

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 14 December 2017

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director Enterprise, Community and Resources.

**PORTFOLIO:** Physical Environment and Transportation

**SUBJECT:** Runcorn De-Linking of the Silver Jubilee Bridge

**WARD(S)** Mersey

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to present to Members options for delivering the de-linking of the Silver Jubilee Bridge (SJB) in Runcorn.
- 1.2 The report also seeks approval to allocate financial resources to progress the delinking work as quickly as possible.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That**

- 1) Members agree to the development of the option as outlined in section 5.2 of the report;**
- 2) Members recommend to Full Council a variation to the capital programme to cover the costs as outlined in section 5.3 of the report; and**
- 3) The Strategic Director Enterprise, Community and Resources be authorised, in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Physical Environment and Transportation to take the necessary steps to ensure value for money through the appropriate procurement processes.**

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 Members will recall that a 10-15 year vision document for Runcorn Town Centre has been produced and was approved at the Executive Board in September 2017. Runcorn Town Centre is one of 8 key impact areas contained within the Council's Mersey Gateway Regeneration Plus Plan, which was considered and approved by the Executive Board in March 2017.
- 3.2 The opening of the new bridge and temporary closure of the Silver

Jubilee Bridge presents a unique opportunity to redefine the existing road infrastructure in the area of the Runcorn Town Centre which is in close proximity to Runcorn Main-Line station and support the development of the Runcorn Station Quarter concept and the Town Centre. (Plan Attached as Appendix 1).

- 3.3 It is proposed that changes to the road layout and removal of certain structures would not only improve the visibility of the town centre and its connectivity to and from Runcorn station, but would also make it easier to create and release new sites for future development.
- 3.4 In developing a Masterplan for the area, an approach which was approved by the Executive Board in October 2017, it will be necessary to assemble and prepare sites for development; engage with existing land owners; and proactively market the benefits that a developed station quarter will bring to the wider Runcorn Town Centre.
- 3.5 The closure of the Silver Jubilee Bridge will make it easier to do this work and, therefore, resources would be required to commence the de-linking and redesign of the road infrastructure as quickly as possible.
- 3.6 The Council commissioned a delinking report which set out options for promoting positive access and movement in regard to the SJB, Expressway and Station Quarter. Both options also took into account the aspiration to 'unlock the locks' in Runcorn. For information, the 'Unlocking the Locks initiative seeks the restoration of the first of the two lines of locks which were constructed in Runcorn to connect the Bridgewater Canal, originally to the River Mersey and later to the Manchester Ship Canal.
- 3.7 Having considered the delinking report, a preferred option has been identified and is recommended for approval. Section 5 of this report summarises the other available options. The preferred option has considered costs and technical feasibility, but also focuses on the best option for releasing the longer-term economic regeneration benefits of the station quarter and surrounding area. It proposes a new major Gateway to Runcorn being formed around a junction, located at the bottom of a two-way eastern slip. The new junction would tie the SJB, Expressway and Greenway road into one junction. The new junction would also connect to Devonshire Place. (See Appendix 2).
- 3.8 It was felt that this scheme would also significantly boost accessibility into the retail core by car. Station Quarter traffic would be served through a new link to connect Greenway Road, south of the proposed new junction.
- 3.9 Further assessment work has also been undertaken to determine

how this preferred option could be taken forward. Clearly, there are a number of permutations and choices associated with this. Further information is provided in section 5.0 below.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The Runcorn Vision document sets out the Council's ambition and priorities to shape Runcorn's future. It also illustrates the interconnectivity between key opportunity sites and could be used to inform policy decisions that the Council will take regarding future investment in the area.

#### **5.0 OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The main elements of the proposed works are:

1. To demolish Runcorn Approach Viaduct West (RAVW) and other associated structures along the length of highway known as Trumpet Loop.
2. To construct a new cantilever edge and parapet to Runcorn Approach Viaduct following demolition of RAVW
3. To construct a new roundabout which will link to both directions of the Expressway, Runcorn Approach Viaduct and a link towards the proposed station quarter site.

5.2 The estimated cost of undertaking these works are:

Roundabout Junction £6.1m  
Parapet Replacement £1.9m  
Full Demolition and Earthworks £1.61m  
TOTAL: £9.61m

5.3 These costs would need to be tested through a formal tendering process and also through the existing 'Balvac Scape' Procurement Framework.

5.4 Other options that were considered included the following:

- i) 'A Do Minimum Option' which results in the construction of 3-way traffic signals onto Greenway Road only (£777k); parapet replacement (£1.9m) and demolition of the RAVW (£310k), TOTAL £2.99m
- ii) 'A Do Minimum Plus option which results in the construction of a 3 way traffic signal junction onto Greenway Rd with Runcorn Approach Viaduct, with emergency/ad hoc provision to the eastbound Expressway

carriageway (£1m); Parapet replacement (£1.9m); Demolition (£1.61m), TOTAL £4.51m.

- iii) 'A do nothing' option'. This option acknowledges that the Council's budget is under significant pressure and funding is required to deliver other services across the Council. However, a do nothing option will still require funding of between £1.49m and £2.6m to maintain the existing structures and road network in the project area. For example, a recent inspection report dated August 2014 made several recommendations for repairs and refurbishment. The document reported heavy corrosion of the disc bearings on the south abutment which were suspected to have seized. Further remedial work such as deck drainage and reapplication of a paint protection system would be required.

5.5 There are a number of advantages to proceeding with the preferred option. Firstly, it releases more land for development within the station quarter; secondly it is more likely to draw people from the station to the town centre, and thirdly, it reaffirms the operation of the SJB as a bridge for local usage.

5.6 The project would be financed by prudential borrowing and would require the Council to vary its capital programme to accommodate this.

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

### **6.1 Children & Young People in Halton**

There are no specific implications arising from this report.

### **6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

It is anticipated that new jobs will be created through the undertaking of the works, but in the long-term it is hoped that new jobs will be created as a result of an enhanced leisure, business, retail and cultural offer in Runcorn town centre.

### **6.3 A Healthy Halton**

There are no specific implications arising from this report.

### **6.4 A Safer Halton**

There are no specific implications arising from this report.

## 6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

The proposals present a number of Urban Renewal opportunities:

- The creation of a new gateway into Runcorn
- A high quality arrival and destination point, in the town
- The improvement of links to Runcorn Town Centre
- The release of development land and improvement of existing sites.

## 7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The proposed works will require planning permission. In addition, a stopping up order will be required, as well as, substantial earthworks removal and demolition. Consequently, key risks to the programme could be costs over-run and delays in the completion of the works. To mitigate these risks, a detailed project plan outlining a project timeline has been developed. The Council has also commissioned Mott McDonald to formulate the high-level costs for the advanced works as identified in this report. Whilst the costs are estimates at this stage a tendering exercise will seek to ensure that best value is secured.

## 8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 There are no immediate Equality and Diversity issues arising from this report.

## 9.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

9.1 To unlock sites for development in and around the Runcorn Station Quarter.

## 10.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

10.1 The options considered and rejected are outlined in section 5 of this report.

## 11.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

11.1 March 2018.

## 12.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
SJB De-linking Advance Works Report	5 <sup>th</sup> Floor Municipal Building	Ian Jones

Runcorn Vision Document	5 <sup>th</sup> Floor Municipal Building	Wesley Rourke
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