

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	POLICY COMMITTEE		
DATE:	25 SEPTEMBER 2017	AGENDA ITEM:	13
TITLE:	JOINT BERKSHIRE LOCAL HIGHWAY AUTHORITY BRIDGE MAINTENANCE CHALLENGE FUND BID 2017		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR T PAGE	PORTFOLIO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT PLANNING & TRANSPORT
SERVICE:	TRANSPORTATION & STREETCARE	WARDS:	BOROUGH WIDE
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out the proposed Joint Berkshire Local Authority Bridge Maintenance Challenge Fund Bid and the financial advantages and implications for Reading.
- 1.2 Appendix 1 - Berkshire Authorities scheme list.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That Policy Committee notes and approves the Joint Berkshire Local Authority Bridge Maintenance Challenge Fund Bid 2017.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Local Highways Maintenance Challenge Fund was announced in the 2014 Autumn Statement. The fund aims to provide a mechanism to fund major maintenance schemes, which could ordinarily not be funded using Local Highway Authorities' funding allocations. Funding is available for schemes in England (outside London), and applications are welcomed from Local Highway Authorities (LHA) and other bodies such as National Parks, Development Corporations, Local Enterprise Partnerships or Urban Regeneration Companies (although these must secure the support of the LHA).
- 3.2 LHA's can submit two bids, one for a small scheme (between £5m and £20m) and one for a large scheme (£>20m). LHA's need to contribute at least 10% of the scheme costs (taken to include design, procurement and construction costs), but it should be noted that the assessment criteria favoured LHA's

which contributed more. Since the funding is 100% capital, LHA's must confirm funds will be spent as such.

- 3.3 In the first year of bid submissions (2015/16), 147 bids were received of which 31 were successful. The assessment criteria prioritised value for money and the strategic case for schemes, followed by project delivery timescales and local contribution.
- 3.4 The results of the 2nd round of bid submissions (tranche 2a) were announced on 1st August 2017. On this occasion 19 bids were successful. The assessment criteria were the same as for tranche 1.
- 3.5 Collaborative working with other Berkshire Local Authorities on highway structures works was proposed in June 2016. This followed on from a successful Challenge Fund bid by Reading, Slough and Wokingham Councils in 2014/15 to upgrade street lighting with energy saving LED units. It was felt that a joint highway structures bid would be more likely to win because of its scale and potential efficiencies in procurement and other areas.

4. PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The six Local Highway Authorities (LHA's) in Berkshire met to discuss Asset Management challenges, priorities and share best practice. Attendees expressed a desire to submit a Joint Berkshire Challenge Fund Bid for highway structures.
- 4.2 Initial priorities were stated at the first meeting in September 2016 and further refined at subsequent meetings during November 2016, (refer to item 5).
- 4.3 The priority list provides a starting point for a Joint Berkshire Challenge Fund Bid submission. The structures list is likely to evolve as funding requirements are further explored and data is examined to determine those structures which have a good case for funding.
- 4.4 Reading has an ageing bridge stock and this joint bid will provide much needed capital to tackle some of the £ 21M backlog we have with our highway structures.
- 4.5 It was agreed by the Berkshire LHA's that they would target a 25% contribution towards each scheme to provide the best chance of securing DfT funding based on previous awards.
- 4.6 As of writing application documents for the Tranche 2(b) Challenge Fund (2018/19 to 2020/21) have not yet been released but were expected to be required in September. The exact nature of the assessment questions is unknown, although it is likely that they will follow a similar format to last year's questionnaire for Tranche 2a funding, which followed HM's Treasury Five Case model.

- 4.7 Local Highways Authorities would be asked to complete an initial application (less resource-intensive) and only those whose application was successful would then proceed to the next stage, completing a full application.
- 4.8 In preparing for the 2017 round of submissions, there is merit in producing some of the preparatory work before the bid requirements are fully defined.
- 4.9 It should be noted that the Joint Berkshire Bridge Maintenance Bid is a single application made up of various schemes submitted by each of the Berkshire LA's.
- 4.10 All parts of the application need to meet the economic case set out by the DfT, which relies on structures supporting the strategic transport routes in order for the whole bid to be successful.
- 4.11 Any award made by the DfT will be for the full Joint Berkshire Bridge Maintenance Bid package contained within the joint application. It is imperative that only schemes meeting the economic case criteria are submitted to achieve a successful outcome.

5. CHALLENGE FUND BID

5.1 Bid £ 3.8M with £ 950k local contribution

Reading Borough Council structures list (see below) includes bearing replacements on 6 No. IDR bridges, 1 No. culvert strengthening scheme and 3 No. bridge strengthening schemes amounting to an estimated cost of £3.8M with a £ 950k local contribution funded by the Department for Transport (DfT) LTP Carriageway & Bridges Capital Grant Award over two financial years (2018/19 & 2019/20)

1. Chatham Street North Bridge bearing replacement (£375k)
2. Chatham Street South Bridge bearing replacement (£375k)
3. Oxford Road Bridge bearing replacement (£400k)
4. Castle Street North Bridge bearing replacement (£450k)
5. Castle Street South Bridge bearing replacement (£450k)
6. IDR-Kennet Bridge bearing replacement (£350k)
7. George Street Hills Meadow Culvert strengthening (£250)
8. High Bridge Stone Parapet Repair/Restoration (£75k)
9. Berkeley Avenue Railway Bridge Strengthening (£350k)
10. Berkeley Avenue Canal Bridge Strengthening (£375k)

- 5.2 The structures listed above are currently all on the Reading Borough Council future capital programme; however, there is insufficient funding to carry out these schemes at this time. The Council manages the risk through the cyclic inspection programme and prioritising minor remedial works when and where necessary.

- 5.3 It should be noted that the Council has other high priority structures schemes listed below in items 11 to 20 inclusive, that would not fulfil the current DfT economic case criteria and if put forward would reduce the likelihood of the Joint Berkshire Challenge Fund Bid being successful.

The cost of these schemes is estimated at £ 5.5M which would need to be entirely funded by local contributions or another source of funding would need to be found.

Additional schemes requiring future funding as follows: (note that these are less likely to pass the DfT economic case criteria funding test as they are not located on strategic routes):

- 11. Bridge Street Canal (Over Kennet) Bridge bearing replacement (£350k)
- 12. Fobney Bridge Deck Replacement (£400k)
- 13. Caversham Mill Footbridge Replacement (£200k)
- 14. Northbrook Road Subway Retaining Wall Repair (£30k)
- 15. Kings Meadow Footbridge Repairs (£20k)
- 16. Brook Street West Retaining Wall Strengthening (£450k)
- 17. Kennetside Retaining Walls Strengthening (£4M)
- 18. De Montfort Road Culvert Strengthening (£200k)
- 19. Lynmouth Road Culvert Strengthening (£200k)
- 20. Kings Meadow Road Culvert Strengthening (pending results of confined space inspection after obtaining bat licence)

- 5.4 The additional scheme structures listed in 5.3 above are all currently on the Reading Borough Council future capital programme, however, there is insufficient funding to carry out these schemes at this time. The Council manages the risk through the cyclic inspection programme and prioritising remedial works when and where necessary, while we explore other funding opportunities.

6. PROCUREMENT

- 6.1 The Berkshire Local Authorities have agreed to procure the works through the SCAPE framework which is a public sector framework designed specifically for use by local authorities.
- 6.2 Using this existing framework avoids the need to undertake a separate procurement process that would be both costly and lengthy, making it difficult to meet the tight spending timescales that are likely to be imposed by the DfT.
- 6.2 The Berkshire Local Authorities group are liaising with the SCAPE contractor (Balfour Beatty) regarding feasibility and are providing them with preliminary designs and costs estimates to enable them to carry out the feasibility study.

7. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

7.1 To contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan 2016 - 2019 priorities:

- Keeping the town clean, safe, green and active
- Remaining financially sustainable to deliver these service priorities

9. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

9.1 In addition to the Human Rights Act 1998 the Council is required to comply with the Equalities Act 2010. Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to:-

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

9.2 The Council has carried out an equality impact assessment scoping exercise on all projects, and considers that the proposals do not have a direct impact on any groups with protected characteristics.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 It is proposed that Reading Borough Council make a match-fund contribution of 25% of the Challenge Fund Bid of £3.8m; that is £950k over two financial years (2018/19 & 2019/20). A lesser sum could be put forward, but experience from previous bidding rounds suggests that 25% is the optimum matching proportion.

10.2 The £950k RBC contribution would be secured through the DfT LTP Bridges & Carriageway Capital Grant Award over the 2018/19 and 2019/20 financial years. The DfT LTP grant is an annual grant provided to Local Authorities and the grant amounts are confirmed for 18/19 and 19/20.

11. RISK ASSESSMENT

11.1 Local Highway Authorities are required to carry out their designated statutory duties, as described in the Highways Act 1980.

11.2 Reading Borough Council manages the risk of highway structures by carrying out the required cyclic inspections and load assessments reviews, as set out in the 'Code of Practice for Managing Highway Structures'.

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1 Letter of support from Public Stakeholders.

BERKSHIRE SCHEME LIST APPENDIX A

Berkshire Authorities:

1. Borough of Wokingham

Priorities:

- Warren House Embankment Stabilisation (£1.6m)

2. West Berkshire

Priorities:

- Denford Mill deck replacement (£150k)

3. Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

Priorities:

- Bray Bridge (£0.8m)
- Cookham Bridge (£2m)
- Victoria Bridge (£0.8m)

4. Reading

Priorities:

1. Chatham Street North & South Bridge bearing replacement (£950k)
2. Oxford Road Bridge bearing replacement (£750k)
3. Castle Street North & South Bridge bearing replacement (£950k)
4. IDR-Kennet Bridge bearing replacement (£550k)
5. George Street Hills Meadow Culvert strengthening (£250k)
6. High Bridge Stone Parapet Repair/Restoration (£75k)
7. Berkeley Avenue Railway Bridge Strengthening (£100k)
8. Berkeley Avenue Canal Bridge Strengthening (£175k)

5. Slough

Priorities:

- Repair/replace Uxbridge Canal Bridge (£1.7m).
- Langley Interchange Footbridges bearing replacement and pier protection (£300k).

6. Bracknell Forest

Priorities:

- Mill Bridge Lane - bearing replacement and re-waterproofing (£600k)
- Station roundabout East Bridge, re-waterproofing, movement joint replacement (£225k)
- Station roundabout East Bridge, re-waterproofing, movement joint replacement and parapet repairs (£225k)
- Bagshot Road Subway re-waterproofing (£420k)