

# **SOUTHWAY TO PLYMBRIDGE WALKING AND CYCLING IMPROVEMENTS – PHASE 2 CONTRACT AWARD**

Executive Decision briefing note



## **PROJECT SUMMARY**

The complete Southway to Plymbridge scheme, part of the Transforming Cities Fund programme, provides 4.7 km of off-road strategic cycle network, connecting Southway, an area of deprivation to the Northern corridor and Eastern corridor growth areas along with leisure opportunities on the Plym Valley Trail. The first phase, completed in June 2021 consisted of walking and cycling improvements in Southway as well as substantial improvements to two shared use paths connecting Plymbridge Road to Miller Way.

This contract award is for the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the scheme which provides significant traffic free walking and cycling improvements along Plymbridge Road. This phase includes:

- Traffic free walking and cycling route along the south side of Plymbridge Road improving connectivity from the Estover industrial estate to the recently improved path alongside the eastern end of the former airport site connecting Plymbridge Road with Miller Way via Durris Gardens.
- Three new signalised pedestrian and cycle crossings of Plymbridge Road.
- improved crossings of side roads for pedestrians and cyclists.

## **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 Northern corridor.

28% of Plymouth households do not have access to a vehicle, with this increasing to 45% in some neighbourhoods served by the northern 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 emissions<sup>1</sup>, 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.

## **TARGET COST AND FINANCE**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the scheme, that is the subject of this decision, is entirely funded from the Northern Corridor SCN Growth Deal funding award.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://naei.beis.gov.uk/>

## PROJECT COST

The project target price is £791,144 at the 2021/22 rates. The phase 2 scheme will be constructed in the 2022/23 financial year. However, the 2022/23 rates under the Council's Term Maintenance Contract with South West Highways have not yet been confirmed. Therefore a precautionary allowance of a 7.5% increase in the rates would increase the target cost to £850,480.

## DELIVERY TIMESCALES

The main works for the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the scheme is planned to start in April, 2022, with construction programmed to take 14 weeks.

## MEMBER AND STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT

The Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure was consulted in late 2018 in advance of consultation with local Ward members. Wider public and stakeholder consultation was completed in January 2019 with 4,700 and local businesses and residents in the vicinity of the scheme. The results of the consultation have been summarised in a consultation report which is available at the [dedicated scheme webpage](#).

Further statutory consultation was then carried out on elements of the scheme requiring Traffic Regulation Orders. The delegated decision to approve the orders to enable the scheme to be implemented was made by the Cabinet member for Transport and Highways on 17<sup>th</sup> of November, 2021, details of which are available [here](#).

## 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 phase 2 scheme makes it an ideal candidate scheme for the TMC to be the delivery vehicle.

Early delivery is important to help meet the timescales required by the Climate Emergency Action Plan. 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.