

LOCAL BRIDGE MAINTENANCE FUND

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the £5.450M of funding secured through a highly competitive bid process from Scottish Government's £32million Local Bridge Maintenance Fund.
- 1.2 At the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee held in June 2022 a report was presented detailing the funding award for the replacement of 4 bridges and strengthening of a further 5.
- 1.3 At the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee held in June 2023 an update report was presented detailing the negotiations regarding land (for new bridges), ground investigation and design work has been progressing well.
- 1.4 Work at Ardchnonnel Bridge commenced in November 2023 and has been completed in February 2024. The works to Ardchnonnel Bridge include strengthening the abutments. This work being urgently required to prevent any further deterioration and increased costs.
- 1.5 Work at Whitestone Bridge has been awarded and is scheduled to commence in March 2024 and is scheduled to complete in May 2024. Similar to Ardchnonnel Bridge, Whitestone Bridge was required to be progressed to strengthen the abutments and reduce any further deterioration and increased costs. Whitestone Bridge wasn't considered to be quite as urgent as Ardchnonnel, however, it is still necessary to progress these works with minimal delay.
- 1.6 Designs for Claonaig, Glenegedale (2), Lochgoilhead, Oude, Pennyghael Bridge are currently progressing. Estimated costs have now been established for all bridges through a feasibility study outlining preferred design options. Public Consultations have been carried out for Oude Bridge and Glenegedale (2) Bridge and are being incorporated into the final feasibility report.
- 1.7 Since the bid was submitted to Scottish Government and as detailed in this report, there have been significant price increases to construction contracts. These increases mean that the allocated funding is not sufficient to deliver the programme originally intended. Officers will be engaging with officials at Scottish

Government to establish if other funding is available and to understand Scottish Government's position regarding the affordability of the original programme which funding was allocated for.

- 1.8 If additional funds are not forthcoming then the projects not delivered will be held back pending additional funding coming from either external sources of council capital programmes. Note all bridges will continue to be monitored as part of our ongoing cycle of bridge inspections to ensure that our bridges are safe and proportionate to use.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that Members of the Environment, Development and Infrastructure Committee consider this report and note that officers will be engaging with Scottish Government regarding the increased costs.

3.0 DETAIL

- 3.1 The fund will be used to undertake proportionate works (from strengthening to comply with 'construction and use' weight limits to full off-line rebuilds) on bridges in need of repair, identified through our inspection programme/ records. Bridges provide critical transport (often lifeline) connections for some communities and are a vital part of the wider road network.
- 3.2 The table at Appendix 1 details the list of bridges which have received funding along with **indicative** site start dates.
- 3.3 As noted in Appendix 1 a grant amount of £5.45M was secured based on pre COVID estimates but the most updated cost estimations show that a cost of approximately £12.5M will be required. There are seven principal reasons for this significant increase in costs for the projects:
- COVID – Cost estimations used to secure grant funds were completed prior to the full extents of Covid to the economy being understood. The impact to the Construction Industry resulted in large increased costs to tender returns.
 - Inflation – Although inflation is considered, the severity of it since 2021 could have not been reasonably predicted.
 - Brexit – This brought further increase to costs as Contractors need to charge more due to increase material costs because of import duties and lack of availability of materials.
 - War in Ukraine – This had a knock-on effect regarding project costs due to increasing fuel costs and increased cost of production.
 - PAS2080 (2023) – Due to recent environmental legislation as part of the design/construction process we must consider steps to reduce/manage carbon output for our projects which have economic repercussions.
 - Active Travel Routes – To allow future sustainable transport links we must include active travel routes on each bridge replacement project

therefore increasing the width of each deck by 3.5m and any new approach roads therefore increasing the overall construction costs. However, we are also considering the cost to maintain existing bridges to accommodate the active travel traffic. This potentially could reduce the initial investment although the whole life costs are likely to be similar.

- Feasibility studies – Prior to submitting an application for each bridge there was inadequate time to carry out a full feasibility study in order to accurately estimate each project. Minimal design had occurred and some of the main design constraints were unknown prior to the application for funding.

3.4 Due to the identified funding shortfall, all schemes have been prioritised. The prioritisation considers, network criticality, design life remaining of existing structures, current condition of existing structure and cost. The outcome of the prioritisation process is as follows:

Bridge	Cost
1 (=) 00019-05 B842-150 Whitestone Bridge	£115,385
1 (=) 00019-29 B839-050 Lochgoilhead Bridge	£472,000
3 (=) 00019-38 B840-140 Ardchnonnel Bridge	£93,353
3 (=) 00019-04 B842-010 Claonaig Bridge	£325,000
3 (=) 00019-30 A815-230 Cothouse Bridge	£662,000
6 (=) 00019-12 B844-010 Kilninver Bridge	£2,490,000
<hr style="border-top: 1px dashed red;"/> <p>The bridges above the red line are affordable based on the available funding.</p>	
6 (=) 00019-37 A849-280 Pennyghael Bridge	£4,575,000
8 00019-25 A846-270 Glenegedale (2)	£1,620,000
9 00019-36 A816-120 Oude	£2,185,000

3.5 We propose to write to the Scottish Government to alert them to the funding shortfalls, clarifying the current position and to seek additional funding to progress all schemes. In the meantime work to progress the lowest ranked scheme, Oude Bridge shall be paused. The total revised cost for all schemes above the line is £4.158M.

3.6 Location plans for each bridge can be found in Appendix 2. Regular updates on these works as they progress will be provided through our weekly members briefing.

3.7 Legislation, Standards, Codes of Practice:

Replacement (new) structures are designed in accordance with:

- Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 Legislation
- Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) document “*CD 350 - The design of highway structures*” and associated document series “*Highway Structures & Bridges*”
- “*CIHT 'Well-managed highway infrastructure' Code of Practice*” Section C6 and associated documentation.
- PAS 2080 - Carbon management in infrastructure and built environment.

Strengthening (maintenance) works to structures are designed, where appropriate, in accordance with:

- Roads (Scotland) Act 1984 Legislation
- Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) document series “*Highway Structures & Bridges*”
- “*CIHT 'Well-managed highway infrastructure' Code of Practice*” Section C6 and associated documentation.

4.0 CONCLUSION

4.1 This report provides an update on the £5.450M of funding secured in highly competitive bid process from Scottish Government’s £32 million Local Bridge Maintenance Fund.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Policy – projects are being taken forward to align with key policies like the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and the Roads Asset Management Plan. Bridge designs in terms of strength and resilience are required to follow nationally set construction specifications.

5.2 Financial – funded from grant funding. The successful award of grant funding helps to reduce the backlog maintenance figure for the Council’s transport infrastructure. Note, the original grant allocation is not now adequate to deliver the full programme.

5.3 Legal – the Council has statutory duties to maintain infrastructure set out in various legislation like the Roads Scotland Act 1984.

5.4 HR – None known.

5.5 Fairer Scotland Duty: None known.

5.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics – an EqSEIA will be completed which tease out and identify any equality issues which need to be considered for new bridges.

5.5.2 Socio-economic Duty – none known.

- 5.5.3 Islands – the programme will bring benefits to island communities which will see two bridges being replaced which will help provide additional resilience to the island’s transportation infrastructure.
- 5.6 Climate Change – due regard will be given to climate change with a view to minimising any climate change impact and these will be considered as and when they arise. The provision for pedestrian facilities will be included as part of the design for new build bridges together consideration for the projected increase in sea levels due to climate change.
- 5.7 Risk – None known.
- 5.8 Customer Service – None known.
- 5.9 The Rights of the Child (UNCRC) – the investment to improve our bridge network will contribute to a safer environment for young people to thrive in.

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Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Bridge work details, prioritisation and cost
Appendix 2 – Bridge location plans

Appendix 1 – Bridge work details, priorities and cost

Prioritisation	Bridge Name	Asset sustainability or asset improvement	Description of Works	2021 Grant Amount based on pre COVID estimates	Estimated Cost @ 2024	Site Start Date	Estimated Completion Date
=1	B842-150 Whitestone Bridge	Sustainability	Additional retaining buttress structure constructed on downstream face of existing bridge. Works required to be progressed to reduce further deterioration and increase costs.	£40,000	£115,385	Mar 24	May 24
=1	B839-050 Lochgoilhead Bridge	Sustainability	Strengthening of arch barrel, including waterproofing, temporary traffic diversion and drainage works.	£198,000	£472,000	Apr 25	Mar 26
=3	B840-140 Ardchnonnel Bridge	Sustainability	Works started due to safety requirements. Additional retaining buttress structure constructed on downstream face of existing bridge. Works required to be progressed to reduce further deterioration and increase costs.	£40,000	£93,353	Nov 23	Feb 24
=3	B842-010 Claonaig Bridge	Sustainability	Strengthening of wing walls, realignment of road and drainage works.	£477,000	£325,000	Jan 25	May 25
=3	A815-230 Cothouse Bridge	Sustainability	Installation of deck waterproofing system (under road surface), installation of new expansion joints, joint sealings, concrete repair works, drainage works, vehicle barrier partial replacement, vegetation removal	£517,000	£662,000	Aug 24	Jun 25
=6	B844-010 Kilninver Bridge	Improvement/new structure	Full bridge replacement (with an active travel route – footway/cycleway)). Feasibility Study largely completed Public Consultation being progressed early 2024.	£1,194,000	£2,490,000	Aug 25	Aug 26
Affordable schemes from Local Bridge Maintenance Funding subject to Scottish Government confirming the change in programme					£4,157,738	Subtotal of schemes above	
=6	A849-280 Pennyghael Bridge	Improvement/new structure	Full bridge replacement (with an active travel route – footway/cycleway) downstream / seawards. Feasibility Study largely completed Public Consultation being progressed early 2024.	£1,193,000	£4,575,000	Aug 25	Jul 27
8	A846-270 Glenegedale (2)	Improvement/new structure	Full bridge replacement (with an active travel route – footway/cycleway) in same location. A public consultation has been completed. Feasibility Study identifies preferred option to progress.	£597,000	£1,620,000	Jun 25	Dec 25
9	A816-120 Oude Bridge	Improvement/new structure	Full bridge replacement (with an active travel route – footway/cycleway) upstream / northwards. A public consultation has been completed. Feasibility Study identifies preferred option to progress. Project in abeyance due to funding shortfalls.	£1,194,000	£2,185,000	Mar 26	Aug 28
Total				£5,450,000	£12,537,738		