

Report to:	Cabinet Council	Date of Meeting:	25 May 2023 13 July 2023
Subject:	Millers Bridge Railway Bridge - Investigation work		
Report of:	Assistant Director of Place (Highways and Public Protection)	Wards Affected:	Linacre;
Portfolio:	Cabinet Member - Locality Services - Deputy Leader		
Is this a Key Decision:	Yes	Included in Forward Plan:	Yes
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

The Department for Transport has provided £2m to the Council to complete investigatory works on the road bridge over the railway on the A5058, Millers Bridge. This is to ensure that the bridge is capable of carrying loads including abnormal loads to the Port of Liverpool. This report recommends the addition of this funding into the Council's Transport Capital Programme.

Recommendation(s):

That Cabinet:

- (1) Recommend to Council, approval of the inclusion of a supplementary capital estimate for £2m, for the Millers Bridge scheme, into the Council's Transport Capital Programme.
- (2) Note the progress on the necessary investigatory work.

That Council:

- (1) Approve the inclusion of a supplementary capital estimate for £2m, for the Millers Bridge scheme, in the Council's Transport Capital Programme.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

The additional funding needs Cabinet approval to be added to the Capital Programme. Approval is needed to enable the commissioning of the necessary technical support work and the track possessions needed to facilitate the investigation.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

None

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

None

(B) Capital Costs

Any works associated with the commission would be funded by the £2m received from the Department for Transport.

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets): Staff time from Highways and Protection will be funded from the additional resource.	
Legal Implications: Technical expertise will be undertaken using the Transport Technical Services Supply contract for which a formal contract applies. Any strengthen work will be subject to a construction contract to be reported separately.	
Equality Implications: There are no equality implications.	
Impact on Cared for Children and Care Experienced Young People: No	
Climate Emergency Implications:	
The recommendations within this report will	
Have a positive impact	N
Have a neutral impact	N
Have a negative impact	Y
The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	Y
The necessary investigatory work and technical support is likely to have minimal impact on Carbon consumption. The strengthening work that is likely to be identified following the investigation is likely to involve construction work which is likely to have a negative impact on the carbon footprint.	

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: Not applicable.
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: Any strengthening work will help ensure

that Millers Bridge remains capable of accommodating the loads generated through the Port of Liverpool.
Commission, broker and provide core services: Not applicable.
Place – leadership and influencer: The bridge on the A5058 over the railway is a critical element of the infrastructure.
Drivers of change and reform: Not applicable
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: Any strengthening work will ensure that the Port of Liverpool can receive all loads and therefore remain competitive.
Greater income for social investment: Not applicable,
Cleaner Greener: Not applicable

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD 7212/23) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD5412/23.) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

Not applicable.

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Council meeting.

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Appendices:

There are no appendices to this report.

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 The A5058 is a critical route within Sefton's highway network, providing, amongst other functions, the abnormal load route to the Port of Liverpool. It is also designated as a Heavy Load Route and has previously accommodated heavy, abnormal loads from the Port onto the wider highway network. A bridge carries the section of the A5058, known as Millers Bridge, over the railway.
- 1.2 National Highways have expressed concern previously over the perceived weight capacity of the structure and its continuing ability to accommodate such loads. Network Rail, as owners of the structure have indicated that they have no immediate plans to complete an upgrade.
- 1.3 The Council has corresponded with Network Rail over a period to time to try and determine as much information as possible over the bridge capacity and its current condition. Initially, with little information forthcoming, a funding proposal for some investigation and possible strengthening work was submitted by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority to the Department for Transport, under the Highways Maintenance Challenge Fund. Initially the bid wasn't successful, and no funding was identified in the settlement to LCR.
- 1.4 However, in 2022, the Council received direct correspondence from the DfT to indicate that an extraordinary payment of grant of £2 million would be made under the Local Transport Capital Block Funding Specific Grant Determination of Millers Bridge Repair on the A5058. The letter confirmed that the 'DfT does not ordinarily have money available to fund schemes on an emergency or ad hoc basis; however, we can provide funding in this extraordinary case subject to appropriate assurance being provided'. The funding has been received and grant letter received and reviewed. Whilst the funding was identified for 22/23 there has been no set criteria identified for when the funding should be spent.
- 1.5 This report seeks authority for the funding to be included within the Transport Capital Programme.

2. Investigatory Work at Millers Bridge

- 2.1 A number of meetings have been held with Network Rail. Information on the load carrying capacity and construction of the bridge was requested to enable any further investigation work to be scoped.
- 2.2 Network Rail confirmed that there had been an assessment demonstrating the ability of the structure to accommodate 40 tonne loading some time ago. There had also been an evaluation to give an indicative capacity to deliver abnormal loads. They confirmed that another assessment is 'likely due soon' as there are cast iron elements within the construction and these require particular consideration.
- 2.3 It was agreed that the DfT funding should be used to complete this further assessment as soon as possible and the scope of the investigatory work has been agreed. As NR don't currently have capacity for completing the work, it has been

agreed that Sefton will lead on the investigation using the Transport Technical Services Supply framework to bring in some resource.

- 2.4 The initial further investigation work will be completed under track possessions which will shortly be booked. Most of the investigatory work is expected to be from track level.
- 2.5 Once the necessary investigation work has been completed and a technical report submitted the scope of any strengthening work will be discussed with Network Rail, a course of action agreed and a cost established.
- 2.6 The Council will continue to liaise with the DfT over the progress of the scheme.