

Committee: Council

Date of Meeting: 23rd July 2020

Report Subject: Funding Options - Aberbeeg Road

Portfolio Holder: Cllr J Wilkins, Executive Member Environment

Report Submitted by: Richard Crook, Corporate Director Regeneration and Economic Development

Reporting Pathway								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
	18.06.20					08.07.20	23.07.20	

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to inform Council, pursuant to paragraph 15.5.3 of the Constitution, of an urgent decision taken by the Executive on 8th July 2020 under the provisions of paragraph 15.5 of the Constitution. The proposals contained in the report were outside the current budget approved by Council, and would normally be presented back to Full Council for consideration, but the requirement for work to commence without delay meant that a decision was taken by the Executive under the urgency provisions. This report explains the situation in more detail.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 The report was presented to the Executive to seek approval to undertake remedial works to a damaged section of the A4046 following storm Dennis in February 2020. As Members will recall, Longitudinal cracking was reported to the Authority and following an inspection by the Borough's Engineers the road was closed to vehicular traffic on public safety grounds while a site investigation was undertaken to determine the cause of the failure.
- 2.2 The site investigation report has identified the remedial works required and also a recommendation to continue to close the northern lane of the carriage. And as a result of this advice the highway is currently restricted by means of traffic lights to one lane of traffic and assigned a 7.5tons weight limit.
- 2.3 The A4046 is a strategic highway for vehicles and provides a southerly access to and from Ebbw Vale to Newport and the M4 - the restriction has resulted in a lengthy detour for vehicles over 7.5T via the A467 to Brynmawr.
- 2.4 Following a meeting with the Heads of the Valley Road contractor we were informed they probably intend to undertake a significant temporary traffic switch at Brynmawr in August, as part of their ongoing works. The current

proposed traffic switch requires significant diversionary routes – including the A4046. The potential unavailability of the A4046 as a diversionary route for the proposed Heads of the Valleys works will result in additional traffic movements being displaced onto local roads and the potential for increased traffic disruption at Brynmawr.

- 2.5 A provisional programme for the proposed traffic switch works at Brynmawr has been provided to the Council indicating a start on the weekend of 15/16th of August for an estimated duration of 12 weeks (completion mid-November). The Aberbeeg works is programmed to take 12 weeks and will initially overlap the HOV works at the initial stages of their contact.
- 2.6 Although we have a 7.5T weight restriction on the road HGV's are still using this section of the highway as a short cut to and from Ebbw Vale and any delays, if the council were to wait for HOV to complete their works could create the risk of not only working during the winter months but increase HGV traffic that may result in further damage/slippage to Aberbeeg Road and lead to a full closure.
- 2.7 Progress/Timescale to date:
- Storm Dennis / Structural Damage to Aberbeeg Rd – 18th Feb 2020
 - Mobilisation of Specialist Drilling Investigation Works - 20th Feb 2020
 - Receipt of Consultants Report – 4th March 2020
 - Discussions with Site Investigation Consultant and agreed to re-open the southern lane of the road under lights but with a weight restriction of 7.5T - 27th March 2020
 - COVID – Interruptions to Investigation activities
 - location of BT Plant plotted on site - W/E 24th April 2020
 - Amend the design / structural calculations to suit position of BT services
 - BT approval of designs in relation to their apparatus – 22nd May 2020
 - Waiver to standing orders and appoint a Contractor direct - Waivers £75,00 to EU Threshold (CPR10.3) – 1st June 2020
 - Estimate from contractor received - 16th June 2020
 - Approval of Funding subject to Executive decision - 8th July 2020
 - Commencement Work anticipated - 20th July 2020
 - Duration of work approx. 12 weeks

3. Decision made by the Executive

- 3.1 The Executive agreed to Option 2, to utilise the BGCBC Capital Programme Big Arch allocation (£1,000K) – this option was the preferred option on the basis that an application to Cadw for consent to undertake remedial works has been delayed and works can't progress until consent is awarded resulting in actual works on site delayed until July 2021/22 at the earliest. At this stage the funding will be reviewed / reinstated prior to Cadw approval

and works on site. If WG subsequently agree the flood funding for the scheme, then the £405K can then be 'repaid' to this capital allocation.

4. **Implications Against Each Option**

4.1 An application for 'Flood Recovery' funding for £605k [initial estimate cost of repairs including ongoing traffic management costs] has been submitted to Welsh Government but no decision on the amount of funding allocated to the Authority has been received from WG to date. Following receipt of Contractor rates the revised estimate for these works are now costed at £405K.

4.1.1 The Executive considered the following options for funding the required works:-

4.1.2 Option1: Utilise the Highway Capital Programme funding (current funding provision of £737K) - reduce the amount of Highway works undertaken this financial year – no reductions necessary if awarded funding from Welsh Government.

4.1.3 Option 2: Utilise the BGCBC Capital Programme Big Arch allocation (£1,000K) - An application to Cadw for consent to undertake remedial works has been delayed and works can't progress until consent is awarded resulting in actual works on site delayed until July 2021/22 at the earliest – the funding will be reviewed / reinstated prior to Cadw approval and works on site. If WG subsequently agree the flood funding for the scheme then the £405K can then be 'repaid' to this capital allocation.

4.1.4 Option 3: To Utilise the Capital Programme Contingency Fund – When the current Capital Programme was agreed a sum of £2m was left unallocated between the period 2019/20 to 2025/26 for allocation at a later date when future priorities arise. The £405K could be funded from this in the short term. If WG subsequently agree the flood funding for the scheme then the £405K can then be 'repaid' to the capital programme.

4.1.5 Option 4: One off Prudential Borrowing of £405K could be undertaken to finance these works, this will require savings of approximately £25,000 per annum over a 20-year period to be identified.

4.2 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

The £405K will be vired from the Big Arch capital scheme to Aberbeeg Road. In the event WG subsequently agree the flood funding for the scheme then the £405K can be 'repaid' to the capital programme and the Big Arch scheme be fully reinstated.

4.3 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

- 4.3.1 1) Will substantially reduce the funding available for highway resurfacing works this financial year unless we secure WG funding for Flood Recovery
- 4.3.2 2) The remedial works to the Big Arch has been delayed with works not expected to start until July 2021- no immediate impact this year but will have to be review prior to our application to Cadw to ensure we have sufficient funding to undertake the works next year. If funding isn't allocated in relation to the flood recovery then there would be a risk of insufficient funding available going forward to complete the Big Arch project (the Authority is contractually obliged to complete this project under terms and conditions associated with grant funding made available to the Authority on The Works project) and to avoid an enforcement notice from Cadw relating to the temporary structure under the arch.
- 4.3.3 3) Should the WG flood funding not materialise there will be £405k less funding available for allocation in the capital programme at a later date, this could result in other priority schemes being unable to go ahead.
- 4.3.4 4) There isn't a sufficient revenue budget available to fund the savings required.
- 4.3.5 Preferred option (2) – Utilise the BGCBC Capital Programme Big Arch allocation (£1,000K).

4.4 ***Legal***

4.4.1 Call-in Urgency

The call-in procedure set out in the Constitution under Clause 7.25.2 Call-in Urgency did not apply since the decision taken by the Executive was urgent. A decision will be urgent if any delay likely to be caused by the call-in process would, for example, seriously prejudice the Council's or other public interests.

4.4.2 The need to undertake repairs to Aberbeeg Road at the earliest time is in order to mitigate the impact associated with the diversion route planned for closure works on the Section 2 A465 at Brynmawr, commencing later this summer, and prevent the Heavy Goods Vehicles illegally using the Aberbeeg Road (7.5T weight limit imposed following a site investigation).

4.4.3 The works to be issued via a Waiver to Standing Orders - £75k to EU Threshold (CPR10.3)

4.5 ***Human Resources***

No staffing issues - All works to be undertaken by the Infrastructure Section of the Environment Department and the appointed contractor.

5. **Supporting Evidence**

5.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

Re-open the A4046 at Aberbeeg Road to all vehicles.

5.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***

Re-open the A4046 at Aberbeeg Road to all vehicles.

5.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***

Members / Public to be informed of the works

5.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

To maintain a strategic highway for vehicles and provide a southerly access to and from Ebbw Vale to Newport and the M4.

5.5 ***Preventative focus***

NA

5.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

NA

5.7 ***Integration(across service areas)***

NA

5.8 ***EqIA(screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)***

NA

6. **Monitoring Arrangements**

6.1 ***State how the work will be monitored e.g. through scrutiny or directorate performance management arrangements***

Re-opening of a strategic highway for vehicles and provide a southerly access to and from Ebbw Vale to Newport and the M4.

7. **Background Documents / Electronic Links**

NA