

Newcastle & Gateshead Joint Bridges Committee

10 December 2020

TYNE BRIDGE MAJOR MAINTENANCE

Report by: **Assistant Director Transport, Newcastle /**
Strategic Director, Communities & Environment, Gateshead

Ward Implications: **Monument/ Benwell & Scotswood/ Callerton & Throckley/**
Ryton, Crawcrook & Stella/Blaydon/Dunston &
Teams/Bridges

For information		
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1. Purpose of the report

1.1 This report updates Members on the proposals for the major maintenance of the Tyne Bridge. It identifies the works to be undertaken, the budget costs and the anticipated programme for delivery.

The report also identifies the proposed method of funding the works and the governance involved with the delivery of the project.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Committee is requested to: -

- i Note the contents of the report.
- ii Recommend the proposals for the major maintenance of the Tyne Bridge, as detailed in paragraph 4 of this report, to the appropriate committee of each authority.

3. Introduction and background

3.1 The Tyne Bridge, which was constructed between 1925 and 1928, was given Grade II* listed status by English Heritage in 2018 as part of the Great Exhibition of the North celebrations.

When it was opened on the 10 October 1928 it was the largest single span steel arch bridge in Britain. The bridge is a landmark feature in the North East and is recognised around the world.

The Tyne Bridge is jointly owned and maintained by Newcastle City Council and Gateshead Council with maintenance costs being share on a population basis of 58:42. Newcastle City Council are the lead authority for the bridge with respect to maintenance.

- 3.2 The Tyne Bridge forms a key part of the area's main highway network crossing the River Tyne and carrying around 70,000 vehicles per day based on pre-Covid19 traffic levels.
- 3.3 The ongoing maintenance of the bridge is essential to ensure public safety and to ensure that it remains fit for purpose. Major maintenance of the bridge was last undertaken between 1999 and 2001 when the bridge deck was repaired, re-waterproofed and re-surfaced. Additionally, the steel structure was fully repainted with localised 'blasting' being undertaken to deal with deep lying corrosion together with steelwork repairs. The cost of the works at the time were in the order of £4.0M and were funded by the Department for Transport, reflecting the national significance of the bridge.
- 3.4 The works undertaken were expected to last 18-20 years and the bridge is now showing noticeable signs of deterioration, particularly with the appearance of corrosion of the steelwork and breakdown of the paint system.

4. Current position and proposals

- 4.1 A programme of specialist inspections and investigation of the condition of the bridge has been carried out over recent years to identify the scope and extent of the maintenance works that are now required.

The maintenance works will include the following:

- a. Full grit blasting and repainting of the bridge steelwork;
- b. Steelwork and cast-iron repairs/replacement as required;
- c. Lighting repairs/replacement as required;
- d. Concrete and drainage repairs within the towers;
- e. Resurfacing;
- f. Road drainage and joint repairs/replacement;
- g. Security improvements; and
- h. Door and window repair / replacement.

In addition, consideration will be given to:

- i. Bird access/nesting prevention measures;
- j. Access improvement; and
- k. Vehicle containment measures.

- 4.2 The intention is to carry out the programme of works over a three-year period.
- 4.3 The works will be undertaken in a manner that will seek to minimize the impact on any users. However, it is envisaged that a limited number of bridge closures will be required over the duration of the works to maintain public safety. Where possible these closures will take place over night and will be publicised in advance with clearly signed diversion routes put in place.

4.4 The programme costs have been prepared following work estimates provided by consultants / specialist contractors following the development of outline designs for the proposed works. HM Treasury - Supplementary Green Book Guidance has been used in the development of the 'Optimism Bias' allowances for the works. The current budget estimate for the works is in the order of £20M.

4.5 A bid has been submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) for Major Road Network (MRN) funding. The bid for the Tyne Bridge was combined with a programme of maintenance works on the Central Motorway in Newcastle.

This combined bid was successful in the first stage of the assessment and the DfT granted the authorities £100,000 to develop the projects to Outline Business Case. Works have been progressed in 2020-21 to develop the Outline Business Case. However, at the time of writing, a date for final DfT approval has not been identified.

4.6 It is anticipated that, if successful, the funding will be subject to a local contribution, estimated to be in the region of £3M and it is proposed that this would be met from the existing Local Transport Plan Maintenance Block allocations spread over 3-5 years. This would be funded by Newcastle City Council and Gateshead Council on a 58% : 42% basis.

4.7 Additionally, alternative sources of funding are being investigated.

5. Reasons for the decision

5.1 The programme of works recommended in paragraphs 4 are major works that require a significant level of funding to allow their delivery. The level of funding required is beyond the scope of the funding currently available for bridge maintenance. Member approval of the proposals and funding are required and will support the next iteration of the business case submitted to government.

5.2 The works are essential to secure the long-term availability of the Tyne Bridge to the travelling public and to maintain the safe and fit for purpose use of the bridge without the need to impose weight or width restrictions.

6. Alternative options

6.1 The programme of works identified addresses the deterioration of the structure which needs to be undertaken to maintain its safe use. The extent of the works requires significant investment.

6.2 The current level of Bridge Maintenance funding is insufficient to allow these works to be carried out and failure to secure additional capital funding would lead to a further deterioration in the bridge condition and would ultimately result in restrictions being placed on the use of the bridge.

6.3 If funding from the Department of Transport cannot be secured the Authorities would have to look at alternative funding options.

7. What happens next

7.1 Officers shall prepare the Department of Transport Funding Bids which will be submitted for consideration and approval.

7.2 The recommended programme of works and budget presented in paragraphs 4 shall be presented to the appropriate committee of each authority.

7.3 Subject to funding approval the programme of works and budget shall be

developed and submitted to the appropriate committee of each authority.

7.4 Subject to funding and Committee approval, the works will be procured in accordance with Newcastle City Council's Financial Regulations.

7.5 The development of the programme will be reported to the Joint Tyne Bridges Committee and to the appropriate committee of each authority. The Newcastle City Council Project Management Framework shall be used for the monitoring and reporting of the project.

8. Background papers

Background papers held by: -

Newcastle City Council, Place Directorate, Transport, Contact Officer:
Alastair Swan,

9. Contact officers

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