



**Report to: Place and Economic Development Sub-Committee, 29<sup>th</sup> October 2020**

**Report of: Corporate Director – Place**

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**Subject: DIGLIS TO CARRINGTON BRIDGE ACTIVE TRAVEL CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENTS**

## **1. Recommendation**

### **1.1 The Place and Economic Development Sub-Committee:**

- **notes the contents of this report and confirms its in-principle approval for the progression of the project;**
- **authorises the Corporate Director-Place in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of this committee to enter into a joint delivery agreement with the County Council securing the governance arrangements for the delivery of section 1 of the riverside route;**
- **recommends to P&R committee to authorise the expenditure of up to £50,000 (from previously allocated feasibility funds towards delivery of section 1 of the riverside route);**
- **supports the expenditure of S106 funding to deliver section 1 of the riverside route (as detailed in Appendix C);**
- **authorises the Corporate Director-Place to submit funding bids to third parties for the balance of funding required to deliver the Project; and**
- **agrees to receive further reports on the outcome of advanced feasibility work for the riverside route sections 2 and 3.**

## **2. Background**

2.1 Worcester City Council has been working in partnership with Worcestershire County Council on exploring the feasibility and options to improve pedestrian and cycling provision from Diglis Bridge to Carrington Bridge. Including:

- Assessing existing pedestrian/cycle routes serving the area; and
- Assessing feasibility with regard to delivering a new/improved pedestrian/cycle route.

2.2 This work links in with Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) which identifies an Active Travel Corridor (ATC) between Kempsey Village and Diglis in Worcester. This route can be along the River Severn, generally following the route of the Severn Way footpath; along the A38; or a mixture of the two using local footpaths and other Public Rights of Way (PRoW).

- 2.3 The aim is to improve connectivity and movement corridors along the riverside, to existing and proposed (South Worcestershire Urban Extension) residential areas as well as improving access to the public open space of the riverside. It will also link in with wider cycling and walking projects for the City which includes elements of the Riverside project, Diglis Playing Fields project and Kepax bridge project.
- 2.4 It should be noted that the route can be split into three sections and anyone of these sections can be delivered/progressed independently of each other. Obviously, the full route will provide the most benefits.

### **3. Progress to date**

- 3.1 To date the following surveys/studies have been carried out:
- Initial site inspections along the western bank of the River Severn to identify potential constraints;
  - Surveys of current walking and cycling infrastructure within the immediate area;
  - Topographical survey between Diglis and Carrington (sections 1, 2 and 3);
  - Initial ecological assessments between Diglis and Carrington (sections 1, 2 and 3); and
  - Detailed plans and costings for delivery of section 1.
- 3.2 It should be noted that during the above work it became apparent that the 'riverside' route could be clearly be split into 3 sections with links into existing national and local cycling routes. As can be seen at Appendix A.
- 3.3 Detailed assessment and costing has been undertaken on section 1. With findings attached at Appendix B. A number of route options for this section have been explored and of these, Option 3 is your Officers recommended route. This is expanded further within section 4 Preferred Option of this report below.
- 3.4 It is proposed to utilise a delivery partnership with Worcestershire County Council, as has been utilised on other infrastructure projects within the City, where a joint project board oversees delivery on behalf of the City Council. This will allow a cost effective delivery through the use of existing procurement frameworks and contractor relationships.

### **4. Preferred Option**

- 4.1 Worcester City Council, in partnership with Worcestershire County Council, to progress the proposal in line with the recommendations above including delivery of option 3 for section 1 of the route.
- 4.2 When progressing a physical intervention there is always a balancing between conflicting priorities. In this instance we need to balance bio-diversity impacts with sustainability benefits.
- 4.3 Improving walking and cycling networks will have significant sustainability benefits giving people real transport choices, as well as providing access to the open spaces and the natural environment (with the positive physical and mental health benefits that this provides).

- 4.4 It is worth noting that when considering which route to progress significant weight was attached to minimising the potential impact on ecology within the area. Option 3 is identified as having the least impact, mainly due to the reduced earthworks (Cut 730m<sup>3</sup>, Fill 130m<sup>3</sup>), is required compared to other options. The reduction in earthworks will therefore reduce the impact on existing vegetation and whilst being the most expensive route to deliver it is considered the extra are merited in this instance.
- 4.4 Section 1 of the route will provide significant improvements to the 'off road' walking and cycling infrastructure within the area and can be considered as either a stand alone route, or as part of a wider route with section 2 and 3.
- 4.5 The preferred option is to deliver all 3 sections in due course once additional funding is identified.

## **5. Alternative Options Considered**

- 5.1 For the reasons set out above no other options are considered appropriate. Current surveys/reports do not indicate any show stoppers. As such, subject to funding being acquired, there are no currently identified issues which would prevent the progression of section 1 of the project and further investigation for delivery of sections 2 and 3.

## **6. Implications**

### **6.1 Financial and Budgetary Implications**

- 6.1.1 The preferred option has an estimated cost of circa £265,000 (figures are shown in Appendix B).
- 6.1.2 The project was allocated £100,000 at Council on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2018 and to date circa £25,000 has been spent on feasibility work/surveys.
- 6.1.3 The above recommendations seeks to utilise up to £50,000 for delivery of section 1. This funding along with S106 agreement funds identified (see Appendix C) will deliver section 1 and will still allow £25,000 to be used for enhanced feasibility assessment for sections 2 and 3.
- 6.1.4 Local Members have been engaged with, on this funding approach, and the general consensus was one of 'in principle' support. It is worth noting that a number of projects have already been delivered within the Diglis Park area as part of S106 contributions identified within the two agreements and that there is still available funds due to underspend on some of the identified projects and inability to deliver a canal bridge due to physical constraints of the tow path.
- 6.1.5 As with any S106 contribution there is a time limit for the funds to be spent otherwise they are returned to the developer. The proposal before you will ensure that these contributions are used within the agreements geographical area and within the parameters of what can be funded by these agreements.
- 6.1.6 Further funding opportunities will need to be explored to deliver sections 2 and 3 and as such further bids will be submitted when they arise.

## 6.2 Legal and Governance Implications

Land and infrastructure ownership agreements as well as maintenance arrangements will need to be progressed between the City and County.

## 6.3 Risk Implications

The progression of the project through to the delivery and implementation stage raises a number of risks.

As part of the project board delivery approach a risk register will be created. However, it should be noted that key risks include:

- Commencement of works reveal abnormal constraints adding to the costs - due diligence with regard to work/surveys have been undertaken throughout the feasibility work to date and no issues have been identified.
- Tendered construction costs exceed project budget - due diligence with regard to work/surveys have been undertaken throughout the feasibility work to date and no issues have been identified.
- Land ownership agreement cannot be reached (section 2 and 3) - further investigations are to be progressed to identify if potential 'pinchpoints' are apparent in the later sections of the route and appropriate engagement/action will occur.
- Statutory agreements cannot be acquired – statutory bodies have been engaged with on the project.

## 6.4 Corporate/Policy Implications

The creation of an improved walking and cycling route to the south of the City will support a number of themes in the City Plan including:

- Stronger and Connected Communities - connecting neighbourhoods through physical infrastructure
- Healthy and Active City - promotion of walking and cycling routes for leisure activities as well as linking employment and residential areas of the City (active travel)
- Sustaining and Improving our Assets - provision of improved access to the riverside and associated green spaces

## 6.5 Equality Implications

The project will bring about changes to the physical form of the area. As the design process progresses equalities impact considerations will need to be carried out.

## 6.6 Human Resources Implications

None directly arising from this report.

## 6.7 Health and Safety Implications

None directly arising from this report.

## 6.8 Social, Environmental and Economic Implications

Social – improved connections between communities to the south of the City and City centre along with access to the wider walking and cycling network. Improvements to walking and cycling facilities obviously have positive impacts on physical and mental health well being for all.

It should be noted that during the consultation process for the Environmental Strategy, a significant number of comments were received making reference to the need for improvements to the City’s walking and cycling network.

Environment – The riverside is a natural environment as well as heritage asset (conservation area). The introduction of a foot/cycleway will have an impact on these.

However this risk has been mitigated by due diligence throughout the survey/technical work and ensuring that the scheme incorporates appropriate mitigation measures within the final design. Option 3, recommended route, is identified as having the least potential impact.

Economic – improved movement corridors along the river will assist with opportunities for residents and visitors to consider non-motor vehicle trips as well as opportunities for improved leisure offer in this area.

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**Background Papers:** Appendix A, B & C

## Appendix A



Red	Indicative Section 1: Diglis Bridge to St Marks Close
Purple	Indicative Section 2: Duck Brook Bridge to Dace Road
Yellow	Indicative Section 3: Dace Road to Carrington Bridge
Blue (solid)	National Cycle Route (on road)
Blue (dash)	Local Cycle Route (on road)
Orange (solid)	National Cycle Route (traffic free)
Orange (dash)	Local Cycle Route (traffic free)

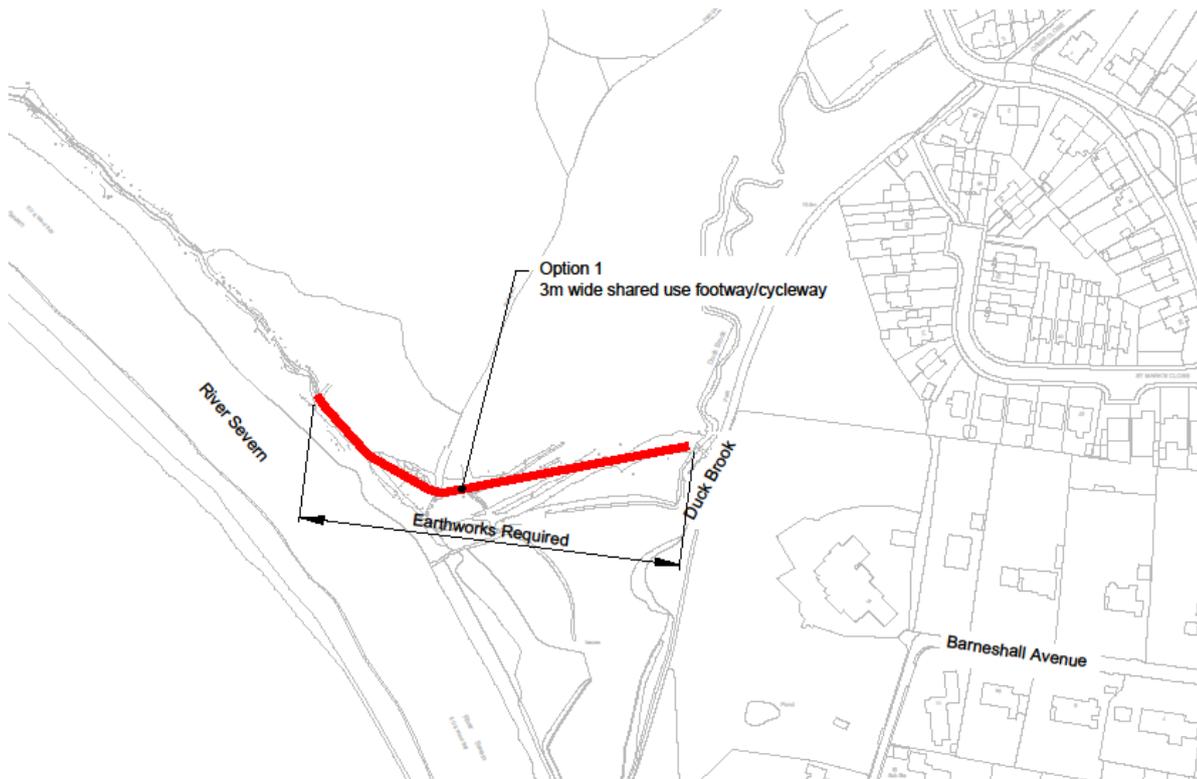
## Appendix B

Three route options have been identified section 1.

### Option 1

Route option 1 maintains the existing PROW route, while lifting the level of the footway by up to 2.5m. This allows for the removal of two existing sets of steps creating a more level footway. This change in vertical alignment requires extensive earthworks which will have an impact upon buildability as well as the local ecology.

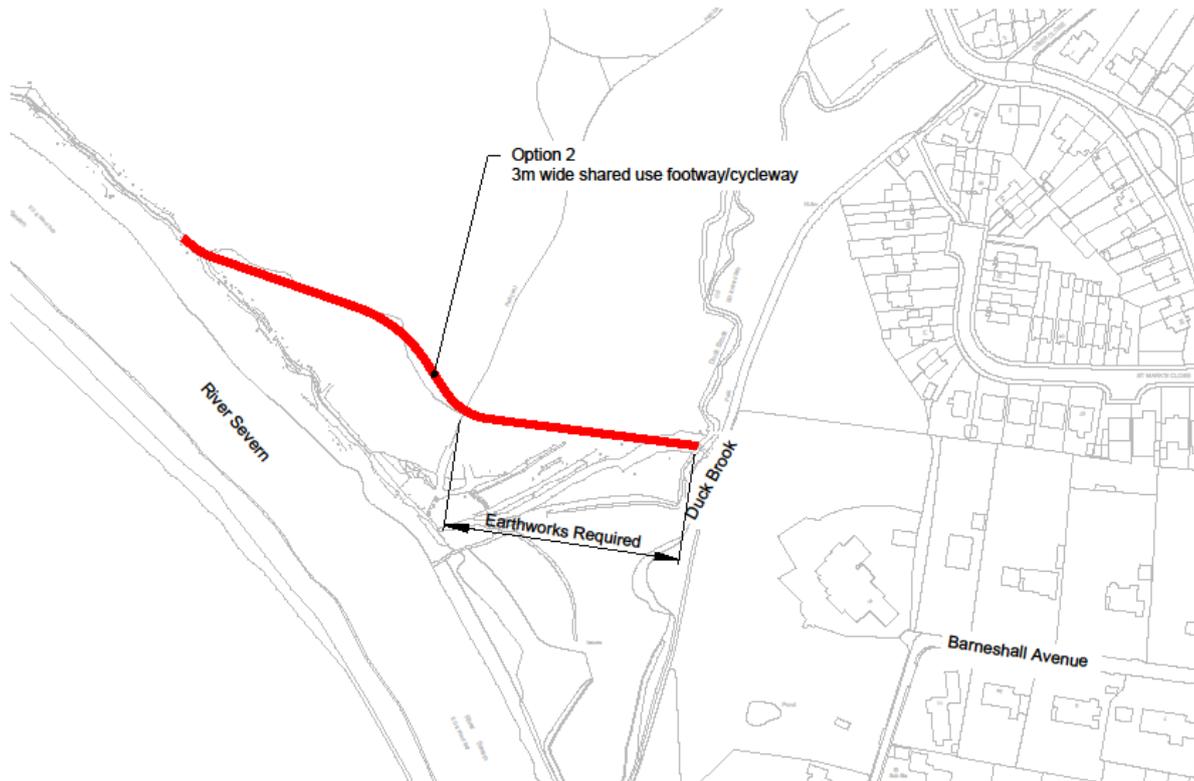
Below identifies the proposed route as well as extent of extensive earthworks.



### Option 2

Route option 2 utilises an alternative alignment to the north. As with option 1 there is a requirement to lift the levels of this route but only over the last 100m, the first 140m can be constructed at existing levels.

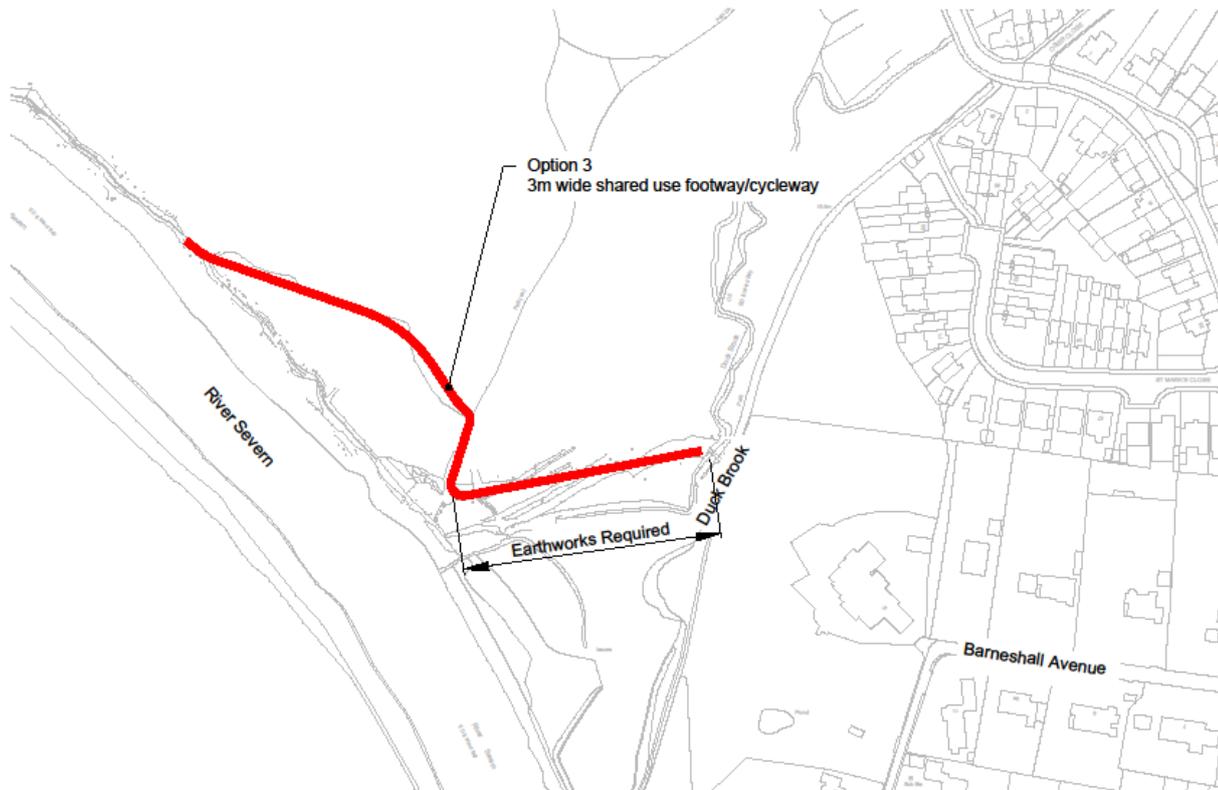
Below identifies the proposed route as well as extent of extensive earthworks.



Option 3

Route option 3 is made up of an amalgamation of both options 1 and 2. The first section follows route option 2, minimizing earthworks as existing levels can be utilised here, the second section follows option 1 which helps to limit impact upon ecology.

Below identifies the proposed route as well as extent of extensive earthworks.



<b>Review</b>			
<b>Option</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Costings</b>	<b>£235.5K</b>	<b>£221.5K</b>	<b>£241.5K</b>
<b>Advantage</b>	Shorter length (195m), maintaining existing alignment Limits impact on ecology due to lower level of trees and planting here	Reduced earthworks as majority of route maintains existing levels (Cut 790m <sup>3</sup> , Fill 125m <sup>3</sup> ) More desirable vertical alignment, ramp only required at eastern end	Reduced earthworks as majority of route maintains existing levels (Cut 730m <sup>3</sup> , Fill 130m <sup>3</sup> ) Limits impact on ecology due to lower level of trees and planting where earthworks are required

<b>Disadvantage</b>	High level of earthworks due to level change required over entire extents (Fill 1100m <sup>3</sup> , Cut 50m <sup>3</sup> ) Less desirable vertical alignment, ramp required at both western and eastern ends Poor access for works plant, haul road may be required	Longer length (240m) Indirect route Poor access for works plant, haul road may be required	Longer length (280m) Indirect route Poor access for works plant, haul road may be required
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The above costs do not include replacement bridge over Duck Brook. However similar replacement bridges have been provided for circa £25k.

## Appendix C

**That S139 contribution in lieu of canal footbridge (currently under discussion with developers but anticipated to be in excess of £150,000) and the underspend on Diglis Playing Fields S126 (£65,000) can be utilised once collected.**

Details of S139 indicates contribution to be spent on:

### **Open Space**

- 1) Enhancement / provision of appropriate facilities for use primarily by the children and young people on land owned by Severn Trent at Portland Walk
- 2) To enhance the play facilities at Cherry Orchard
- 3) Upgrading of the Cherry Orchard playing field (including car parking and changing rooms)
- 4) Enhancement of the Cherry Orchard Nature Reserve including potential interpretation centre and improved access by the way of the Severn Way footpath

### **Open Space (19,341 only)**

- 1) Enhancement of Diglis recreation ground
- 2) Development of playing fields at Battenhall
- 3) The acquisition of land and laying out of allotments at land adjacent to electricity substation in St Peters
- 4) Maintenance of casual open space at Duck Brook Corridor

### **Allotments**

- 1) Towards the provision and/or improvement of allotments in the vicinity of the Land

### Justification

The proposed works constitute improvements to access routes including Severn Way footpath and as such satisfies the type of works identified in Open Space no.4 as well as Duck Brook Corridor no.4.

Details of S126 indicates contribution to be spent on:

### **Open Space**

- 1) Production of Masterplan
- 2) The enhancement of children's play space
- 3) The upgrading of playing fields and sports facilities (including changing rooms)
- 4) Enhancement of public open space including the Cherry Orchard local nature reserve (but not Diglis Dock Road)

### Justification

The proposed works constitute enhancement of public open space through improved access and movement and as such satisfies the type of works identified in Open Space no.4.