

9 February 2021		ITEM: 6
Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
A13 Widening Project		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Not applicable	
Report of: Anna Eastgate, Assistant Director of Lower Thames Crossing & Project Delivery		
Accountable Assistant Director: Anna Eastgate, Assistant Director of Lower Thames Crossing & Project Delivery		
Accountable Director: Andy Millard, Director of Place		
This report is public		

Executive Summary

This report is provided at the Chair's request in order to update in relation to the progress made on the A13 project. It was noted at the last meeting in December 2020 that when an update was available on out turn forecast and programme, it would be reported to this Committee.

1. Recommendation

1.1 That the Planning Transport Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny 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 The consent for this project was granted by a Harbour Empowerment Order in 2008, with the Council taking on responsibility for the preliminary design in 2011. The local growth fund deal was received in 2014 which provided the certainty needed for the Council to award contracts for the preliminary design

in early 2014. Detailed design and main works construction contracts followed in 2016.

- 2.3 Since the last update to the PTR Overview & Scrutiny Committee in December 2020, there are further significant issues to report.
- 2.4 A similar report is being considered by Standards and Audit Committee on 11 March 2021 in relation to this project.

3. Progress

- 3.1 Up until December 2020, work had continued throughout the Covid 19 pandemic with the team working hard to ensure all guidance and covid safe procedures were followed. Consistent with the emergence of the new more transmissible strain of Covid, the site was impacted in mid-December with the report of three cases in a drainage team. It was thought that this outbreak was contained however a week later, further cases were reported in the site office and within the supervision teams on site.
- 3.2 The team took advice from the Council's public health and environmental health teams and a decision was made based upon that advice and the need to operate the site safely, that it would be sensible to close the construction site early for the Christmas break. Consequently the site was closed on 17th December 2020.
- 3.3 At the time of writing this report, work is underway to look at opening the site for construction slowly and safely and ensure all relevant guidance and precautions are taken to protect workers and the public.
- 3.4 Further progress includes the completion of all major earthworks, surfacing on both sides of the carriageway and the concrete bridge decks on the structures. Demolition of the former bridge structures will commence in spring and it is anticipated the new Horndon bridge will be open to the public in the coming weeks.
- 3.5 More than £8.7 million 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.
- 3.6 There has now been more than 500,000 hours since the last RIDDOR and more than 1 million hours worked on the project in total. The Project Accident Incident Rate is currently 0 which is a significant achievement.

Revised Out turn forecast

- 3.7 With the project entering the last 12 months of construction activity, an exercise is underway to review the anticipated remaining costs on the project.

- 3.8 It has been reported that additional costs are expected due to ongoing financial pressures with the scheme. This situation has now been exacerbated by the issues with Covid and whilst there have been some improvements with the issues relating to utilities diversions, clash detection and drainage, these matters are still having an impact on delivery and therefore impacting also on cost.

Programme

- 3.9 The current accepted programme has an anticipated planned completion date of March 2022. This does not include any additional delays as a direct consequence of the Covid impact. That will be reported at a future meeting when a revised programme has been submitted for approval.
- 3.10 The team continues to challenge the construction programme to look at efficiencies to see if completion can be brought forward. Work is underway to identify ways in which the programme will deliver a road open to traffic in December 2021.
- 3.11 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.
- 3.12 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.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 To respond to the Chair's request for information and ensure democratic scrutiny of the A13 Widening scheme.

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 forecast position on the project remains under review as set out in sections 3.8 to 3.9

7.2 Legal

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

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

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Becky Lee**
Team Manager – Community Development and Equalities

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:

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Place