

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Council – 24th June 2009

Sustrans River Tay Connect2 Project

Report by Executive Director (Environment Service)

This report outlines the background to the Sustrans Connect2 Project and details the current funding position and the next steps.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Council is asked to:

- i) Note the contents and issues highlighted in this report
- ii) Consider whether to proceed with the project and sign the Memorandum of Understanding with Sustrans on the basis of a future commitment for funding from the indicative future TACTRAN commitment.

BACKGROUND

1. In the draft Area Local Plan of December 2004 the Council stated that it would “investigate the principle of construction of a pedestrian/cycle bridge across the River Tay between the North Inch and Quarrymill”. Although the overall plan was subsequently abandoned the aspiration was re-stated in the draft Regional Transport Strategy in 2007 and carried through to the current TACTRAN Delivery Plan.
2. The purpose of the bridge is to provide a cycling and walking link for leisure and commuting between the two banks of the River Tay, and is very much considered a community project. Recent studies carried out at similar sites by Sustrans demonstrate that the bridge is likely to generate considerable usage.
3. Prior to 2007 the subject had been discussed at a fairly informal level with officers, Local Members and cycling groups, but the Council had no firm commitment to it.
4. However, in 2007 a funding opportunity presented itself through Sustrans for a bid to be put to the Big Lottery “Peoples Millions” Competition to assist with the bridge funding.
5. The bid, however, was progressed with a degree of misplaced optimism in that initial indications were that the bid was for the funding of the entire link. However, after the bid’s success in December 2007, it became apparent that a sum of only £1.25million was available for the Perth project.

PROPOSALS

Design and Environmental Considerations

6. In line with their Delivery Plan, TACTRAN approved funding in 08/09 to advance the scheme's design. The design is being progressed by staff in the Council's Roads Service with assistance from Atkins, one of our term consultants. A number of routes for the bridge have been investigated with the preferred route shown on the plan at Appendix 1.
7. This route is preferred due to the following; the results of the preliminary environmental and topographical survey work; it has less impact on the North Inch golf course and the alignment is away from and out of the main view of an adjacent private property. However, there are two options for this route, with the difference being that one consists of 3 piers and a large embankment on the west riverbank and the other with 4 piers and a small embankment.
8. The River Tay is a European Site by virtue of its designation as a Special Area of Conservation and therefore in accordance with the Conservation Regulations 1994 an appropriate assessment will require to be carried out for the project.

Land Issues

9. A Title Search Plan has been carried out and all landowners affected by the project have been identified. The land affected by the preferred southern route is owned by Capability Scotland (ownership transferred from the Gannochy Trust) whilst the river is owned by the Crown Estate.
10. The North Inch golf course will be slightly affected by the bridge and it will be necessary to carry out consultation with staff in The Environment Services and the Common Good Fund. Legal Services have advised that this is unlikely to be an alienation of Common Good land.
11. The preferred route will require a footway/cycle track to be constructed adjacent to Isla Road, leading up to Quarrymill. This land is currently owned by the Gannochy Trustees.
12. It is proposed that the route to Scone will be through Quarrymill. An option report has been prepared by Perth & Kinross Countryside Trust and they are currently in discussion with the Gannochy Trust on the routes and the benefits to the wider community.

Planning Permission

13. Initial discussions have taken place with Planning and they do not have any immediate concerns with the proposed bridge. The processes to be followed will depend on the scheme of delegation which is in operation when the application is submitted.

Construction

14. In accordance with the conditions set out by the Big Lottery, the project must be completed by 31 March 2013.
15. A design and construction programme has been prepared and at this time, construction of the bridge is planned for late 2010/early 2011. However, should there be delays in the progress of the project the construction may be pushed back to late 2011/early 2012.

Costs

16. The bridge will be a simple structure and will comprise of a pair of painted steel beams, carrying either a concrete or hardwood timber deck. It will have stainless steel parapets.
17. Based on the investigations, surveys and design work carried out to date costs of the project are broken down as follows:

Item	£	Notes
Construction of bridge	1,824,000	
Path works	170,000	
Installation of Toucan Crossing	40,000	To be funded from CWSS
Consultants Fees	200,000	£55,000 already spent in 08/09
Ground Investigation	160,000	
Land Acquisitions/Agreements	10,000	
Detailed Design	150,000	
Engineering Administration	50,000	
Site Supervision	72,000	
	2,676,000	
TOTAL COST	2,581,000	Minus £95,000 as above

Funding

18. Through the success of the Big Lottery Bid, Sustrans has awarded £1.25million towards the River Tay Connect2 Project. This leaves a funding gap in the region of £1.331 million.
19. The TACTRAN Capital Programme for 2009/10 has been agreed and £194,000 has been allocated to the Connect2 Project. In addition to this £500,000 has been ring fenced and placed in a suspense account.
20. It is highlighted that TACTRAN have committed £1.3 million to Connect2 in their Delivery Plan 2009-2012. However, the debate over TACTRAN funding continues due to the differing levels of commitment between the four Councils involved and the Delivery Plan as proposed is no longer valid. One option for funding the shortfall of £637,000 is to continue with TACTRAN's commitment to the project in 2010/2011. However, this would still need to be approved through the Council's normal budget procedure.

21. Officers have diligently attempted to pursue other funding sources but in the current financial climate this has proven to be very difficult. As a result there is a project shortfall of around £637,000 unless the TACTRAN funding is continued in future years.

Next Steps

22. If the Council agrees to proceed with the Connect2 Project work will start immediately on progressing the land and land issues associated with the project. Work on the design and procurement will continue.
23. In addition the Council is required to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with Sustrans. A draft has been prepared and reviewed by Legal Services and Finance. This document does not legally contract the Council to build the project but is the mechanism for reporting progress to Sustrans and the Big Lottery.

CONSULTATION

24. The Head of Finance, Head of Legal Services, Head of Democratic Services, Executive Directors (Corporate Services) Executive Director (Education and Children Services) and the Director of TACTRAN have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Revenue

25. Maintenance of the structure will vary over the life of the bridge with an occasional large spend (e.g. repainting of the bridge every 25-30 years). Costs are therefore estimated at £3,000 per year over the life of the bridge.
26. There will be minimal maintenance costs associated with the path links to the bridge.

Capital

27. This report details the current funding commitment of £1.944 million by TACTRAN and the Big Lottery to this project. If the Council proceeds with the project it will be necessary to give a commitment of £637,000 to complete this project either by agreeing to continue TACTRAN funding for the scheme for 10/11 or by identifying the project as a future priority in the Council's Capital Programme.

COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN OBJECTIVES 2006-2010

28. The Council's Corporate Plan 2006-2010 lays out five Objectives which provide clear strategic direction, inform decisions at a corporate and service level and shape resources allocation. This report impacts on the following:-

- (i) A Safe, Secure and Welcoming Environment
- (ii) Healthy, Caring Communities
- (iii) A Prosperous, Sustainable and Inclusive Economy
- (iv) Educated, Responsible and Informed Citizens
- (v) Confident, Active and Inclusive Communities

EQUALITIES ASSESSMENT

29. The Council's Corporate Equalities Assessment Framework requires an assessment of functions, policies, procedures or strategies in relation to race, gender and disability and other relevant equality categories. This supports the Council's legal requirement to comply with the duty to assess and consult on relevant new policies to ensure there is no adverse impact on any community group or employees.
30. The function, policy, procedure or strategy presented in this report was considered under the Corporate Equalities Assessment Framework and assessed in relation to the Race/Disability/Gender Equalities Assessment. Consequently the following points were identified and actions –
- Positive impact on equality groups from the proposals

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

31. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a legal requirement under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 that applies to all qualifying plans, programmes and strategies, including policies (PPS).
32. The Connect2 Project is contained within the TACTRAN Delivery Plan, which has been formulated from the Regional Transport Strategy (RTS). An SEA Environmental Report was produced for the RTS, with the walking and cycling strategies within this considered under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 and the determination was made that the strategies are unlikely to have any significant effects on any of the areas defined in the SEA Guidance.
33. Given that the River Tay is a European Site by virtue of its designation as a Special Area of Conservation an appropriate environmental assessment will be carried out as part of the Connect2 Project.

CONCLUSION

34. Sustrans is an extremely popular charity and has received a large amount of public support for the Connect2 Projects. This has been demonstrated by the success of the bid.

35. The new crossing will provide a link between Scone and Perth's schools, colleges, hospitals and leisure facilities as well as the commercial and industrial areas allowing pedestrians and cyclists to travel safely, away from the already heavily congested existing Perth bridges.
36. For the project to progress a decision now has to be made regarding whether funding will be made available either from the anticipated TACTRAN commitment or the Councils Capital programme.

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Executive Director (Environment)

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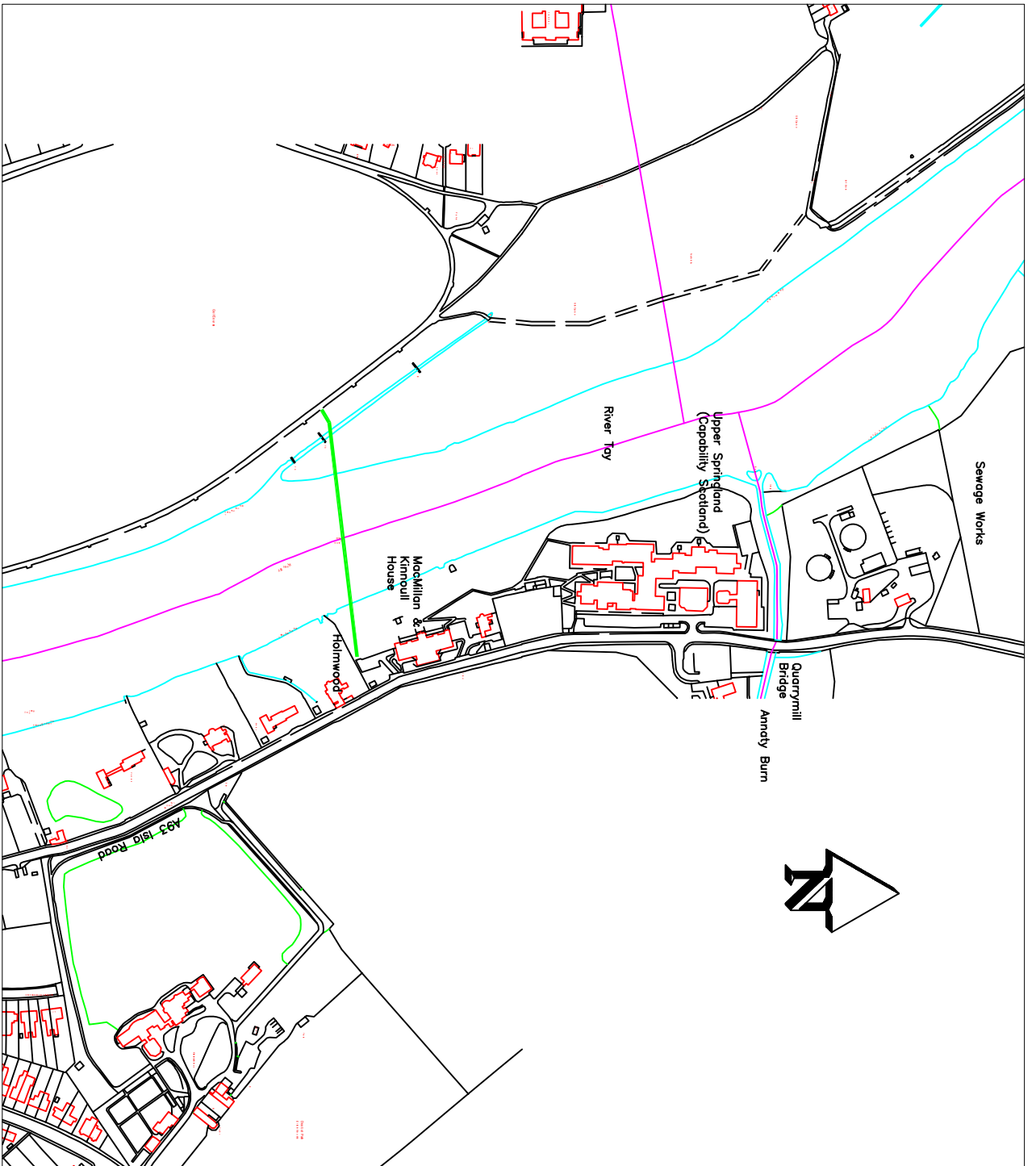
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Date: 17th June 2009

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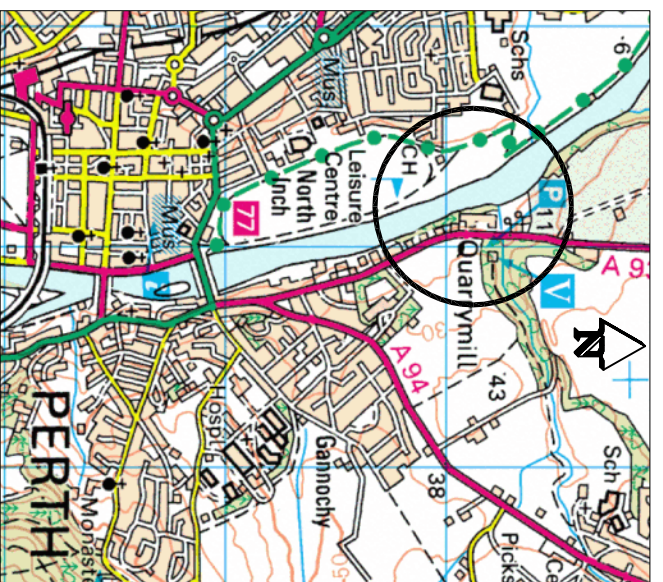


Council Text Phone Number 01738 442573



Location Plan
Scale 1:2,000

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Scale N.T.S.

— (preferred alignment)

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Note

There are two options on this alignment and these are:

- a) To include a large embankment from the west riverbank to the path around the North Inch.
- OR
- b) To replace the embankment with an additional length of bridge deck.

INTERIM PLOT DETAILS		Revision Details	
Drawn by:	Checked by:	Revised by:	Approved Date:
Drawn by: [Name]	Checked by: [Name]	Revised by:	Approved Date:
Date:	Time:		
Reason for Plot:			
Autocad Plotting Scale:			
AUTOCAD DRAWING FILE DETAILS		Drawing Scale:	
MicroStation/PC Dr:	Autocad options June	as shown	
Perth & Kinross Council	Drawing:	Project Code:	489/09
	Date:	Drawing No.:	489/09
		Location Options June 2009	
PERTH & KINROSS COUNCIL		Connect 2 Footbridge	
<small>THE KING'S SERVICE</small>		<small>Authoritative Signature - J J Shaw BSc, CEng, RICS</small>	