

## Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING:	<b>Cabinet</b>	
MEETING DATE:	<b>10th July 2013</b>	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		<b>E 2483</b>
TITLE:	<b>Two Tunnels Project Update</b>	
WARD:	Kingsmead, Westmoreland, Newbridge	
<b>AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>		
<b>List of attachments to this report:</b> <b>Appendix 1: Two Tunnels Greenway Leaflet</b> <b>Appendix 2: Element 3 General Arrangement</b> <b>Appendix 3: Northern Link Route</b> <b>Appendix 4: Northern Link General Arrangement</b> <b>Appendix 5: Claude Avenue Link General Arrangement</b>		

### 1 THE ISSUE

1.1 Sustrans formally opened the completed southern sections of the 2 Tunnels Greenway on 6<sup>th</sup> April, 2013 (Appendix 1), with an average of 520 cyclists using the route each day during the first week. Although not recorded by the automatic cycle counters, the route is also proving to be popular with walkers and joggers. This report provides an update on proposals to complete remaining northern section of the route, provide a northern link to the Riverside Path and a local link to Claude Ave.

### 2 RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet agrees that:

2.1 Subject to agreement with Sustrans under a Memorandum of Understanding, DfT's Linking to Communities grant be accepted to complete the remaining off road section on Council land through the northern section of Linear Park, with the works to upgrade the existing permissive footpath to a permissive cycle track for use by pedestrians and cyclists to be constructed by the Council using its land ownership powers between the disused Somerset and Dorset Railway Bridge and Bellotts Road (Element 3).

2.2 Sustrans under licence to Network Rail re-open the disused Somerset and Dorset Railway bridge for pedestrians and cyclists on a temporary basis until the bridge is replaced as part of the mainline rail electrification works planned from 2015

onwards. The access arrangements on Council land through Linear Park and extent of the Works on Linear Park are to be agreed with the Council.

- 2.3 The Council enter into agreements with Network Rail for the adoption and maintenance of a new replacement foot/cycle bridge provided by Network Rail as part of the mainline rail electrification works.
- 2.4 The DfT Cycle Safety Grant be accepted by Council for the purpose of implementing the 2 Tunnels Northern Links scheme in accordance with the grant conditions and agreed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Sustrans.
- 2.5 Subject to planning conditions being met, Claude Avenue Cycle Link is constructed by the Council between Claude Avenue and the 2 Tunnels Greenway funded by the LSTF WEST project.
- 2.6 The Divisional Director for Environmental Services be:
  - i) Authorised to negotiate and enter into any necessary agreements with Network Rail to facilitate the adoption and maintenance of the cycle/footbridge and seek to minimise future maintenance costs.
  - ii) Authorised to agree the Memorandum of Understanding with Sustrans to access funding allocated to Element 3 and Northern Link projects from the DfT Cycle Safety Fund and Links to Communities Fund.

### **3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 The estimated cost of each aspect of the projects is:

Element 3 on the northern section of Linear Park (Appendix 2) – £80k (fully grant funded by Linking to Communities Fund)

Northern Link (Appendix 3 and 4) – £330,470 (Funded by £70,000 Integrated Transport Block funding, £35,000 S106 funding and £225,470 DfT Cycle Safety Fund)

Claude Avenue Link (Appendix 5) - £180k (fully grant funded by LSTF WEST project)

- 3.2 The works are funded by a combination of DfT grants, with the Council providing match funding of £70k from the 2013/14 LTP capital programme and S106 Funding of £35k for the Northern Link project.
- 3.3 The scheme will improve the existing unmade footpath to a high quality bitumen macadam surface 3m wide through Linear Park and replace an existing Pelican Crossing, reducing existing and future maintenance costs. However the Council will be responsible for maintaining the cost of a new foot/cycle bridge over the mainline. The design life of highway structures is 120 years and typically the main costs to the Council will be in maintaining the protective paintwork to steel structures approximately every 15 years. Expenditure on highway structures is managed from existing budgets on a risk assessment basis to ensure the condition of highway structures do not become critical.

- 3.4 Currently there is no maintenance funding provision for the Two Tunnels project in the council's ownership. Consequently planned or reactive works to this asset could potentially increase the existing maintenance backlog.

## 4 CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

- *Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone*

The 2 Tunnels Greenway provides a safe off road route for pedestrians and cyclists to use for every day journeys for work, education and leisure purposes.

- *Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live*

The scheme is supported and promoted by the 2 Tunnels Group, a local community group who also help to maintain the route with the Council's Parks Service.

- *Building a stronger economy*

The route directly serves the Bath 'City of Ideas' Enterprise Area and will encourage more people to walk and cycle, particularly for short trips, thus reducing traffic congestion.

## 5 THE REPORT

- 5.1 The Council has worked with Sustrans to develop the 2 Tunnels Greenway, with the Council being responsible for constructing the route through Linear Park and a section of the route in Lyncombe Vale. These sections of the route are in the Council's ownership.

- 5.2 Sustrans has been responsible for constructing the section of the route outside the Council's ownership including the route through Devonshire and Combe Down Tunnels and the section of the route to the south of Combe Down Tunnel over Midford Viaduct.

- 5.3 Although the route was formally opened on 6<sup>th</sup> April, 2013, Element 3 of the route over the mainline railway and through Linear Park to Bellotts Road is not yet complete. Sustrans has been negotiating with Network Rail to reopen the former Somerset and Dorset railway bridge for pedestrians and cyclists. However the mainline electrification project has delayed a decision being made by Network Rail over the future of the bridge until recently.

- 5.4 In April 2013, Network Rail agreed to allow Sustrans to temporarily reopen the bridge for pedestrians and cyclists pending the demolition of the bridge for the electrification project from 2015 onwards. The bridge would then be replaced at Network Rail's expense by a new pedestrian/cycle bridge to a design approved by the council, who will then adopt the bridge and be responsible for future maintenance.

- 5.5 On the section of the route through Linear Way between the bridge and Bellotts Road, the Council will construct a new 3m wide permissive cycle track for use by pedestrians and cyclists, upgrading the existing unmade footpath. The cost of this work is estimated to be £80k entirely funded by Links to Communities Grant.

- 5.6 The Northern Link between the 2 Tunnels Greenway to the Riverside Path creates an attractive circular route between NCN 4 along the river, through Bath city centre and along the Kennett and Avon canal.
- 5.7 The scheme involves widening the northern side of Lower Bristol Road footway between Burnham Road and Fieldings Road under powers contained in the Highways Act 1980 and creating a cycle track for use by pedestrians and cyclists and upgrading the existing Pelican Crossing to a Toucan Crossing. The route then crosses the Halfpenny Bridge over the river to connect with the Riverside path
- 5.8 At present cycling is not permitted across the bridge and cycle dismount signs will be erected on each side of the bridge. The Council will monitor the usage of the bridge to determine in consultation with local ward members whether cyclists should be permitted to use the bridge in the future.
- 5.9 As part of original plan for the 2 Tunnels Greenway a number of connections to local roads were identified as being desirable, but not essential to the project. One of these connections is the link to Claude Avenue. The link is supported by the local community and primary school as well as the 2 Tunnels Group and it is proposed to use LSTF WEST funding to provide this link. The scheme is likely to need planning consent.

## **6 RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 6.1 The report author and Lead 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 Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed. The scheme provides an off road route that is accessible and of positive benefit to disabled people. Adverse impacts were identified with potential conflicts between elderly and disabled pedestrians sharing the route with fast moving cyclists. Sustrans, promoters of the route, have published a code of conduct to remind cyclists of the need to act responsibly and cycle safely on the shared use paths. The code is being publicised by the 2 Tunnels Group following the partial opening of the route and early reports of conflicts between different types of user.

## **8 RATIONALE**

- 8.1 The rationale is to complete the 2 Tunnels Greenway and provide an attractive and continuous cycle route along the Riverside Path through the centre of Bath and along the Kennett & Avon Canal, with a new local link provided to Claude Avenue.

## **9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 9.1 A route connecting the 2 Tunnels Greenway to the Riverside Path across the Lower Bristol Road and along Windsor Bridge Road was considered, but the volume of traffic and lack of controlled crossing points for cyclists to use ruled this option out.

## 10 CONSULTATION

10.1 Ward Councillor; Cabinet members; Stakeholders/Partners; Section 151 Finance Officer; Chief Executive; Monitoring Officer by email and through the 2 Tunnels Steering Group. A meeting was held on site with Westmoreland Ward Cllr Sharon Ball to discuss and agree the proposals.

10.2 Further consultation will be undertaken with Ward members and local residents on cycle access across the Halfpenny Footbridge. In the meantime cyclists will be required to dismount prior to crossing the bridge.

## 11 ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN REACHING THE DECISION

*11.1 Customer Focus; Sustainability; Property; Other Legal Considerations*

## 12 ADVICE SOUGHT

12.1 The 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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<b>Background papers</b>	<i>E1842 Two Tunnels Project</i>
<b>Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format</b>	