

Report to: Greater Cambridge Partnership Joint Assembly

27th February 2019

Lead Officer: Mike Davies – Cambridgeshire County Council

THE CHISHOLM TRAIL

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The Chisholm Trail scheme supports the Greater Cambridge Partnership's (GCP's) transport vision of implementing improved public transport routes to encourage more people to use sustainable transport modes instead of the private car. This is part of a wider public transport strategy which aims to support the feasibility of delivering proposed housing and employment growth in Greater Cambridge.
- 1.2. The Chisholm Trail will provide a new largely off road link across the eastern side of the city linking Cambridge Station with Cambridge North Station, and in so doing provide links to employment, education and growth sites, and link green spaces.
- 1.3. The report progress to date on the delivery of Phase One, as well as looking ahead to how Phase Two will be delivered to give a complete Chisholm Trail.
- 1.4. The Joint Assembly is asked to comment on the report.

2. Background

- 2.1. The Chisholm Trail was conceived by cycling campaigner Jim Chisholm in the late 1990s. The thinking behind the Trail is to provide a strategic transport corridor that is largely traffic free that could link up key destinations, including employment sites across the city. This would mean that vulnerable road users would be able to avoid heavy traffic and junctions, whilst the route itself would serve to encourage increased sustainable transport journeys and thus relieve congestion, boost public health and make for more reliable journeys.
- 2.2. A feasibility study was undertaken in 2009 which identified potential route options, land ownership and upcoming opportunities in new developments. In 2012 The Chisholm Trail as a strategic transport route was added to the emerging Cambridge City Local Plan. A Basic Asset Protection Agreement was signed with Network Rail, and work began to identify potential delivery options.
- 2.3. It was agreed at the Greater Cambridge City Deal Executive Board meeting in January 2015 that The Chisholm Trail should form part of the City Deal prioritised programme, and a budget of £8.4m was allocated. In August 2015 the Board gave approval to consult on the proposed route. In March 2016 the Executive Board approved the route of The Chisholm

Trail following a period of public consultation, and gave approval to submit a planning application.

- 2.4. A two phase approach has been adopted for development and delivery of the scheme. Phase One (Coldhams Lane to Cambridge North Station including a new river crossing) is almost wholly off road, and required planning consent and commons consent, whereas Phase Two (Coldhams Lane to Cambridge Station) runs on quiet streets (public highway), Network Rail (NR) land and across two new developments (Mill Road Depot and Ridgeons, Cromwell Road). The approved route and the scheme phases can be seen on the plan in **Appendix 1**.
- 2.5. The 2009 feasibility study recommended that a new bridge crossing of the River Cam should be considered as part of the trail, and that this in itself had standalone value. Cambridgeshire County Council was successful in its 2013 bid to become part of the Department for Transport funded Cycle City Ambition Grant (CCAG) programme. The new bridge, which has come to be known as Abbey-Chesterton Bridge, was a key part of the County Council's CCAG programme. Following public consultation, approval was given by the County Council's Economy and Environment Committee in November 2015 to proceed to a planning application. Further S106 funding was identified for the bridge, and it gained planning consent in 2017.
- 2.6. As well as being a key component of the strategy to increase the levels of cycling and walking in Greater Cambridge, added benefits of the project are the promotion of multi-modality (allowing easy access to rail stations and transport hubs by foot and cycle) and the opening up and linking of green spaces, which in turn gives potential scope for recreation, public art, new habitat creation and other initiatives and projects. This is a robust model: the Promenade Plantée in Paris, New York's High Line, and the recently opened 606 in Chicago have enabled alternative transport and leisure routes along railway corridors.
- 2.7. The Trail will also serve to link new developments thus encouraging more residents to adopt sustainable transport modes. The Chisholm Trail is very much a strategic route that links new developments and employment sites, and has direct linkages to other projects including Waterbeach Greenway.

3. Key Issues and Considerations

Phase One

- 3.1. The construction contract for Phase One (and Abbey-Chesterton Bridge) was let in November 2018 to Tarmac. The current work programme is 20 months duration. This phase has proved to be very complex and lengthy in terms of progressing through the planning application and planning condition discharge process reflecting the difficulties of the site. The site runs next to and under a live railway line, passes the oldest building in Cambridge, across areas of archaeological and ecological interest, and through areas that are designated as 'Flood Zone'. The route also impacts on public utilities located in Newmarket Road as well as a major strategic gas main that has to be crossed by The Trail in Ditton Meadows.
- 3.2. Land licence agreements have had to be secured from a range of landowners for both temporary compounds and the permanent route of The Trail. Each landowner has different requirements in reaching an agreement in terms of boundary treatments, specific routing of

The Trail, landscaping and lease/licence duration. In some cases landowner requirements have meant reworking of packages being submitted to discharge planning conditions.

- 3.3. Due to ecological reasons the space available at Barnwell Lakes, on the south side of Newmarket Road, is more limited than first believed. This means that it is not possible to construct the underpass as originally planned by constructing it on Barnwell Lakes land and then moving it into place using self-propelled modular transporters. The underpass has been re-designed so that it can now be constructed in less space at Barnwell Lakes, using pre cast concrete units.
- 3.4. To construct the underpass, various utilities need to be relocated or protected during the works. The original plan was to physically suspend the services beneath a scaffolding bridge, but based on trial holes dug, condition surveys and liaison with each of the utility companies, the age and poor condition of some of the services has meant that this is not possible. The services will now need to be permanently or temporarily diverted.
- 3.5. Work to deliver Phase One should be complete by summer 2020, including the new river bridge.

Phase Two

- 3.6. In terms of Phase Two, NR are undertaking major works to their assets north of Cambridge Station to increase stabling capacity, and to improve carriage presentation facilities (maintenance and cleaning) as part of the Thameslink programme. These improvements entail bringing back into use an arch in Mill Road bridge, and lowering the track at that location, for which a closure of Mill Road bridge is necessary for around seven weeks; scheduled for summer 2019. NR are liaising with the County Council's Traffic Manager Team to finalise the timings and arrangements.
- 3.7. As a result of close working over several years between The Chisholm Trail Project Team and NR, the proposals for The Trail on the east (Romsey) side can be delivered by NR as part of their works. Details are shown on the plan in **Appendix 2**. This option that gives best value and minimises the need to obtain various approvals/consents, and procure NR approved contractors. It also delivers this section of the scheme in the shortest possible timescale.
- 3.8. The planning application for Mill Road depot site includes The Chisholm Trail, running along its eastern edge, and provides the Hooper Street to Mill Road bridge arch link. The Trail is already in the masterplan for the Ridgeons site as part of a quiet street shared with cars, to tie in at the northern extent of the section outlined in 2.3 above.
- 3.9. The Project Team will continue to engage with NR with regards to securing approval to establish the Trail on the west (Petersfield) side, from Mill Road Depot to Cambridge Station; though if this proves impossible to agree and deliver the alternative route is Devonshire Road.
- 3.10. In terms of on-road sections, interventions/treatments will include signage, resurfacing and a re-design of the signal controlled junction at Coldhams Lane and Cromwell Road.
- 3.11. The plan in **Appendix 3** shows the whole project in some detail in terms of on road sections, off road sections, developer interfaces and delivery phases.

4. Finance

- 4.1. £8.4m was allocated to The Chisholm Trail project in 2015, and at that time the scheme was very much in a development phase. A further £869,000 was allocated in early 2018 due to the difficulties and challenges of the site, the restrictions in how the construction works could be executed, and the complexities of agreeing packages for discharging planning conditions.
- 4.2. Final estimates for completing the Phase 2 scheme have now been secured. The £14.3m estimate is above the current approved budget.

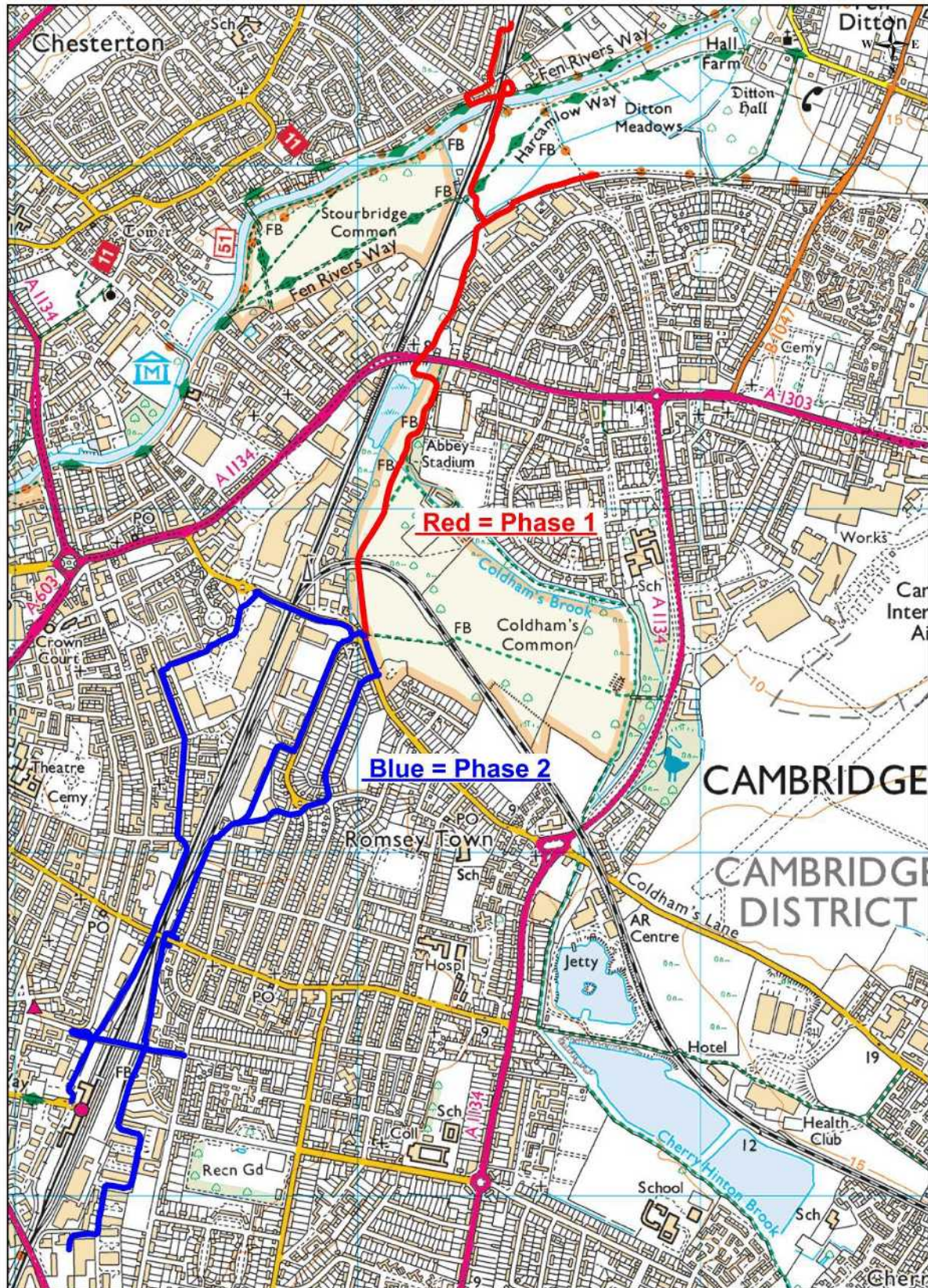
5. Options and Emerging Recommendations

- 5.1. The Executive Board will be asked to note the progress being made on Phase One, with construction works commencing, and the work to date in developing Phase Two.
- 5.2. The Executive Board will also be asked to approve increasing the budget in line with final estimates.
- 5.3. Approval will also be sought to enable part of Phase Two to be delivered by Govia Thameslink/NR's contractor as part of the Thameslink works.

6. Next Steps and Milestones

- 6.1. The current construction works on Phase One will continue, including the construction of the Newmarket Road underpass, path widening across Coldhams Common and the new Abbey-Chesterton Bridge linking Ditton Meadows to Chesterton. At this stage it is anticipated that the underpass will be built in the autumn, with a closure of Newmarket Road for several days required.
- 6.2. Construction works on Phase Two (Romsey Section) will commence in summer 2019 as part of the Thameslink work in Cambridge, including the closure of Mill Road Bridge. The section of The Chisholm Trail between Cavendish Road and Clifton Road should be open for public use this year, providing a good quality cycle link from Romsey to destinations such as Hills Road and Long Road Sixth Form Colleges, Addenbrooke's Hospital and the Biomedical Campus via this new link and the Hills Road segregated cycleway.
- 6.3. Work to commence the development of Mill Road Depot site has started, and on completion a section of The Chisholm Trail will open. Positive discussions have been ongoing to incorporate The Chisholm Trail as part of the Ridgeons development on Cromwell Road, though the design has not been finalised and planning consent has not been secured.
- 6.4. Design work is underway to improve the controlled crossing of Coldhams Lane, giving access from Coldhams Common into Cromwell Road and onwards to the Ridgeons development. Other on road sections of the route include Cromwell Road, York Street, Ainsworth Street and Clifton Road. Work is underway to consider how these roads, all currently subject to 20mph speed limits, could be further enhanced to ensure the very safest, attractive conditions for cyclists exist.
- 6.5. The Chisholm Trail is currently planned to be complete and open for use in 2022.

APPENDIX 1 – APPROVED ROUTE AND PHASING



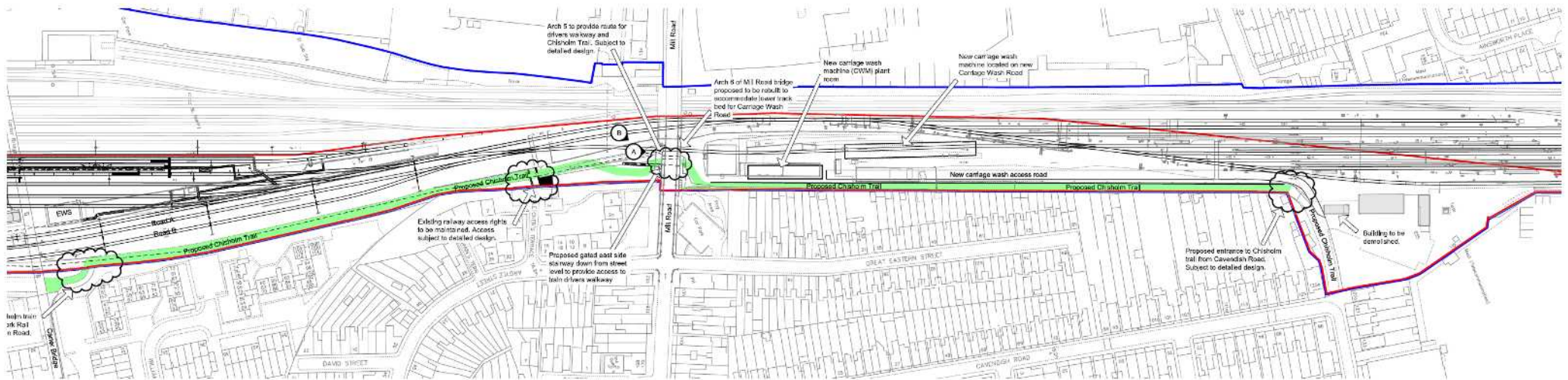
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Larger plan to be tabled at the meeting



APPENDIX 3 – DEVELOPER INTERFACES, ON & OFF ROAD SECTIONS AND DELIVERY PHASING

