

AGENDA ITEM
REPORT TO CRIME
AND DISORDER
SELECT COMMITTEE

15 OCTOBER 2015

REPORT OF SCRUTINY
OFFICER

Review of River Tees Crossing Infrastructure

At the Committee meeting on 30 July 2015 Members were provided with information regarding the review of River Tees Crossing Infrastructure. In summary this stated:

- There are 539 structures in the Borough of which 372 are in the ownership of the council and 167 are 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 our parks and the drainage culverts that run under many of our highways.
- There are no simple solutions available to their maintenance and repair.
- The economic importance of our bridges and structures is sometimes only realised when they don't function.
- 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.
- An asset management process needs 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.
- 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.
- 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 is in need of an overhaul.
- 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.
- 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.

- 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).
- 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 Bridge. This was intended to share the maintenance costs of the two structures equally but in practice Middlesbrough Council maintain the Transporter and Stockton looks after Newport Bridge. Over the last ten years this arrangement has been fairly equitable in terms of respective spend but this arrangement needs to be formalised.

As a result of the evidence received the following recommendations were proposed and agreed:

1. The need to have a robust asset management plan in place for our bridges and structures.
2. The need to have a five year investment strategy for our bridges and structures based upon this asset management plan.
3. The need to review bridges and structures with a view to disposing of, or demolishing those redundant assets if feasible and cost effective.
4. That development and delivery of the asset management plan will require an appropriate level of resourcing.
5. That the development of the asset management plan and its delivery needs to be risk based and recognises the economic significance of those assets.

Further issues

Members asked for further information regarding:

How sure were SBC that the Teesside Park flyover would not subside? Members previously heard that monitoring would take place focusing on how frequently the road moved in the future and the road would eventually have to be re-built.

With reference to salt penetration, it was asked whether SBC would consider a defreeze chemical as an alternative to ensure that the road was not damaged. Members were informed that this could be an alternative option and work was currently underway to research this.

The Highways, Transport and Environment Manager will provide additional information at this meeting.

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