

**Divisions Affected – Abingdon East**

**DELEGATED DECISIONS BY CABINET MEMBER FOR  
INFRASTRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

**10 October 2024**

**Approval to award contract in respect of the construction/delivery  
of Abingdon National Cycling Network Route 5 Missing Link - East  
St Helens Street Active Travel Scheme**

**Report by Director of Environment & Highways**

**RECOMMENDATION**

The Cabinet Member is **RECOMMENDED** to

- a) **Delegate authority to the Director of Environment & Highways in consultation with the Executive Director: Resources and Section 151 Officer and the Head of Legal Services & Deputy Monitoring Officer to approve the award of a contract in relation to construction and delivery of the Abingdon National Cycling Network Route 5 Missing Link - East St Helens Street Active Travel Scheme.**

**Executive Summary**

1. This report seeks approval for delegated authority to award a contract for the forthcoming construction contract for the Abingdon National Cycling Network Route 5 Missing Link – East St Helens Street Active Travel Scheme and to provide assurances that the project satisfies the requirements of Oxfordshire County Council's corporate policies and practices.

**Background**

2. In February 2024 the County Council was allocated £2,384,163 by Active Travel England (ATE) from Active Travel Fund Tranche 4 Extension funding. This funding is allocated to support specific projects intended to improve walking and cycling infrastructure in the county. The Abingdon National Cycling Network Route 5 Missing Link – East St Helens Street Active Travel Scheme is an infrastructure project that has been allocated £1,473,679 by Active Travel England for full project delivery, comprising preliminary design, public consultation, detailed design, and construction.

3. The Abingdon National Cycle Network Route 5 Missing Link scheme is in the heart of Abingdon Town Centre, on Sustrans National Cycle Network Route 5, and partially in an Air Quality Management Area. The route currently requires cyclists to dismount and push for approximately 90 metres which potentially adversely affects people with reduced mobility such as elderly or people with disabilities, potentially using adapted cycles. Additionally, the current crossing provisions along this route are extremely poor or non-existent.
4. The project is intended to address the issues for walking and wheeling in this area, to give more priority to the most vulnerable users. The scheme includes 2 parallel and 2 zebra crossings, 3 raised tables, and a section of cycle contraflow.
5. The scheme is included in the approved Abingdon Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, and it will help tie together the Oxford, Abingdon, and Didcot Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans, and create a safe walking/wheeling/cycling route for all people. The Abingdon Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan was approved by Cabinet on 23 February 2023 and is a 10-year plan (2023 to 2033) to improve and increase cycling and walking in the town.
6. The Abingdon National Cycle Network Route 5 Missing Link scheme when completed is expected to remove a significant barrier to achieving a high quality cycle network connecting Oxford, Abingdon, Didcot, and beyond. The emerging Oxfordshire Strategic Active Travel Network includes links through this scheme, as does the existing Science Vale Cycle Network (renaming to Science Vale Active Travel).

## **Procurement Strategy**

7. In August 2024 a project Procurement Strategy (Appendix 1) was approved by Head of Infrastructure Delivery. The strategy recommended:
  - i) Preliminary design to be procured via 3 quotes procurement route in line with the County Council's procurement policy for contracts under £100k; and
  - ii) Detailed design and construction to be procured via the Midlands Highway Alliance (MHA) MSF4 framework using the sub-regional call-off option.
8. The Scheme will be run as a two stage process comprising a County Council Consultancy Services contract which is to be used when procurement of design services is via Request for Quote for preliminary design, and an Engineering Construction Contract (ECC) Option C (Target Cost with Activity Schedule) for detailed design and construction, with Option X22 for Early Contractor Involvement (ECI).

9. The contract for preliminary design is expected to cost less than £100k and, as such, does not meet the threshold requiring a Cabinet Member Decision. However, the contract for detailed design and construction may exceed £1m making it a key decision and as such a Cabinet Member Decision is required.
10. The procurement process for detailed design and construction is expected to be carried out in Spring 2025 and it is anticipated that construction will commence during Summer 2025.

## Corporate Policies and Priorities

11. The Abingdon National Cycle Network Route 5 Missing Link Active Travel Scheme has the potential to address a range of the Council's strategic priorities:
  - **Put action to address the climate emergency at the heart of our work**  
By improving sustainable transport offer the project will reduce carbon emissions from road transport by promoting active travel.
  - **Prioritise the health and wellbeing of residents**  
An enhanced cycling and pedestrian environment will encourage walking and active travel leading to health benefits.
  - **Invest in an inclusive, integrated and sustainable transport network**  
The project will provide new cycling and walking infrastructure that will encourage people to walk, wheel and cycle.

## Local Transport and Connectivity Plan Implications

12. The project is strongly aligned with the County Council's vision set out within the Local Transport & Connectivity Plan 2022-2050 which includes reducing the need to travel and private car use through making walking, cycling, public and shared transport the natural first choice. The Local Transport & Connectivity Plan supporting strategies include the Active Travel Strategy.
13. The Local Transport & Connectivity Plan includes targets to:
  - reduce 1 in 4 current car trips by 2030; and
  - deliver a net-zero transport network by 2040.

## Financial Implications

14. The total cost estimate for all project stages is £1,473,679 and Cabinet approved the inclusion of the scheme in the capital programme on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2024. The estimate includes a construction cost estimate of £752,046 and a contingency/optimism bias/risk allowance (44% of construction budget) of

£339,700. The scheme is capital funded and there are no capital or revenue financial implications arising from this report's recommendation.

Comments checked by: Rob Finlayson, Strategic Finance Business Partner (Environment & Highways), [rob.finlayson@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:rob.finlayson@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

## Legal Implications

15. When procuring goods, services or works, the procurement must be conducted in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and, where applicable, the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (**PCRs**).
- The anticipated value of the contract for the design and construction works is between £750k and £1m inclusive of VAT. Such anticipated value falls below the PCRs threshold, which currently stands at £5,372,609 inclusive of VAT.
  - The Midlands Highway Alliance Plus Medium Schemes Framework 4 (MSF4 MHA+) was awarded on 21 June 2022 following a public procurement exercise under the PCRs and expires on 22 July 2026. A total of 4 suppliers were appointed to the Framework, including Galliford Try Construction Limited.
  - The procedures for awarding call-off contracts include a Sub-Regional Call-off option. The Council may directly award a Call-off Contract to the Sub-Regional Contractor for the region that includes Oxfordshire. MHA+ have confirmed, for the region that include Oxfordshire, Galliford Try Construction Limited are the Sub-Regional Contractor.
  - The proposed call-off contract between Galliford Try Construction Limited and the Council is an amended NEC4 Engineering and Construction Contract. MHA+ are in the process of approving the form of the call-off contract.
  - The Council will be delivering the Abingdon National Cycle Network Route 5 - Missing Link scheme in its capacity as highway authority for Oxfordshire under the Highways Act 1980.

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## Staff Implications

16. Staff to procure and deliver the project will be delivered through existing resources, with no need make additional appointments.

## **Equality & Inclusion Implications**

17. The Equalities Impact Assessment is presented in Annex 2 to this report.
  - The assessment shows that no negative impacts to bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community will result from the scheme.
  - The Equalities Impact Assessment found the scheme will either have no impact on the groups under consideration or will have a positive impact. Groups which will benefit from a positive impact include those with the protected characteristics of Age, Disability, Pregnancy & Maternity, Sex, Rural Communities, Carers and Areas of Deprivation.

## **Sustainability Implications**

18. The Climate Impact Assessment is presented in Appendix 3
19. The project scores favourably in terms of the potential impacts that could be delivered however the project team will work closely with the designers and the construction contractor to ensure that desirable low carbon objectives achieved through the implementation of bespoke materials and innovative infrastructure measures are balanced against the scope of scheme deliverables determined by the budget and does not compromise other benefits identified in the 'Just Transition' category.

## **Risk Management**

20. If the Council does not enter into contract in respect of the construction/delivery of the scheme in Spring 2025, as planned, then this will adversely impact the County Council's ability to spend the Active Travel Fund Tranche 4 Extension funding and deliver the scheme in a timely manner. This could result in reputational damage and reduced funding allocated to the County Council in future Active Travel Fund rounds.

A project level risk assessment has been prepared and will be regularly reviewed throughout the project life cycle.

**Report by Paul Fermer**  
**Director of Environment and Highways**

Annexes: Annex 1 – Climate Impact Assessment [CIA\\_Abingdon\\_NCN5\\_Missing link.pdf](#)  
Annex 2 – Equalities Impact Assessment [Abingdon\\_NCN5\\_Missing\\_Link\\_ATF4E\\_Equalities\\_Impact\\_Assessment.pdf](#)

Background papers: Nil

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Programme Lead, Active Travel Delivery

10 October 2024