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| **Report to:** | **Cabinet** |
| **Date of meeting:** | **22 April 2025** |
| **By:** | **Director of Communities, Economy and Transport** |
| **Title:** | **Exceat Bridge Replacement** |
| **Purpose:** | **To consider the scope of the Exceat Bridge Replacement Project and the funding arrangements** |

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**Cabinet is recommended to:**

**(1) Note the estimated costs and options for replacing Exceat Bridge;**

**(2) Agree to continue with the proposals for an offline two-lane replacement bridge ('Option A');**

**(3) Agree to re-direct £11.128m grant funding from the Newhaven and Peacehaven bus priority schemes set out in the Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) to the Exceat Bridge Replacement Project;**

**(4) Approve the amendments to the 2025/26 BSIP funding allocation, reflecting the reallocation of £4m of funding to the Newhaven bus priority scheme; and**

**(5) Delegate authority to the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport to take all actions necessary to achieve the completion of the offline two-lane replacement bridge ('Option A'), including but not limited to awarding any required construction contracts for the Bridge.**

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## 1. Background

### Affordability of bridge and design options

1.1 Exceat Bridge spans the Cuckmere River on the A259 and is part of the Major Road Network. It is a key corridor between Eastbourne and Brighton, with an average annual daily traffic count of 11,500 vehicles and has morning and evening peaks of nearly 1000 vehicles per hour. The bridge creates a pinch point between Seaford and Eastbourne and was considered as a Levelling Up Fund bid given its strategic importance as a transport corridor and its poor condition. In 2021, ESCC was awarded £7,957,517 of Levelling Up Funding (LUF) towards the then estimated total cost of £10,590,517 for the replacement of Exceat Bridge with a new two-lane bridge on a better alignment and with improvements for pedestrians.

1.2 Since then the project has suffered significant delays and costs have increased by over £10m. Given the Council's current financial constraints, it is not currently possible to meet these additional costs from the Council's capital programme. Further information about the reasons for the increase to project costs were detailed in a report presented to Cabinet on 4 March 2025 (sections 1.2-1.6)

1.3 At the meeting on 4 March 2025, Cabinet were asked to consider the affordability of the project and the potential options for progressing the project. The options set out in that report are as follows:

- **Option A:** Continue with plans for an offline, **two-lane bridge** with planning approval, noting the considerable price increase from the original estimated costs.

- **Option B:** Replace the existing bridge with a **single-lane bridge** in the same location using secured LUF funding, subject to approval from the Government. It is anticipated that this could be done under permitted development rights, although this is subject to confirmation from the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA).

- **Option C: Refurbish the existing bridge** at ESCC cost, estimated at £2.5m. This option would require repayment of LUF funding. £4.543m has been received and £3.085m of this has already been spent.

1.4 Although the two-lane bridge ('Option A') remained the preferred option, the paper asked Cabinet to consider an alternative, on-line, single-lane bridge that would be within budget ('Option B'). The single-lane bridge would be very similar to the existing bridge, have fewer benefits for users and would require a 22 week road closure to construct; however, it could be delivered within the financial envelope available at that time.

**Additional funding**

1.5 East Sussex County Council has been working with bus operators, including Brighton and Hove Bus and Coach Company Limited (B&H Buses) and other stakeholders to deliver the East Sussex Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). £41.4m of funding was secured from the Department for Transport for East Sussex's BSIP 1 in the autumn of 2022 for a variety of projects, including bus priority schemes along the A259 transport corridor.

1.6 Immediately prior to the 4 March Cabinet meeting, B&H Buses wrote to the Leader of the Council expressing concern about the prospect of an online single-lane replacement bridge and the associated road closures. They also expressed their view that, had the County Council not already had plans to replace Exceat bridge with a new two-lane, off-line, bridge they would have promoted improvements at Exceat bridge as a higher priority than other bus priority schemes in the BSIP.

1.7 They proposed that the County Council submit a Project Adjustment Request (PAR) to the Department for Transport (DfT) to request the reallocation of £11.128m funding from two BSIP 1 bus priority schemes (Newhaven Town Area -The Drove and Denton Roundabout, and the A259 Peacehaven Corridor) to the Exceat Bridge project. Further information regarding the impact of this on delivery of the Newhaven and Peacehaven schemes is set out in section 2 of this report.

1.8 The DfT have approved the request for £11.128m of the BSIP1 grant funding to be reallocated to Exceat bridge. The reallocated funding would remove the funding gap between the anticipated cost and available funding for the Exceat Bridge project, making it possible to continue with the original, preferred option, of an offline, two-lane bridge, should Cabinet agree to proceed on this basis. The DfT have also agreed an extension to LUF spending to 31 March 2026 (subject to the usual requirement that any draw down of funds is signed off by the Council's section 151 officer).

1.9 In order to deliver the proposed off-line two-lane bridge, the Council is required to acquire land not currently in its ownership. Due to issues in acquiring the land by agreement, Cabinet agreed on 18 July 2023 for the Council to make a Compulsory Purchase Order in order to secure the required land, and for a Side Roads Order and a Bridge Scheme to be made under the Highways Act 1980, both of which were required to support delivery of the project.

1.10 Consequently, on 3 October 2023, the Council in accordance with its statutory powers under the Highways Act 1980 made the East Sussex County Council (Exceat Bridge Replacement- A259 Eastbourne Road) Compulsory Purchase Order 2023 (the CPO). At the same time, the Council made two separate orders under the Highways Act 1980, namely the East Sussex County Council (Exceat Bridge Replacement- A259 Eastbourne Road) (Classified Road) (Side Roads) Order 2023 (the Side Roads Order) and the East Sussex County Council (Exceat Bridge Replacement- A259 Eastbourne Road) Bridge Scheme 2023 (the Bridge Scheme).

1.11 Although the CPO, the Side Roads Order and the Bridge Scheme (together the Orders) have been made by the Council, they do not become effective unless and until they are confirmed by the Secretary of State. If Cabinet agree to reallocate the BSIP funding, then it will be necessary to complete the purchase of land and for the necessary Orders to be confirmed before construction can commence.

1.12 In view of the objections submitted with the Department for Transport (DfT) against the Orders, the DfT has arranged a Public Inquiry to commence on 13 May 2025, which will run for several days, following which a decision on the Orders will be reached. The Council will continue to negotiate with those statutory objectors to remove the need for a CPO.

1.13 However, if for any reason the Council were no longer to proceed with the original scheme (Option A) and to instead pursue Option B, this would remove the justification for the Orders as set out in the Council's Statement of Case. The Public Inquiry is due to commence on 13 May 2025. Whilst it is technically still open to the Council to withdraw the Orders, this would be subject to DfT agreement. Given that objectors have been notified of the Public Inquiry, it cannot be guaranteed that agreement from the DfT would be forthcoming.

1.14 In addition, even if the DfT were to agree to withdraw the Orders, there is a risk that the landowners affected by the CPO make a financial claim against the Council for any loss or costs they have incurred in relation to the Public Inquiry. However, the Council will have to manage and minimise those costs should that situation arise. The Council will continue to focus on negotiations with those with interests in the relevant land in order to avoid the need for a CPO.

## 2. Supporting information - Bus Service Improvement Plan schemes

### Impact of Exceat Bridge Project on BSIP

2.1 The B&H Buses 'Coaster' bus services (compromising the 12, 12A, 12X and 13X bus services) make 1,250 bus journeys a week across the bridge. The Coaster services carry over 5 million passengers each year, equating to 21% of East Sussex's total bus patronage. B&H Buses report that the bridge is currently a major bottleneck for buses, adding to journey times, causing delays and unreliable journey times (including short running of services and regular whole service cancellations) that affect the whole route between Eastbourne and Brighton. If a two-lane bridge is not built and the single lane bridge is either refurbished or replaced, it would mean that the bridge continues to be a major disruptor to services, even if permanent traffic lights to control traffic are introduced.

2.2 Looking at the BSIP schemes along the A259 corridor between Eastbourne and Brighton, the Bridge scheme is the most time critical (with the requirement to use LUF funding by the end of 2025/26) and therefore considered to be the highest priority.

2.3 B&H Buses have also expressed their concern about the impact of the 22-week bridge closure necessary to complete the 'Option B' single-lane bridge. They have forecast a loss of around 20% patronage on the route if the required road closure was to go ahead. Due to the scale of the route, this would reduce East Sussex's bus patronage overall by over 5% and they have also forecast that it is likely to take at least seven years to rebuild usage. They have indicated that bus patronage on the Coaster services may never get back to current levels if a single lane bridge scheme, with associated road closures, is delivered.

### BSIP 25/26 Funding Apportionment

2.4 Table 1 provides an overview of the revised proposed high-level apportionment of the 2025/26 BSIP funding. This takes account of £11.128m of BSIP1 capital funding being transferred to deliver a two-lane bridge at Exceat and the desire to deliver bus priority on the A259 corridor at the earliest opportunity, with £4m of 25/26 BSIP capital being allocated to deliver the Newhaven bus priority scheme. Table 2 shows the original apportionment of 25/26 BSIP capital funding approved by Lead Member for Transport and Environment on 17 March 2025. There are no proposed changes to be made to the revenue apportionment.

Table 1: Overview of High-Level 2025/26 BSIP Funding Apportionment - PROPOSED

| | | **25/26 Allocation** | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Capital** | Traffic Light Priority | £555,000 | 12% |
| | Bus Priority | £4,000,000 | 88% |
| | Total | **£4,555,000** | |

Table 2: Overview of High-Level 2025/26 BSIP Funding Apportionment - ORIGINAL

| | | 25/26 Allocation | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Capital | Bus Priority | £1,600,000 | 37% |
| | Bus Stop Infrastructure | £1,250,000 | 27% |
| | Real Time Information | £1,250,000 | 27% |
| | Traffic Light Priority | £455,000 | 8% |
| | Total | **£4,555,000** | |

2.5 The transfer of the £11.128m of BSIP funding would result in a delay in delivery of one to two months of an existing BSIP1 bus priority schemes in Newhaven: Newhaven Town Area -The Drove and Denton Roundabout (the Newhaven bus priority scheme). There is also the potential that the scheme may need to be descoped to ensure it can be delivered within the available funding. In addition, transferring BSIP funding to the Exceat bridge scheme would result in the delay or cancellation of the A259 Peacehaven Corridor (the Peacehaven bus priority scheme). This would mean the current congestion and delays to buses currently experienced at this location would remain; however, B&H Buses (the primary bus operator in the affected areas) is content that resolving the congestion at Exceat is a higher priority.

2.6 It is therefore recommended that £4m (of a total of £4.55m) of 2025/26 BSIP capital funding is allocated for this purpose. However, this will require an amendment to the 2025/26 BSIP delivery plan and, as a result of this reallocation, delivery of the planned Bus Stop Infrastructure and Real Time Information (RTI) proposals will be delayed until additional funding is available. These schemes, as well as the Peacehaven bus priority scheme, would be prioritised for delivery using future BSIP funding, if and when the DfT announces future BSIP funding. If no further BSIP funding is received then we would not be able to deliver Peacehaven Bus Priority Scheme or the Bus Stop Infrastructure and RTI schemes.

2.7 Therefore, alongside the request to approve the transfer of £11.128m of BSIP1 funds to Exceat bridge, Cabinet is recommended to approve amendments to the 2025/26 BSIP funding allocation, reflecting the allocation of £4m of the 2025/26 funding to the Newhaven bus priority scheme as set out in Tables 1 and 2 above.

### 3. Supporting Information - Exceat Bridge Design Options

3.1 In light of the proposed reallocation of BSIP funding to support the Exceat bridge project, there remains three potential options to take the project forward:

**Option A:** Continue with the offline, **two-lane bridge** with planning approval. This is the Council's preferred option, but would require use of the secured BSIP funding from the Newhaven bus priority scheme and Peacehaven bus priority scheme to ensure the scheme is fully funded and remains subject to confirmation of the Orders (as set out above) and the final tender prices for the bridge scheme being within the current estimates.

**Option B:** Replace the existing bridge with a **single-lane bridge** in the same location using secured LUF funding, subject to approval from the Government. As set out above, it is anticipated that this could be delivered under permitted development rights, but this is subject to confirmation from the SDNPA. If this option is pursued, the BSIP 1 funding would be spent on the Newhaven bus priority scheme and the Peacehaven bus priority scheme as originally planned.

**Option C: Refurbish the existing bridge** at ESCC cost, estimated to be £2.5m. Pursuing this option would require the Council to repay the LUF funding awarded for the replacement of the bridge. £4.543m of LUF funding has been received and £3.085m of this has already been spent. Funding of £4.665m would need to be identified to fund the costs already incurred and additional costs not covered by the remainder of the National Productivity

Investment Funding (NPIF) grant. If this option is pursued, BSIP funding would be spent on Newhaven bus priority scheme and the Peacehaven bus priority scheme as originally planned.

3.2 Further details about these options are included in Table 3 below and details of how they would be funded at Table 4.

**Table 3: Exceat Bridge Options**

| Option | Cost | Road closures | Risks (financial and practical) | Benefits | Disbenefits |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **A. Offline, two lane replacement bridge (planning approval secured)**<br>- 2 lane bridge on a safer alignment,<br>- New footway and crossing points,<br>- Viewing platforms,<br>- Street lighting,<br>- Bus stop improvements<br>- Shared meeting space<br><br>Completion date March 2027 | **£21.8m including £4.8m spend to date (subject to value engineering outcome)**<br><br>Further costs in relation to the CPO process may need to factored in. This may include funding the full costs of a public inquiry on the CPO, assuming those landowners who have objected to the CPO continue to refuse to negotiate reasonable terms for the necessary rights. | Around 19 days of full closures – not continuous and some closures could be carried out on less busy days. In addition, site safety would be managed by reducing the road to one lane for approximately 300m and controlling traffic with traffic lights, predominantly on the west side of the bridge. | Planning approval for the bridge site has been secured subject to fulfilment of planning conditions. Planning application for compound site to enable construction due to be submitted shortly.<br><br>This Option is conditional upon the Council being successful in the CPO to acquire the necessary rights to construct the new bridge and (as the bridge crosses a navigable waterway), confirmation by the Secretary of State of a Bridge Scheme. Public Inquiry being held 13 May.<br><br>Risk of cost overrun will sit with ESCC.<br><br>Further details on financial risks in section 2.4 | New 2 lane bridge (100 year plus lifespan)<br><br>Significant improvements in journey times/reliability and subsequent outcomes such as better connectivity between coastal towns.<br><br>Easier for buses and HGVs to turn onto the bridge.<br><br>Significant improvements for non-motorised users accessibility as a result of new footway.<br><br>Meets stakeholder and public expectations.<br><br>An Equality Impact Assessment was completed as part of the initial design and the new bridge would have a positive impact on those with and without protected characteristics.<br><br>**The original scheme had a benefit:cost ratio calculated at 2.15. We are currently recalculating the ratio using latest cost estimates.** | Delay to the delivery of other BSIP schemes. |

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| **B. Replace the existing bridge like for like in the same location**<br>- Single lane bridge<br>- Permanent traffic lights<br>- Street lighting<br>- Puffin crossing<br>Further information including a diagram of the bridge is appended to the <u>4 March Cabinet report.</u><br><br>Completion date March 2026 | **£9.9m* (including £4.8m spend to date and £ 5.1m to complete plus abortive costs from Public Inquiry).**<br>NB. This does not include land and potential compensation and legal costs as an assessment of what further rights and orders are required will be undertaken following decision on option.<br>*This is based on a northside footway as is the current situation, but options to move this to the southside and enhance sustainable travel improvements will be explored. | Around 22 weeks of continuous, full road closures. The diversion route via the A27 would be 21.3 miles, which takes approximately 35-75 minutes during rush hour.<br><br>See Appendix 1 for further details about road closures | Reputational risk to communicating change of original plan due to significant road closure and impact on stakeholders and A259 strategic road network.<br>Risk of cost overrun will sit with ESCC.<br>Additional time and costs for permissions for any piling in third party land that sits outside of permitted development.<br>As assessment will need to be made on whether this can be constructed wholly within the boundary of the highway and/or land owned by the Council (permitted development confirmation needed from SDNPA) or if any third party rights are required. Based on the legal analysis carried out so far, it is likely that the Council will still need a Bridge Scheme to construct over the river which would need to be confirmed by the Secretary of State.<br>If SDNPA do not accept that Permitted Development Rights apply then a full planning application will need to be made. | New bridge (100 year plus lifespan)<br>Some minor improvements to congestion, journey time reliability and pedestrian safety/accessibility.<br><br>Does not require planning permission as it can be carried out within permitted development (subject to confirmation).<br>An Equality Impact Assessment was completed as part of the initial design and although the new bridge would have a positive impact on those with and without protected characteristics, these would not be as significant as option A. | Major disruption to journeys as a result of the road closure. See further details below.<br>* No improvements for buses and HGVs which find it difficult to make the sharp turn onto the bridge.<br>If the footway remains on the northside, pedestrians will still have to cross the road twice. |

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| **C. Refurbishment of existing bridge**<br>**- Make temporary traffic lights permanent**<br><br>Completion date Late 2025 | **£7.3m (Estimated £2.5m completion costs (high level at this stage) and £4.8m spend to date) with an additional funding requirement of £4.7m (includes repayment of the expended LUF grant)**<br>NB. This does not include land and potential compensation and legal costs as an assessment of what further rights and orders are required will be undertaken following decision on option. | Estimated 10 weeks of continuous, full road closures. The diversion route via the A27 would be 21.3 miles, which takes approximately 35-75 minutes during rush hour.<br><br>See Appendix 1 for further details about diversions. | Unlikely to be funded by the Government and would require us to pay back LUF funding allocated to date.<br>Reputational risk to communicating change of original plan.<br><br>Provision should be made for the consequential write off of abortive costs should neither of Option A or B be taken forward. | May extend the life of the bridge by a few years.<br>Traffic lights have brought some improvements to journey times/reliability.<br>Does not require planning permission.<br>Is unlikely to require any third party rights nor a Bridge Scheme. | Current bridge not compliant with design standards set out in the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB) or LTN1/20.<br>The bridge will still need replacement in the near future, and it is not known whether any external funding will be available. This will also require more road closures.<br>No improvement for road users on current situation. |

Table 4: Funding source for each option. Further details on spend so far are set out in Appendix 2.

| | **Spend to 24/25** | **25/26 and 26/27** | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Option A – two lane bridge** | **£m** | **£m** | **£m** |
| **Costs** | **4.798** | **16.993** | **21.791** |
| **Funding** | | | |
| LUF grant | 3.085 | 4.873 | 7.958 |
| NPIF | 1.213 | 0.920 | 2.133 |
| LUF capacity | 0.000 | 0.271 | 0.271 |
| ESCC | 0.500 | 0.000 | 0.500 |
| BSIP | 0.000 | 11.128 | 11.128 |
| **Total Funding available/approved** | **4.798** | **17.192** | **21.990** |
| Additional funding requirement/(surplus) | | (0.199) | (0.199) |

| | **Spend to 24/25** | **25/26 and 26/27** | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Option B – one lane bridge** | **£m** | **£m** | **£m** |
| **Costs** | **4.798** | **5.100** | **9.898** |
| **Funding** | | | |
| LUF grant | 3.085 | 4.873 | 7.958 |
| NPIF | 1.213 | 0.920 | 2.133 |
| LUF capacity | 0.000 | 0.271 | 0.271 |
| ESCC | 0.500 | 0.000 | 0.500 |
| **Total Funding available/approved** | **4.798** | **6.064** | **10.862** |
| Additional funding requirement/(surplus) | | (0.964) | (0.964) |

| | **Spend to 24/25** | **25/26 and 26/27** | **Total** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Option C – refurbishment** | **£m** | **£m** | **£m** |
| **Costs** | **4.798** | **2.500** | **7.298** |
| **Funding** | | | |
| LUF grant | 3.085 | (3.085) | 0.000 |
| NPIF | 1.213 | 0.920 | 2.133 |
| LUF capacity | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| ESCC | 0.500 | 0.000 | 0.500 |
| **Total Funding available/approved** | **4.798** | **(2.165)** | **2.633** |
| **Additional funding requirement/**(surplus) | | **4.665** | **4.665** |

**Scheme costs overview for two lane Exceat Bridge project**

3.3 Jacobs provided a cost estimate in October 2024 for bridge construction based on the detailed design. This included the costs to construct the bridge, roadworks and any preliminary activities, inflation for both tender and construction and a large risk allowance. They are confident that their estimate is still robust. A Contingency has not been added as detailed design has been completed and risk is low. Since the October 2024 cost estimate, preliminary work has been carried out on identifying areas where value engineering could reduce the costs of the scheme. Jacobs are confident that savings could be made and such savings can then be used as contingency if necessary.

3.4 The other elements in the table below which complete the scheme costs relate to the exclusions within the Jacobs cost estimate (including site and property acquisition and public inquiry; statutory undertakers diversions; accommodation works, as well as the Jacobs (design) fees, legal fees and internal staffing resource).

3.5 The Construction contractor's fees have been calculated as a percentage of construction and preliminaries (including inflation and risk, as well as land acquisition, legal fees and costs of the Public Inquiry).

**Risks**

3.7 The Jacobs cost estimate has been reviewed and validated by the Council's Contract & Commercial Team. The team have an extensive knowledge of current market rates, construction methods and productivity rates as well as procurement and construction risks.

3.8 The Council's Internal Auditors have completed a high-level review of the cost estimate to ensure best industry practice and current market knowledge has been adopted.

3.9 As with all construction projects, there are inherent risks including supply chain issues (e.g. material shortages and price volatility), contractual issues (e.g. scope changes and contractual disputes) and construction site risks (e.g. unknown site conditions, protestor action, flooding etc.). These risks will be mitigated through careful contract management and the use of appropriate contract terms.

3.10 Inflation has been included in the estimate for design development risks, construction risks and scope change risks. Allowances have also been made for Tender Inflation and Construction Inflation (taken to the midpoint of construction) using the Building Cost Information Service Road Tender Price Index. The overall cost estimate accounts for the high level of inflation since the original LUF estimate was put together. At the time of the estimate in October 2024, inflation had returned to lower and more stable levels.

3.11 In the absence of a Quantified Risk Assessment, an ample risk allowance has been included in the construction cost estimate (10-15% might be expected at the final design stage). This level of risk allowance is appropriate for a high-level construction cost estimate and would make adequate allowance for both procurement and construction risks.

3.12 Jacobs are in the process of developing a quantified risk assessment now the detailed design is complete, which will result in a more refined risk allowance. It is expected that the result of this and further value engineering will reduce the current construction estimate.

3.13 The impact of the recent Tariffs imposed by the USA on the wider economy are unknown; however, it is considered that the known potential impacts of supply chain disruption and increased material costs are likely to be minimal on this project as the materials are expected to be sourced within the UK.

3.14 Optimism bias (a calculation designed to compensate for the tendency to underestimate costs and overestimate benefits, often used in economic impact assessments) has not been included in the estimate. This is in accordance with DfT Guidance, Tag Unit A1.2 Scheme costs, stating that optimism bias uplifts are only required for the economic case of a proposal.

3.15 Prior to construction award, a target cost for the construction will be prepared summarising the results of construction bids received and providing a clear and comprehensive evaluation and recommendation for sign off by the Exceat Project Board prior to contract award. A further approximate £260k of the Jacobs project management costs, plus costs associated with the CPO public inquiry will be incurred at risk, should the tender evaluation not lead to contract award.

3.16 Other project risks:

| **Risk** | **Mitigations** |
|---|---|
| Delays to the project that would push it beyond the end of LUF and BSIP funding periods – e.g. discovery of protected wildlife, unexploded object, underground archaeology or utilities, delays in securing above permissions or in carrying out preliminary work such as optimisation of design, finalising target costs and programme etc. | Wildlife surveys have already been carried out. A UXO survey is planned as part of the design phase. A Utility survey has been completed. We have consulted with Designated Network Operators and have located utilities. There is no known archaeology on site.<br><br>Optimisation of the programme has been carried out and reduced by 6 months to 100wks. Further work will be done on the programme when we know the critical deadline for completion, particularly in terms of spending external funding.<br><br>The Programme is based on a 5-day week, so could reduce the length of the programme (at a cost) by weekend working. |
| Public Inquiry rejects CPO - unable to secure land to build bridge | External lawyers Sharpe Pritchard have been engaged to manage the CPO and Public Inquiry. |
| SDNPA refuse planning consent for main compound. | Pre-planning engagement with SDNPA has taken place. No major issues have been identified. |
| Failure to discharge planning conditions | SDNPA require all planning conditions to be discharged before work can commence on site. It may be possible to negotiate a staged completion of conditions to save time. Work will begin on discharging conditions if / when a decision to proceed with Option A has been made. Surveyors are on standby for this purpose. |
| SDNPA, Environment Agency or Marine Management Organisation do not agree changes to materials/methodology proposed as part of programme optimisation. Risk of funding gap or delays to the project meaning we lose funding. | Engagement will take place as early as possible. |
| Major flooding or adverse weather conditions during construction – delays/cost increase | Now using Boathouse as a compound which is more resilient to weather. No plant will be left on site due to risk of flooding/pollution. The Programme will take into account optimal time of year to avoid flooding/adverse weather as far as possible within other timescale constraints. |
| Securing compound land and compensatory land. Landowners requesting more compensation. | Engagement taking place via the Council's Property Team. We have discussed plans for the compound site with the landowner. |

## 4. Supporting Information - communication with stakeholders

4.1 The Project Team have kept LUF representatives from the DfT informed and they are understanding of the issues the project has faced. Internal and external stakeholders are receiving regular updates. Further details can be found at Appendix 3 to this report.

## 5. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

5.1 The Council's preference has always been to complete the original proposal for an offline two-lane replacement bridge (Option A). However, this is only viable if additional external funding is identified. The diversion of BSIP funding from the Peacehaven and Newhaven bus priority schemes provides an opportunity to continue with Option A, subject to confirmation of the Orders by the Secretary of State and / or successful negotiations with the landowners.

5.2 Cabinet is therefore recommended to approve the diversion of £11.128m from the Newhaven and Peacehaven bus priority schemes already approved in the Council's BSIP programme to the Exceat Bridge Replacement Scheme and to proceed with the preferred option of a new offline, two-lane, replacement bridge ('Option A'). Cabinet is also recommended to approve the amendments to the 2025/26 BSIP funding allocation, reflecting the reallocation of £4m of funding to the Newhaven bus priority scheme.

5.3 To ensure the effective delivery of the project, Cabinet is recommended to delegate authority to the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport to take all actions necessary to achieve the completion of the 'option A' two-lane replacement bridge, including but not limited to awarding any required construction contracts for the Bridge.

**RUPERT CLUBB**

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LOCAL MEMBERS

Councillors Adeniji, Lambert, MacCleary, S Shing, Denis, Bennett, Osborne, Collier, Robinson, Holt, Swansborough, Shuttleworth, Wright, Ungar, Belsey, di Cara, Tutt and Rodohan