

To: Cabinet
Date: 16 November 2022
Report of: Executive Director (Development)
Title of Report: Award of a Works Contract for the Refurbishment of the Gasworks Pipe Bridge

Summary and recommendations	
Purpose of report:	To seek Cabinet approval for a works contract to refurbish/repair the Gasworks Pipe Bridge situated between Friars Wharf and Baltic Wharf; authority for the Executive Director (Development) to award a contract; and approval of the spend of identified funds for the funding of the contract.
Key decision:	Yes
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Ed Turner, Deputy Leader (Statutory) Finance and Asset Management
Corporate Priority:	Vibrant Sustainable Economy
Policy Framework:	Council Strategy 2020-24

Recommendations: That Cabinet resolves to:	
1.	Grant project approval to award a contract for the refurbishment/repair of the Gasworks Pipe Bridge;
2.	Recommend to Council the approval of a virement of £1.82 million from the existing stock condition budget to fund the works to the Gasworks Pipe bridge, including reimbursement of c£185k feasibility cost incurred to date; and
3.	Delegate authority to the Executive Director (Development), in consultation with the Deputy Leader (Statutory) - Finance and Asset Management and the Head of Financial Services/Section 151 Officer, to award the contract for refurbishment/repair of the Gasworks Pipe Bridge to a successful tenderer following the completion of the competitive and compliant tender process described in this report.

Appendices	
Appendix 1	Risk Register

Introduction and background

1. The Gasworks Pipe Bridge carries a public right of way, a national cycle route and forms a crucial link for communities north and south of the river. Unfortunately, it had to be closed suddenly, causing significant inconvenience, and Oxford City Council has worked hard to get the bridge reopened as soon as possible. The bridge is particularly important for families with young children that live north of the river and need to travel to attend school at St Ebbe's to the south of the river. To enable the reopening of this important crossing point, urgent repairs works will need to be undertaken.
2. A structural assessment on the Gasworks Pipe Bridge identified sections of the bridge as being unsafe through aging or non-compliance to current standards. The most critical aspect highlighted in the assessment related to the truss, including its connections, indicating it has inadequate capacity to carry crowd loading and is at risk of sudden collapse without warning. This resulted in the bridge being closed with immediate effect by both Oxford City Council (the "Council") and Oxfordshire County Council ("County"), with County making the application for the "stopping-up order" under the Highways Act 1980 in respect of the public footpath and cycle-way which runs across it, and the Council physically closing the bridge and said footpath/cycle-way pursuant to said "stopping-up" order when it was granted. County made this application because the public footpath/cycle-way falls within their jurisdiction as local highways authority.
3. To minimise disruption to travel, a diversion route was set up across the Gasworks Railway Bridge. The Council and Oxford Direct Services Limited ("ODS") worked together to ensure the alternative route was safe and clear. In order to enable this, signage was installed and a mirror was installed (in order to maximise visibility through the tunnel under the Gasworks Railway Bridge) and "way-finder" uprighters were installed throughout the route. ODS inspect the route weekly to ensure this signage, mirror and lights are in good condition, and they report any issues that arise.
4. Stantec Inc. ("Stantec") was appointed as the Council's consultant to undertake an options appraisal on the Gasworks Pipe Bridge. Based on the results of the options appraisal, it was decided that the appropriate option was to refurbish/repair the bridge rather than replace it.
5. An Approval in Principle ("AIP") was produced by Stantec on behalf of the Council detailing the design criteria for the permanent works associated with the repair and strengthening of the main span of the existing bridge. The AIP was approved by the Technical Approval Authority ("TAA") at County's offices in August 2022. Please note that County is the TAA in this matter owing to the fact that the Council does not have the technical expertise in-house to be so whereas County does,

Stantec has provided the detailed designs for the repair / refurbishment works of the Gasworks Pipe Bridge (the "Works") and continues to work through the final detailed technical designs, which will require final approval from the TAA.

6. Following the Council’s procurement policy, the tender for contractors is being followed. Accordingly, the Council will, by the time this report is considered at Cabinet, have sent out to tender to procure a contractor to undertake the Works.

Programme of works

7. The table below shows programme milestones:

Gasworks Pipe Bridge Timeline	Start	Duration	Finish
Cabinet	16/11/22	1 day	16/11/2022
Contractor appointment	23/01/23	1 Day	23/01/23
Submission of Flood Risk Activity Permit (FRAP)	06/02/23	1 Day	06/02/23
Temporary Works Design	24/01/23	10 weeks	03/04/23
Mobilisation	21/03/23	4 weeks	19/04/23
Partial refurbishment of structure (main span and deck replacement)	20/04/23	12 weeks	14/07/23
Footbridge open to public	14/07/23	1 Day	14/07/23
Full refurbishment of structure (repairs to brick abutments, replacement of bearings, installation of drainage and movement joints, other minor works)	17/07/23	12 weeks	09/10/23

Statutory Authorities

8. The Council and Stantec have liaised with the following relevant statutory authorities:
- (a) The Environment Agency;
 - (b) Oxfordshire County Council; and
 - (c) Oxford City Council Planning Authority

To ensure approvals and licences have been considered, and the following authorities have confirmed the requisite approval to the Works:

- (d) Oxfordshire County Council (i.e. such approval has been effectively given by the procurement of the stopping-up order); and
 - (e) Oxford City Council Planning Authority (i.e. officers have approached Oxford City Council Planning Authority, and they have confirmed that planning approval is not required for the Works).
9. The Council and Stantec have maintained regular communication with the TAA in order to ensure a smooth delivery of the project.
10. Stantec engaged with the Environment Agency (“EA”) early in the project and officers from the Council and Stantec continue to liaise with the EA regarding licences and technical issues. Note that the EA will be required to provide a Flood Risk Activity Permit (“FRAP”) during or before the commencement of the Works, but the FRAP has not yet been issued.

Stakeholder engagement and Comms

11. Officers have provided updates to key stakeholders on the progress of the refurbishment of the Gasworks Pipe Bridge through regular bulletins and member briefings. Updates to the website and press releases have also been included to inform the general public on progress.

Now the project is moving forward quickly, communications will be provided on a more regular monthly basis.

12. Tender Process

The tender process will follow the Council’s normal procurement process (the “Strategy”) and has benefitted so far from the support of the Council’s procurement team who are satisfied with the proposed tender. The evaluation criteria will be set at 40% price and 60% quality to evaluate the tender responses.

The quality of each of the potential contractors’ respective proposals will be assessed on the extent to which the tenderer will meet the industry standard and perform their obligations under the contract. The Council’s standard 0-5 scoring mechanism will be used when making such assessment.

The estimated costs of the Works is £1.2m. The Public Contract Regulations 2015 works threshold is £5.3 million.

The Works are specialised. To ensure we reach the appropriate contactors therefore, we will conduct an open tender process using the South East Business portal. This was a decision by officers based on advice from the Council’s procurement team and Stantec.

We will use the NEC Option A: Priced contract with activity schedule.

13. Financial implications

The business plan includes a budgetary provision of £1.82 million, which includes contractor costs, internal officer costs and consultancy fees. The estimated contract value for the contractor is circa £1.44 million, and this figure:

(a) includes a 20% contingency for unforeseen costs arising from intrusive works during construction; and

(b) is based on an 18 month contract term.

The work is being funded from the stock condition survey budget of around £3.3 million included over the next 2 years of the capital programme.

The estimate is based on the work below:

Property	Repair Works Summary	Estimated Cost
Gasworks Pipe Bridge Refurbishment	<p>The following provides a list of works to be undertaken by a contractor as part of the repair and strengthening of the Isis Gasworks Footbridge:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Undertake material testing to confirm the strength of steel and presence of lead in the protective paint system and validate the assumptions made in the assessment. 2. Remove and dispose of existing concrete deck planks and supporting steel angles (a safe system of work, which may require the use of a pontoon system, shall be used by the contractor to prevent debris falling into the river). 3. Erect temporary access scaffold and encapsulate structure. 4. Remove dilapidated paint system and corrosion through grit blasting or other means deemed appropriate. 5. Undertake an inspection, together with the Permanent Works designer, of the steel structure to determine the extent of corrosion and identify all elements to be repaired and replaced; 6. Repair and/or replace steelwork. 7. Repair or replace the existing bridge parapet. 8. Replace the existing bridge bearings. 9. Repaint the structure. 10. Install new FRP (fibre reinforced polymer) deck panels. 11. Repair brick abutments (removal of vegetation, repair cracks in the brickwork, repointing). 12. Install new lockable access doors at the ends of the structure for access to the room behind the abutments. 	£1,200,000.00
Estimated Total		£1,200,000.00 + Contingency

14. Legal Issues

This report seeks:

- (a) Cabinet approval to the Council's entry into a contract worth circa £1.44 million with a contractor selected from a pool of tenderers. By the time this report is considered at Cabinet the Strategy will have been implemented, but the assessment to decide to whom from the pool of tenderers the contract should be awarded will not be carried out in order until Cabinet grants the approvals sought by this report; and
- (b) Cabinet delegation of authority to the Executive Director for Development, in consultation with the Deputy Leader (Statutory) - Finance and Asset Management and the Head of Financial Services/Section 151 Officer, to award the Gasworks Pipe Bridge contract to a successful tenderer.

There are no legal issues to consider apart from to identify ownership of the Gasworks Pipe Bridge. The Council acquired legal title to the Gasworks Pipe Bridge by virtue of purchasing the site of the former Oxford Gasworks (of which the Gasworks Pipe Bridge forms part) from the old Southern Gas Board for £11,615 on 22nd January 1970. **NB** the land of which the bridge forms part was unregistered when it was acquired by the Council and has remained so for the past 50 plus years, although it is intended that the Council will apply to HM Land Registry for its registration in due course.

15. Level of Risk

Please refer to the risk register at Appendix 1.

16. Equalities impact

There is no known equalities impact regarding the Works or proposed delegation. However, due regard is given to equalities in procurement under the Strategy, which for instance covers issues like the Oxford Living Wage and apprenticeships. Reopening of the bridge will have a beneficial impact by improving accessibility of St Ebbe's school for residents on the other side of the river, including those on low incomes.

17. Carbon and Environmental Considerations

Please note that:

- refurbishing the bridge contributes to supporting active travel in the city, and that encouraging walking and cycling in the city will help the Council to achieve its target of reaching net zero by 2030;
- measures such as encapsulating the bridge to prevent debris or other contaminants entering the river will be put in place to minimise disruption to the environment whilst the Works are being undertaken; and
- refurbishing the existing bridge uses less carbon than building a new one.

Conclusion

18. It is the opinion of the author of this report that there is enough information contained herein in order to enable the Cabinet to grant the approvals and delegation sought.

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Background Papers: None

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