

Cabinet – 18 March 2009

Darlaston Strategic Development Area - Bentley Road South Canal Bridge

Portfolio: Councillor A.Andrew, Deputy Leader and Regeneration
Councillor A. Harris, Transport

Service: Regeneration & Performance – Transportation
Neighbourhood – Engineering & Transportation

Wards: Bentley & Darlaston North, Pleck

Key decisions: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1. Summary of report

- 1.1 In conjunction with Walsall Regeneration Company (WRC), the Council is driving forward the redevelopment of the Darlaston Strategic Development Area (DSDA). The key to unlocking the development potential is to improve access to, from and within the area by upgrading highways and constructing new canal and rail structures.
- 1.2 The Council has identified funds from the integrated transport block of the Local Transport Plan (LTP) to enable sections of the project to be constructed earlier to speed up the overall delivery of the scheme. The first of these sections is Bentley Road South Canal Bridge a location plan of which is included as Appendix A to this report.
- 1.3 This report seeks Cabinet authority to accept the recommendations of the tender appraisal report and authorise the appointment of Messrs Barhale to undertake the reconstruction of this bridge.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To authorise the acceptance of the arithmetically corrected tender received from Messrs Barhale in the sum of **£743,679.58** and appoint them to undertake the reconstruction of Bentley Road South Canal Bridge.
- 2.2 To approve an allocation of £1.2m be set aside to ensure that the Council can deliver the bridge strengthening works. This allocation is made up of £0.8m from the integrated transport block of the LTP and £0.4m from European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) resources allocated to the West Midlands Region. This allocation covers the total anticipated costs of construction, Statutory Undertakers diversion costs, British Waterway's costs, design and site supervision fees, and a contingency sum for any unexpected ground conditions.

3. Background information

- 3.1 The Darlaston SDA Access Project was developed in response to poor traffic access to and through the Darlaston Green area, especially for heavy goods vehicles (HGVs). Bentley Road South is classified as a local distributor road and close to it's junction with Heath Road there is a canal bridge which is owned and maintained by British Waterways Board (BWB). Its carrying capacity was assessed in 1994 as 17 tonnes gross. Following discussions with BWB they agreed to monitor the bridge for a limited period, pending the outcome of bids by the Council to secure funding for strengthening or reconstruction. In May 2000 such funding had not been allocated and therefore BWB requested that a 17 tonne weight restriction be imposed. The necessary weight restriction order was confirmed in December 2000 following which the appropriate signs were erected.
- 3.2 Approximately 300m north of the canal bridge there is a Railway Bridge which is owned and maintained by Network Rail (formerly Railtrack). It is a two span bridge and following an assessment in 1999 the capacity of the smaller redundant span was also rated at 17tonnes gross. Railtrack wanted to impose a weight restriction but such action would have severely affected, perhaps even have closed down, the two businesses which are located between the Canal and Railway bridges. Following discussions with Railtrack, the Council funded the temporary propping of the redundant span in August 2001 for an agreed period of 4 years. That period has now expired but Network Rail have agreed to extend it until the Darlaston SDA project can be implemented. The reconstruction of the canal bridge would, if necessary, allow this propping to be removed and a 17 tonne weight restriction be implemented without the above mentioned threat to the viability of the businesses materialising (see paragraph 8.1).
- 3.3 Despite being identified as Priorities 3 & 4 in the West Midlands Local Transport Plan 2000, insufficient funding has been allocated to allow any work to be undertaken on either of these bridges up until now.
- 3.4 A budget has now been made available from within the integrated transport block of the Transportation Capital Programme to fund the construction works of the canal bridge. It is anticipated that, subject to Cabinet authorising the appointment of Barhale, work will commence on site in April 2009 with completion approximately 9 to 10 months later.

4. Resource considerations

4.1 Financial:

- 4.1.1 Funding for the highways project is through the West Midlands Local Transport Plan. The DSDA scheme received provisional approval by the Department for Transport (DfT) in December 2003 to the value of £14.5m. The Council is in the final stages of making a resubmission of the Business Case to the DfT. The canal bridge stage of the scheme will be funded from the 2008/09 integrated transport block allocation of the LTP in the sum of £0.8m which will represent the 'local contribution' to the scheme from mainstream resources and is part of a global CFR for the LTP. This will be supplemented by £0.4m of ERDF grant.

- 4.1.2 The West Midlands has assessed all major schemes as part of the Regional Funding Allocations (RFA) process and DSDA was within the top six as recommended to DfT in January 2006. The RFA is currently being reviewed with regional submissions on the priorities for 2009/10 to 2018/19 required by February 2009.
- 4.1.3 The design of the new canal bridge was carried out with the assistance of consultants Mouchel and completed in early 2007.
- 4.1.4 At its meeting on 19 November 2008 Cabinet approved measures to progress the implementation of the DSDA scheme, including both the bridges in Bentley Road South. A procurement process following both national and Council procedures was then instigated. Tenders were sought and have been received from six contractors selected from the appropriate section of the Council's Unified Standing List of contractors and consultants. In choosing from this list, and also using the Manual of Contract Documents for Highway Works, the quality element had already been addressed before tenders were invited. The six contractors, in alphabetical order, were Adroit Construction, Barhale Plc, Currall Lewis & Martin, Forkers, McPhillips and Wrekin Construction.
- 4.1.5 Following receipt of these tenders an appraisal based on cost alone was undertaken by Mouchel and the tenders received and arithmetical corrections are listed below:

Tenders Prices Received in Numerical Order	Arithmetically corrected Tenders
£744,766.75	£743,679.58
£856,888.00	£856,337.69
£896,000.00	£895,900.09
£949,491.00	£949,491.73
£968,249.64	£968,278.58
£1,264,019.47	N/A

The conclusion of the appraisal was that Mouchel have recommended that the most economically acceptable tender submitted by Messrs Barhale is accepted. Messrs Barhale have confirmed their acceptance of the corrected tender sum.

- 4.1.6 The total cost of the scheme was estimated at £1.2 m. The table below indicates that the anticipated scheme costs are within budget

Main Contract	£ 743,680
British Telecom	£ 107,612
South Staffs Water	£ 20,541
National Grid Gas	£ 22,620
EON	£ 68,677
British Waterways costs incl. land and Legal fees	£ 50,000

Consultants Fees	£ 30,000
Site Supervision	£ 63,000
Total	<u>£1,106,130</u>

4.2 **Legal:**

- 4.2.1 The Council as Highway Authority has a duty to protect the safety of users of its bridges. The Contract between the Council and Barhale will be signed and sealed.

4.3 **Staffing:**

- 4.3.1 The Council will need to commit staff resources to this project but this will all be funded from the allocated budget from within the Transportation Capital Programme.

5. **Citizen impact**

The construction of a new road network within the DSDA will benefit all sections of the community by providing better links between major distributor roads. The redevelopment of derelict land in the DSDA is projected to provide new jobs, many of which will directly benefit the local community. Strengthening of this bridge will in particular benefit existing industry and commerce especially the businesses in Bentley Road South and also assist with commercial vehicle movements in the area generally.

6. **Community safety**

The construction of the new canal bridge will provide safe vehicular access to key businesses within the Darlaston area and improve the pedestrian footway along the route.

7. **Environmental impact**

The area is adjacent to the busy M6 and in an area where there is significant ground contamination. The impact of the DSDA highway proposals will be subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment, to be undertaken once the DfT have reconfirmed programme entry. The reconstruction of this bridge will enable the existing 17 tonne weight restriction to be removed which will in turn restore the balance of Heavy Goods Vehicle movements within the Darlaston area.

8. **Performance and risk management issues**

8.1 **Risk**

The approval sought in this report will enable officers to progress the bridgeworks which are an integral element of the project programme and will ultimately assist in obtaining final approval to secure funding for DSDA in accordance with the RFA process. For the major project as a whole, the key risks have been identified and actions taken to mitigate wherever practicable as follows:

- Financial – The DfT has already given provisional approval for the scheme and the project was identified within the top six for the West Midlands under the existing RFA.
- Design – the overall scheme includes an aqueduct and two bridges. Liaison with Network Rail and British Waterways is a prerequisite to ensure delivery. Network Rail have agreed to remove the existing rail structure in Bentley Road South and construct a new bridge in line with the scheme programme. Therefore the significant risks associated with the bridge construction and rail possessions have been transferred to them which will in turn reduce the potential risk of delay to the construction programme. A further report will be submitted to Cabinet seeking authority to enter into an Agreement with Network Rail once the costs and likely timescales have been established.

9. Equality implications

The reconstruction of Bentley Road South Canal Bridge will support the proposed improved highway network, and will provide improved transport links into the regenerated area. The proposed highway improvements will greatly improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists. Footway improvements will cater for use by disabled people. In line with normal practice the relevant clauses and questionnaire in respect of equalities were included with in the Contract documentation.

10. Consultation

During the development of the Darlaston SDA project there has been consultation with key stakeholders, residents and businesses that may be partially or significantly affected by the proposals. This has been undertaken in conjunction with the WRC. Consultation has been extended and developed as an integral part of the scheme implementation process to include British Waterways and the affected local businesses / land owners.

Background papers

Tender appraisal report prepared by consultants Mouchel dated February 2009

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9 March 2009



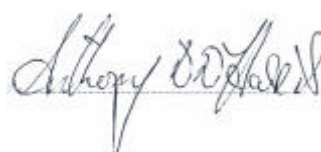
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9 March 2009



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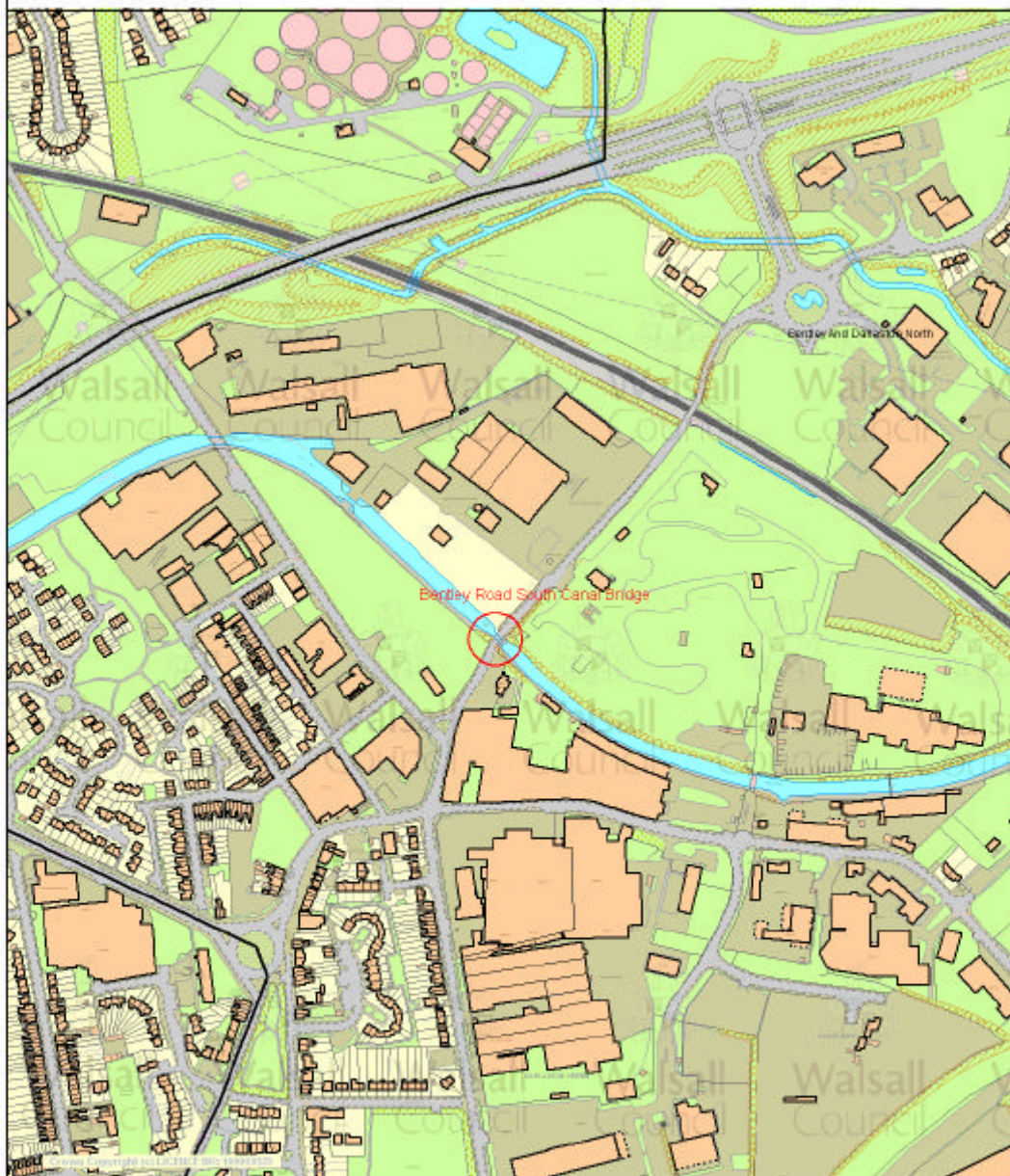
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Bentley Road South Canal Bridge



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