

Bath & North East Somerset Council			
DECISION MAKER:	Cllr Paul Crossley, Leader of the Council		
DECISION DATE:	On or after 29th of December 2011	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:	
		E	2335
TITLE:	Victoria Bridge Emergency Repairs – Rule 16 – Special Urgency		
WARD:	Kingsmead, Westmoreland, Widcombe		
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM			
List of attachments to this report: None			

1 THE ISSUE

1.1 Following structural inspections carried out in 2010 Victoria Bridge was closed to pedestrians and cyclists in the interests of public safety. Recent (September 2011) structural monitoring of the bridge recorded cracking within critical structural members necessitating the commissioning and undertaking of emergency works to stabilise and protect the bridge from the risk of collapse. These works included attaching straps to the bridge and the provision of a truss which also enables the bridge to be brought back into use. The Cabinet Member is requested to ratify the decision to carry out the work and ratify the funding sources associated with the emergency works

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet Member is asked to agree that:

2.1 The decision to undertake the emergency works be ratified;

2.2 The remaining emergency works as set out in the report be completed;

2.3 The following sources of funding (as set out in section 3 for the emergency works) are used for this purpose:

- (1) The extra 2011/12 Structural Maintenance capital grant totalling £191,000, and
- (2) The Corporate Capital Contingency totalling £357,600.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The total estimated capital cost of the emergency works in 2011/12, based upon the truss being purchased and the ramps hired, is £846,810 as set out below:-

Forecast Costs

Summary Finance Requirement	Total
Peer Review	£64,000
Monitoring & Phase 1 Emergency Works	£34,210
Phase 2 Emergency Works	
Truss Installation	£473,078
Ramp Installation/Removal	£117,062
Fees	£158,460
Total Emergency Works	£846,810

Sources of Funding

Existing Funding	Total
DFT Grant – Structural Maintenance Capital Programme	£200,000
Growth Points Grant Funding	£64,000
Revenue	£34,210
Funding Approved As Special Urgency Decision	
DFT – Additional 2011/12 Capital Grant	£191,000*
Corporate Capital Contingency	£357,600*
Overall Funding	£846,810

* Funding to which this decision refers

3.2 Reprioritising the current Structural Maintenance Capital Programme for 2011/12 provided a £200,000 contribution to the cost of the emergency works. The Peer Review costs were funded from Growth Points grant and the Monitoring and Phase 1 works are funded from the revenue budget.

3.3 This report proposes to fund the balance of the costs from an additional grant of £191,000 from the DfT for structural maintenance work and £357,600 from the Council's Capital Contingency (which stands at £2.4 million). This represents an appropriate use of the capital contingency which is reviewed each year as part of the budget approval process.

3.4 Officers evaluated the options to either hire or purchase the truss required for the emergency work. The indicative programme for restoration suggested that the truss will be needed for a minimum of 102 weeks, as it is required to facilitate the permanent works. After 105 weeks, the purchase option represents a lower cost. This includes the supplier's 'buy back' offer of 20% of the purchase cost (subject to the truss not being damaged). With a project of this duration and nature, on an aged structure, delays are quite likely due to weather and unforeseen circumstances etc. Therefore, the purchase option was taken as it avoids the financial risk from any project overrun.

3.5 The decision to approve the sources of funding as set out in paragraph 2.2 of this report and shown in the table included in paragraph 3.1 is proposed as a 'Rule 16 – Special Urgency' decision on the basis that the decision could not reasonably be deferred due to the serious risk that the Bridge could fail unless emergency action was taken. The necessary comments of statutory officers and agreement of the Deputy Chair of the Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel for Planning, Transport & Environment have been obtained.

4 CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- *Addressing the causes and effects of Climate Change*
The bridge provides a key pedestrian and cycle link to the Western Riverside development helping to avoid dependency on the car
- *Improving transport and the public realm*
The structure forms part of a key safe route school helping to promote alternative modes of transport.

5 THE REPORT

5.1 Victoria Bridge was built in 1836 and designed by James Dredge. Very few bridges of this unusual design remain; it is the oldest example. The Bridge has a Grade 2* listing.

5.2 The bridge is some fifty years beyond a normal design life and, being made of materials including timber and wrought iron, it has deteriorated over time. Following routine structural assessments it was necessary to close the bridge to pedestrians and cyclists in October 2010.

5.3 A structural monitoring regime was put in place to ensure public safety, whilst officers investigated options for a temporary solution. The options considered both temporary works to the existing bridge and the provision of a Bailey Bridge alongside the existing structure. At the same time officers commenced the investigation and design for a permanent restoration of the bridge.

5.4 In October 2011 the monitoring regime indicated that the condition of the hangers had deteriorated significantly over a relatively short timescale. As a result of this deterioration, it became necessary to close the river path on the north side of the river and British Waterways also closed the river (following consultation with the Council).

5.5 In November 2011, officers instigated emergency works to protect the structure these included provision of props to support the bridge deck and temporary strapping across the bridge.

5.6 Installation of a truss to support the bridge was originally planned for spring 2012. This would provide structural support for the bridge as well as a platform for the permanent restoration works. The provision of the truss was accelerated to provide additional support for the bridge and it was installed in December 2011.

5.7 The truss has been designed to accommodate the passage of pedestrians through it, thus providing a temporary route, (although not a DDA compliant one) across the river for public use at times when construction works are not being carried out to the Bridge.

Ramps will need to be installed at each end of the truss before the route can be used by the public. It is envisaged that the ramps would be installed in Spring 2012 such that the route through the truss would be opened to coincide with the opening of Victoria Bridge Road through the Bath Western Riverside site.

5.8 A full restoration scheme is considered necessary to protect the structure in the long term. Officers will bring a further report to a future meeting of Cabinet setting out the options and costs for the restoration scheme.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 The report author and Cabinet member have fully reviewed the risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

7 EQUALITIES

7.1 An equalities assessment has been carried out in accordance with corporate guidelines. Failure to complete the emergency works and reopen the bridge will disadvantage young people and the elderly who do not have access a motor vehicle and will be denied a desirable pedestrian route

8 RATIONALE

8.1 As the Bridge has an historic value, provides an important route for pedestrians (including a route to school) and is a key gateway to the Western Riverside development the Council needed to take emergency action to protect public safety and ensure the bridge did not suffer a catastrophic failure.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 Deferring emergency works was ruled out in view of the additional risk of a bridge collapse due to either very strong winds, heavy snowfall or freezing temperatures during the winter period

10 CONSULTATION

10.1 The Cabinet Member for Transport, Section 151 Finance Officer; Chief Executive, Divisional Director for Planning and Transportation and the Monitoring Officer have been consulted on the report. Their comments have been included in the body of the report

11 ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN REACHING THE DECISION

11.1 The bridge has a historic value and provides a key pedestrian/cyclist route into the Western Riverside development.

11.2 Completion of the remaining emergency work, i.e. installing the ramps, is required to enable the route to be reopened across the river.

12 ADVICE SOUGHT

12.1The Council's Monitoring Officer (Divisional Director – Legal and Democratic Services) and Section 151 Officer (Divisional Director - Finance) have had the opportunity to input to this report and have cleared it for publication.

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Background papers	<i>None</i>
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