



PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION NOTICE

INDIVIDUAL DECISION BY THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR PLANNING AND TRANSPORT

TOPIC – COMMISSIONING OF INTERPRETATION SCHEME FOR THE HOCKLEY VIADUCT

PROCEDURAL INFORMATION

The Access to Information Procedure Rules – Part 4, Section 22 of the Council's Constitution provides for a decision to be made by an individual member of Cabinet.

In accordance with the Procedure Rules, the Corporate Director (Governance), the Chief Executive and the Head of Finance are consulted together with Chairman and Vice Chairman of The Overview and Scrutiny Committee and any other relevant overview and scrutiny committee. In addition, all Members are notified.

If five or more Members from those informed so request, the Leader may require the matter to be referred to Cabinet for determination.

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SUMMARY

- Following the successful formal opening of the restored Hockley Viaduct in February, work has now started on the next phase of the project.
- The restoration has brought the Viaduct back into good condition, and enabled it to be integrated into the final section of National Cycle Route Network Route 23.
- However, stakeholders have – from an early stage in the project planning – considered that the experience of those walking and cycling cross the Viaduct and along the adjacent stretches of pathway would be enhanced through the addition of interpretive materials.
- At present, a number of aging and in some cases irrelevant signs erected by a range of organisations can be found in the area. These need removing and replacing with an updated scheme.

- However, modern interpretation schemes tend to be more interactive than traditional noticeboards, and could include benches, pieces of artwork or salvaged materials (such as the signal gantry which has already been erected on the Viaduct).
- Stakeholders have also suggested that any interpretation scheme be created in partnership with the local community – school children, for example, or other relevant local groups.
- Approval is therefore requested for officers to commission the design, production and installation of interpretation materials on and around the Hockley Viaduct.
- The Council would be the lead commissioning body in a funding partnership which also includes Hampshire County Council (HCC), The Environment Agency and The Friends of Hockley Viaduct.
- A specification has been drawn up and approved by a stakeholder group which includes the funding partners. It elicits proposals for a creative and sympathetic scheme which draws on the railway history of the Viaduct. A number of other important considerations are identified in the specification, such as the proximity to the South Downs Way and the importance of the biodiversity in the area;
- The commission will be advertised on the South East Business Portal, the Council's preferred procurement website. Up to three shortlisted bidders will be invited to interview, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport.
- The commission will help to support the delivery of the Winchester District Community Strategy Active Communities and High Quality Environment outcomes, by seeking to increase participation in healthy physical activity and also by encouraging walking and cycling in order to reduce our carbon footprint.

DECISION

1. That the Assistant Director (Economic Prosperity) be authorised to determine the evaluation scheme for submitted bids, shortlist bidders based on this evaluation scheme and to then commission an organisation or individual to undertake the design, production and installation of interpretation materials on and around Hockley Viaduct, at a total price of £25,000.
2. That in accordance with Financial Procedure Rule 6.4, authority be given to incur capital expenditure of up to £25,000 for the project.

REASON FOR THE DECISION AND OTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

The interpretation scheme is considered by stakeholders to be an integral part of the Hockley Viaduct project. However, as total costs for the restoration and construction works were based on estimates at the outset, the Project Board decided to defer the interpretation commission to a later phase in order to assess what – if any – monies were left in the project budget.

The project board felt that by advertising the opportunity to external bidders, the Council would attract a range of creative and high quality proposals for an interpretation scheme. The Council does not have the in-house expertise, and all funding partners felt that an external procurement process would be helpful. Sustrans may bid for the work, in which case they will not form part of the evaluation panel.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

By outsourcing this work the impact on staff will be limited; although there will be time required for the analysis of the bids, shortlisting and interviewing of potential candidate organisations, as well as for contract management.

Hampshire County Council is keen to support this aspect of the project and have recently had a bid of £20,000 approved for Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) in order to support the promotion and marketing of Cycle Route 23 and the Hockley Viaduct as a link to the South Downs National Park.

In addition, The Friends of Hockley Viaduct and The Environment Agency are contributing sums totalling £5,000.

The project board has therefore identified £20,000 from the existing project budget towards this commission, whilst awaiting confirmation from the County of the total to be released from the LSTF funding.

This £20,000 is over and above the £100,000 required for a maintenance agreement to support the Viaduct over the next 40 years.

CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN ON THE DECISION

The brief that has been drawn up to publish the opportunity has been circulated to all stakeholder organisations and was finally agreed at a meeting on 13 March 2013.

FURTHER ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED FOLLOWING PUBLICATION OF THE DRAFT PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION NOTICE

Following publication of the Draft Notice and representations received, the Ward has been corrected to note it also includes Compton & Otterbourne. In addition, it is proposed that an opportunity be arranged for local groups (eg the parish council, the Ramblers and others who have expressed interest in the project) to view the draft designs so that their feedback can be taken into account in finalising the interpretation scheme.

A further question has been raised about the amount of Council funding which will be allocated to the interpretation scheme. At this point, the full scheme cost is advertised at £25,000. Of this, £5,000 has been confirmed in external contributions. However, the County Council has not yet been able to confirm the exact contribution which it will be making from its Sustainable Transport Fund, which could be as much as £20,000 but is more realistically likely to be less than this. Whatever the amount, there is enough already identified within the existing project budget to fund the commission so no new money will be required from the City Council for this scheme.

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY THE DECISION MAKER OR A MEMBER OR OFFICER CONSULTED

n/a

DISPENSATION GRANTED BY THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

n/a

Approved by: (signature)

Date of Decision: 17.04.13

Councillor Victoria Weston – Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport