

## **GREEK STREET BRIDGE SCRUTINY REPORT**

### **Report of the Director of Place Management**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the works required, and schedule associated with, the Network Rail led Greek Street bridge renewal project. This includes providing an overview of the potential subsequent disruption and the responding mitigation works.
- 1.2. The report provides an update to the works required for the Greek Street Bridge renewal. Following inspections by Network Rail, it was identified that Greek Street Bridge requires replacement due to the deteriorating condition of the bridge structure. The replacement of this bridge 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 bridge replacement is of strategic future importance to both Stockport Council and Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) given that it lies adjacent to the potential future Tram Train alignments through Stockport, connecting to both Manchester Airport and Hazel Grove. As such, the replacement presents an opportunity to safeguard the new structure for any future arrival of light rail services into Stockport. This essential renewal is being led by Network Rail.
- 1.4. Stockport Council also has an interest as the bridge is a key element of the local highway network supporting the movement of bus, cyclists, pedestrians, freight, and general traffic. It provides connectivity into Edgeley and the town centre, providing key links to Stockport College and Stockport County Football ground.
- 1.5. The works associated with bridge renewal are scheduled to run from March 2025 to March 2026 and is anticipated to cause disruption to the western side of the town centre.
- 1.6. This report sets out:
  - 1.6.1. An update on the replacement Stockholm Road and Greek Street Bridges
  - 1.6.2. Proposed way forward and timescales for the works.
  - 1.6.3. How the council will work with Network Rail and the contractor to manage disruption and keep residents and businesses informed.
  - 1.6.4. Financial considerations.

## **2. Stockholm Road Bridge update**

- 2.1. Stockholm Road bridge was originally proposed to be replaced at the same time as Greek Street bridge. Doing so would have taken advantage of the rail closures that are required for the Greek Street bridge replacement and thus minimise disruption to the rail network. The structural condition of Stockholm Road bridge does not, however, require replacement at this time and due to budgetary pressures on other Network Rail schemes in greater need of replacement, Network Rail has taken the decision to push the replacement of Stockholm Road bridge back into a subsequent funding period.
- 2.2. The design for the replacement Stockholm Road bridge has been developed, in collaboration with TfGM, to safeguard for any future introduction of rapid transit to Stockport. It was agreed with Network Rail that the current stage of the design for the bridge is to be concluded, which will enable a more robust cost estimate to be produced to support the development of the case for rapid transit. Given the current timescales for the delivery of rapid transit to Stockport, postponing the replacement of Stockholm Road bridge will still present an opportunity to coordinate both the bridge replacement and the tram train works.

## **3. Greek Street Bridge**

### **3.1. Context**

- 3.1.1. Greek Street bridge is located to the south of Stockport Rail Station and provides both rail alignment for the West Coast Mainline, and highway access north-south and east-west across Stockport. The entire of the highway asset is located on the existing structure which has been identified by Network Rail as requiring replacement. This is a whole-life replacement, meaning it is necessary for Network Rail to remove the whole bridge deck, effectively closing Mercian Way, Greek Street and Shaw Heath to vehicular movement at this location for a 12 month period.
- 3.1.2. The 12-month period of works will require both highway closures and five major rail possession, closing the West Coast Mainline at five points across the construction schedule (see section 7).
- 3.1.3. Both Network Rail and Murphys have a complex set of engineering works to undertake over the 12-month period, and are reinstating the bridge with passive provision for future rapid transit options along the rail lines.

### **3.2. Planning Application**

- 3.2.1. Network Rail will shortly be submitting an application for Prior Approval, seeking confirmation that the Council, as Local Planning Authority, whether prior approval is required and if it is required the conditions which the Council wish to apply. This approval is required in order to authorise proposed works to reconstruct the bridge at Greek St, Stockport.
- 3.2.2. The prior approval application will be considered under the Councils adopted scheme of delegation and the determination of the application is delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive.

#### **4. Highway layout**

- 4.1. Under the National Agreement Network Rail will be replacing the highway as existing, however, they have agreed to put an amended layout back on the bridge at a similar cost. The Council are working with Network Rail to finalise the highway layout, ensuring that it provides the necessary highway capacity and accommodates improved pedestrian connectivity to the wider area.
- 4.2. This highway layout is being designed in coordination with the structural design.
- 4.3. There is a separately funded package of proposed works to improve cycle and pedestrian movements in the area. The potential improvements to walking and cycling have been consulted upon earlier in the year however there is insufficient funding within the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement package to fund all the proposed scheme elements. Key scheme elements for delivery are being prioritised in the developing final business case and alternative means of funding other elements are being explored.

#### **5. Proposed road and lane closures ahead of the main closure**

- 5.1. Ahead of the main Greek Street bridge road closure, temporary lane and road closures will be required to facilitate the construction and implementation of the temporary statutory services bridge.
- 5.2. Overnight temporary lane closures are planned on Mercian Way and Shaw Heath (south of the roundabout) over the course of four Saturday nights in late November and throughout December 2024.
- 5.3. The intention is to keep disruption to a minimum through the proposal of overnight lane closures and the appropriate temporary traffic management is planned to be put in place as required.
- 5.4. A set of construction preparation works are proposed to be undertaken on 25<sup>th</sup> December, with an associated full road closure on Shaw Heath (north of the roundabout) and Mercian Way to allow for the crane to lift a temporary bridge into position. Temporary traffic management and appropriate diversions will be in place for the duration of the works. The council is continuing to work with Network Rail to minimise both the traffic and personal disruption over this period. It is quite normal for Network Rail to undertake major rail works over the holiday periods, as this is when the rail network is traditionally the quietest.

#### **6. Greek Street Bridge Main Closure**

- 6.1. The traffic diversion works are being led by Network Rail and their appointed contractors. Council officers are working 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.
- 6.2. It is recognised that as the Greek Street roundabout is directly on top of the bridge structure that there is likely to be widespread disruption to the operation of the highway network in the area and mitigation work is of vital importance.

- 6.3. The main works to replace the bridge will commence in March 2025 and are planned for completion in March 2026.
- 6.4. The roundabout is on the bridge so all routes to the roundabout will be affected and a plan is provided in **Appendix A** to illustrate the extents.
- 6.5. Access to all properties close to the works will be maintained and discussions are taking place between Network Rail, the council and affected parties to confirm the appropriate arrangements.
- 6.6. A comprehensive consideration of diversion routes during the works is being developed with the appropriate diversion routes for the following users: Booth Street bridge has a 7.5 ton weight limit so cannot be part of the diversion route for Heavy Goods Vehicles and there are ongoing discussions regarding its use by buses .
- Pedestrians (with specific consideration to users with mobility and sensory needs);
  - Cyclists;
  - Buses;
  - Light traffic; and
  - Heavy Goods Vehicles.
- 6.7. The council has been working with Network Rail to advise and design our proposed diversionary routes. The council is proposing two main diversionary routes around Garners Lane/Councillor Lane and Edgeley Road/A560. This will be complemented with more local pedestrian diversionary routes around Thompson Street and Flint Street.

## 7. Proposed railway closures

- 7.1. To facilitate the works, railway line closures (known as rail possessions) are required before and during the works from late 2024 and through 2025 to allow for key construction activities to take place.
- 7.2. A summary of the line closure periods i are shown in the table below.

<b>LOR: NW5001 Crewe North Jn to Manchester Piccadilly At/Between: Cheadle Hulme North Jn &amp; Heaton Norris Jn</b>	
Week 39 2024 Wednesday 25 to Friday 27 December 2024	<i>Core Possession (54hr)</i>
Week 04 2025 Saturday 19 to Tuesday 22 April 2025	<i>Core Possession (72hr)</i>
Week 19 2025 Saturday 02 to Tuesday 23 August 2025	<i>Core Possession (21 day)</i>
Week 28 2025 Saturday 04 to Monday 06 October 2025	<i>Core Possession (54hr)</i>

Week 39 2025 Thursday 25 to Saturday 27 December 2025	<i>Core Possession (54hr)</i>
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- 7.3. Throughout the duration of the railway closures, rail replacement bus services are proposed to maintain access for rail passengers wishing to travel from and to Stockport Station and surrounding rail stations which will be affected by the closures.
- 7.4. Discussions between Network Rail, Transport for Greater Manchester and train operating companies are ongoing, and information will be circulated once a comprehensive timetable has been established.

## **8. Stakeholder communication plan**

- 8.1. Network Rail and the council have been jointly working together to develop a stakeholder communication plan to support the works for the Greek Street Bridge replacement. The intention is to ensure that key stakeholders and members of the public are communicated with in advance of and for the duration of the works. The council has a nominated project manager with the Major Projects Team that is the single point of contact from the council for the project, however, this will be done collaboratively with representatives from Network Rail.
- 8.2. The council will be working with both Network Rail and the contractor, Murphys, to communicate progress updates on the work, any changes to the programme, closures to the highway network and the rail station, reminders about rail/road disruption and provision of advice related to the ongoing progress of the project. This will be done through a number of mediums as outlined below.
- 8.3. A webpage will be set up on the council website, linking to the Network Rail landing page with details of the plan, including background information, from pre-commencement to completion and the associated diversion routes. The Network Rail webpage (<http://www.networkrail.co.uk/greekstreet>) has already been launched and this will be kept up to date with the latest information. Furthermore, a 24 hour general enquiry phone line will be in operation (03457 11 41 41) and a customer help page for queries or concerns ([Support Home Page \(custhelp.com\)](http://www.custhelp.com)) will be live throughout the project and widely referenced on other methods of communication.
- 8.4. On-street signage, banners and site boards will be used to provide information and raise awareness from pre-commencement to completion with press releases / articles for information and awareness raising from pre-commencement to completion.
- 8.5. It is intended that letter and leaflet drops will be undertaken on an ad-hoc basis from pre-commencement to completion. Physical drop-in sessions at venues close to the site are to be planned ahead of the works commencing so the public will be able to voice any concerns or ask any questions in relation to the construction.
- 8.6. The council, along with partners at Network Rail and Murphys, have committed to monthly Working Group Meetings with the elected members across the three

directly impacted wards. These have been scheduled to start from October and will run on a monthly basis until the project is complete.

8.7. During the closure of Greek Street bridge, we are planning to work with our Strategy, Policy and Research colleagues to undertake a number of activation events in the town centre focussing on the promotion of sustainable travel.

8.8. A summary of the stakeholder communication plan is provided below.

<b>Who</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Local Area Members – Edgeley, Central and Brinnington and Davenport and Cale Green	Member Working Group	Monthly in-person meeting with SMBC, NwR and Contractor
Cabinet Members, Local MPs and Wider Members	Progress meetings and email updates	Monthly via email and by arrangement
TfGM / National Highways / TOCs	Workshops and progress meetings	Bi-weekly until January 2025 then weekly stakeholder forum to begin
Businesses / Residents (local)	Face to face introduction, letter drops, public consultation events, hub site, press releases	Upon project milestones and prior to press releases
Emergency Services	Workshops and progress meetings	Ad-hoc then weekly forum from January 2025
Community and interest groups / forums; i.e. taxis / disability forum / walking and cycling forum)	Email updates and present at forums where required	Upon project milestones

## 9. Financial considerations

9.1. Network Rail has confirmed that the full cost of the works will be funded by Network Rail from their Control Period 7 Renewals Budget. Stockport Council however is required to contribute 5% of the total scheme cost upon completion, as part of the Bridgeguard 3 Programme. The City Region Sustainable Travel Settlement Strategic Maintenance Funding has been secured from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority to cover this contribution based on the most recent cost estimate and an appropriate level of risk and contingency to reflect the maturity of the cost estimate available at this stage of the project.

9.2. Based on the current scheme estimate for Greek Street Bridge the Bridgeguard contribution is currently around £1m- inclusive of 20% contingency on top of the contribution to account for cost increases. The Council will work with Network Rail throughout the course of project to monitor costs and maintain an accurate forecast of the final Bridgeguard 3 contribution.

- 9.3. The Council is required to enter into a Bridgeguard 3 agreement with Network Rail to confirm this commitment. Approval to enter into the Bridgeguard 3 agreement and make any payments to Network Rail required of the agreement is sought by way of this report.

## **10. Legal Considerations**

- 10.1. As noted above, the scheme will be subject to the requisite planning approval for a scheme of this nature and a Bridgeguard agreement is to be entered into with Network Rail.

## **11. Human Resources Impact**

- 11.1. There is no expected human resource impact.

## **12. Equalities Impact**

- 12.1. A related equality assessment is being undertaken by Network Rail in consultation with Stockport Council to ensure it meets the needs of the equalities act.

## **13. Environmental Impact**

- 13.1. Appropriate environmental considerations are being undertaken by Network Rail in consultation with Stockport Council in accordance with planning requirements.

## **14. Next steps**

- 14.1. Discussions are continuing with Network Rail and their contractors over the final highway layout on the bridge and the proposed diversions and these details will be agreed with local councillors and the Cabinet Member
- 14.2. The package of complementary pedestrian and cycling improvements will be finalised and submitted for funding approval to Transport for Greater Manchester and the Bee Network Committee. Once funding is approved the package of works will be delivered in phases before, during and after the bridge renewal works to minimise additional disruption in the area.
- 14.3. This report will be sent to Central Stockport Area Committee in December.

## **15. Recommendations**

- 15.1. Scrutiny is requested to comment on the report and support the intent to request the Cabinet:
- Approve to enter into the Bridgeguard 3 agreement and make any payments to Network Rail necessary under this agreement.
  - Agree that the decisions related to the necessary diversion routes are delegated to the Cabinet Member for Parks, Highways & Transport Services in conjunction with officers following engagement with members.
  - Agree that the decisions related to the final highway layout on the new structure are delegated to the Cabinet Member for Parks, Highways & Transport Services following consultation with the Member Working Group.

Note that prior approval application will be considered under the Councils adopted scheme of delegation and the determination of the application is delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive.

### BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are none

Anyone wishing to inspect the above background papers or requiring further information should contact Jamie Birtles, Sue Stevenson on Tel: 07356 120 423, Tel: 0161-474-4351 or by email on [jamie.birtles@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:jamie.birtles@stockport.gov.uk), [sue.stevenson@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:sue.stevenson@stockport.gov.uk)