

Open Report on behalf of Paul Coathup, Assistant Director, Highways and Transportation

Report to:	Councillor K J Smith, Executive Councillor for Finance and HR
Date:	01 March 2013
Subject:	St. Botolph's Footbridge, Boston
Decision Reference:	02144
Key decision?	Yes

Summary:

Approval is sought to proceed with the replacement of St. Botolph's Footbridge on a preferred option that has received support from Public Consultation and gained Conservation Area Consent from the Secretary of State and is eligible for ERDF grant. The net cost to Lincolnshire County Council is £594,100 and £93,000 of costs has been incurred to date in developing options, consulting on viable options and developing the preferred scheme for a planning application.

Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that the Executive Councillor for Finance and HR approves the funding package for St. Botolph's footbridge, Boston with a scheme cost of £918,100 and net cost of £594,100 to Lincolnshire County Council.

Alternatives Considered:

1. Not to proceed. This option has been discounted since there are structural defects that need addressing. The bridge will remain non-compliant in relation to the Equality Act 2010.
2. Refurbishment of existing structure. This option has been discounted since the bridge would need to be closed for 12 weeks and significant cost incurred, without adding the benefits of having an Equality Act 2010 compliant bridge. The work would be labour intensive and require significant temporary works to gain access for blast cleaning, painting and removal of the precast concrete planks and replacement. This solution would not enhance the appearance.
3. Demolishing the existing bridge and replacing with a basic bridge. A basic bridge is unlikely to have received Secretary of State Consent due to a potential English Heritage objection. To change the design concept would require a new Conservation Area Consent and this would incur the loss of

the ERDF grant since there is insufficient time to comply with the process and complete construction by December 2013. In addition £93,000 of costs have already been incurred developing the existing design, carrying out public consultation, submitting a Conservation Area Consent and tendering on this preferred option.

Reasons for Recommendation:

The proposal will provide a replacement bridge that complies with the Equality Act 2010, for a bridge that has serious structural defects, on an important well used link between the bus station and market place, within a Conservation Area. Public Consultation has been carried out and a Conservation Area Consent obtained and competitive tenders sought to determine the most cost effective price for the works.

1. Background

- 1.1 The existing St. Botolph's footbridge is a three span bridge built in the 1970's and comprises of a clear span of 28m over the River Witham with two side spans of 16m each. The bridge is located in the shadow of Boston Stump in a Conservation Area and is an important link between the bus station and the recently refurbished national heritage award winning market place.
- 1.2 The existing footbridge has a number of serious structural defects. The most serious is the apparent structural failure of the precast concrete deck planks which span transversely and support the walking area. There are cracks at midspan on a number of these planks. Previously two planks have been replaced due to shear crack failure at the supports.
- 1.3 In addition there has been a continual on-going problem with loss of the non-slip walking surface and trip hazards at the expansion joints which have required regular intervention measures since 2005.
- 1.4 An additional maintenance issue is surface corrosion to the steelwork. The bridge was last painted in 2002 but due to the location blast cleaning was not considered acceptable due the need to close the bridge for access. The bridge now requires full structural re painting and blast cleaning would be required.
- 1.5 The existing bridge is unattractive and does not enhance the area in which it is located.
- 1.6 The existing bridge does not comply with the Equality Act 2010 in terms with non-compliant approach ramps and the width is insufficient to cope with current pedestrian usage.
- 1.7 Work to replace the footbridge commenced in August 2009 with a feasibility study of options involving a local architect to determine options likely to be acceptable to English Heritage.
- 1.8 In 2010 Lincolnshire County Council submitted a bid for European Regional Development Funding (ERDF) Priority Axis 2 for a Waterways Partnership 'Routes not Barriers' package and a replacement St.Botolph's footbridge was included in the package. The bid was successful and ERDF funding of 54% of the cost of the bridge up to a limit of £600,000 was secured based on an early estimate for an enhanced bridge as a replacement. The estimate was

based on a bowstring arch with higher quality materials and some lighting. A condition of the grant is that all work must be complete by December 2013.

- 1.9 A Public Consultation event was held in September 2011 in Boston on three different designs and the preferred option was a Bowstring Arch. This decision was endorsed by the Executive Councillor for Highways and Transportation in a decision notice dated 9 December 2011. The new three span Bowstring Arch will have a total span of 65m and is wider than the existing.
- 1.10 A Conservation Area Consent application to demolish the existing bridge and replace with a Bowstring Arch was submitted to Lincolnshire County Council on 14 September 2012. Boston Borough Council was consulted as part of the consultation and the Secretary of State approved the application on 24 January 2013 after receiving no objection from English Heritage.
- 1.11 Tenders have been received for a replacement footbridge based on the Conservation Area Consent that is fully compliant with the Equality Act 2010 and the ERDF successful bid requirements.
- 1.12 The proposal is to award a contract on 8th March 2013 and start on site on 12 August 2013 with completion of the works by 15th November 2013. The works will require the closure of the bridge for up to 8 weeks with an alternative pedestrian diversion route over Town Bridge to the west.
- 1.13 The scheme cost is based on the lowest submitted tender is £918,000. This works cost includes a risk allocation of £90,000 and it is anticipated that the full risk cost will not be realised. The net cost to Lincolnshire County Council is £594,100 which will be funded from the Structures Capital element of 2013/14 Asset Protection Block. The additional cost incurred over the original estimate will be funded from within the 2013/14 Structures allocation by re-profiling existing projected schemes.
- 1.14 Alternative options have been considered but discounted :
 - Do nothing – fails to address the structural defects and the structure will become a safety risk leading to closure
 - Structural refurbishment – does not provide an Equality Act 2010 compliant structure. Long closure anticipated and labour intensive work with significant temporary works required. Retention of an unattractive bridge considered as an eyesore in the shadow of the historic Boston Stump.
 - Demolishing bridge and replacing with a basic structure – unlikely to receive Conservation Area Consent without an objection from English Heritage and opportunity for ERDF grant to fund an enhanced bridge missed.

CAPITAL COSTS OF PROPOSED SCHEME

	2009/10 £000's	2010/11 £000's	2011/12 £000's	2012/13 £000's	2013/14 £000's	TOTAL £000's
WORKS	-	-	-	-	805.0	805.0
FEES	17.8	5.3	40.0	35.0	15.0	113.1
TOTAL	17.8	5.3	40.0	35.0	820.0	918.1

CONTRIBUTIONS

	2009/10 £000's	2010/11 £000's	2011/12 £000's	2012/13 £000's	2013/14 £000's	TOTAL £000's
GRANT	-	-	-	18.9	305.1	324.0
NETT LCC	17.8	5.3	40.0	16.1	514.9	594.1
TOTAL	17.8	5.3	40.0	35.0	820.0	918.1

2. Conclusion

- 2.1 The proposed scheme has being through a Public Consultation and a Conservation Area Consent has been approved by the Secretary of State after consultation with Boston Borough Council and receiving no objections from English Heritage.
- 2.2 It is recommended that the Executive Councillor (Finance and HR) approves the net expenditure to Lincolnshire County Council of £594,100 after an ERDF contribution of £324,000 has been made.

Legal Comments:

The Executive Councillor has the remit to approve the funding package for St. Botolph's Footbridge; Boston provided he has the delegated authority of the Leader.

Resource Comments:

Approval of this report will commit the Council to a gross cost of £918,100 to replace St Botolph's footbridge in Boston. The Council will receive £324,000 of ERDF grant as a contribution towards the scheme giving a net cost to the Council of £594,100. This expenditure will be funded from the existing Highways and Transport capital programme.

3. Consultation

Has The Local Member Been Consulted?

N/A

Has The Executive Councillor Been Consulted?

N/A

Scrutiny Comments

This has not been considered by a scrutiny committee.

Policy Proofing Actions Required

N/A

Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Public Consultation Final Report
Appendix B	Executive Councillor Briefing Note dated 6 December 2011
Appendix C	Final Design Images

Background Papers

The following background papers as defined in the Local Government Act 1972 were relied upon in the writing of this report.

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
Exec Cllr (H&T) Decision 9/12/11	IDOX

This report was written by David Walton, who can be contacted on 01522 552935 or david.walton@lincolnshire.gov.uk