

Information item: BRIDGE MANAGEMENT AND THE SECKLOW BRIDGE INCIDENT: ACTION PLAN

Author: David Hill, Chief Executive, Tel: (01908) 25 2200

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with an update on progress in implementing the Action Plan that was formally accepted by the Committee as the management response to the Bridge Management and Secklow Gate Bridge audit reports.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Audit Committee review progress in implementing the Action Plan and discuss whether or not that progress provides grounds for reassuring members and Milton Keynes residents about the safety of bridges in Milton Keynes, and about the effectiveness of the Council's arrangements for dealing with incidents, managing contracts and ensuring effective governance.
- 2.2 It would be open to the Committee to agree that:
- (a) the actions recommended for closure should be closed
 - (b) future updates should be aligned with the remaining actions.

3. Background and Action Plan Governance

- 3.1 At its meeting on 25 January 2012, the Audit Committee reviewed internal and external audit reports and CLT management statement relating to weaknesses in the Bridge Management Service and to the delays in commissioning the repair of Secklow Gate Bridge following a fire in January 2010. Each report contained several recommendations and the Audit Committee made a total of 28 more – one of which was that the Corporate Leadership Team should develop and implement a comprehensive Action Plan to address all the identified areas of concern.
- 3.2 The enclosed Action Plan, incorporating 51 headline actions (some of which have several sub-elements) was drawn up by a project board established by the Chief Executive, and was approved by the Audit Committee at its meeting of 28 March 2012.
- 3.3 The Action Plan is owned by the Corporate Leadership Team, sponsored by the Chief Executive and has been delivered by a project board comprising the Chief Executive, the Corporate Director Resources, the Assistant Directors for Highways & Transport, the Partnership Delivery Team and Audit & Risk Management, supported by the Portfolio Office.

4. **Overall progress to date**

4.1 I am very pleased to report that of the 51 actions:

- 41 (80%) are rated Green [delivering to the agreed target date with no cost or quality implications, and no major outstanding issues or risks]
- 10 actions (20% of the total) are rated Amber/Green [minor issues and risks exist but appear resolvable, and if addressed at this stage, should not threaten timely delivery]
- 29 (57% of the total) are recommended for closure as having been completed
- No actions are rated Amber/Red or Red.

5. **Key Achievements**

5.1 **Bridge Safety**

- An initial risk assessed selection of 62 more complex bridges received a Principal Inspection during 2011/12, with the outcomes signed off and entered onto BMX (the Bridge Management IT system).
- A further programme of 75 Principal Inspections has been approved for 2012/13, with PIs for the remaining bridges requiring such inspections scheduled on a prioritised risk basis for 2013/14 and 2014/15. The Council's insurer has agreed that this programme is prudent and acceptable. Once completed the PI programme will revert to the normal six year cycle.
- General Inspections (of all bridge structures other than those receiving a PI that year) are now scheduled on a two year cycle, with General Inspections completed on the relevant bridges in 2011/12.
- Capital resources to fund major repairs have been allocated in the capital programme for 2012/13 and future years. The results of this year's annual report on the condition of the bridge stock will be used to review the sufficiency of this allocation.
- The backlog of minor repairs has been cleared and consideration is being given to a more straight forward arrangement under which the management of the repair contact would be directly under the control of the Bridge Management Service.

5.2 **Service Dispute and SLA renegotiation**

- A comprehensive new SLA has been agreed, reflecting all the relevant provisions of the relevant industry Code of Practice. This is being implemented through the Partnership Delivery Team, with the agreement of commercial terms and final sign off expected imminently.

- MKC and Mouchel have reached agreement on a basis for resolving the dispute over the extent of compliance with the previous SLA. Both parties accept that its provisions were not sufficiently clear and will share the cost of completing the outstanding principal inspections.

5.3 Incident Management and Recovery Framework, and Project Management

- A new Incident Management and Recovery Framework has been developed to link together the three relevant council processes (Business Continuity, Emergency Planning and Project Management) and ensure that a relevant process is applied at critical points in any incident – see diagram at Annex A. This framework has been embedded in relevant guidance and in their associated training programmes.
- A Highways and Transport Programme Management Board chaired by the AD (Highways & Transport) and with additional programme management capacity, has been established to promote effective programme and project management throughout the service. This in turn is subject to scrutiny and challenge by a Transport Programme Sponsor Board, which includes three members of the Corporate Leadership Team with assurance provided by the Portfolio Office.
- The MK Approach (to project management) is currently going through its annual update and will include additional material to embed learning from the Secklow Gate Bridge Incident.

5.4 Contract Management

- A review of the Council's overall approach to contract management has been undertaken, led by Mike Hood the AD responsible for the overall management of the relationship with Mouchel. CLT has now endorsed a strategy to strengthen and improve contract management through:
 - (a) establishing a corporate capacity (akin to the Portfolio Office) to set standards, promote best practice, organise relevant training and provide a degree of assurance, and
 - (b) bringing together over a period - and strengthening - contract management capacity over the whole spectrum of "environmental" services – landscaping, waste collection/recycling, residual waste treatment and highways (including bridges, street lighting and passenger transport). This approach is described in more detail at Annex B.

5.5 Other Measures

- Good progress is being made in taking forward the wide range of other recommendations made or endorsed by the Audit Committee, with details set out in the attached Action Plan (Annex C).

6. **Implications**

Policy: the progress made in implanting the Action Plan will strengthen the Council’s ability to achieve its objectives efficiently and effectively.

Resources and Risk: resource and risk issues are considered within the environment of individual recommendations and action points. The RAG ratings for projects reported here include risks and finance as determining issues.

✓	Capital	✓	Revenue		Accommodation
	IT	✓	Medium Term Plan	✓	Asset Management

6.1 Carbon and Energy Management: n/a

6.2 Legal: strengthening incident and project management should minimise the risk of legal disputes.

6.3 Other Implications: n/a

✓	Equalities/Diversity		Sustainability		Human Rights
	E-Government	✓	Stakeholders		Crime and Disorder

Background Papers: “Review of the Secklow Gate Bridge project management arrangements”, Haines Watts
 “Progress in implementing CLT management actions arising from the internal Secklow Gate Bridge Review”
 Paper to Audit Committee 25/01/2012
 “Secklow Gate Bridge” (9 September 2011) Internal Audit
 “Bridge Service Review” (January 2012) Internal Audit
 Audit Committee Recommendations (Secklow Gate Bridge and Bridges), 25 January 2012