

CABINET – 21 OCTOBER 2014

A34 MAJOR IMPROVEMENTS SCHEMES

Report by Director for Environment & Economy

Introduction

1. This Cabinet Report follows the 16 September 2014 Cabinet Report for A34 Major Improvement Schemes Ref: 2014/116. This report is provided specifically for Chilton Interchange, and updates Cabinet on the current position of the scheme, and provides the Stage 2 Business Case for approval.

Exempt Information

2. Annex 2 contains commercially sensitive information. The public should therefore be excluded during consideration of the Annex as discussion in public would be likely to lead to the disclosure to members of the public present of information in the following category prescribed by Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended):
Category 3; Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)
3. and since it is considered that, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, in that where a tender or bidding process is in progress disclosure would distort the proper process and would prejudice the position of the authority in the process of the transaction and the standing generally in relation to such transactions in future, to the detriment of the Councils ability properly to discharge its fiduciary and other duties as a public authority.

Background

Science Vale UK context

4. Major growth is proposed across the area to deliver in the order of 16,000 homes and 20,000 jobs by 2029. Harwell Oxford and Milton Park have Enterprise Zone status, aiming to deliver 8,500; Didcot and Wantage/Grove are the key settlements for housing growth.

Chilton Interchange

5. In October 2013 an application for Local Pinch Point Funding of £5 million was submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) as a contribution towards proposed improvements to Chilton Interchange.

6. The total estimated scheme cost is approximately £11 million. It is proposed that this is funded from two main sources; the Department for Transport Local Pinch Point Funding bid described above and via match funding of £5.7 million from the Local Enterprise Partnership's (LEP) Local Infrastructure Funding from expected Enterprise Zone (EZ) business rates income.
7. It is important to bring forward this scheme to enable full access to the A34 for Harwell Oxford Campus Enterprise Zone.
8. Release of £5 million from the Department for Transport is subject to close working with the Highways Agency (HA) in relation to the new north facing slips and extended underpass under the A34.
9. The Highways Agency will take responsibility for the slips and will play a vital role in ensuring the successful delivery of this project.
10. Substantial scheme progress should be made by March 2015 to meet the current terms of both funding streams.

Key Issues

Chilton Interchange

11. There have been three objections to the Draft Slip and Side Road Orders submitted for the Chilton Interchange. One of these is from Chilton Parish Council (CPC) and they are a Statutory Consultee.
12. The Chilton Parish Council objection has been withdrawn, and a Public Inquiry will not be needed. As a result the Highways Agency will take steps to progress the Orders.
13. Scheme is set to progress, on agreement by Highways Agency of outstanding arrangements and making of Orders by the Secretary of State.

Communications

14. Chilton Interchange consultations (Public and Interested Parties) have been undertaken to commence the scheme between late November 2014 and January 2015, and approval of the Business Case will trigger the development of the final phase of the Communications plan.
15. Further discussion will be held with the Highways Agency to conclude the Orders and progress the scheme.
16. The contract for the Chilton Interchange scheme is due to be awarded at the end October 2014 to meet a 'Site Start' of between late November 2014 and January 2015.
17. Agreement to allow the award of the Chilton Interchange contract through the Delegated Authority route, minimising programme, and shortening

mobilisation phase will allow the council to maximise spend in this financial year.

Financial and Staff Implications

18. The current assessment of the Chilton Interchange scheme suggests that it can be awarded within current budget and indications are that spend profiles are compliant with Pinch-point funding commitments, however there is a pressure against this due to the delay to the commencement.

RECOMMENDATION

19. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:**
 - (a) **approve the Stage 2 – Full Business Case for the Chilton Interchange scheme;**
 - (b) **pass Delegated Authority to the Executive Director for Environment and Economy in consultation with the Leader to Award the contract for construction once tender assessment is complete and provided the costs are within the budget envelope.**

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