

11 March 2021		ITEM: 14
Standards and Audit Committee		
A13 Widening Project		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: N/A	
Report of: Anna Eastgate, Assistant Director Lower Thames Crossing and Project Delivery		
Accountable Assistant Director: Anna Eastgate, Assistant Director Lower Thames Crossing and Project Delivery		
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 not only in Thurrock but across the whole south Essex corridor.

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 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 The site has opened back up gradually to safeguard against another outbreak and to 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.

Programme

3.7 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.

3.8 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.

- 3.9 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.
- 3.10 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.

Budget

- 3.11 With the project within the last 12 months of construction activity, the team is undertaking a full review of the anticipated remaining costs on the project and the commercial terms of the contracts in place. These negotiations cannot be reported at this time due to commercial sensitivity and until the negotiations are advanced, however the objective for the Council is to secure a greater level of certainty as to cost and programme through the commercial arrangements. This has been considered previously but was not an available option given the risk profile of the project at that time in terms of structures, utilities and drainage.

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 forecast position on the project remains under review as set out in section 3.11.

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: **Rebecca 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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