

10 September 2020		ITEM: 10
Standards and Audit Committee		
A13 Widening Project		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: N/A	
Report of: Anna Eastgate, Assistant Director for LTC & Transport Infrastructure Projects		
Accountable Assistant Director: Anna Eastgate, Assistant Director for LTC & Transport Infrastructure Projects		
Accountable Director: Andy Millard, Director of Place		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

This report is provided at the Committee's request to have a quarterly update on the A13 project. This report and future reports will focus on the latest progress in delivery of the scheme, any changes in the agreed programme and any changes in the out turn forecast.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 That the Standards and Audit Committee notes and comments on the report content.

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1** This project involves widening the A13 Stanford le Hope by-pass from 2 to 3 lanes in both directions, from the junction with the A128 (Orsett Cock roundabout) in the west to the A1014 (The Manorway) in the east and replacing four bridges. Once the project is completed, there will be a continuous three-lane carriageway from the M25 to Stanford le Hope, reducing congestion and resultant pollution, improving journey times and supporting further economic growth.
- 2.2** There have been a number of issues with the project which has resulted in delays in the delivery and an increase in costs, the detail of which has been discussed and considered in previous reports to both this Committee and PTR O&S.

2.3 This report and future reports to this committee will focus on progress in delivery and provide an update on out turn forecast and programme.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

Progress

3.1 The site continues to operate in accordance with the industry guidelines for working safely in Covid 19, with no positive cases recorded across the project. Plastic screens have been installed in the offices, to enable more office staff to return, alongside additional hygiene facilities and cleaning resources.

3.2 Significant visible progress made over the course of the summer so far, with the successful installation of Saffron Gardens Bridge and the two new bridges at the Orsett junction. Work is underway to construct the surfaces and walls of each structure. Earthworks, drainage and other works continue to progress at the same time.

3.3 Almost £7.5million has been invested locally, by using regional suppliers and businesses based within 10 miles of the project – supporting the local economy at a time when this is needed more than ever.

3.4 The project has employed summer placement civil engineering students – currently studying at Loughborough University – helping to foster the next generation of civil engineers.

3.5 Considerate Constructors Scheme assessment took place in July. We scored 43/50 and were rated ‘Excellent’ by the independent review body.

Programme

3.6 Under the terms of the NEC 3 contract in place, there are four limited provisions which would enable the Council to reject changes to the programme. In rejecting the contractors programme, the Council has to give the justification and reasons why.

3.7 The four provisions are:

- The Contractors plans are not practicable
- It does not show information required by the contract
- It does not represent the Contractors plans realistically
- It does not comply with the works information.

3.8 The current accepted programme No 34 has an anticipated planned completion date within the currently published period of Autumn/Winter 2021. Again it is likely that there will be further delays as a consequence of Covid 19 but as the pandemic is still a live issue, it is difficult to understand the impact at this stage.

Budget Forecast

- 3.9 Members will recall at the last meeting, the anticipated out turn forecast including contingency was £114,675,000.
- 3.10 There is no update to this figure which was arrived at prior to the Covid 19 crisis. As mentioned elsewhere in this report, there will be a cost impact from the Covid 19 crisis which is difficult to assess when the crisis is still very much ongoing.
- 3.11 Information relating to the impacts on cost and programme as a consequence of Covid 19 are being closely monitored and separately identified. This is to ensure that the Council can apply for any additional support from Government should it be made available for infrastructure schemes impacted by the pandemic.
- 3.12 Members will recall that there were three options being looked at to bridge the forecast funding gap of £26.9m as follows:
- An increase in grant funding towards the delivery of the Project;
 - Funding contributions from the private sector; and
 - Funding contributions from Thurrock Council.
- 3.13 Officers from Highways, Finance, Economic Growth and Transport Projects held a workshop to look at the options. The workshop has identified a list of ideas which need to be looked into in further detail before taking any forward on which to base a decision. Those ideas will be reported back when they are further worked up into potential opportunities.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 To respond to the Committee's request for quarterly updates on the A13 project.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 5.1 A communication plan has been prepared and agreed.
- 5.2 Member briefing sessions are held periodically at the A13 Site Offices and provide an opportunity for Members to receive a presentation from the contractor and raise issues on behalf of local residents.
- 5.3 Meet the team sessions are held monthly at the A13 Site Office and are a popular way for residents and road users to find out more about the works and ask any questions, although as a result of Covid-19 these (and the Member briefing sessions) are currently postponed.

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

- 6.1 The A13 Widening scheme supports the corporate priorities by encouraging and promoting economic prosperity.
- 6.2 The A13 Widening scheme also supports the Thurrock Transport Strategy (2013 – 2026) and in particular policy TTS18: Strategic road network improvements by creating additional capacity to reduce congestion, improve journey times, facilitate growth and improve access to key strategic economic hubs.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Jonathan Wilson**
Assistant Director - Finance

The financial implications are set out in the body of the report.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Tim Hallam**
Deputy Head of Law and Deputy Monitoring Officer

This is an update report and there are no specific direct legal implications arising.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**
Community Engagement and Project Monitoring Officer

There are no implications arising from this update report.

7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder, or Impact on Looked After Children)

The contractor is required to risk assess all aspects of this project and put in place appropriate procedures and measures to safeguard lives as well as the environment.

The contractor is also required to prepare a sustainability plan that reduces carbon emissions and reduces the project's carbon footprint.

8. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- None

9. Appendices to the report

- None

Report Author:

Anna Eastgate

Assistant Director for LTC & Transport Infrastructure Projects