

EAST RENFREWSHIRE COUNCILCABINET28 March 2024Report by Director of EnvironmentCLARKSTON ACTIVE TRAVEL BRIDGE**PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1. The purpose of this report is to inform Members about the Clarkston Active Travel Bridge and to seek approval to directly appoint Network Rail to design a new active travel bridge across the railway at Clarkston adjacent to the existing B767 road bridge and install the Active Travel Bridge on site.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. It is recommended that the Cabinet:
 - (a) Delegates the Chief Officer of Legal and Procurement to approve the Exemption from Contract Order form to enable East Renfrewshire Council to appoint Network Rail and,
 - (b) Delegates to the Head of Place to approve and sign the Service Level Agreement between East Renfrewshire Council and Network Rail to approve an exemption under the Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2015 and the Council's Contract Standing Orders to enable the direct award of a contract to Network Rail.

BACKGROUND

3. The department is currently leading the development of the Clarkston to Muirend Active Corridor funded via the Sustrans Places for Everyone programme. This project aims to improve active travel infrastructure on the B767, which is identified and approved by Council as Strategic Cycle Corridor 3 in Local Development Plan 2.
4. A key constraint is the existing crossings of the railway at Clarkston. The B767 road bridge has a substandard footway that is too narrow to accommodate separated cycleway, while the nearby footbridge is unsuitable for cycle traffic due to its limited width and indirect route. A feasibility study conducted in 2021 by AECOM concluded that these constraints could be overcome by constructing a new foot/cycle bridge adjacent to the current road bridge.

REPORT

5. The Council has worked with Network Rail to prepare a 'Development Services Agreement', which would see Network Rail lead the project. Funding has been awarded via Transport Scotland's Active Travel Transformation Fund to support design activity.

6. The report is seeking Cabinet approval for an exemption to standard procurement procedures to allow East Renfrewshire Council to directly award the contract to Network Rail with an estimated cost of £193,500 to carry out a full design package for a new walking, wheeling and cycling bridge across the railway at Clarkston adjacent to the existing B767 road bridge. This will also create a safe link between the Goods Yards car park and the town centre.
7. The project justification to proceed with the direct award is as follows:
 - a. Delivery of the detailed design activity by the Council would depend on obtaining access to the railway to conduct topographical and ground investigation surveys. Network Rail's approval of any work carried out on-site by a third party (and the signing of an 'asset protection' agreement) is a mandatory and lengthy process. This would present a risk that the proposed project would not be achieved within the timeframe of the railway electrification project, leading to future construction constraints, negative effects on the local community and railway users, and possible inability to achieve a crossing in the near future.
 - b. Network Rail electrification of the Glasgow to East Kilbride railway line is a live project and there is a risk that the design process would not take account of the new pedestrian and cycle bridge design. An agreement with Network Rail would allow seamless working between our project and Network Rail and reduce any delays or negative effects.
 - c. Network Rail is required to improve station accessibility and access as a part of their project on the railway, this will include a new footbridge being installed, and a new access from platform two from its northern end into the Clarkston town centre carpark. The agreement between the Council and Network Rail will allow a more appealing and accessible step-free access to the station platform two and stepped access to platform one.
8. It is considered that the criteria for a Regulation 33 exemption and standing order 23 exemption are therefore met for the following reasons:
 - a. The design and construction of the proposed foot/cycle bridge must integrate with the current electrification project by Network Rail, which has already commenced on site from both a technical and timescale perspective. The bridge must be designed to fit with and be completed prior to Network Rail works.
 - b. The key sections of the new bridge would be constructed during closure of the railway for the electrification works in Spring 2025 and so the design and all preliminary tasks would require to be completed by this date to avoid further closure of the railway and to avoid difficulties in providing improved accessible access to the station platforms.

FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY

9. The contract award to Network Rail to carry out the design package for the bridge is £193,500.
10. Full funding (£240,000) has been awarded by Transport Scotland via the Active Travel Transformation Fund (ATTF), to progress the concept and detailed designs for this new crossing. The ATTF award includes allowance for Council officer time to oversee this work and contingencies. There is no additional financial burden on the Council to progress this design work.

CONSULTATION

11. The Department is currently leading the development of the Clarkston – Muirend Active Corridor funded via Sustrans Places for Everyone funding which will have multiple public engagement and consultation in Spring via in-person events and Commonplace Platform.
12. Engagement is also planned with internal departments and team within East Renfrewshire, and external partners, ScotRail, Transport Scotland, Sustrans, and Strathclyde Partnership for Transport.

PARTNERSHIP WORKING

13. This project has involved close partnership working with Sustrans Scotland, Network Rail and Transport Scotland.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE PROPOSALS

14. The development of the design for the new foot/cycle bridge at Clarkston will not have impact on council staffing, property, IT, or subsidy control.

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT ASSESSTMENT

15. A Climate Change Impact Assessment has been completed, and this proposal will have a small detrimental impact on council operational emissions achieving net zero and a small positive effect on community climate impacts.

EQUALITY, FAIRNESS AND RIGHTS IMPACT ASSESSMENT

16. An Equalities Fairness & Rights Impact Assessment (EFRIA) screening will be carried out and reviewed alongside the design process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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 - (b) Delegates to the Head of Place to approve and sign the Service Level Agreement between East Renfrewshire Council and network to approve an exemption under the Public Contracts (Scotland) Regulations 2015 and the Council's Contract Standing Orders to enable the direct award of a contract to Network Rail.

Director of Environment

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