

Report – Planning and Transportation Committee

Report of Urgent Action Taken: Gateway 4b - Tower Bridge High Voltage System Replacement and Increasing Resilience

To be presented on Thursday, 3rd December 2020

*To the Right Honourable The Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Commons
of the City of London in Common Council assembled.*

SUMMARY OF ACTION TAKEN

1. We hereby report action taken in relation to a project involving the refurbishment of the High Voltage (HV) and Low Voltage (LV) electrical infrastructure at Tower Bridge and increasing its power resilience (i.e. the secondary source of power in the event of a power failure).
2. This project was at a critical stage and the refurbishment of electrical equipment was necessary as a matter of urgency, as the current electrical network and switchgear was 20 years beyond its design life and the existing secondary supply could only power bridge-lifts at half speed. This affected the ability to complete bridge lifts as covered under the Corporation of London (Tower Bridge) Act 1885.
3. To emphasise the current risk of power failure, in August 2019 (over the bank holiday weekend), a power failure led to the cancellation of 10 bridge lifts and the late opening of the income generating exhibition. There was concern that, by delaying Court consideration of this matter until 3 December 2020, the delivery programme would be quite considerably delayed beyond Christmas 2021 and into 2022. The intention was to complete this project in December 2021, before Christmas and New Year when power demands on the bridge tend to increase.
4. The approval of the Court was required to proceed at Gateway 4b given that the overall cost was in excess of £5m. There had been no change to the cost, programme or costed risk provision since the previous Gateway Report (GW3), which recommended that the next report to committee would be a Detailed Options Appraisal (G4). However, following further design development and advice from the professional team, your Projects Sub and Planning & Transportation Committees identified a preferred option to progress the project and, consequently, the approval of the Court was sought for permission to proceed straight to Detailed Design (G4c). This would avoid submission of repeat information in the next report and would allow the programme of this critical project to be maintained.

5. The overall cost of the project (including risk) was £8,400,000. Provision had been made within the Bridge House Estate maintenance plan for all budget requested to progress this project (i.e. no new monies were being requested).
6. Approval was, therefore, granted under urgency to proceed with the project and progress to Gateway 4c, the Detailed Design stage, noting the total estimated cost of the project of £8,400,000 (including risk). Approval of the project and any associated amendments at Gateway 4c and Gateway 5 stages was also delegated to the Planning & Transportation and Projects (Policy & Resources) Sub-Committee.

RECOMMENDATION

7. We **recommend** that the action taken be noted.

All of which we submit to the judgement of this Honourable Court.

DATED this 2nd day of November 2020.

SIGNED on behalf of the Committee.

Deputy Alastair Moss
Chair, Planning and Transportation Committee