

South Area Committee Query RE : Dutch Style Roundabout

QUOTE

A Cambridgeshire County council spokesperson said: “Fendon Road roundabout, which opened in July 2020, is the first Dutch-style roundabout in the UK. Its innovative new road layout is designed to improve cyclist safety and provide better walking links in the Queen Edith’s and Addenbrooke’s area. The project has been well supported from consultation stage with a majority of people in favour of a new cycle-friendly roundabout design.

“Works included a number of challenges due to unforeseen events including COVID-19 and the first lockdown as well as significant additional utilities works. This increased the cost of the project beyond its £2.056m budget.”

BACKGROUND INFO

- Were councillors asked to approve the additional costs and if so, when? Please provide the date, and if applicable, meeting reference. If they were not, why not?

- When were councillors told that the cost had increased from £800,000 to £1.4m?

Councillors agreed a series of works and funding as part of the Transport Strategy for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire in October 2014. This included costings for the Fendon Road roundabout project along with other proposals for the South Area Transport Plan which covers Queen Edith’s Way, Cherry Hinton Road and the Robin Hood junction.

The figure of £800,000 was an early estimate of the construction costs for a roundabout project suggested before any design work had even been undertaken. Construction costs are only part of the total project costs.

In November 2016, the Economy and Environment Committee approved the implementation of the Dutch-style roundabout design. The initial budget for Queen Ediths Way, which included Fendon Road was £1.2m

but specific additional S106 funds of £225k were received from Cambridge Biomedical Campus, which increased the scheme budget.

And then from £1.4m (stated by [REDACTED]) to £1.8m? (Figure provided to the press in February 2020)

And then from £1.8m to the final cost of £2.4m?

- A statement provided to the press in February 2020 said the initial £800,000 cost had been an "early estimate" and "did not include the additional utility work now required". Further additional costs were also later attributed to covid.

In 2017 an opportunity arose to secure further funding specifically for the roundabout from the Department for Transport's Cycle Safety Grant. A successful bid was submitted for £550,000.

Alongside the original funding, S106 monies and the DfT grant, the overall scheme budget was £2.056m prior to works.

Recognising that Fendon Road would be the very first Dutch-style roundabout in the UK, additional advice and expertise was sought and the project team worked with the Dutch transport consultancy firm Royal Haskoning to develop detailed designs for this innovative project.

Once the works began, it became apparent that substantial additional utilities work would be required, elements of which had not been previously identified by the utility companies. If the utility work had been carried out before the roundabout construction, it would have taken the utility companies at least five months; but by working collaboratively with our contractors already on site, this time was reduced to three months. Inevitably costs increased as a result of the extra work and extended programme. This was compounded by the six week closure due to Covid-19.

Can you provide a breakdown of the £2.4m final cost? Please ensure that this includes the cost attributable to covid and to the additional utility work.

The final project cost is £2.2m This includes construction costs of £1.56m and costs around design, staff time and communications. The scope and complexity of the Fendon Road roundabout project has

changed since 2016. As mentioned, the early estimate of £800k was a construction-specific cost, not the project cost, the cost of transport infrastructure has also increased over the 4 years since this early estimate.

In June 2020 the Council's Highways and Transport Committee recommended reallocation of £304k of funding from within the overall programme of the South Area Corridor Transport Plan to complete construction of the roundabout. Some savings have been found in the budget for the Robin Hood junction project.

We estimate that COVID-19 added around £45,000 to the overall project costs and delayed the works by 6 weeks. Additional utilities works added around £230,000 to the cost of the project.

What are the lessons that were learned and that are being implemented as referenced in [REDACTED] comments?

Since the opening of Fendon Road roundabout in summer 2020, Steve Cox, Executive Director of Place and Economy, has undertaken a review of all highways project management procedures and is introducing new processes that ensure there is improved reporting measures and more transparent decision making across highways projects. This will ensure that any changes to scheme budgets will be reported to Committee earlier in the future.

Could you please assist with the request for a cost/benefit analysis figures, timeline and accurate project cost estimate figures on the Dutch style roundabout?

Email from [REDACTED] (Group Manager MID) to [REDACTED] [REDACTED] dated 3rd July 2020

Apologies for the delay in responding to your enquiry. I have been looking back through the archives to locate a benefits realisation document or something outlining the benefits.

At the time the South Cambridgeshire Cycle Improvement initiative was being progressed, local members were keen to have the initial S106 funding spent on safer walking and cycling on Queen Edith's Way,

Cherry Hinton Road and the Robin Hood junction and therefore the approach was to derive the benefits based on the consultations that took place and the general support received from the local residents. As such, therefore, a BCR was not calculated and therefore I am unable to supply such details.

The situation today has changed in that we do now calculate a BCR and develop a benefits realisation plan for our projects, however I am sure the benefits will become self-evident once the roundabout opens in the near future.