

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting24th April 2008

1. Title of Item/Report

Connect2

2. Record of the Decision

Members considered a report that sought approval in principle for a scheme designed to link Ingleby Barwick with Eaglescliffe, Preston Park, Thornaby and Yarm via a series of pedestrian and cycle routes, including new bridges across the Rivers Leven and Tees.

It was explained that as a result of a successful bid for Big Lottery funding in December 2007, Sustrans had secured £50 million of grant funding for 'Connect2', a national initiative designed to link communities currently severed by a physical barrier such as a road, river or railway. Each of the 79 Connect2 schemes across the UK would receive a share of the grant over the five years from 2008/09 to 2012/13 inclusive, with the Council receiving £600,000 towards the cost of the scheme proposed within the Borough.

Cabinet noted that the Council had worked with Sustrans to develop a Connect2 scheme. Members noted the main features of the scheme:-

- A new footpath/cycleway bridge across the River Leven between Ingleby Barwick and Yarm (Link 1);
- A new footpath/cycleway bridge across the River Tees between Ingleby Barwick and Eaglescliffe (Link 2);
- A new footpath/cycleway between Ingleby Barwick and Thornaby (Link 3); and
- A new footpath/cycleway Ingleby Barwick and Preston Park via the existing Jubilee Bridge (Link 4).

Subsequently the Council had carried out an outline feasibility study, which identified a number of potential route alignments for the two proposed bridge crossings, together with an initial cost estimate of £6.3 million.

Members representing the Wards directly affected by the proposed scheme have been updated on progress. A public consultation exercise was carried out through the Winter 2007 and the level of support for the scheme was high.

The landowners affected by the proposed routes had been identified and most broadly supported the proposed links.

Cabinet was asked to give its approval of the proposed scheme in principle.

Members noted that in order to take the scheme forward, an outline Project Plan had been developed to deliver the scheme by 2012/13. The Project Plan sets out the key tasks associated with delivery of each of the four proposed links, together with an indicative timescale in each case.

For practical reasons, a phased approach to the delivery of the scheme has been adopted. The target year for completion of each Link was as follows:

Link 4 (Ingleby Barwick to Preston Park): 2009/10

Link 3 (Ingleby Barwick to Thornaby): 2010/11

Link 1 (Ingleby Barwick to Yarm): 2012/13

Link 2 (Ingleby Barwick to Eaglescliffe): 2012/13

It was explained that effective management of risk would be crucial to the successful delivery of the scheme, and Members were appraised of some of the key potential risks to delivery of each of the four proposed links.

Members were informed that it was intended that an External Project Board would be established to maximise engagement with key stakeholders and reduce the risks to delivery of the scheme

Sustrans had requested detailed information prior to issuing a Memorandum of Understanding, which will set out the conditions governing the release of the £600,000 of Big Lottery funding for Links 1 and 2 over the next five years. As this contribution would cover only a small proportion of the overall scheme cost, work was also underway to identify and secure the other ingredients in the overall funding 'cocktail'.

Should it prove impossible to secure sufficient funding the possibility of meeting part of the cost of the scheme from the Council's own resources may need to be considered.

A further Report would be brought to Cabinet in February 2009, by which time a more detailed funding strategy for the scheme would have been developed.

RESOLVED that

1. the proposed Connect2 scheme be approved in principle.
2. Officers be authorised to pursue the preferred strategy for the delivery of the scheme, as highlighted within the Report, and to investigate potential sources of funding.
3. the establishment of an External Project Board to ensure that key stakeholders are fully engaged throughout the scheme development process, be noted.
4. A further Report, updating Members on progress made with regard to funding, land acquisition and risk management, be submitted to Cabinet in February 2009.

3. Reasons for the Decision

Although consultation carried out would suggest that there was widespread support for the scheme, it was just a proposal without any formal status. It was, therefore, important that the scheme be approved in principle.

Formal endorsement of the scheme would allow officers to pursue the preferred strategy for its delivery and to investigate potential sources of funding. It would also allow an External Project Board to be established, thereby ensuring that key stakeholders were fully engaged throughout the scheme's development process.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

Councillor Mrs Beaumont declared a personal/prejudicial interest in respect of this item as she was a member of the Planning Committee and did not wish to fetter her discretion prior to consideration, by the Planning Committee, of issues connected with this matter. Cllr Mrs Beaumont left the meeting during voting on this item.

6. Details of any Dispensations

Not Applicable

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Not later than Midnight on Friday 2nd May 2008

Proper Officer
28 April 2008