

TCF SOMERSET PLACE TO PONSONBY ROAD – CONTRACT AWARD

Executive Decision briefing note



PROJECT DETAILS

The Somerset Place to Ponsonby Road scheme will deliver a key link on the city's Strategic Cycle Network (SCN). It will complete the upgrade of a poor quality and poorly used footpath into a wide, well lit and high quality shared cycle and footpath that will make it easier, safer and more attractive to walk and cycle to Central Park and the Life Centre from Stoke and other neighbourhoods to the south and west of the park. Part of this scheme was delivered in 2013. Transforming Cities Fund (Tranche 1) funding is now being used to deliver the remainder of the scheme, and work is expected to be completed in the summer of 2021

Construction drawing is available online [here](#).

This scheme is part of the TCF East-West Corridor Improvements Package and focuses on enhancing travel on that corridor, connecting existing areas of deprivation to growth areas with 17,000 new jobs and 15,500 houses planned by 2034.

SCHEME OBJECTIVES

Plymouth's population is forecast to reach 300,000 by 2034, an increase of 17%, with an accompanying increase in economic opportunity. Modelling forecasts show that by 2034, even with currently committed transport schemes and modal shift away from private car to sustainable transport of between 5 and 10%, congestion will worsen. Specifically, congestion is impacting on public transport reliability on the eastern corridor.

28% of Plymouth households do not have access to a vehicle, with this increasing to 50% in some neighbourhoods served by the east-west corridor. An expanding and improving walking and cycling network, linking to new jobs in key growth areas will help create inclusive, low carbon growth, improve productivity and address unemployment which is currently 4.7% –1.4% higher than the regional average, and 0.3% higher than the national average.

To address this sustainably, and help make Plymouth an attractive place in which to live, work and invest, the Joint Local Plan identifies that major infrastructure investments are needed. With 67% of Plymouth commuters working in the city, and with 38% of car journeys less than 2km, walking and cycling have a key role to play.

With transport representing around 28% of carbon emissions¹, a proportion that is set to increase substantially, investment in walking and cycling to reduce overall car trips through a substantial transfer from private car is essential if we are to meet the Council's pledge to make Plymouth carbon neutral by 2030. This scheme will also help address physical inactivity which is a major problem in Plymouth with just 18.6% of the adult population exercising for 30 minutes three times a week. Physical inactivity is estimated to cost the NHS £4.1 million pa with far greater costs to the wider economy.

PROJECT COST

The project price is £192,213.

FUNDING

The scheme is entirely funded from the Transforming Cities Fund tranche 1 funding award

DELIVERY TIMESCALES

The main works for the scheme is planned to start in mid February, 2021, with construction programmed to take 14 weeks.

¹ <http://naei.beis.gov.uk/>

MEMBER AND STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT

The Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure was consulted in late 2018 in advance of the submission of the TCF tranche one funding bid.

Latterly, the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure along with the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People were consulted in November 2020, regarding the possibility of closing the cycleway for the duration of the construction period and to give advance notice of a Traffic Regulation Order that will need to be in place once the cycle way is constructed. Recently, it has been agreed that the path only needs to close for approx. 1 week for surfacing work, so the outcome was positive.

Consultation has also commenced with Stoke Ward Councillors regarding the TRO to apply double yellow lines at the Ponsonby Road intersection, to improve the visibility for lane users and protect them from oncoming traffic.

PROCUREMENT APPROACH

The Council's Term Maintenance Contract (TMC) with South West Highways specifically provides for its use to deliver transport schemes and projects in addition to the core highway maintenance activities.

The scale and nature of the works required for the scheme makes it an ideal candidate scheme for the TMC to be the delivery vehicle.

The use of the TMC has a number of benefits that would support early delivery of the works:

- Capitalise on the collaborative working arrangements that the contractor has established with the Council's Highways department and other key stakeholders and partners
- Access to the competitive price list that was secured through the vigorous and robust tendering assessment that the Council carried out to award the TMC
- Local knowledge
- Co-ordination with other planned works on the local and strategic road networks
- Early contractor involvement to progress the design and identify value savings and reduce risks in both the design and construction stages
- Supports continuity of working between the Council and the contractor to help deliver improvements in performance over the term of the TMC
- Gives confidence to and supports the local economy, helping to safeguard existing jobs and create new ones

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The alternative options to employing the TMC would be to either carry out a formal tendering exercise or use an appropriate framework. Both these options would add delay to any appointment, impacting on the delivery timescale of the works and do not have all of the benefits use of the TMC offers.