

SUBJECT: LLANFOIST TO ABERGAVENNY ACTIVE TRAVEL BRIDGE – UPDATE AND CONTRACT PROGRESSION

MEETING: CHIEF OFFICER DECISION

DATE: 27th MAY 2026

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: LLANFOIST, ABERGAVENNY

1. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to enter into a contractual arrangement with Balfour Beatty to undertake pre-construction enabling works and purchase the steel required to construct Llanfoist Bridge.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Chief Officer Infrastructure:

- Agrees to enter into a contract with Balfour Beatty to undertake the enabling works for the Llanfoist Active Travel Bridge
- Agrees to the procurement of mild and stainless steel required for the construction of Llanfoist Bridge.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1. The SCAPE contract, explained below, has been prepared for the construction cost of the Llanfoist to Abergavenny Active Travel Bridge. This bridge is a critically needed link from Llanfoist to Abergavenny, where lack of existing provision is identified as an 'active travel severance point'. This scheme has been a longstanding, central priority for the development of Monmouthshire County Council's Active Travel network.

People living in the Llanfoist, (and further west) have to cross the Usk to reach the secondary school, town shops and services, railway and bus station, library/hub, leisure centre, etc. in Abergavenny, and the nearest connection, the Usk Bridge, restricts travel and transport options.

To facilitate the use of active and sustainable modes for short local journeys, MCC has been successful in securing grant funding for the planning, design and delivery of a walking and cycling bridge alongside the Usk Bridge.

This scheme is in the MCC Community and Corporate Plan, the Local Transport Strategy and the Welsh Government's Active Travel Network Map. Planning permission for the bridge was granted in 2018 as DM/2018/00408.

Aims of the Llanfoist to Abergavenny Active Travel Bridge scheme:

- Increase active travel journeys in Abergavenny
- Improve connectivity and accessibility for active travel trips in and between Llanfoist and Abergavenny
- Improve actual and perceived levels of personal safety and security when walking and cycling
- Promotion of sustainable travel as attractive and safe in Abergavenny and Llanfoist.

Further information on the scheme is provided in the scheme pre-construction website <https://www.monlife.co.uk/abergavenny-active-travel-scheme-bridge-connection-to-llanfoist/>.

- 3.2 The 2-stage construction tender for the bridge has been awarded under the SCAPE framework with Balfour Beatty undertaking a large amount of Early contractor Involvement, mitigating the project risks and onward maintenance liability of the structure. This includes the Non-Material Amendment of the design from a Wooden Glulam structure to a traditional steel build. The output program estimated costs and supply chain has allowed for successful grant funding bids to be prepared and submitted.
- 3.3 £10.4m construction funding has been secured through Welsh Government's Active Travel Fund based on the initial SCAPE/Balfour Beatty contract estimates, project management costs and ancillary works (Property Flood Resilience). The Stage 1 contract, allowing for finalisation of design and Early Contractor Involvement was entered into in April 2025 and completed in May 2026.
- 3.4 A finalised contract price has now been agreed amounting to £8.351m and an officer report seeking approval to enter into the second stage of the contract will be considered by Cabinet on the 10th of June.
- 3.5 The construction of the project is scheduled to begin in July 2026, subject to authorisation to continue from Cabinet and completion of the structure is expected in September 2027. There are however risks associated with the programme due to constrained river working periods. To enable construction works to commence in the river on the 1st of July, the contractors will need to undertake enabling works which includes the procurement of a ground works contractor, installation of a site compound and associated footpath diversions and fencing and the procurement of equipment. Any delays in commencing

works in the river could result in the project being delayed into a further year, which will result in increased costs.

- 3.6 The current geo-political situation has resulted in volatility with the price of commodities such as steel which has seen an increase of 4.6% over the last year. To mitigate any impacts of further price rises, it is proposed that the order for the steel is placed as soon as possible to secure the steel and fix the project cost.
- 3.7 To mitigate the risks associated with a delay in river working and offset additional costs from increasing steel prices, it is proposed that the Chief Officer, Infrastructure uses their delegated decision powers to agree to entering into an interim contract with Balfour Beatty to undertake the enabling works and purchase the steel. Should Cabinet not agree to entering into a stage 2 contract, the Council will be liable for the costs incurred in mobilising the enabling works.

4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

The Llanfoist Active Travel Bridge has been progressed because of its beneficial outcome for people and the area. Negative impacts have been assessed and mitigated where possible. An Integrated Impact Assessment for the bridge is attached (Appendix 4) with a summary below:

Access

This bridge will provide the option of sustainable and affordable travel between Llanfoist and Abergavenny, on a route that currently is exclusive to many.

Ecology

Castle Meadows, where the bridge will land on the Abergavenny side, is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the River Usk is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The plan includes measures to mitigate negative impacts and include net-benefit.

Flood and water management

Castle Meadows are historic water-meadows which flood seasonally, and this has been taken into account in the bridge design and construction programme. To mitigate flooding that already happens and minimise the effect of the bridge on local flooding, the scheme includes a suite of Property Flood Resilience measures offered to identified local properties.

Local amenity

Castle Meadows is a much-loved recreation area crossed by paths and the National Cycle Network. We have worked with stakeholders to ensure existing users' needs are met and that concerns are addressed. The scheme will include works to support the Castle Meadows Management Plan.

Visual impact and Heritage

The active travel bridge will be downriver of the listed road bridge, the Usk Bridge. The new bridge has been designed to fit with the historical landscape and reduce impact on the Usk Bridge by providing a low-impact alternative to driving in the local network.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL.

The options are limited to either not to enter into an interim contract and await the decision of Cabinet or to approve the interim contract and the purchase of the steel.

- Approval of the interim contract would allow enabling works to begin, securing material prices in a fluctuating market and mitigating further delays to the completion of the scheme.
- If the approval is not granted, the scheme would be in abeyance until Cabinet consider the report on the 10th June and the call in period has expired. This would result in the project progressing into a third year due to the constrained time periods for river working. We could approach NRW for an extension to the river working window, but there is no guarantee that this would be forthcoming.

6. REASONS:

The council has a duty under the Active Travel Act to enable active and multi-modal sustainable travel. We can, through this scheme, support access, financial, social and health equality for individuals and the wider community and environment. The consequences of not building the bridge in a timely manner, or at all, are laid out below in '8. Resource Implications'.

MCC has prepared this scheme and readied for construction to fix a serious problem on the walking and cycling network, to allow people to make healthy, sustainable and affordable travel choices. The existing infrastructure is inaccessible to many, as well as unattractive, inconvenient, and considered unsafe. Travelling between Abergavenny and Llanfoist is essential to many, and people should have the option to make this short trip without a vehicle and feeling they have the support to do it.

Granting approval to enter into an interim contract will mitigate both programme delay and cost, however it is accepted that this will in itself give rise to financial risk should Cabinet not agree to enter into the construction contract.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

Financial

MCC has secured £10.4m in grant funding for the construction of the bridge, already having used over £1.5m in previous grant and section 106 funds to bring the scheme to construction.

Should it be agreed to enter into an interim contract for enabling works the Council will be committing to expenditure in the region of £712,000. If Cabinet consent is not forthcoming on the 10th June, all works would cease and contracts terminated, however there would be residual liability for the costs already incurred and any claims for compensation arising from early contract termination.

Balfour Beatty has secured a quotation for the required steel amounting to £311,000 including storage costs.

8. CONSULTTEES:

MCC Cabinet

Sara Burch, Cabinet Member – Rural Affairs, Housing and Tourism
Ben Callard Cabinet Member - Resources

MCC Officers

Debra Hill-Howells – Chief Officer, Infrastructure
Nicholas Tulp – Head of Transport
Richard Clements - Solicitor

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Integrated Impact Assessment - Supplied

Monmouthshire County Council - Local Transport strategy [Microsoft Word - Local Transport Strategy 24-25 Final.docx](#)

ATF 2024/2025 Awards - [Local authority transport grants awarded 2024 to 2025 | GOV.WALES](#)

ATF 2025/2026 Awards - [Local authority transport grants awarded 2025 to 2026 | GOV.WALES](#)

Active Travel Guidance - <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2022-01/active-travel-act-guidance.pdf>

MCC Community and Corporate Plan - [MMCCCommCorpPlan_Final_EN.pdf](#)

10. AUTHOR:

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