

Joint Tyne Bridges Committee

13 December 2021

(10.30 - 11.30 am)

This meeting was held virtually and live streamed

Present

Councillor John McElroy	Gateshead Council
Councillor John Eagle	Gateshead Council
Councillor Ian Patterson	Gateshead Council
Councillor Pauline Allen	Newcastle City Council
Cllr John-Paul Stephenson	Newcastle City Council
Cllr Steven Fairlie	Newcastle City Council

In attendance:

Nigel Burn	Gateshead Council
Alastair Swan	Newcastle City Council
Karen Christon	Newcastle City Council

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2021/22

RESOLVED: that Councillor John-Paul Stephenson be appointed as Chair of the Joint Bridges Committee for the 2021/22 municipal year.

2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2021/22

RESOLVED: that Councillor John McElroy be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Joint Bridges Committee for the 2021/22 municipal year.

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Ged Bell

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

5 MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEE

Noted.

6 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 10 DECEMBER 2020

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 December 2020 be agreed as an accurate record.

7 JOINT TYNE BRIDGES REVENUE BUDGET

Submitted: report on the Joint Tyne Bridges Revenue Budget by the Assistant Director of Transport, Newcastle City Council and the Strategic Director, Housing, Environment & Healthy Communities, Gateshead Council (circulated previously and a copy attached to the official minutes).

In response to questions committee from the joint committee, it was noted that Network Rail had responsibility for the removal of graffiti on the High Level Bridge and contact details could be included on local authority websites. Members noted that an agreement had been in place with Network Rail previously to allow local authorities to carry out routine maintenance without special permission, but the option to do this would now be subject to available budgets.

In respect of the structural integrity of the High Level Bridge, officers confirmed that a programme of inspections was carried out by Network Rail and information from the last inspection could be sought to confirm that the bridge's condition remained acceptable. A member noted that work had been carried out approximately 13 years ago to extend its life for a further 25 years, but since then there had been a deterioration in its condition. Given the use of the bridge as a major thoroughfare for pedestrians and cyclists, it was suggested that correspondence be sent to Network Rail to remind them of their responsibilities.

Officers confirmed that costs associated with repairing the pedestrian guard rail on the Redheugh Bridge following vehicle damage, would be pursued through insurance where the driver was known.

In respect of the condition of the pedestrian surface on the Tyne Bridge, Officers confirmed that any blistering identified through inspection would be repaired through the revenue budget.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the Chair and Vice-Chair write to Network Rail in respect of the condition of the High Level Bridge, and a copy of the correspondence be provided at the next meeting.
- ii) Note the expected expenditure for 2020/21 is £52,875 compared with a budget provision of £39,650.
- iii) That the programme of maintenance and repair works to be carried out in 2022/23, as detailed in paragraph 6 of the report, be recommended to the appropriate committee or delegated decision making of each authority for inclusion in that committee's budget for 2022/23.
- iv) That a budget provision of £60,800 for 2022/23, as detailed in paragraph 6 of the report and Appendix A, be recommended to the appropriate committee or

delegated decision making of each authority for inclusion in that committee's budget for 2022/23.

8 JOINT TYNE BRIDGES CAPITAL BUDGET

Submitted: report on the Joint Tyne Bridges Capital Budget by the Assistant Director of Transport, Newcastle City Council and the Strategic Director, Housing, Environment & Healthy Communities, Gateshead Council (circulated previously and a copy attached to the official minutes).

Responding to questions from the joint committee, it was noted that the last principal inspection of the Swing Bridge carried out two years ago, identified some deterioration and a programme of major maintenance was being considered. The mechanical operation of the bridge was controlled by the Port of Tyne and they were working to identify a long term solution.

In respect of the planned inspections on Redheugh Bridge and Scotswood Bridge, officers confirmed that no road closures would take place but lane closures for up to one week would be necessary.

RESOLVED:

- i) Committee note the progress made on the planned capital works programme funded by the Department for Transport's Local Transport Plan (LTP) for 2021/22.
- ii) The programme of planned capital works to be carried out in 2022/23, as detailed in paragraphs 5 to 9 of the report, be recommended to the appropriate committee or delegated decision processes of each authority.
- iii) The budget provision of £125,000 for 2022/23, as detailed in paragraphs 5 to 9 of the report, be recommended to the appropriate committee or delegated decision processes of each authority for inclusion in budgets for 2022/23.

9 TYNE BRIDGE MAJOR MAINTENANCE

Submitted: report on Tyne Bridge major maintenance by the Assistant Director of Transport, Newcastle City Council and the Strategic Director, Housing, Environment & Healthy Communities, Gateshead Council (circulated previously and a copy attached to the official minutes).

The Chair opened the discussion, welcoming progress that had been made on the Department for Transport funding bid. Concern was expressed about the poor condition of the bridge as an iconic structure for the north, as it approached a key anniversary.

Responding to questions raised by the joint committee, officers confirmed that the condition of the bridge was closely monitored and there were no immediate concerns about its structural capacity. Funding from the Department of Transport would allow for a detailed inspection to be carried out to understand the extent of works required and how soon restrictions would need to be imposed to limit

capacity. In the meantime, inspections were carried out regularly due to its condition and where issues were noted, particularly where there may be a risk to the public, they would be dealt with.

In respect of the impact of the Clean Air Zone, there was a possibility that proposals would reduce HGV levels. There were currently no predictions on potential changes to usage as a result of reopening the A1 following current works, but a reduction in usage had been noted following previous works and also during the pandemic.

Officers confirmed Newcastle City Council held a lease for ad-hoc event hire of the towers and enhancements would be carried out through the maintenance budget. There were no proposals beyond the current lease.

Responding to a concern about the lack of clarity about the prospect of government funding, officers confirmed that the £100,000 allocation would support preparation of a full business case for submission by Spring. Dialogue had taken place with DfT on the proposals, but a firm decision would not be taken until the business case had been considered. Alternative options for funding were being investigated, should the bid be unsuccessful. Members requested to be informed of the outcome of the bid.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.