

MERSEY GATEWAY EXECUTIVE BOARD

At a meeting of the Mersey Gateway Executive Board on Monday, 21 July 2008 in the Conference Room 1, Municipal Building

Present: Councillors McDermott (Chairman) and Wharton

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Polhill

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: B. Dodd, S. Nicholson, M. Reaney, D. Sutton, D. Tregear and L. Derbyshire

Also Present: Councillors Findon and Redhead

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

MGEB4 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19th May 2008, having been printed and circulated, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

MGEB5 PROGRESS ON ISSUES RAISED WITH THE DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT

The Board considered a report of the Mersey Gateway Project Director which asked Members to note the progress made with officials at the Department for Transport (DfT) leading to securing an agreement on the key issues of project value for money and project delivery, which were required to achieve as part of the Programme Entry funding conditions.

It was reported that discussions with DfT officials continued to focus on reaching a consensus on value for money based on the revised traffic model outputs. It was noted that the funding agreement with Ministers required both value for money and deliverability to be reviewed prior to any Public Inquiry based on the results of the new traffic model. It was also noted that it was planned to settle these matters prior to making an application for the Transport and Works Act, but the progress made combined with the extra

assessments required by the DfT had prevented this from being achieved. However, significant progress had been made towards providing all the information requested and there were no concerns raised by the DfT to date.

Arising from the discussion, the Board noted:-

- (1) That DfT officials were prepared to support a bid for development costs and a report would be presented in September regarding this matter;
- (2) That the North West Regional Assembly's Executive Board had agreed to bring forward the Regional Transport Grant to cover the development cost bid to DfT and Ministers could now be consulted for a decision without delay;
- (3) That securing a DfT contribution to development costs would ease the pressure on the development cost budget;
- (4) That a full report on the development cost increase with advice on revised financial requirements and development cost budget would be given to the Mersey Gateway Executive Board in September; and
- (5) That the Mersey Gateway Project provided an opportunity to improve accessibility to services, education and employment for the Borough.

RESOLVED That:

- (1) the progress made and the actions taken to date be noted; and
- (2) the estimated scheme cost in outturn terms be noted.

MGEB6 COMMENTS RECEIVED IN RESPONSE TO THE PUBLISHED ORDERS AND APPLICATIONS

The Board considered a report of the Mersey Gateway Project Director which provided an interim report, pending the termination of the formal consultation period on 18th July on the expressions of support, representations and formal objections, received in response to the published Orders and Applications for Mersey Gateway. The report also

outlined the action that would be taken to resolve the issues raised in the formal objections,

It was reported that for a project of the size and complexity of Mersey Gateway, the response received at the date of publication of the report had been relatively low key.

A summary of the parties and institutions that had responded with expressions of support, representations or to record a formal objection were listed in Appendix 1 to the report, along with a summary of the issues raised. It had been encouraging to receive the confirmation of support from the North West Development Agency, Cheshire County Council and Cheshire Police and neighbouring Councils in Merseyside.

The Board was advised that the letters of objections could be categorised into three groups, Holding Objections, Landowners and Members of the Public. It was reported that a number of letters had been received in respect of the additional traffic that is expected on the central expressway. The Board was also advised of the actions that would be taken in respect of the objections that had been received.

Arising from the discussion, the Board noted:-

- (1) That the project would introduce increased safety on the central expressway by creating extra lanes within available land to help facilitate the volume of traffic;
- (2) It was noted that there was some campaigning against the bridge and there had been leaflets distributed, many of which were misleading or misinformed. However, it was also noted that all the concerns would be addressed during the planning process;
- (3) The extensive consultation exercise including leaflet drops throughout the Borough and exhibitions that had taken place on the project were noted. The process and statutory consultation undertaken in respect of the planning process was also noted;
- (4) That it was crucial to have a pro active communication strategy for the project in order to ensure that accurate information was being disseminated throughout the Borough. This would increase awareness of the advantages

of the scheme and reduce the amount of inaccurate information being circulated; and

- (5) The process and timescales of a public enquiry was noted.

RESOLVED That:

- (1) the formal responses received to date be noted; and
- (2) the action taken to resolve the Objections be noted.

MINUTES ISSUED: 23rd July 2008

CALL IN: 30th July 2008

Any matter decided by the Mersey Gateway Executive Board may be called in no later than 30th July 2008

Meeting ended at 11.25 a.m.