



FOR PUBLICATION

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**REPORT TO CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, ASSETS AND
TRANSPORT**

25 July 2024

Report of the Executive Director - Place

Z26193 Weir Footbridge (Lovelock) Maintenance
(Cabinet Member for Highways, Assets and Transport)

1. Divisions Affected

1.1 Bakewell.

2. Key Decision

2.1 This is not a Key Decision.

3. Purpose

3.1 To seek the Cabinet Member's approval, under Protocol 5 of the Council's Financial Regulations, to proceed with the procurement and delivery of Weir Footbridge (Lovelock Bridge) Maintenance scheme at an estimated cost of £100,000.

4. Information and Analysis

4.1 The purpose of the scheme is to produce a package or works to carry out essential maintenance of the bridge and to address any other issues, e.g. resurfacing, inclusive of the removal of the lovelocks and prevention of re-attachment and delivery of all of the works. The capital scheme is not currently in the commercial pipeline.

- 4.2 The most contentious issue with the scheme is the removal of the locks, as discussed in Section 7 of Appendix 1 below. The Council has had complaints that locks have caused injury to the public, e.g, scratches, as they walk along the bridge. In addition, the locks are increasing the dead loading on the structure and so are posing a risk in this regard. They are also preventing the maintenance of the bridge structure, and so therefore need to be removed.
- 4.3 However, recognising the strength of feeling in relation to this issue, it is intended to collaborate with local stakeholders, including local elected representatives and the local District and Town Council, to work with all parties on the timings and works needed.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 A full communication plan is being developed in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Highways, Assets and Transport to make reasonable endeavours to inform interested parties of the works to be undertaken. Engagement has been had with Bakewell Town Council, as the local representation, and Derbyshire Dales District Council, both of these will be involved in the next stages of engagement.

6. Alternative Options Considered

- 6.1 Do nothing: The bridge is long overdue this essential maintenance and it has been previously deferred. Without maintenance, the bridge will deteriorate into a further state of disrepair until the point that it will not be economically viable to maintain and the bridge would need to be closed. This is the main pedestrian access into Bakewell Town Centre from the adjacent car parking provision.

7. Implications

- 7.1 Appendix 1 sets out the relevant implications considered in the preparation of the report.

8. Background Papers

- 8.1 Procurement Documents (Confidential).

9. Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 – Implications.

10. Recommendation

That the Cabinet Member:

- a) Approves, under Protocol 5 of the Council's Financial Regulations, to proceed with the procurement and delivery of Weir Footbridge (Lovelock Bridge) Maintenance scheme at an estimated cost of £100.000.

11. Reasons for Recommendation

11.1 To ensure long-term serviceability of the structure.

11.2 To stop further injury to the public.

12. Is it necessary to waive the call in period?

12.1 No.

Report Author: Julian Gould

Contact details: julian.gould@derbyshire.gov.uk

Implications

Financial

- 1.1 Capital funding for the scheme was originally allocated in 2020. Additional capital funding was approved for 2024-25 to a total scheme value of £0.156m. To date, £0.007m has been spent against this allocation, meaning funding of £0.149m is available for the maintenance scheme outlined above.

Legal

- 2.1 The Council's Standing Orders Relating to Contracts provide that where the procurement of a contract is not detailed in the appropriate Departmental Service Plan, approval to undertake the procurement must be sought from Cabinet or the Cabinet Member as appropriate along with approval to delegate the award of the contract to the relevant Executive Director.
- 2.2 The Procurement value is below FTS threshold and will be undertaken using Protocol 5 in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations and Standing Orders Relating to Contracts.
- 2.3 As the bridge is a local highway authority structural asset that continues to carry a footpath that is a highway maintainable at the public expense, the Council as highway authority is required by the Highway Act 1980 maintain the bridge and the footpath, and to assert and protect the right of the public to pass along the footpath to its full extent, including the section over the bridge.

Human Resources

- 3.1 None.

Information Technology

- 4.1 None.

Equalities Impact

- 5.1 Not applicable.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 6.1 This is the main pedestrian access to Bakewell Town Centre from the adjacent car parks and agricultural centre, it is integral to supporting the economic wellbeing of the Town. (Thriving Communities).

Other (for example, Health and Safety, Environmental Sustainability, Property and Asset Management, Risk Management and Safeguarding)

Public Relations

- 7.1 The removal of the padlocks from the bridge is an emotive subject with arguments from both sides for the removal of the locks and their retention.
- 7.2 All Council sections involved in the scheme are aware of the sensitivity of the proposed works. As such, advanced warning and engagement is being given to the public through notifications positioned at the bridge and through the Council's Communications section.

Works Programme

- 7.3 Some of the required maintenance works are dependent on good weather conditions and consent from the Environment Agency. If the scheme is delayed the works might be split into two phases:

Phase 1: Removal of the locks and alteration of the bridge parapets to stop future lock attachment.

Phase 2: Repainting and resurfacing of the bridge (such works are best carried out between April and September).