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The preferred design for a new foot and cycle bridge over the Great Ouse in St Neots has been decided and approval has been given for the project to progress to the next stage.

Members of Cambridgeshire County Council's Economy and Environment Committee agreed on Thursday 15 November to support the proposal to further develop a river crossing design, over the northern section of the river, based on the option of a suspension bridge.

The new bridge, the design of which is proposed to have two slender towers on one side of the river with cables extending vertically down to support the bridge deck, is part of the St Neots Masterplan for Growth. The Masterplan is being delivered by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority in partnership with Huntingdonshire District Council and St Neots Town Council with input from the County Council and other stakeholders.

In 2017 over 1,000 residents participated in a public consultation to decide on the bridge's location and 77% of locals were in favour of one being built. The location for the new foot and cycle bridge was chosen to be north of the existing Town Bridge, providing a link to the historic centre of the town from Crosshall Road across Regatta Meadow. This offers a convenient link to Crosshall School, and both Priory Park and Priory Junior schools as well as Longsands College, the railway station, plus local shopping and leisure facilities.

Following this consultation an environmental site analysis and design options study was commissioned by the County Council and used to draw-up options. The analysis involved looking at the predicted usage of the bridge plus the impact any bridge designs would have on the town's landscape and natural surroundings.

Three final designs were then chosen in consultation with the Masterplan Steering Group and worked up for public consultation. Local residents, businesses and organisations were invited to vote and comment on the options during a six week consultation in summer 2018, and just under 1,500 people responded. A scoring system was used alongside results from the technical analysis, to recommend the preferred option.

The suspension bridge scored highest, closely followed by a cable stayed bridge with a single tall, slender tower and cables extending diagonally down to support the bridge deck. The option of a steel arch bridge, with a low offset arch, scored the lowest.

Chairman of the St Neots Masterplan Steering Group, Cambridgeshire County and Huntingdonshire District Councillor

David Wells, said: “The Masterplan Steering Group supports the location and the design of the bridge, which is sympathetic to the area and minimises impact on Regatta Meadow.

“As part of the St Neots Masterplan for Growth this bridge project will encourage growth and alleviate the challenge of managing traffic flow across both the town and the river in St Neots.”

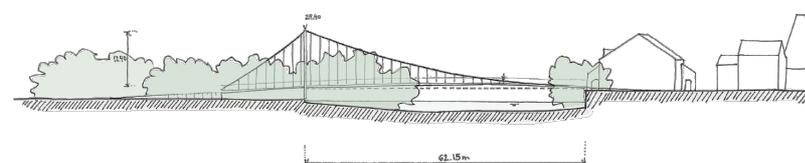
Councillor Ian Bates, Cambridgeshire County Council’s Chair of the Economy and Environment Committee, said, “A northern bridge will link up key destinations in St Neots and give new options for runners, walkers, wheelchair users, mobility scooter riders, buggy pushers and cyclists.

“The suspension bridge option is seen to be an elegant and environmentally considerate design, which will work well at the chosen location, and will encourage more people to get out of their cars - providing a safer, traffic-free route across the river, as well as improving infrastructure and bringing economic prosperity to the town.

“By encouraging walking and cycling, we’re promoting healthier lifestyle choices that will also help to reduce air pollution and ease congestion in St Neots.”

Next steps will be for the Council to procure contracts for planning and a detailed bridge design with input from a contractor, with the aim of working towards the submission of a planning application and bridge navigation order.

The detailed design process and engagement with contractors will allow for a clearer indication of the total costs involved. The majority of funding is now in place, and opportunities for further funding if required will be explored as the scheme progresses. The current programme states that the project will seek final approval to construct from the council’s Economy and Environment Committee in May 2020.



The Story of St Neots Northern Foot and Cycle Bridge

So Far ...

RECAP

In 2017 we held a consultation for the bridge location ...

2018

This year we held a six week consultation for the bridge design ...

NEXT STEPS



1079
Responses to consultation



77.7%
People in favour of having a bridge



60%
People in favour of location chosen



14K

Leaflets and postcards delivered to local residents and businesses



1454

Responses to consultation



78%

In favour of improving transport links in St Neots



15
NOV 2018

Approval was given at Cambridgeshire County Council's Economy and Environment Committee to progress to the next stage of the project based on the option of a suspension bridge design

'Bridge must complement the surrounding area'

'Consider impact on local events'

'Bridge will ease traffic congestion'

'Spend the money on roads/improving the town centre instead'

'Concerned about impact on view'

'Must be environmentally friendly'



104.2K

People reached on Social media



4732

Website views



3

Public Events

Find out more here: www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/stneotsbridge



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