

**GREEK STREET AND STOCKHOLM ROAD BRIDGES****Report of the Director of Place Management****1. Introduction**

- 1.1. Greek Street Bridge and Stockholm Road Bridge are both Network Rail (NR) owned and maintained road over rail bridges which have been identified by Network Rail as needing replacement due to the deteriorating condition of the structures. This is becoming critical to the safe running of the rail and highway network,
- 1.2. The replacement of these bridges is of strategic importance to the Town Centre West Mayoral Development Corporation as it provides a key focus of connectivity between Stockport Town Centre, Edgeley and Stockport Railway Station.
- 1.3. The design for the replacement of these bridges is of strategic future importance to both Stockport Council and Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) given that they span or lie adjacent to the potential future Tram Train alignment through Stockport, connecting to both Manchester Airport and East Didsbury. As such, the replacement of these bridges presents an opportunity to safeguard these new structures for any future arrival of light rail services into Stockport.
- 1.4. There has been considerable work undertaken by Network Rail to develop the proposed bridge replacement schemes and identify a delivery programme and this has led to a delay in being able to start developing the accompanying highway proposals and proposed pedestrian and cycle improvements.
- 1.5. Network Rail has assessed that both these structures need to be replaced and have put in temporary measures to protect the structures until they can be rebuilt. These are essential renewal and maintenance works being led and funded by Network Rail and TfGM. The proposed replacement structures are being developed by Network Rail with the required contribution from the local authority via funding from the City Region Sustainable Transport settlement (CRSTS) to future proof them for a potential tram train route.
- 1.6. Stockport Council also has an interest in both bridges as they are key elements of the local highway network supporting the movement of bus, cyclists, pedestrians, freight, and general traffic. They also provide connectivity into Edgeley and the town center, providing key links to Stockport College and Stockport County Football ground. The bridges also support access into and around the Town Centre West Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC). In particular the Greek Street replacement of the existing Network Rail bridge includes funding being sought from CRSTS for a wider package of walking

and cycling improvements for access to and around the bridge. The Greek Street improvements would complement the Town Centre West MDC, providing enhanced walking and cycling connectivity in the Town Centre West area. The Greek Street bridge is over the West Coast railway line and is near Stockport Railway station, whilst Stockholm Road bridge is over the mid-Cheshire railway line.

- 1.7. The replacement of Network Rail (NR) Structures are the responsibility of NR and the bulk of the funding will be provided by them. Stockport Council is required to contribute 5% of the final cost of the scheme which is expected to be between £15m and £20m. The City Region Sustainable Travel Settlement Strategic Maintenance Funding secured from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority will cover this contribution. Transport for Greater Manchester has secured funding from the City Region Sustainable Travel Settlement Tram-Train package to cover the costs of additional work required to future-proof for Tram-Train which will not be funded by Network Rail.
- 1.8. This report sets out:
- The work undertaken to date to develop the design for the replacement bridges.
  - A summary overview of highway network considerations following the closure of the bridge during Network Rail's bridge renewal and replacement works; and
  - A proposed way forward and timescales for the works.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1. Greek Street bridge (GSB) is a Network Rail owned overbridge structure located just to the south of Stockport Railway Station and in close proximity to Stockport Town Centre. The bridge spans the West Coast Main Line (WCML) and at street level carries a busy highway junction linking Mercian Way, Greek Street, Shaw Heath and King Street West. Surveys undertaken by Network Rail have raised concerns regarding the condition of the bridge and as such it has been added to Network Rail's Control Period 6 Renewals Programme. Network Rail are closely monitoring the bridge on yearly detailed examinations as mitigation of its current condition until such a point that the bridge has been renewed. Network Rail have outlined that the bridge renewal should be constructed no later than 2025/26. Network Rail have advised that delays to the renewal of the bridge would most likely result in safety measures being applied, restricting weight loading and potentially also closure of the bridge to all traffic.
- 2.2. The Stockholm Road bridge (SRB) is a Network Rail owned overbridge, located in Edgeley / Adswold. The structure spans the Mid-Cheshire Heavy Rail Line. The condition of the existing Stockholm Road bridge is such that Network Rail has identified it as being required to be renewed no later than 2025/26.

- 2.3. Network Rail and their contractor have developed a series of design options for the replacement of both bridges which include varying degrees of future proofing for Tram-Train.
- 2.4. As set out to Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) in June 2022, Greek Street Bridge has been identified as a scheme that benefited from 'conditional approval' into the CRSTS Programme. This includes the following funding contributions towards the replacement bridge:
- Tram Train contribution; and
  - CRSTS Strategic Maintenance Funding
- 2.5. Funding for the replacement of the two bridge structures, Greek Street Bridge and Stockholm Road bridge, was outlined in two business cases that are being combined to share the available funding between the two bridges. The draw-down of funding was approved by the Bee Network Committee in July 2023.
- 2.6. . A total of £6m has been allocated to these projects £1.9m for the anticipated required local authority contribution to the schemes and £4.1m for improvements to the Stockholm bridge construction to allow for a future potential tram-train route.
- 2.7. The Tram Train project is intended to utilise part of the Mid-Cheshire Line which joins with the WCML just south of the Booth Street bridge. Were tram-trains to run on the Mid-Cheshire Line, however, they would not join the WCML but would run on a parallel dedicated tram track immediately to the west of the WCML with a new stop to the west of Stockport Station. Between Booth St and the Railway Station it is proposed that, due to levels, Metrolink would be in a new tunnel which would run under part of Mercian Way and King Street West. The exact location of the Metrolink tunnel has yet to be determined.
- 2.8. In addition, as part of the CRSTS allocation for Stockport there is £900k allocated to CRSTS 'Streets for All' Greek Street pedestrian and cycle improvement package. This package is being developed to complement the layout of the replacement bridge and will be the subject of local consultation which will include the potential highway layout of the structure. The funding for this is subject to the development and approval of business cases as part of the CRSTS governance process.

### **3. Design Options Review**

- 3.1. The renewal of the bridges present Stockport Council and TfGM with an opportunity to safeguard the new structure for the arrival of light rail services into Stockport. Network Rail's contractor has considered various design option to futureproof the replacement structures for Tram Train.
- 3.2. Design Options considered for Greek Street bridge ruled out a like for like basis replacement as this would have restricted the future potential for Metrolink to travel on this route and would have required a substantial rebuild. Whilst consideration

was given to constructing a Metrolink ready bridge in situ, the additional cost is likely to be in excess of circa £10m. This resulted in the recommended approach of replacing the bridge in position with light touch Tram Train future proofing to ensure that the foundations of the new structure do not constrain a future adjacent tunnel. This ensures the bridge can be adapted when Metrolink comes to Stockport.

- 3.3. The preferred design meets the council's objectives as it supports the future construction of the adjacent Tram-Train line and allows for greater flexibility as to any future Tram-Train alignment. The design is also being developed such that it futureproofs for the construction of the adjacent Tram-Train box through, for example the avoidance of the use of rock anchors that would be impacted by the Tram-Train works. Given the increasing imperative of replacing the bridge, this approach has been identified as the only realistic option to protect the tram route and undertake the work in the timescale that is required due to the current bridge condition.
- 3.4. Design Options considered for Stockholm Road bridge are as follows:
- **Option 1:** Like for like replacement – no Tram-Train futureproofing (one footway)
  - **Option 2:** Tram-Train futureproofing for one additional track (two footways)
  - **Option 3:** Tram Train futureproofing for two additional tracks (two footways)
- 3.5. For Stockholm Road bridge, it is not possible to replace the bridge on a like for like basis and retain the possibility of Metrolink passing through without a subsequent further replacement of the bridge. Therefore, the proposed approach of future proofing through Option 2 generates momentum to meet the Council's aspirations to bring Metrolink to Stockport through its Next Stop Stockport Campaign within the available resources secured by CRSTS.
- 3.6. However, the cost of upgrading the bridge would not be met by Network Rail and this is why there is a significant local contribution of £4.1m required which is funded from CRSTS.

#### **4. Highway Layout**

- 4.1. The council will continue to work with Network Rail to ensure that the highway layout on the bridges, particularly on the Greek Street bridge, provides the necessary highway capacity and accommodates improved pedestrian and connectivity to the wider area.
- 4.2. Options will be developed to identify appropriate walking and cycle provision at the roundabout and in the surrounding area. These options will be based upon traffic modelling which is currently being undertaken. We expect consultation to start before the end of the financial year.

#### **4.2.1. Greek Street Bridge**

4.2.1.1. When the bridge is replaced, the junction will be reinstated by Network Rail. We have previously examined alternative layouts including installation of a signal crossroads however this is not suitable for reasons of both alignment and capacity. There remains a need, however, to provide improved crossing facilities, both for pedestrians and cyclists, at the junction. Examination will be made of possible improvements including pedestrian priority crossings on arms with no current facility and ideally the possible inclusion of Bee Network standard cycle connections between residential areas, the College, and the Railway Station. The design will need to take account of current design standards. The design and traffic modelling of works has commenced and will be subject to consultation / approval processes with members, stakeholders, and the public in the new year to allow time for any changed layout to be incorporated in the bridge design by Network Rail.

#### **4.2.2. Stockholm Road Bridge**

4.2.2.1. When the bridge is replaced, the road will be reinstated by Network Rail. When the railway bridge was built it was constructed with a deck width of approx. 7.5m allowing for an approx. 5.5m carriageway and single footway. Temporary barriers to protect the weak parapets restrict both the carriageway and footway width so requiring the bridge to currently employ shuttle working and restricting the footway to less than 1.5m width. When, subsequently, the second railway bridge was constructed to the south it had a deck width of over 10m allowing for a wider carriageway and footways either side. The road either side of the bridge was widened to allow for housing development with a carriageway width of approx. 6.5m and footways on both sides of the road. Network Rail have been advised that the bridge should be re-constructed with a minimum carriageway width of 6.5m as required for a bus route and that 2.0m width footways should be provided on either side of the road. The 20mph speed limit will be maintained which alongside the relatively low volumes of traffic will support the use of the facility by cyclist on carriageway. . Discussions around the standards of the replacement structure are ongoing.

### **5. Managing Construction and Traffic Impacts**

5.1. The works are being led by Network Rail and their appointed contractors. SMBC officers will work with Network Rail and their contractor to ensure that appropriate measures are implemented to minimise the impact of the works on users of the highway network and local residents. It is recognised that as the Greek Street roundabout is directly on top of the bridge structure that mitigation work is of vital importance. The timescales and traffic management requirements for the works will be confirmed following completion of the design and confirmation of the construction methodology for the bridges. Stockport Council will work with Network Rail to develop communications plans that will ensure that road users, local communities, and key stakeholders, for example Emergency Services and Stockport County, are kept informed before and throughout the work. As part of

this process there will be close liaison with the District Centre Manager and with local businesses. In addition to the below detailed considerations for diversion routes, construction traffic management plans will need to be developed by Network Rail's contractors to ensure that appropriate routes are used to access the sites.

## **5.2. Greek Street Bridge Diversions**

It is anticipated that works to replace the bridge will commence in early 2025 and, at this stage, the works are expected to take around nine months to complete. The roundabout is on the bridge so all routes to the roundabout will be affected by its closure and therefore, a comprehensive consideration of diversion routes during the works is required for:

- Pedestrians.
- Cyclists.
- Buses.
- Light traffic; and
- HGV's.

There will also be some impact on the railway lines into Stockport station with various rail closures required before and during the construction period probably from late 2024 and through 2025.

## **5.3. Stockholm Road Bridge Diversions**

It is anticipated that works to replace the bridge will take place in 2025/26. A comprehensive consideration of diversion routes for pedestrians, cyclists, buses and light traffic during the works is required. The area is already subject to a weight limit on Stockholm Road of 7.5 tonnes at the existing bridge, so diversion of HGV's is not required.

5.4. The works will also impact on the mid-Cheshire railway line with closures to the rail services required.

## **6. Next Steps**

6.1. The business case for the council's contribution to the bridges has been approved in principle by GMCA and funds set aside from the GM CRSTS settlement, allowing the scheme development to continue.

6.2. As part of the development of the detail required the Council will also implement associated pedestrian and cycle improvements. A public consultation on the proposed Greek Street highway layout will be undertaken, after which Council approval for the design will be sought.

6.3. Consultation will start in the new year on the road layout options, including walking and cycling improvements at the roundabout and in the immediate vicinity.

- 6.4. The Greek Street bridge replacement and the Stockholm Road bridge are planned to be replaced 2025/26.
- 6.5. Stockport Council officers will work with Network Rail and TfGM to ensure that Councillors and the local communities are kept informed about the works as and when further information about the design and construction becomes available. In particular, traffic management will be carefully planned and coordinated to keep impacts to a minimum.
- 6.6. As the plans for the work are finalised a joint communication plan will be developed, and a series of meetings held with key local stakeholders to ensure the diversions and work programmes are well publicised and respond to local requirements.

## **7. Financial And Risk Assessment Considerations**

- 7.1. As identified above this work forms part of CRSTS with funding contributions. The need to replace the bridges is an essential undertaking for Network Rail and presents SMBC, through their position as highway authority and being in receipt of CRSTS money, the opportunity to provide highway enhancements following replacement of the bridge.

## **8. Legal Considerations**

- 8.1. The schemes will be subject to agreements with Network Rail, TfGM and DfT these will be subject to consideration by the legal team.

## **9. Human Resources Impact**

- 9.1. There is no expected human resource impact.

## **10. Equalities Impact**

- 10.1. Related equality assessment needs will be undertaken as the project is progressed to insure it meets the needs of the equalities act.

## **11. Environmental Impact**

- 11.1. Related environmental assessment needs will be undertaken as the project is progressed.

## **12. Recommendations to Cabinet**

- 12.1. The Cabinet is recommended to: -

(1) Authorise the Director of Place Management to continue to work with Network Rail and TfGM on the proposed replacement of the Greek Street Bridge

on basis of the proposal detailed at Section 3.2 of the report including authority to develop and consult on a new highway layout over the Greek Street bridge.

(2) Authorise the Director of Place Management to work with Network Rail and TfGM to develop the design for the Stockholm Road bridge within on the basis of the 'Option 2' proposal detailed at Section 3.5 of the report.

(3) Request that the Director of Place Management work with Network Rail and their contactor to manage and mitigate the highway and rail impacts of the bridge replacements during construction as detailed in Section 5 of the report.

(4) Give approval to the development, consultation and submission of the associated package of highway, cycle, and pedestrian improvements as part of CRSTS process following appropriate engagement and approvals from the Central Stockport Area Committee and Cabinet Member for Parks, Highways and Transport Services.

(5) Give approval to the use of £1.9m of CRSTS strategic maintenance funding to pay the council's required contribution to the replacement of both structures and the £4.1m contribution of CRSTS funding towards the enhancements at Stockholm Road bridge.

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are none

Anyone wishing to inspect the above background papers or requiring further information should contact Sue Stevenson on Tel: 0161-474-4351 or by email on [sue.stevenson@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:sue.stevenson@stockport.gov.uk)