

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

3 DECEMBER 2015

**REPORT OF CRIME AND
DISORDER SELECT
COMMITTEE**

CABINET DECISION

REGENERATION AND TRANSPORT – Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Cooke

SCRUTINY REVIEW OF RIVER TEES CROSSING INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Summary

The Crime and Disorder Select Committee examined arrangements for the maintenance of the Boroughs' main bridges and to provide reassurances and recommendations on those arrangements.

2. Recommendations

The Committee recommend that:

1. A robust asset management plan is developed for the bridges and structures in Stockton Borough.
2. A linked five year investment strategy is developed for the bridges and structures based upon the asset management plan.
3. An appropriate level of resourcing is applied for the development and delivery of the asset management plan
4. The asset management plan ensures its delivery needs are risk based and recognises the economic significance of those assets.
5. That subject to further detailed discussions with Middlesbrough Council, Cabinet consider at a future meeting, proposals for a new joint arrangement that will reflect a revised financial structure for the maintenance of the River Tees crossings, under which Stockton will assume responsibility for the Newport Bridge and Middlesbrough will assume a reciprocal responsibility for the Transporter Bridge.
6. A further review of redundant bridges and structures with a view to disposing of, or demolishing those redundant assets if feasible and cost effective.
7. Monitoring of Teesside Park access takes place biannually as opposed to annually.
8. Additional investment, if required, is provided to deliver a database that meets departmental requirements.

3. Reasons for the Recommendations/Decision(s)

1. The aim of the review was to provide appropriate challenge relating to the financial impact to the Council, exploring alternative funding sources, contractual arrangements including those with neighbouring local authorities and asset management of key structures in order to limit disruption to river crossings if maintenance is required and identify cost effective maintenance arrangements.

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.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

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DETAIL

1. With 539 structures in the Borough of which 372 in the ownership of the council and 167 privately owned, mainly Network Rail, Auto-Link and A-One, the range and type of structures varies enormously from the historically significant bridges like Newport Bridge to

the wooden footbridges in parks and the drainage culverts that run under highways. As a result there are no simple solutions available to their maintenance and repair.

2. The economic importance of the bridges and structures is realised when they are not available for use. For example, the closure of Newport Bridge which carries approximately 30,000 vehicles per day pushed those vehicles onto the Tees flyover which already carries in excess of 100,000 vehicles per day to the point where it simply couldn't cope. Long delays on journeys to and from Middlesbrough were the result, demonstrating the fragile nature of the existing infrastructure.
3. With the abolition of Cleveland County in 1996 there was an agreement put in place for the joint maintenance of both the Transporter and Newport Bridges. This was intended to share the maintenance costs of the two structures equally but in practice Middlesbrough Council maintain the Transporter and Stockton Council takes care of Newport Bridge. The Committee heard that over the last ten years this arrangement has been fairly equitable in terms of respective spend but believe this arrangement needs to be formalised.
4. The Committee believe that the management of bridges and structures needs to minimise disruption, risk and consequential costs to road users and makes economic and efficient use of resources. The Committee enquired whether SBC could utilise a defreeze chemical as an alternative to salt to ensure that roads and bridges were not damaged in the way Newport Bridge was shown to be affected. Members were informed that this could be an alternative option and work was currently underway to research this.
5. As such an asset management process needs to be developed in order to have a detailed knowledge of those assets in terms of construction, condition, function and constraints and requires an effective inspection regime that provides detailed information on asset condition and performance.
6. There are a number of inspection types (Safety, General, Principal, Special, Acceptance, and Inspection for Assessment) which generate a raft of data and information in relation to the structure, any defects present and their cause. The results of all inspections inform the asset management plan process and investment profile. Currently this is done via an access database designed and built in-house and is an area that is in need of review.
7. The reduced number of inspections coupled with a database in need of upgrading has led to an approach to the management of bridges and structures which the Committee believe is in need of an overhaul.
8. The Committee learned that the inspection programme was previously delivered in-house by suitably qualified and experienced engineers and is now, in part, carried out by external consultants. The costs associated with using external agencies are such that some of the inspections were of a reduced specification in order to deliver them within existing budgets.
9. The only source of funds has been the Local Transport Plan (LTP) budgets which are not sufficient to cover the scale of investment needed without having a major impact on the other highway maintenance programmes.
10. In December 2014 the Government announced the establishing of the "Local Highways Maintenance Challenge Fund", which is to run for six years and funds small schemes up to £5m and large schemes above £20m. Local authorities are expected to provide at least 10% of the bid from their own resources (not from LTP).
11. Particular concern was raised regarding the access to Teesside Park and the building of the access ramps on soft ground without adequate foundations. Members raised concerns that SBC would face financial implications should the access sink at some point in the future. The Committee noted that an alternative access would be required in order to avoid

financial impacts on Teesside Park shops and leisure facilities whilst works were being carried out. This could require support and investment from Middlesbrough Council.

12. The Committee was therefore keen to determine whether the Teesside Park access was entered onto the Corporate Risk Register and whether a budget was in place should a problem occur. It was highlighted that the Teesside Park access was included on the Corporate Management Register however finances were not specifically allocated to resolve such an eventuality as a second access would require approximately £18m.

13. It was noted that once works were finalised, annual monitoring would take place in order to assess how Teesside Park access performed. It was highlighted that identifying conditions of bridges and structures played a vital role in preparing an investment plan. The Committee suggested that the monitoring took place twice per year as opposed to annually.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

14. Development of a five year investment strategy and application of appropriate resourcing to deliver an asset management plan.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

15. Formalisation of the agreement put in place for the joint maintenance of both the Transporter and Newport Bridges

RISK ASSESSMENT

16. This review is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY IMPLICATIONS

17. Economic Regeneration and Transport: Deliver key infrastructure including enhancing the transport network

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

18. This report has not been subject to an Equalities Impact Assessment.

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

19. None

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Education related? No

Background Papers None

Ward(s) and Ward Councillors: N/A

Property N/A