present the only route between Petersfield and the QECP is via the A3 Trunk Road or using off road routes with significant gradients. Neither of these possible routes is suitable for the majority of people and this has been highlighted by a petition with in excess of 4,000 signatories, which was initiated by the Cyclist Touring

Club in support of a new route. The Ramblers Association in Hampshire and local equestrian organisations have also indicated their support.

- 2.3. A bid was submitted by the South Downs National Park to the Department of Transport (DfT) in May 2013 for £688,000 from its Cycling Ambition fund to deliver a cycle route linking Petersfield to the Queen Elizabeth Country Park. The bid was approved by the DfT in August 2013 with works originally needing to be committed by March 2015 to secure the funding, a date which was subsequently amended to September 2015. Further funding to the value of £300,000 was also awarded by the EM3 LEP.
- 2.4. The delivery of the project was approved at the Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment Decision Day on 9 September 2015.
- 2.5. The project was subsequently tendered, the contract awarded to Raymond Brown Ltd and works commenced on site on 5 May 2015.
- 2.6. Further back ground information is available in the previous [report](#) made to the Executive Member for Economy Transport and Environment.

### **3. Reasons for Cost and Timescale increases**

- 3.1. Because of the tight timescales associated with the terms of the grant funding, work was started on Section 1, the only section of the route on Hampshire highways, whilst negotiations continued with Highways England for completion of the Section 6 agreement (under the Highways Act 1980) required to allow the County Council to work on its land (sections 2 and 4 of the scheme), and land dedication agreements were completed with the Forestry Commission.
- 3.2. Additional surveys, design alterations and associated fees have been required to address Highways England geotechnical concerns and requirements. Negotiations regarding the Section 6 Agreement have been protracted and the provision of documents for technical checking and subsequent alterations has attracted additional fees. Changes required to the design have led to delays on site and associated costs.
- 3.3. Ground conditions on site along Section 1 of the route were not as anticipated and this led to additional construction works being required to enable the footway to be widened and altered to a shared use route.
- 3.4. The route of Section 3 is through Forestry Commission land. Whilst the land dedication was being finalised the Forestry Commission required that the route through their land be amended to facilitate horse riders as well as cyclists. This required changes to the design and the contract to enable a segregated route, suitable for horses and cyclists (i.e. half of the route to be a macadam surface appropriate for cyclists and half to be a bound granular material suitable for horses). Additionally it had been agreed that the Forestry Commission would remove the trees on their land but when they were approached they were unable to facilitate the request and

subsequently the works needed to be included in the main contract, which attracted additional cost.

- 3.5. The unforeseen presence of tipped asbestos at the back of the layby in section 4 meant that before work could start this had to be removed and disposed of in the correct manner attracting additional costs.
- 3.6. With regard to section 5, this land is also owned by the Forestry Commission. The contract was let due to the timescales associated with the grant funding prior to the completion of the land dedications from the Forestry Commission. Section 5 is on a slope and the cycle way is to be provided by cutting into the slope and supporting the route with a retaining wall. Following land clearance, topographical survey information meant that a significant redesign was required involving a redesign of the wall and additional approvals were needed from Highways England due to the proximity of the retaining wall to the live A3 and their bridge. The complexities of the redesign required a significant design resource input impacting on timelines. Given the contractual prolongation costs associated with waiting for the redesign and the Christmas period, it was agreed to demobilise Raymond Brown Ltd before Christmas. Demobilisation, whilst the cheaper option under the circumstances, still added costs that were not accounted for in the original contract.
- 3.7. Works are currently on hold while the redesign of the retaining wall is completed and checks and approvals carried out. Approval from the Forestry Commission will also be required to alter the alignment of the route through section 5 to avoid the low spots.
- 3.8. Discussions with Highways England are ongoing with regard to completion of section 4 and it has been agreed that on completion of the section the land will be dedicated to Hampshire County Council (see also 6.4 below).

#### 4. Finance

- 4.1. The value of the original project appraisal approved on 9 September 2014 was £1,088,000.
- 4.2. The current estimated value of the works still to be completed as part of the current tender is £1,565,523. This is an increase of £477,523 on the original PA value, which can be funded from existing resources identified below.

4.3	<u>Estimates</u>	<u>£'000</u>	<u>% of total</u>	<u>Funds Available</u>	<u>£'000</u>
	Design & Client Fee	209.3	13	DfT Cycling Ambition	865.0
				EM3 LEP	300.0
				EHDC	220.0
	Supervision	122.0	8	S106 Contributions	180.5
	Construction	1234.2	79		
	Land				
	<b>Total</b>	<u>1565.5</u>	<u>100</u>	<b>Total</b>	<u>1565.5</u>

4.4 <u>Revenue Implications</u>	<u>£'000</u>	<u>% Variation to Committee's budget</u>
Net increase in maintenance expenditure	7.8	0.008%
Capital Charges (Depreciation and notional interest charges)	144.0	0.094%

## 5. Programme

- 5.1 It is anticipated that shortly after the approval of this report construction will commence and will take approximately 4 months. The actual timescales for the work will be confirmed following discussions regarding remobilisation with the contractor.
- 5.2 Section 2 will be constructed by Highways England. They have indicated that they will complete this work within the Spring.

## 6. Land and maintenance

- 6.1. Section 1 of the route is a shared use footway/cycleway on Hampshire County Council maintained highway and will be maintained in the usual manner.
- 6.2. Section 2 is Highways England owned land and will remain so following construction of this section of route.
- 6.3. Section 3 is through Forestry Commission owned land. This route will be converted to a bridleway once completed and will be dedicated to Hampshire County Council. Maintenance will be carried out by the County Council's Countryside Access Team within the Culture, Communities and Business Services Department (CCBS). The route will be added to the Definitive Map of Public Rights of Way.
- 6.4. Section 4 will be dedicated to the County Council by Highways England once the route is completed. Further investigation will be carried out in the meantime in respect of any highway rights or highway status of the land.
- 6.5. Section 5 is through Forestry Commission land and will again be converted to a footpath with cycling rights and again be dedicated to the County Council and added to the Definitive Map of Public Rights of Way for maintenance by CCBS.

## **7. Recommendations**

- 7.1. That the Executive Member for Environment and Transport approves the revised Project Appraisal for Petersfield to Queen Elizabeth Country Park Cycle Route as outlined in this report.
- 7.2. That the Executive Member for Environment and Transport gives approval to procure, spend and enter into the necessary contractual arrangements for the implementation of the improvements to the Petersfield to Queen Elizabeth Country Park Cycle Route, as set out in this report at an estimated total cost of £1,565,523, representing an increase on the original estimate of £477,523, which can be funded from existing identified resources.
- 7.3. That authority to make minor variations to the design or contractual arrangements be delegated to the Director of Economy, Transport and Environment.

**CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:****Links to the Corporate Strategy**

<b>Hampshire safer and more secure for all:</b>	Yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
<b>Maximising well-being:</b>	Yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
<b>Enhancing our quality of place:</b>	Yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

**Other Significant Links**

<b>Links to previous Member decisions:</b>		
<u>Title</u> Project Appraisal - Petersfield to Queen Elizabeth Country Park Cycle Route	<u>Reference</u> 6039	<u>Date</u> 9 September 2014
<b>Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives</b>		
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>	

**Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents**

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

DocumentLocation

## **IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:**

### **1. Equality Duty**

1.1. The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

**Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:**

- a) The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;
- b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- c) Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

### **1.2. Equalities Impact Assessment:**

The provision of an off road cycle route from Petersfield to QECP will provide a safe off road route for all ages to get from Petersfield to the country park. Whilst the route will be suitable for commuters the primary driver for this is access to the country park for leisure cyclists. An off road route will provide a safe route for families and children. No adverse impacts have been identified on people with protected characteristics.

### **2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:**

2.1. None.

### **3. Climate Change:**

3.1. How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

3.2. How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

- 3.3. The route will provide a safe link from Petersfield Station into the South Downs National Park. The route is linked to the 2 National Parks' Local Sustainable Transport Fund project, and the DfT's Cycling Ambitions fund to provide continuous sustainable transport routes to areas of interest and leisure. The route will enable people who travel to Petersfield by train to access the national park and country park by bike rather than car.
- 3.4. The route is intended to promote the use of sustainable modes of transport to link towns with local areas of interest and visitor attractions.