

SUBJECT:	MONMOUTH ACTIVE TRAVEL BRIDGE –WeITAG Stage 2
MEETING:	SINGLE CABINET MEMBER (Cllr BRYAN JONES)
DATE:	December 12th 2018
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	Dixon with Osbaston, Drybridge, Town, Wyesham

1. PURPOSE:

This report seeks to advise the Cabinet of the results of work undertaken to develop Monmouth Integrated Network Map (INMs) Route MCC-INM-M4 to Welsh Transport Appraisal Strategic Outline Case (also known as WeITAG stage 1) level and seek approval for the further steps proposed.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

That officers are asked to commission and report an Outline Business Case (WeITAG stage 2) as set out in the Welsh Government's Welsh Transport Appraisal Guidance, report back to council once this is completed, and to apply for WG funding to develop a Full Business Case (WeITAG stage 3).

3. KEY ISSUES:

During the assessment of potential routes for inclusion in Monmouthshire's Integrated Network Maps (that is, the proposed networks of key walking & cycling routes), it became clear that route MCC-INM-M4 (which is the Wye bridge and routes leading to it) scored very badly against the criteria for acceptable routes set out by the Welsh Government's Active Travel Design Guidance. During the public consultation, substantial feedback was received highlighting that the route is one of the key issues for pedestrians and cyclists in Monmouth. The route was thus put into the highest priority category for improvements within the MCC INM. (The INM was agreed by full council in February 2018, and approved by WG in April.)

In 2017, Monmouth Town Council's Active Travel Group also set up a 'Bridge Group' sub-group to drive the process to develop and deliver an improvement for this route. As such a project would inevitably require WG funding for development and delivery, the group, with support of MCC officers, developed a Strategic Outline Case for the project in accordance with WG's Welsh Transport Appraisal Guidance. This includes

- preparation of a clear evidence based description of the issue that needs addressing and the problems that are manifesting now or will do so in the future if no action is taken
- an analysis of the factors that are contributing to the problem, including looking at the root cause, supported by evidence and presenting the mechanism by which the factors identified are contributing to the issue under consideration
- exploration of links between transport and other sectors
- the objectives for any proposed solution, which should be clearly stated, and must take account of national objectives set by WG such as the objectives set under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 including the need to think long term and innovatively to deliver multiple benefits, objectives for the transport system as set out in the Wales Transport Strategy, more focussed objectives, e.g. objectives developed for the particular issue under consideration
- a long list of options that could address the problem

- recommendations on the options that should be taken forward to Stage 2 based on their ability to prevent, or solve the problem now and in the future, their ability to meet the objectives set and improve the social, cultural, environmental and economic well-being of Wales, their short and longer term impacts to deliver multiple benefits across the four aspects of well-being and maximise contribution to all seven well-being goals, their deliverability; and their robustness to uncertainty and potential to drive long lasting change.
- a clear explanation of the reasons for these recommendations

A draft Strategic Outline Case was completed in October 2018, and on 22 October this was examined in detail by a WeITAG stage 1 review workshop as required in the WeITAG guidance. The final report and appendices are provided as appendix 1 and 2.

Three options have been shortlisted at the end of stage 1:

- Option II-I Add a cantilever footway and cycleway upstream
- Option III-I New crossing adjacent to existing Wye bridge (upstream)
- Option III-III New crossing upstream of the existing bridge near Haberdashers Boat Club

Consultants have now been engaged to undertake an Outline Business Case (WeITAG stage 2 study), which will include outline / preliminary design and feasibility work (including relevant geotechnical, structures, environmental and ecological and costings work), (further) development of the strategic, transport, financial, commercial and management case as set out in the WeITAG guidance, and a public consultation.

At the end of stage 2 a preferred option must be selected and the council must decide whether it wishes to continue with the detailed design and delivery of the project. It is anticipated that stage 2 will be completed around the end of the financial year.

4. REASONS:

To allow work to continue in dealing with a key walking & cycling issue identified in the council's Integrated Network Maps.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

There are no direct resource implications arising from this report, as WeITAG stage 1 was developed by Monmouth Active Travel Group bridge group volunteers with the help of MCC officers and WeITAG stage 2 work will be funded by external (WG) grant that must be used for development of Active Travel Projects (the WeITAG stage 2 work is estimated to cost £80,000 funded from the Active Travel Grant – 2018/19).

6. WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS IMPLICATIONS (INCORPORATING EQUALITIES, SUSTAINABILITY, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

The WeITAG stage 1 report contains an assessment of the project against Wellbeing of future generations' objectives

7. CONSULTEES:

The project was identified and prioritised during the development of the MCC INM, which included a public consultation and was formally approved by the council in February 2018. The development of the study was undertaken in conjunction with Monmouth Town Council's Active Travel Group. The WeITAG review workshop was attended by officers from MCC, Gloucestershire CC, Forest of Dean DC, Sustrans, Welsh Government. Central Monmouthshire Area Committee supported the report – 21/11/2018

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

WelTAG stage 1 report (appendix 1 and 2)

9. AUTHOR:

Christian Schmidt

10. CONTACT DETAILS:

Tel: 07471 479238

E-mail: christianschmidt@monmouthshire.gov.uk