

Environment, Development and Transport Committee

Report title:	Great Yarmouth Third River Crossing – Stage 3 Public Consultation
Date of meeting:	18 January 2019
Responsible Chief Officer:	Tom McCabe – Executive Director, Community and Environmental Services
Strategic impact The delivery of the Third River Crossing in Great Yarmouth supports Norfolk County Council's commitment to the delivery of infrastructure in support of economic growth and job creation. A new river crossing at Great Yarmouth will help us meet this priority. It offers a direct route into the town from the south, provides the link between the trunk road network and the expanding port and the South Denes Enterprise Zone sites, and overcomes the problem of limited road access to the peninsula of Great Yarmouth. The Third River Crossing is vital to the economic prosperity of Great Yarmouth. Great Yarmouth is part of a larger economic sub-region with a strong economic heritage including manufacturing, food and drink processing, tourism and leisure industries. Great Yarmouth is highlighted as a key growth location within the New Anglia LEP's Strategic Economic Plan. However, as the project proceeds it is essential to identify and respond to the concerns of stakeholders and the public. This report is a general update on the project including with an update on the statutory pre-application consultation that is required prior to making an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO).	

Executive summary

Norfolk County Council adopted a preferred scheme for the Great Yarmouth Third River Crossing in 2009, comprising an opening bridge over the River Yare to connect the trunk road network, at the A47 (formally the A12) Harfrey's Roundabout, to the southern peninsula near to the port and Enterprise Zone sites. An Outline Business Case (OBC) was submitted to Department for Transport (DfT) in March 2017. DfT confirmed acceptance within the Large Local Majors Schemes Programme on 28 November 2017. An addendum to the OBC containing financial and commercial aspects was submitted to DfT in July 2018.

This report sets out the consultation process that has been undertaken and the preliminary findings from the responses received. The preliminary findings are detailed in section 3.

An update on the progress of procurement for the project will be provided verbally to committee at the meeting.

Recommendations:

- 1. Committee notes the preliminary outcomes of the statutory consultation described in this report and the further work required to develop the DCO application**
- 2. Committee notes the final consultation results including the final scheme to be submitted as an application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) including any proposed changes to the scheme as a result of the statutory consultation, will be reported to Committee on 8 March 2019.**

1. Proposal

- 1.1. Committee are asked to take into consideration the initial feedback from the statutory pre-application consultation, with a view to be updated further at its meeting on 8 March 2019, prior to a DCO application being submitted.
- 1.2. The pre-application consultation was part of a three-stage consultation process for the Great Yarmouth Third River Crossing. The three stages of consultation comprised of the following:

Stage	Purpose
Stage 1 (Completed Jan 2017) Initial engagement consultation	Understand views on congestion, share emerging proposals and understand level of support
Stage 2 (Sept – Oct 2017) Scheme development consultation	Understand views on the bridge development work so far
Stage 3 (Aug 2018 to Dec 2018) Pre-application consultation	Present details of the proposed scheme and understand views on it before an application for a DCO

- 1.3. The GY3RC is on track for a DCO application to be submitted in Spring 2019.

2. Consultation Process

- 2.1. On 26 February 2018 the Secretary of State directed that the Third River Crossing is development for which development consent is required under the Planning Act 2008. As a result the County Council will require a DCO, in order to construct, operate and maintain the Third River Crossing. Prior to making an application for a DCO a statutory pre-application consultation is required. This report provides an update on the County Council's pre-application consultations that have taken place between 20 August 2018 and 9 December 2018.
- 2.2. The pre-application consultations on the Third River Crossing were undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Planning Act 2008. The consultation can be divided into 3 main elements, which are defined by Section 47, Section 48 and Section 42 of the Act. A brief outline of each of these consultations is provided below.
- 2.3. Consultation under Section 47 – consultation with the local community

Section 47 requires the Council to prepare and implement a Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC). This sets out the measures the Council will take to consult the local community on its proposals. After consultation with Norfolk County Council's Planning Services Team and Great Yarmouth Borough Council the SoCC was amended. The final version was made available to view on the County Council's project webpage and at locations in Great Yarmouth and Gorleston (including libraries) on 3 August 2018.

The local community consultation was then undertaken in accordance with the SoCC between 20 August 2018 and 5 October 2018 and consisted of:

- Letters sent to approximately 33,000 residential and business addresses in the Great Yarmouth and Gorleston area advising of the consultation.
- Letters and emails sent to parish councils, County Councillors, Borough Councillors, MPs, MEPs and other stakeholder organisations advising of the consultation.
- Press releases, social media posts and posters erected on site advising of the

consultation.

- Four consecutive one-week public exhibitions (each staffed for one day) at Great Yarmouth Library, Gorleston Library, The Priory Centre and The Kings Centre.

To help consultees understand the scheme proposals a consultation brochure was produced. A copy of this brochure is contained in Appendix A.

2.4. Consultation under Section 48 –statutory notification

Formal notices stating that Norfolk County Council intended to make an application for DCO for the Third River Crossing were placed in the following publications:

- Eastern Daily Press and Great Yarmouth Mercury on 17 August 2018;
- Eastern Daily Press, Great Yarmouth Mercury, The Times and The London Gazette on 24 August 2018.

The notices also provided information on the pre-application consultations and invited responses.

2.5. Consultation under Section 42 – consultations with local authorities, prescribed consultees and those with interest in land

This consultation was undertaken between 7 September 2018 and 21 October 2018 and included the production of a number of documents, which included:

- **Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR):** This provided information on the likely significant environmental effects of the scheme.
- **Non-Technical Summary of the PEIR:** This provided a summary of the key information in the PEIR.
- **Non-Technical Note on Transport Modelling:** This explained the process used to produce the traffic flow forecasts provided in the consultation documents.
- **Design Process Summary:** This explained the design rationale for the scheme.
- **Questions and Answers:** This provided answers to commonly posed questions.
- **Scheme visualisations:** This provided photo visualisations of the preliminary scheme proposals.

These documents and the Consultation Brochure were provided, electronically on memory sticks, to relevant local authorities (both at county and district/borough level), prescribed consultees (e.g. Environment Agency, Natural England, Marine Management Organisation etc) and to approximately 4,200 persons/organisations that had a relevant interest in land in the vicinity of the scheme (these comprise owners and occupiers, together with people who might be eligible to make statutory claims).

The documents were also available for anyone to view on the County Council's project web page and as paper copies at a number of document deposit locations in Great Yarmouth and Gorleston.

Two further exhibitions at the Kings Centre and Peggotty Road Community Centre were held specifically for Section 42 consultees to provide the opportunity for them to have face to face discussion with officers.

2.6. Responses to the above consultations could be made by completing an on-line or paper questionnaire, emailing a specific email address or writing to a FREEPOST address.

2.7. During the above consultations it was brought to officers' attention that the PEIR was missing a number of plans. In order to ensure that consultees had the opportunity to consider and respond to the missing figures the following action was undertaken:

- The consultation deadline for all consultees was extended to 9 December 2018
- The missing figures were added to the document deposit locations and the

County Council's project web page.

- New press releases, social media posts and posters erected on site were provided to advise the local community of the extended consultation deadline and the reasons for this.
 - Further statutory notices were placed in the Eastern Daily Press, Great Yarmouth Mercury, The Times and The London Gazette on 26 October 2018.
 - Paper copies of the missing figures were re-issued to the Section 42 consultees.
- 2.8. The deadline for consultation responses was extended to the 9 December 2018 and to this point 340 responses have been received. Further responses after the deadline may be received and any new key matters that these raise will be reported verbally at the meeting.

Due to the extended response deadline it has not been possible to fully analyse all the consultation responses and fully consider them. Some of the matters raised will need further investigation, which may include some changes to the scheme proposals.

This review process will be undertaken in January and February 2019 with the results reported to the committee at its meeting of 8 March 2019.

3. Key matters arising from the consultation

- 3.1. Preliminary findings from the consultation responses, and some of the key matters identified for further investigation, are provided below.

3.2. Overall support

Support for the scheme remains high with the majority of the responses received stating support for the proposals or stating that the Third River Crossing is needed.

3.3. Type of bridge

There is general support for the bridge form being a double leaf bascule bridge, with no significant volume of responses suggesting an alternative. There is comment that the bridge needs to be reliable and easy to maintain in order to minimise impacts to both road traffic and river vessels.

The responses regarding the type of opening mechanism were mixed. Those supporting an opening mechanism with counter weights below ground (and with knuckles extending into the river) tended to cite visual appearance as the main reason for this. Those supporting an opening mechanism above ground (and with piers in the river) tended to cite the reduced impact on tidal flows as the main reason for this.

3.4. Highway design and public realm:

There was overall general support for the highway design and public realm proposals with suggestions for this to include artwork (such as a sculpture), benches, information boards about the bridge, community managed planting, and good lighting. Other suggested changes are detailed in Section 3.9 below.

3.5. Traffic impacts

The majority of responses consider that the Third River Crossing will help congestion in Great Yarmouth. The greatest concern regarding traffic impacts remains how much queueing traffic will occur when the bridge opens for river vessels. In particular whether traffic will queue back through the A47 Harfrey's Roundabout and the proposed traffic signalled junction on South Denes Road.

The impacts of the scheme on Southtown Road and South Denes Road were also highlighted as concerns by some responses.

There were comments regarding the routes that vehicles might take when leaving

the bridge on the east side of the river. Suggestions for clear routeing and direction signing to the sea front, town centre and outer harbour were made.

3.6. **Marine impacts**

A number of responses considered that they lacked sufficient knowledge to comment on the impacts to marine operations, some suggesting that mitigating the impact on road transport was more important than mitigating the impact on river vessels.

Whilst the bridge will open on demand to commercial vessels there were suggestions that this commitment should also be given to non-commercial vessels. If no such commitment could be given, then there were suggestions for improvements to berthing facilities for these vessels. The key suggestions are detailed in Section 3.9 below.

Despite the commitment to open on demand for commercial vessels some responses still consider that the scheme proposals will impact marine operations because of:

- Concerns about closures of the navigable channel during construction
- Concerns about access during times of a bridge breakdown or bridge maintenance work.
- Suggestions that Great Yarmouth port loses the advantage over its competitors of having unhindered river access.

3.7. **Environmental impacts**

The impact of narrowing the river on tidal flows and potential flood risk remains a concern. The impact of noise, vibration and air quality on nearby properties during construction was also highlighted.

3.8. **Land impacts**

The most frequent concern regarding land was the impact of the proposals on the Community Roots site. Community Roots is a community garden project that aims to provide emotional, social and practical support to people suffering mental ill health. The impacts to the site were identified as:

- The reduction in area of the site (including the loss of key features such as the Ted Ellis memorial plot, labyrinth artwork, wildlife pond and orchard).
- The impacts during construction (including impacts to wild life and plants, access and parking).
- The impacts to users of the site, a number of which use it for activities that encourage positive wellbeing and mental health recovery.

3.9. **Suggested improvements to the scheme**

The key suggestions for changes to the scheme proposals that have been identified to date are as follows:

- Providing cycle facilities on both sides of the bridge
- Making the Suffolk Road arm of the new roundabout on William Adams Way two-way
- Providing a direct ramped access to Southtown Road from the bridge
- Keeping parking restrictions to a minimum in order to help local residents and businesses
- Ensuring there are good links between the bridge and locations elsewhere in Great Yarmouth/Gorleston for walkers and cyclists.
- Locating the proposed VMS signs further away from Great Yarmouth

- Allowing residents to adopt areas as community-maintained spaces
- Providing more green spaces on the east side of the river
- Provide clear routing and direction signing to the sea front, town centre and outer harbour.
- Provide improvements to the vessel waiting pontoons either side of the proposed bridge as well as Breydon Bridge and Haven Bridge.
- Improving the methods (e.g. using VHF radio, telephone) vessels use to communicate with the bridge operator.
- Co-ordinating the openings of all 3 bridges to avoid significant waiting times for vessels between each bridge opening.
- Examining the options to mitigate the impacts on the MIND Community Roots site.

3.10 Conclusions

The consultation results analysed to date show that the majority of responses support the Third River Crossing and consider that it will be of benefit to Great Yarmouth. They also raise a number of matters that need to be examined before making the application for a DCO. Some of the key matters identified to date are highlighted by this report. These matters will be further reviewed and an update on each will be provided to this Committee at its next meeting in March.

With regard to the impacts on the Community Roots site it is proposed that a design review be undertaken to identify where the area of potential land take can be reduced. If the land take cannot be reduced then officers will also work to identify potential alternative sites. The intention is to hold further meetings, to which users of the site will be invited, to present the findings of the work and obtain further views on it. These meetings are planned for early in 2019 to help inform the DCO application details.

4. Financial Implication

- 4.1. The Outline Business Case submission to DfT set out the project cost which amounts to £120.653m. The Autumn Budget 2017 has confirmed a Government contribution of £98m to support the GYTRC and Programme Entry was confirmed by the Department for Transport by letter of 28 November 2017.

5. Issues, risks and innovation

- 5.1. Key risks at this stage still remain as presented to Committee on 17 March 2017, which assuming that the scheme progresses were identified as:
 - Planning Process: not obtaining planning consent; or receiving unexpected and onerous requirements from the Development Consent Order.
 - Construction: difficulties in securing access for surveys and preliminary construction; the construction schedule of the A47 roundabout, or other A47 schemes, conflicting with the bridge works programme; or adverse weather conditions causing delays/damage to construction.
 - Port operations: the number and type of vessels changing significantly between now and construction, resulting in reduced traffic benefits or greater mitigation requirements; the need to alter the bridge, or its construction, to accommodate port operations; or the bridge affects the river sedimentation regime (locally or more widely) affecting port operations and maintenance.
 - Design/Scope change: vessel simulations show a need for a bridge wider

than 50m clear span; variations from current geotechnical and topographical assumptions impact on the design; or unexpected statutory services are located, particularly if they are under water/anticipated pier and fender locations.

6. Background

- 6.1. In 2009 Cabinet adopted a preferred route for the scheme by way of a dual carriageway link utilising a 50m span bascule bridge over the river, it authorised purchase of properties the subject of valid Blight Notices served upon the Council and agreed for further study work to be undertaken into funding and procurement options.
- 6.2. Since then, £2.8m has been invested by the Council to acquire properties and land
- 6.3. Following the submission of the OBC in March 2017, that utilised funding provided by the DFT as part of its fast track Large Local Major Transport Schemes fund, local work has continued to be delivered in line with the overall programme. The Autumn Budget 2017 has confirmed a Government contribution of £98m to support the GYTRC and Programme Entry was confirmed by the Department for Transport by letter of 28 November 2017. The reports presented to EDT Committee on 15 September 2017 and 10 November 2017 provided an update on progress since the submission of the OBC.
- 6.4. The report to EDT Committee on 19 January 2018 outlined and sought agreement on the process for procuring a design and build contractor for the Third River Crossing scheme. A further report to Full Council on 15 October 2018 provided an update on this procurement and sought approval to delegate the award of the contract to design and build the scheme to the Executive Director of CES and Executive Director of Finance and Commercial Services, in consultation with the Leader, Deputy Leader and Chair of EDT committee.

6.5. Background Reports

Cabinet 7 December 2009 - Follow this [link](#) (see item 22)

EDT Committee 20 May 2016 – Follow this [link](#) (see item 9 page 28)

EDT Committee 17 March 2017 - Follow this [link](#) (see item 11 page 43)

EDT Committee 15 September 2017 – Follow this [link](#) (see item 15 page 98)

EDT Committee 10 November 2017 - Follow this [link](#)

EDT Committee 19 January 2018 – Follow this [link](#)

Full Council 15 October 2018 – Follow this [link](#)

Officer Contact

If you have any questions about matters contained in this paper or want to see copies of any assessments, eg equality impact assessment, please get in touch with:

Officer name : David Allfrey

Tel No. : 01603 223292

Email address : david.allfrey@norfolk.gov.uk



If you need this report in large print, audio, braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact 0344 800 8020 or 0344 800 8011 (textphone) and we will do our best to help.