

Divisions Affected – Benson and Cholsey, Chalgrove and Watlington, Berinsfield and Garsington

CABINET MEMBER FOR TRAVEL & DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

– 7 September 2023

Approval to issue a Task Order in respect of the construction/delivery of the Benson Relief Road scheme

Report by Corporate Director of Environment & Place

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to

delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Environment & Place in consultation with the Director of Finance and the Head of Legal Services & Deputy Monitoring Officer to approve the issuing of a Task Order (for the value of £5.158m inc VAT) pursuant to the Highways Partnership Contract (HPC) with Milestone in relation to the construction/delivery of the Benson Relief Road scheme.

Executive Summary

2. This report seeks to ensure that authority is in place for a Task Order (£5.158m inc VAT) to be issued to Milestone (pursuant to the HPC) for the construction/delivery of the Benson Relief Road scheme.

Background

3. The Benson Relief Road scheme will provide an alternative route from the A4074 and B4009 to the north of Benson village, particularly for HGVs.

4. The scheme will support planned growth in both housing and employment and, importantly, support/facilitate sustainable and active travel in the local and wider area. The Benson Relief Road scheme will:

- Help to unlock development sites to the north of Benson village along the new route and, in doing so, support the delivery of c600 new homes
- Reduce congestion through Benson village and provide an alternative route from the A4074 and B4009, for cars, LGVs and HGVs
- Deliver capacity improvements at the A4074 / Church Road junction
- Provide high-quality pedestrian/cycle infrastructure
- Improve air quality

5. Detailed design is nearing completion (to be finalised in September 2023), and the County Council has secured all the land that is required for the scheme through private treaty.
6. The purpose of this report is to obtain approval for the County Council to issue a Task Order (£5.158m inc VAT) to Milestone (pursuant to the HPC) for the construction/delivery of the Benson Relief Road scheme.
7. Milestone shall construct/deliver the Benson Relief Road scheme on behalf of the County Council acting in its capacity as Highways Authority under the Highways Act 1980.

Key Issues

8. It is essential that this decision is made urgently in respect of the issuing of a Task Order to Milestone to ensure that the construction/delivery programme is not adversely affected.
9. The key driver for use of the HPC with Milestone is time; this route will produce the shortest time to commence construction. Furthermore, there is a requirement to ensure that the Housing Growth Deal funding that has been allocated to the scheme is spent by the end of March 2025. Use of the HPC will help to drive time and cost (including value for money) efficiencies and, thereby, ensure that the project adheres to the latest programme/timescales.

Financial Implications

10. As identified previously, this report seeks to ensure that authority is in place for a Task Order (for the value of £5.158m inc VAT) to be issued to Milestone (pursuant to the HPC) for the construction/delivery of the Benson Relief Road scheme.
11. The £5.158m (inc VAT) cost for Milestone to construct/deliver the Benson Relief Road scheme on behalf of the County Council falls within the 'approved budget', which was approved by Cabinet in October 2022.
12. There are no budgetary implications, as the budgets for the project have already been agreed by Cabinet.

Comments checked by: Rob Finlayson, Finance Business Partner
(rob.finlayson@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Legal Implications

13. 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).

14. The value of the proposed Task Order for construction works is £5.158m and therefore falls below the PCR threshold for Works which currently stands at £5,336,937inc VAT.
15. The HPC was entered into in 2010 following a public procurement exercise and expires on 31 March 2025. As well as standard maintenance activity, the HPC also provides for the delivery of new infrastructure schemes below the PCR threshold. As such, the issuing of a Task Order to Milestone for the construction/delivery works complies with both the HPC requirements and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

Comments checked by: Jayne Pringle, Principal Solicitor – Contracts and Conveyancing (Legal Services)
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Staff Implications

16. There are no staff implications.

Risk Management

17. If the Council does not issue a Task Order to Milestone in respect of the construction/delivery of the scheme as soon as practicably possible then this could put pressure on the County Council's ability to spend the Housing Growth Deal funding that has been allocated to the scheme by the end of March 2025. Furthermore, Milestone will not be able to commence construction as per the latest programme until the Task Order has been issued, which could have financial and time implications. Both of these risks could result in reputational damage if the Council does not issue the Task Order to Milestone in a time-efficient manner.

Bill Cotton, Corporate Director of Environment & Place

Annex: Nil

Background papers: Nil

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