

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

MEETING: CABINET

DATE: 10th JUNE 2026

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: LLANFOIST, ABERGAVENNY

1. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to update Cabinet on the progress of the Llanfoist to Abergavenny Active Travel Bridge and to seek approval to sign the formal construction contract between Balfour Beatty and Monmouthshire County Council now final pricing has been agreed.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Cabinet:

- Approves the full Stage 2 (construction) schedule of costs under SCAPE contract and agrees for officers to exchange the contract.

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 We are pleased to now have finalised the contract price for the bridge construction, at a price of £8.351m, and are seeking authority to sign the Deed of Variation for the full contract, and to progress into the second stage of the contract. The request is for authorisation to sign the Deed of Variation to enable the Council to proceed with construction of the Llanfoist to Abergavenny Active Travel Bridge and to delegate authority to exchange and complete to the Chief Officer for Infrastructure in liaison with the Cabinet Member for Active Travel.
- 3.5 Construction is scheduled to begin in June 2026, subject to authorisation to continue from Cabinet and completion of the structure is expected in September 2027. The final program is subject to the river working windows and any potential sever weather impacts, with the risk of a 3rd year of river working being mitigated as far as possible with enabling work under the Stage 1 contract.

- 3.6 A delegated decision by the Chief Officer – Infrastructure has been made to initiate further preliminary works in readiness for the Stage 2 contract to be entered. This includes enabling works and steel procurement to de-risk the program, as per point 3.5.
- 3.7 Additional funding for the project for 26/27 has been secured through the Regional Transport Fund, to the sum of £3.6m, which will allow MCC to construct improved links to the bridge on both the Llanfoist and Abergavenny banks, once the risk of the 3rd year construction has been mitigated with substantial in river construction this year.

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

The scheme 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 approve the SCAPE contract, to negotiate a new contract/find a new contractor or to end the scheme.

- Approval of the contract would allow construction to begin, securing material prices in a fluctuating market and mitigating further delays to the completion of the scheme.
- Negotiation of a new contract or finding a new contractor would create additional cost and delay, with loss of the funds invested in ECI, third-party ECI and preparing the contract and programme, making likely significant delay or cancellation due to funding, planning permission and ecological constraints.
- Finally, ending the scheme would have financial and reputational risk, and leave a recognised issue unaddressed.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

The bridge will be installed in phases, to fit in-river working within strict windows permitted within the Usk River SAC. The phasing plan will be publicised online and at the site, and the scheme's NEC4 Project Manager will keep in close contact with MCC on the progress of construction.

The contract lays out a programme for this work, which can be followed to assess progress following this decision. Cabinet's permission to proceed will allow the construction of the bridge to proceed. Balfour Beatty will immediately notify suppliers, mobilise their workforce, purchase materials and commence the piling within the short time permitted within ecological constraints.

7. 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.

8. 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. The risk created by not completing the contract are various and have wider impacts. Every effort has been made to identify and mitigate programme risks - however, extreme weather may impact the

programme, previously discussed as the 'third year risk'. The costs associated with this being covered by a contingency fund previously agreed by MCC and now mitigated through further grant funding.

Staffing

The Active travel team and wider support from the infrastructure directorate are programmed to deliver the scheme over the next 2 years, with support from an external NEC Project Manager to aid the construction. Approval to proceed will have no impacts on wider project delivery.

Reputational

This scheme is high-profile and there is huge reputational risk to delay/loss of this as a longstanding commitment of the Council which has been presented to the public as MCC's priority. The Council's reputation with funding bodies would also be at risk.

Public health and wellbeing

The active travel bridge is designed to fix a serious problem on the walking and cycling network, to allow people to make healthy, sustainable and affordable travel choices. This impacts community connectedness and resilience, reducing inequality by improving peoples' access to education, work, and services, with the choice to travel independently and reduce personal travel choices' impact on others through air quality, quality of experience and network pressure. Llanfoist residents need access to Abergavenny for essential services such as secondary education. The knock-on cost of limited travel options to get to essential trip attractors, as existing infrastructure and MCC's population ages, range from impact on personal development and ability to play a positive part in the local economy, to deepening existing inequality.

9. CONSULTTEES:

MCC Cabinet

Sara Burch, Cabinet Member – Rural Affairs, Housing and Tourism

MCC Officers

Joanne Chase – Head of Legal

Debra Hill-Howells – Chief Officer, Infrastructure

Nicholas Tulp – Head of Transport

10. 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](#)

11. AUTHOR:

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