

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

24 APRIL 2008

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET DECISION

Regeneration & Transport – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Cook

CONNECT2

1. Summary

New pedestrian and cycle links between Ingleby Barwick & Eaglescliffe and Ingleby Barwick & Yarm have been identified as priorities for implementation over the life of the Second Stockton-on-Tees Local Transport Plan. Accordingly, the Council has worked with sustainable transport charity Sustrans to develop 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.

As a result of a successful bid for Big Lottery funding in December 2007, Sustrans has 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 will receive a share of this 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.

This Report seeks approval in principle for the scheme, and for the preferred strategy for its delivery over the next five years.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended 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. Members note that an External Project Board is to be established to ensure that key stakeholders are fully engaged throughout the scheme development process.
4. A further Report, updating Members on progress made with regard to funding, land acquisition and risk management, be brought to Cabinet in February 2009.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

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

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

4. Members' Interests

Members (including co-opted Members with voting rights) should consider whether they have a personal interest in the item as defined in the Council's code of conduct (**paragraph 8**) and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with paragraph 9 of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest in the item, he/she must then consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest (**paragraphs 10 and 11 of the code of conduct**).

A Member with a prejudicial interest in any matter must withdraw from the room where the meeting considering the business is being held -

- in a case where the Member is attending a meeting (including a meeting of a select committee) but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under statutory right or otherwise, immediately after making representations, answering questions or giving evidence as the case may be;
- in any other case, whenever it becomes apparent that the business is being considered at the meeting;

and must not exercise executive functions in relation to the matter and not seek improperly to influence the decision about the matter (**paragraph 12 of the Code**).

Further to the above, it should be noted that any Member attending a meeting of Cabinet, Select Committee etc; whether or not they are a Member of the Cabinet or Select Committee concerned, must declare any personal interest which they have in the business being considered at the meeting (unless the interest arises solely from the Member's membership of, or position of control or management on any other body to which the Member was appointed or nominated by the Council, or on any other body exercising functions of a public nature, when the interest only needs to be declared if and when the Member speaks on the matter), and if their interest is prejudicial, they must also leave the meeting room, subject to and in accordance with the provisions referred to above.

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

24 APRIL 2008

**REPORT OF CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET DECISION

CONNECT2

SUMMARY

'Connect2' is 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. This Report seeks approval in principle for the scheme, and for the preferred strategy for its delivery over the next five years.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended 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. Members note that an External Project Board is to be established to ensure that key stakeholders are fully engaged throughout the scheme development process.
4. A further Report, updating Members on progress made with regard to funding, land acquisition and risk management, be brought to Cabinet in February 2009.

DETAIL

Background

1. As a result of its successful bid for Big Lottery funding in December 2007, Sustrans has secured £50 million 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 will receive a share of the £50 million 'Living Landmarks: The People's Millions' grant over the five years from 2008/09 to 2012/13 inclusive, with the Council receiving £600,000 from the national 'pot' towards the cost of the Connect2 scheme proposed within the Borough.
2. New pedestrian and cycle links between Ingleby Barwick & Eaglescliffe and Ingleby Barwick & Yarm were identified as 'Top Five' Priorities for implementation over the life of the Second Stockton-on-Tees Local Transport Plan (LTP) by the Eastern and Western Area Transport Strategy Steering Groups respectively. Accordingly, the Council has worked with Sustrans to develop a Connect2 scheme linking 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.

3. The proposed routes will bring the four communities closer together, making it easier for residents to travel to work, school, the shops and other community facilities on foot or by cycle. Just as importantly, they will improve access to Preston Park and the River Tees between Stockton and Yarm, opening up this stretch of the river for leisure use by all residents of the Borough.

The Scheme

4. The proposed routes are as follows:
 - 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).

The Schematic Plan at **Appendix 1** illustrates the four proposed Links.

5. Links 1 and 2 are completely new routes, whilst Links 3 and 4 are largely upgrades of existing Public Rights of Way. The Big Lottery funding secured through Sustrans is 'ring fenced' for expenditure against Links 1 and 2.

Progress to Date

6. The Council has 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. It should be noted that this estimate includes provision for current 'unknowns' including design fees, land purchase costs and risk.
7. Members representing the Wards directly affected by the proposed scheme¹ have been updated on progress through presentations to the Eastern and Western Area Transport Strategy Steering Group Meetings held in May and October 2007. In addition, a special Member Briefing Session was held at Stockton Central Library on 14 September 2007, at which the contribution of the scheme to the delivery of wider corporate objectives such as the regeneration of Preston Park and the creation of a 'River Tees Park' between Stockton and Yarm was highlighted.
8. A public consultation exercise was carried out through the Winter 2007 edition of 'Stockton News' and the Council's website in order to ascertain the level of support for each of the four Links, with respondents asked to complete and return a short questionnaire. 220 completed questionnaires were returned by the 21 December deadline. The level of support for the scheme was high – as illustrated by **Appendix 2**, the overall percentage of respondents in favour was above 80% for all four of the proposed links.
9. In addition, a series of 'Road Shows' was held at venues in each of the four communities that will benefit from the scheme (Eaglescliffe, Ingleby Barwick, Thornaby and Yarm) during the run-up to the Big Lottery vote in December 2007. Feedback from these road shows was extremely positive, with the majority of visitors expressing support for the scheme.

¹ Eaglescliffe, Ingleby Barwick East, Ingleby Barwick West, Parkfield & Oxbridge, Village and Yarm.

10. The landowners affected by the proposed routes have been identified and contacted, both to make them aware of the scheme and to canvass their initial views on the proposals. Most of those contacted are broadly supportive of the proposed links.

Next Steps

11. Although, as highlighted above, there would appear to be widespread support for the scheme, it is currently just a proposal without any formal status. It is, therefore, recommended that the scheme be approved in principle.
12. In order to take the scheme forward, an outline Project Plan has 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.
13. For practical reasons, a phased approach to the delivery of the scheme has been adopted. The target year for completion of each Link, as envisaged in the Project Plan, is 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

The adoption of a phased approach will have the added advantage of demonstrating progress 'on the ground' during the early years of the project, ensuring that the profile of the scheme remains raised during the lead-in period for Links 1 and 2. Further Reports will be brought to Cabinet as and when required over the life of the project.

14. Effective management of risk will be crucial to the successful delivery of the scheme, and the Table at **Appendix 3** highlights some of the key potential risks to delivery of each of the four proposed links. A Risk Management Strategy will be developed over the coming months to supplement and reinforce the Project Plan.

Stakeholder Engagement

15. An External Project Board is being established to maximise engagement with key stakeholders and reduce the risks to delivery of the scheme. Invitations to be Members of the Board will be extended to:
 - The Cabinet Members for Regeneration & Transport, Environment, Children & Young People and Arts, Leisure & Culture;
 - Representatives of the Eastern and Western Area Boards of Stockton Renaissance;
 - A representative from the Children's Trust Board;
 - Sustrans;
 - The Tees Forest;
 - British Waterways; and
 - One NorthEast.

The Project Board will receive progress reports from the Project Delivery Team, and will assist and guide as appropriate to achieve the overall objectives of the scheme.

16. Further thought is being given to the operation of the Project Board, including the need for a formal constitution.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

17. Sustrans has 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 will cover only a small proportion of the overall scheme cost, work is also underway to identify and secure the other ingredients in the overall funding 'cocktail'. Possible funding sources identified to date include:
- The Council's annual '**Integrated Transport**' **Block Allocation** from the Department for Transport (DfT). The contribution from this source is likely to be in the region of £800,000 over the life of the scheme;
 - A bid for **LTP Major Scheme Funding**. This possibility has been formally raised with the DfT and the Government Office for the North East, and will be further explored in partnership with the Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit (JSU) over the coming months. If successful, such a bid could raise between £1.7 million and £5.7 million towards the cost of the scheme;
 - Funding released through the **Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy**, coordinated by the JSU. This possibility is currently being explored in partnership with the Council's Countryside and Greenspace Team. Funding released through this source is likely to be between £100,000 and £200,000;
 - **Developer Contributions**. The potential contribution from this source will depend on the level of developer activity in the area served by the scheme;
 - **Landfill Tax Credits**. The level of contribution from this source is likely to be between £10,000 and £50,000; and
 - **Other External Funding Sources**, for example Cycling England's 'Cycling Demonstration Town' initiative, for which a joint bid with Middlesbrough Council is currently being prepared.
18. Should it prove impossible to secure sufficient funding from the above sources, the possibility of meeting part of the cost of the scheme from the Council's own resources may need to be considered. This contribution could be met through:
- **Prudential Borrowing**, funded through an 'invest to save' contribution from revenue resources over a number of years; and/or
 - A bid for **Council Capital Resources**.

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

19. The Table at **Appendix 4** shows the secured and potential sources of funding for each of the four proposed Links.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

20. There are no immediate legal implications associated with the activities flowing from the recommendations contained within this Report. This issue will be considered in more detail within the update Report that will be brought to Cabinet in February 2009.

RISK ASSESSMENT

21. The activities flowing from the recommendations contained within this Report are categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities will be sufficient to control and reduce risk.
22. As highlighted within the Report, effective management of risk will be crucial to the successful delivery of the scheme. A Risk Management Strategy will be developed over the coming months to supplement and reinforce the Project Plan.

COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

23. The proposed scheme will contribute towards achievement of the key objectives set within a number of the policy platform areas of the Community Strategy 2005-08, as outlined in the Table below:

Policy Platform Area	Improvement Theme	Key Objective
<i>Economic Regeneration and Transport</i>	<u>Theme 4</u> : 'Accessibility of Local Facilities and Services'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access to education, jobs and health services. • Reduce road congestion.
	<u>Theme 5</u> : 'Reduce the Harmful Effects of Road Travel'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce road traffic related air pollution. • Promote the health benefits of walking and cycling.
	<u>Theme 6</u> : 'Sub-Regional Transport Structure'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport network rebalanced to promote more sustainable modes.
<i>Liveability</i>	<u>Theme 3</u> : 'Create a Better Environment'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access to quality, safe and secure green spaces in the Borough.
<i>Children and Young People</i>	<u>Theme 1</u> : 'Being Healthy'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halt the year-on-year rise in obesity amongst young children under 11.

24. By providing a sustainable alternative to many of the journeys currently made by car within the south of the Borough, the proposed scheme will also contribute positively towards meeting the air quality and climate change objectives set out in the Second Stockton-on-Tees Local Transport Plan and the Stockton-on-Tees Climate Change Action Plan.

Community Safety Implications

25. The design of the proposed Links will be consistent with the standards laid down in the Tees Valley 'Design Guide and Specification', including the provision of street lighting where required. Careful consideration will need to be given during detailed design of the proposed bridge crossings to ensure that safety of users is maximised and the potential for antisocial behaviour is reduced to a minimum.

CONSULTATION, INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLOR

26. As highlighted within the Report, Members representing the Wards directly affected by the proposed scheme have been updated on progress through presentations to the Eastern and Western Area Transport Strategy Steering Group Meetings held in May and October 2007. In addition, a special Member Briefing Session was held at Stockton Central Library on 14 September 2007.
27. A public consultation exercise was carried out through the Winter 2007 edition of 'Stockton News' and the Council's website. The level of support for the scheme was high, with over 80% of respondents in favour of all four of the proposed links. In addition, a series of 'Road Shows' was held at venues in Eaglescliffe, Ingleby Barwick, Thornaby and Yarm during the run-up to the Big Lottery vote in December 2007. Feedback from these road shows was extremely positive, with the majority of visitors expressing support for the scheme.

Corporate Director of Development & Neighbourhood Services

Contact Officer: Rob Farnham
Tel: (01642) 526729
E-mail: rob.farnham@stockton.gov.uk

Background Papers:

None.

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors:

Eaglescliffe (Councillors Mrs Rigg, Fletcher and Lewis);
Ingleby Barwick East (Councillors Faulks, Harrington and Larkin);
Ingleby Barwick West (Councillors Dixon, Narroway and Patterson);
Parkfield & Oxbridge (Councillors Javed and Rix);
Village (Councillors Dalgarno and Eddy); and
Yarm (Councillors Mrs Beaumont, Earl and Sherris).

Property:

There are no immediate implications with regard to property associated with the activities flowing from the recommendations contained within this Report. This issue will be considered in more detail within the update Report that will be brought to Cabinet in February 2009.