

Partnerships and Corporate Organisation Policy and Scrutiny Panel

Executive Member reporting: Cllr Steve Bridger, Executive Member for Assets and Capital Delivery

Date of meeting: 3 March 2022

Capital delivery

A priority for me is that our major projects are exemplar schemes that deliver against our vision for an open, fairer, and greener North Somerset, and to constantly look for opportunities to be imaginative and innovative with particular regard to active travel and green infrastructure. But there are significant challenges delivering high profile projects within approved timescales and within budget, with uncertainties arising because of the pandemic and inflationary pressures.

We are also taking steps to increase the knowledge and understanding of our carbon reduction work across our major projects and capital plans.

MetroWest

We are still in the procurement stage with Network Rail. Continued delay to central government decision on the Development Consent Order (DCO). We continue to lobby on this through engagement with DfT. Outcome of DCO is critical for the timeline and completion of procurement process. Project is at commercially sensitive stage but evidence that costs have increased due to the pandemic, inflation and more risk being priced in.

Banwell bypass

The next round of non-statutory public consultation on the Banwell bypass will start in March (date TBC) and last 6 weeks. We are exploring the possibility of joint events with the Local Plan team. The consultation will include further detail on the design of the preferred route and the emerging package of local mitigation measures. This will all inform the planning application which is on track for submission to the LPA at the end of May.

A38 MRN

After finalising the Outline Business Case (OBC) for the A38 MRN bid (which included working with Somerset CC to address additional questions from National Highways on measures at J22), I paused the submission of the OBC to DfT in the light of the Bristol Airport appeal decision. While we must take the long-term view and not miss out on the opportunity for investment where it's needed, it is right that we take some time to consider the implications of the planning decision and to fully understand the funding position in the context of the appeal outcome.

Additional note

I would like to acknowledge that all these projects have required more project and senior officer input than originally planned for because of the level of interest, complexity, need to maintain and build relationships and to ensure appropriate levels of scrutiny and member briefings. I am hugely grateful to the officer team, and we are lucky to have them.