

REGENERATION, COMMUNITY AND CULTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

3 OCTOBER 2013

DARNLEY ARCHES, STROOD

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and Culture

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Summary

This report sets out an update of the planned works at Darnley Arches in Strood, it follows a report taken to the Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 31 January 2013.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

1.1 This paper provides an update on the progress of works to date after this matter appeared on the agenda at the request of Councillor Igwe.

2. Background

2.1 After the meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 31 January this matter was referred to the Portfolio Holder for Front Line Services and the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development and Economic Growth and further work has taken place in moving forward with this project. Regular meetings with the Portfolio Holders have taken place, with closely managed consultant support.

2.2 Work has taken place as outlined in paragraph 3.6 of the 31 January 2013 meeting records and the following actions have been taken:

- A review of expenditure to date and available budgets/ timescales for spend;
- A review of the options for deliverable improvements, that would not require widening the arch;
- Refinement of the possible options based on survey data and on-site observations;
- Initial costings at each stage of the design process to ensure the scheme is within available budget;
- Appraisal of the long-term options, if appropriate for other major improvements to the Darnley Arch pedestrian route;

3. Options

- 3.1 The Council currently holds £526,673 of Section 106 contributions from Morrison's, with a deadline for spend of August 2014
- 3.2 Medway Council have appointed specialist transport consultants Peter Brett Associates (PBA) to prepare options for the Darnley Arch pedestrian accessibility improvement scheme. PBA have prepared a range of options that have now been shortlisted to 3 realistic options for improvements that are appraised in the attached summary table.
- 3.3 The preferred option at this stage is Option 2 (attached), as it gives the most benefits to pedestrian accessibility and therefore fulfils the Section 106 obligation whilst delivering most benefits to the local area. Option 2 is the most viable scheme with regards to the benefit gained and its overall cost.

4. Option 2 - The Scheme

- 4.1 The scheme consists of a carriageway realignment of A228 Cuxton Road under the Darnley Arches Rail Bridge, and includes:
 - Removal of the existing footway on the southern side of the carriageway under the Darnley Arch Bridge.
 - Introduction of a new 1.5m footway on the northern side of the carriageway under the Darnley Arch Bridge connecting to Northcote Road and Cuxton Road.
 - Introduction of a zebra crossing on the one-way section of Cuxton Road some 5-10 metres into the junction from Priory Road.
 - There is also scope to improve pedestrian crossing facilities at Darnley Road in the vicinity and to slow vehicles egressing from Darnley Road through the use of a raised table.
 - An improved lighting design for the local area to improve the pedestrian environment, and the use of high quality materials to enhance the local public realm.
- 4.2 Relocating the footway enables the creation of a wider footway, which is now on the pedestrian desire line. The existing footway is 0.8m under the arch. At this width it is difficult for two pedestrians to pass.
- 4.3 The cost of Option 2 will be finalised when the detailed design of the scheme is complete, provisional estimates indicate this will be within the available budget. Officers have undertaken the preliminary review of the statutory undertakers plants and had discussions with the Council's Road Safety team.

5. Current Position and Next Steps

- 5.1 Officers are in the process of undertaking the Stage 1 Safety Audit and Statutory Utility enquiries to ensure the deliverability of the preferred design and the approximate cost of diverting any services on site. This will take around 6 weeks.
- 5.2 Members will recall plans for a pedestrian and cycle tunnel under the railway embankment to the north of Darnley Arch. With recent Government funding cuts and changes to the way major funds are allocated (linked to major economic growth and delivery of new jobs) there seems little potential for major scheme funding for this project. Member's views are sought on this issue as if the Council were to abandon plans for a tunnel at this location the property owned by the Council and earmarked for this project could be considered by Cabinet for declaring surplus and subsequently disposed of.

6. Financial and Legal Implications

- 6.1 The financial implications are contained within the body of the report.
- 6.2 The section 106 agreement provided that the owner or its successors in title (now Morrisons) contributed the sum of £500,000 towards the provision of a dedicated pedestrian route at Darnley Arches. The Council may not use the monies other than for the above purpose and if the monies are not used within a period of 5 years from the date of the final payment (January 2008), the monies must be returned together with simple interest. Morrisons have subsequently agreed to extend the repayment period until 10 August 2014.
- 6.3 If it is not possible to implement the scheme or agree further extensions with Morrisons the monies held by the Council would need to be returned to Morrisons together with interest.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 Members are recommended to note the preferred option. (Option 2).

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Background papers

- O&S Committee Paper - 31 January 2013 - <http://democracy.medway.gov.uk/mgconvert2pdf.aspx?id=18893>
- Record of the meeting – Thursday 31 January 2013 - <http://democracy.medway.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=2561&T=1>
- PBA appraisal table
- Sketch of Preferred Option (dwg no. 28545/001/004D)

Option	Pedestrian Benefit		Traffic Impact	Local Access	Safety	Cost	Traffic Order Required
	Accessibility	Ease of use					
Option One Do Minimum Widen Existing Footway	No real accessibility improvement as the pinch point under the tunnel cannot be widened.	There is a minimal improvement in the ease of use as the footway can be marginally widened either side of the key pinch point.	There would be a slight impact on traffic flow due to a slightly narrower carriageway.	No Impact	There is no impact as the footway could not be widened enough to remove the guard rail and provide a wider footway.	Low - see costing - poor cost benefit ratio - considerable disruption £50,000	No
Option	Pedestrian Benefit		Traffic Impact	Local Access	Safety	Cost	Traffic Order Required
	Accessibility	Ease of use					
Option Two Do Something Switch Footway to Northern Side	Overall improvement due to wider footway provided making the area under the arch more accessible and the footway is moved to the desire line.	Overall improvement as the footway provided is sufficiently wide enough for two pedestrians to pass. If guard rail is not required then the effective width is much greater.	There would be a slight impact on traffic flow due to a slightly narrower carriageway.	No Impact	There is a reduced risk of pedestrians ignoring provided routes. If guard railing is not provided there may be conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles if over-running of the kerb occurs.	Medium - see costing - good cost benefit ratio - considerable disruption £100,000	No
Option	Pedestrian Benefit		Traffic Impact	Local Access	Safety	Cost	Traffic Order Required
	Accessibility	Ease of use					
Option Three Do Maximum Remove roundabout to make A228 'Free Flow' with Northcote Rd as One Way	There is an overall improvement of the public realm that is complimented by a new north south connection. However the southern footway cannot be widened at the actual pinch point.	There is an overall improvement as there is no longer a need for pedestrians to walk in the road on the northern side of the arch.	There would be a major impact due to the crossing causing queuing and delays.	Major impact from banned right turn into Northcote Road. Potential to eliminate rat running that occurs through the residential area.	There is an improvement in safety as pedestrians have a controlled crossing to get them from north to south.	Medium- see costing - poor cost benefit ratio - considerable disruption £100,000	Yes

