

<p>CABINET MEETING – 8th April 2009</p> <p>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY SHEET – PART I</p>	
<p>Title of Report: PROPOSED APPOINTMENT OF CONSULTANTS FOR THE SUNDERLAND STRATEGIC TRANSPORT CORRIDOR – NEW WEAR BRIDGE</p>	
<p>Author(s): Director of Development and Regeneration</p>	
<p>Purpose of Report: The purpose of this report is to seek approval to the commissioning of consultants to provide traffic modelling services and to produce an updated Major Scheme Business Case for the Sunderland Strategic Transport Corridor – new Wear bridge (SSTC) project.</p>	
<p>Description of Decision: Cabinet is recommended to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Agree that a consultant should be commissioned to provide traffic modelling services for the SSTC project. ii) Agree that a consultant should be commissioned to produce an updated Major Scheme Business Case for SSTC project. 	
<p>Is the decision consistent with the Budget/Policy Framework?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>If not, Council approval is required to change the Budget/Policy Framework</p>	
<p>Suggested reason for Decision: The value of both of the commissions exceeds £100,000 and Cabinet approval to the use of a consultant is therefore required.</p>	
<p>Alternative options to be considered and recommended to be rejected: The Council does not have the capability to provide either the traffic modelling service or the updating of the MSBC in house and is therefore constrained to source the relevant expertise from elsewhere.</p> <p>It is proposed to procure both the traffic modeling service and the updating of the MSBC via the Council's existing Framework Agreement with Jacobs for the provision of transportation services. Consideration has been given to a competitive procurement for the modelling work as an alternative to calling-off these services direct from the Framework. However to do so would add six months to the delivery date for the new model thus delaying the submission of the planning application and if the application is called-in by the Secretary of State for determination there will be considerable delay to the whole project. The</p>	

use of the Framework will enable these services to be procured expeditiously. Similarly it would be advantageous to have an updated MSBC to hand as soon as possible in order to be able to respond to events quickly should that become necessary in the event that public inquiries are not required for the various statutory orders and approvals required for the project. Furthermore, Jacobs' fee rates have recently been reassessed against market rates and it has been demonstrated that Jacobs continues to offer value for money.

Is this a "Key Decision" as defined in the Constitution? Yes

Relevant Review Committee:
Policy and Co-ordination

Is it included in the Forward Plan?
Yes

PROPOSED APPOINTMENT OF CONSULTANTS FOR THE SUNDERLAND STRATEGIC TRANSPORT CORRIDOR – NEW WEAR BRIDGE

Report of the Director of Development and Regeneration

1.0 Purpose of the Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to the commissioning of consultants to provide traffic modelling services and to produce an updated Major Scheme Business Case for the Sunderland Strategic Transport Corridor – new Wear bridge (SSTC) project.

2.0 Description of Decision

2.1 Cabinet is recommended to:-

- i) Agree that a consultant should be commissioned to provide traffic modelling services for the SSTC project.
- ii) Agree that a consultant should be commissioned to produce an updated Major Scheme Business Case for the SSTC project.

3.0 Background

3.1 At its meeting on 26th June 2008 Cabinet agreed to accept the offer from the Department for Transport (DfT) of Programme Entry for the SSTC project. The DfT offer was made subject to certain conditions which must be discharged by or before the date of the next formal application to the DfT.

3.2 One such condition is that a new traffic model that is fully compliant with contemporary guidance must be in place before making an application for Conditional Approval. Submission of the application for Conditional Approval is on the critical path for the project and is currently programmed for November 2010. Outputs from the new model are also required to be able to demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Highways Agency that the project will not have a detrimental effect on the operation of the A19 trunk road and its junctions with the local road network. Until the Highways Agency is satisfied it is unlikely that planning permission for the scheme can be granted.

3.3 In December 2008 the DfT advised that the proposal to use the new Tyne and Wear Transport Planning Model as the basis for further transport modeling work for the SSTC was acceptable in principle. The DfT further advised that any new model should have the capability to more accurately simulate the performance of junctions in congested network conditions.

3.4 The Major Scheme Business Case (MSBC) for the SSTC project was originally submitted to the DfT in July 2005. Since then there have been significant changes in the relevant DfT guidance with the result that the MSBC is now in need of updating

4.0 Proposals

- 4.1 Jacobs Consultants (the Council's Traffic and Transportation framework consultant) is the author of the Tyne and Wear Transport Planning Model and so has an in depth knowledge of that model and is familiar with the local area. This is valuable in that another consultant would need a significant period to develop its understanding to the same degree.
- 4.2 A proposal under the terms of the framework agreement has been received from Jacobs for a new model, based on a development of the Tyne and Wear Transport Planning Model, which will satisfy DfT modelling requirements, particularly to have the necessary capability to simulate delay at congested junctions. A fee ceiling of £190,600 plus £34,000 third party costs for additional traffic surveys has been proposed for the work. The cost of this commission will be carefully monitored to ensure appropriate performance and progress against programme.
- 4.3 The application to the DfT for Conditional Approval will be made when the statutory powers and approvals are in place and must be accompanied by a MSBC that is fully compliant with contemporary guidance. As currently programmed the MSBC must be updated by November 2010. However, there is a possibility that this date could be brought forward should, for example, there not be a public local inquiry in relation to the statutory orders and approvals required for the SSTC. It is therefore appropriate now to update the current version of the MSBC and to keep it updated so that it is fit for its intended purpose at all times throughout the project.
- 4.4 A proposal from Jacobs for producing an updated MSBC and for subsequently keeping it up to date has been received. A fee ceiling of £136,406 has been proposed. The cost of this commission will also be carefully monitored to ensure satisfactory performance and progress are achieved.

5.0 Reason for the Decision

- 5.1 The value of both of the proposed Jacobs' commissions exceeds £100,000 and Cabinet approval to the use of a consultant is therefore required.

6.0 Alternative Options

- 6.1 The Council does not have the capability to provide either the traffic modelling service or the updating of the MSBC in house and is therefore constrained to source the relevant expertise from elsewhere.
- 6.2 Consideration has been given to a competitive procurement for the modelling work as opposed to calling-off these services from the Council's Framework consultant for transportation services. However to do so would add six months to the delivery date for the new model thus delaying the submission of a planning application and if the application is called-in by the Secretary of State for determination there will be considerable delay to the whole project. The use of the Framework will enable these services to be procured expeditiously. Similarly it would be advantageous to have an updated MSBC to hand as soon

as possible in order to be able to respond to events quickly should that become necessary. Furthermore Jacobs fee rates have recently been reassessed against market rates and it has been demonstrated that Jacobs continues to offer value for money.

7.0 Relevant Considerations

Financial Implications

The report to Cabinet on 3rd December 2008 entitled “Sunderland Strategic Transport Corridor – New Wear Bridge Design Options” referred to the funding of development costs of the project to date from resources committed by ONE North East. The report stated that resources of £2.68million from ONE North East were subject to approval. This funding has now been approved. The costs of the proposed commissions for traffic modelling services and for updating the MSBC will be met from the above funding in the short term.

Programme Entry status has been granted for the project by the Department for Transport (DfT) and funding levels have been agreed. Any preparatory costs (design fees and the like) of the project following Programme Entry will be shared on a 50/50 basis between the DfT and the Council. However, this funding will not be made available until Conditional Approval is granted by the DfT. In the longer term therefore, 50% of the costs of the commission will be recoverable from the DfT, subject to Conditional Approval being granted.

8.0 Background Papers

Development and Regeneration file reference M21

