

Assurance Summary

VERSION 1 24.11.2021



1 – SCHEME DETAILS

Project Name	T0026 Forge Island Footbridge	Type of funding	Grant
Grant Recipient	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council	Total Scheme Cost	£1,476,107.03
MCA Executive Board	TEB	MCA Funding	£1,000,000
Programme name	TCF	% MCA Allocation	68%
Current Gateway Stage	FBC	MCA Development costs	0
		% of total MCA allocation	0%

2 – PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Is it clear what the MCA is being asked to fund?

Yes, the funding is requested to provide a high-quality footbridge over the River Don between the town centre and Forge Island.

This is part of the works to regenerate Forge Island and will provide an improved environment for pedestrian movements between Rotherham Town Centre, and the new mixed use leisure development on Forge Island. The bridge will allow both pedestrian and cycle access although the main users are expected to be pedestrians.

3. STRATEGIC CASE

Options assessment

Is there a clear rationale for the selection of short-listed options and the choice of the Preferred Way Forward?

Yes, the rationale for the new bridge was that the existing bridge was in poor condition, unattractive and uninviting (as unlit) as a pedestrian route. It was also constructed within the river flood level and was therefore liable to flooding, which was compounded by water level rises associated with climate change.

However, since OBC the existing footbridge has been removed at risk in order to maintain the programme for the overall Forge Island development. The rationale is now to replace the old bridge, provide a direct link across Forge Island to Rotherham Central Train / Tram station, and to maximise opportunities for active travel connectivity.

	<p>The options analysis is somewhat weak and only considers two options – a ‘do minimum’ (which for appraisal purposes assumed maintenance of the existing bridge) and a ‘preferred option’ of replacing the bridge. As the bridge has been removed the ‘do minimum’ is no longer a viable option. Despite this, it is broadly recognised that the preferred option directly responds to the need to upgrade an ageing facility deemed not fit-for-purpose by the council (since removed), maintain previous levels of connectivity and in time grow active travel use on a key desire line between a key transport hub and the town centre.</p>	
<p>Statutory requirements and adverse consequences</p>	<p><i>Does the scheme have any Statutory Requirements?</i></p> <p>No. The footbridge at Forge Island lies in RMBC controlled land and has full planning consent in place.</p> <p><i>Are there any adverse consequences that are unresolved by the scheme promoter?</i></p> <p>Yes – some minor adverse consequences are identified, specifically traffic disruption and environmental impact of construction, which is typically expected for a scheme of this scale. It is also noted that increased cycling across the bridge and through the adjacent development could have potential safety impacts due to increased conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists. It is understood that the lighting will be compliant with planning conditions and will be screened to minimise light pollution. Overall, it is considered that the strategic benefits of the scheme would outweigh the adverse impacts.</p>	
<p>FBC stage only – Confirmation of alignment with agreed MCA outcomes (Stronger, Greener, Fairer).</p>	<p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The scheme will contribute to an integrated package of infrastructure for active travel, which will serve future sustainable economic growth, including the Forge Island development and housing sites around the Westgate Riverside area of the town centre. • The scheme will encourage people to adopt active travel modes over private cars to reduce the number of vehicles that use the SCR road network and hence reduce the negative effects on congestion. • The scheme would help facilitate the transition to a low carbon transport network, by creating a modal shift away from the private car to more sustainable modes including walking (including as a stage of a public transport trip) – and more significantly by improving the environment on routes to Rotherham Central station and the new Magna tram/train stop – also delivered through TCF. • Reducing the reliance on private transport, encouraging people to choose greener and healthier forms of transport both for existing journeys and new journeys stemming from investment in the City Region. • Investing over a sustained period in high quality walking infrastructure that better connects homes, transport interchanges, education, employment, and recreational opportunities using safer, direct, and convenient routes. • Removes barriers to walking and identifies the infrastructure required to encourage more trips by bike or on foot. 	
<p>4. VALUE FOR MONEY</p>		
<p>Monetised Benefits:</p>		
<p>VFM Indicator</p>	<p>Value</p>	<p>R/A/G</p>
<p>Net Present Social Value (£)</p>	<p>£7,015,900</p>	

<i>Benefit Cost Ratio / GVA per £1 of SYMCA Investment</i>	7.97	
<i>Cost per Job</i>	N/A	
Non-Monetised Benefits:		
<i>Non-Quantified Benefits</i>	There are benefits such as to the townscape / regeneration, which could be significant, and which have not been included in the monetised benefits. If considered these benefits could positively impact the BCR.	
Value for Money Statement		
<i>Taking consideration of the monetised and non-monetised benefits and costs, and the uncertainties, does the scheme represent value for money?</i>		
<p>Yes. The BCR of 7.97 is high (above 4). However, sensitivity testing has demonstrated a certain volatility in scheme benefits resulting in a BCR range from 1.38 to 14.57, albeit it is considered that owing to uncertainty in the inputs, it is more likely to be towards the lower end. There is also uncertainty in the base demand given the change in land uses, which has not been factored into the assessment. Similarly, other non-monetised benefits mentioned above have not been considered in the VfM conclusions which could positively impact the BCR.</p>		
5. RISK		
<i>What are the most significant risks and is there evidence that these risks are being mitigated?</i>		
The top 3 highlighted risks are:		
Risk	Mitigation	Owner
Flood event during construction disrupting/damaging/delaying construction and risk to life and property.	The contractor will be added to the Emergency Planning Team notifications so early warning is provided. The contractor will register with the Environment Agency for flood risk notifications and log onto live river gauge on-line monitoring sites located on the River Don. Work sequence is to build the podium deck as soon as possible which is above the flood plain and will be safe for personnel/plant/equipment/materials	J. Green
Development partner bankruptcy	All necessary financial checks were undertaken before entering into the development agreement.	J. Green
Principal Contractor bankruptcy	All necessary financial checks were undertaken before they were invited on to the tender list.	J. Green
<i>Do the significant risks require any contract conditions? (e.g. clawback on outcomes)</i>		
No – none are considered necessary given mitigants in place.		
<i>Are there any significant risks associated with securing the full funding for the scheme?</i>		

No. The source of funding has changed since OBC due to rising interest rates from the 3rd party funder. 68% of the funding is now sourced from SYMCA with the remaining £476,107 provided by RMBC.

Are there any key risks that need to be highlighted in relation to the procurement strategy?

No – there are no significant risks. The scheme promoter has also confirmed that the Council has signed a Development Funding Agreement with Muse that sets out a maximum funding commitment for the whole scheme (including the bridge) and Muse is contractually obliged to deliver for that price.

6. DELIVERY

Is the timetable for delivery reasonable?

Yes. Completion of the bridge is expected by Mar23 which is considered realistic.

Is the procurement strategy clear with defined milestones?

Yes - RMBC has indicated the following key milestones (piling and concrete works – 12/12/22 to 06/03/23 / pre- construction and installation 24/10/22 to 06/03/23).

What is the level of cost certainty and is this sufficient at this stage of the assurance process? Has the promotor confirmed they will cover any cost overruns?

Cost certainty is noted as **being 95%**, which is appropriate for this stage. The principal contractor has also included a risk allowance in their tender. The applicant has clearly stated that RMBC would be responsible for any cost overruns.

Has the promoter demonstrated clear project governance and identified the SRO? Has the SRO or other appropriate Officer signed of this business case?

Yes, the SRO has been identified as the Strategic Director Regeneration and Environment. Section 7.5 provides an organogram for the team responsible for managing the project.

The FBC has not yet been signed.

Has public consultation taken place and if so, is there public support for the scheme?

Public consultation is noted as having taken place as part of the planning process for the full Forge Island scheme (the planning process has been completed).

Are monitoring and evaluation procedures in place?

Yes, although only one objective has been defined. A single objective is insufficient to monitor and evaluate the scheme's outcomes. For example, there are other outcomes which could be framed by further objectives, e.g. economic benefits (e.g. including visitor perceptions), environmental impacts (e.g. noting design requirement to allow for flood levels) and safety benefits (e.g. those facilitated by provision of CCTV and lighting). **Therefore, it is recommended that this is revisited.**

7. LEGAL

Has the scheme considered Subsidy Control compliance or does the promotor still need to seek legal advice?

State aid is not applicable to this scheme.

8. RECOMMENDATION AND CONDITIONS

Recommendation	Proceed to contract.
Payment Basis	
Conditions of Award (including clawback clauses)	
The scheme is recommended with the following conditions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The FBC is signed by the relevant officer.• More than one objective is defined to monitor the success of the scheme as required at OBC.• The promotor will supply a revised legal appraisal of Subsidy Control taking in to account the Subsidy Control Act 2022 coming into force.	