

Roundwaters Retaining Wall Scheme

Briefing Note

Summary of Events

During the winter of 2020/21, the embankment supporting the B3224, between Exford and Wheddon Cross at Roundwaters, failed. It is believed that this failure occurred following one or more storm/rainfall events, which caused a large tree to fall and take with it a significant portion of the embankment adjacent to the carriageway. The exact date of the failure remains unknown but, once discovered, a single lane closure was put in place to prevent vehicles from running close to the unstable edge of the carriageway and its associated drop. This traffic management remains in place at the current time.

As a result of this failure, WSP (the Council's Consultant) was engaged to undertake a feasibility study and, from the options proposed, a steel sheet piled (SSP) retaining wall with associated drainage and highways improvements that includes a vehicle restraint system (VRS) and carriageway resurfacing, was selected. This solution was presented to the LCN earlier in the year and has also been circulated to the affected landowner.

Progress

We are now approaching tendering stage with the following having been progressed:

1. Approval in Principle - signed off;
2. Outline access for works – granted;
3. Provisional Advance Authorisation of road space – logged. When a start date is confirmed a reduced advertising period can be adopted to secure that road space;
4. Arboricultural Report – received;
5. Preliminary Ecology Appraisal (PEA) – undertaken;
6. Geotechnical Design Report – received;
7. Stage 1 / 2 Feasibility / Detail Design Safety audit – completed;
8. Ground Investigation Report – received;
9. Drawings – produced;
10. Bill of Quantities – produced;
11. Pre-Construction Information – completed;
12. Existing telecom Poles - BT/Open Reach have been engaged to move these ahead of the main works;
13. Ecology work - has started and includes surveys;
14. Vegetation removal works - will take place between mid-September and early October.

There is a single issue regarding the Vehicle Restraint System (VRS) which is in the final stages of satisfactory close out.

Time Frame

It was originally envisaged that works could commence on or around 17th October 2023. However, activities have taken longer to sort out than originally expected, therefore this date is no longer achievable.

Going to tender	Late August to early September 2023.
Tendering period	Four to six weeks. During this time, the tenderers will have the opportunity to raise tender queries and to ask for an extension to the tender period. SC will grant an extension if there is i) the opportunity of cost savings, ii) it resulted from technical questions or iii) other legitimate reasons occur.
Tender Evaluation	Minimum two weeks. Once the tenders are returned, SC will need to evaluate the submissions.
Tender Award	Circa two weeks.
Road Space/Closure [^]	Two to six weeks. Although we have the process for the road closure in place, since this date will be changed, it will take time to update the required systems.
Mobilisation [^]	Unknown. The contractor will need time to mobilise, book plant, order materials, prepare their programme and to generally resource the project safely.
Public Meeting [^]	We would all wish to have the opportunity to undertake some further public engagement or consultation.
Site activities	Four to eight weeks but is dependent on the approach, weather conditions and other issues beyond our control.

[^] = Potentially concurrent activities.

Consequently, we do not expect to start on site before mid-late November following receipt of the works programme a more accurate start date will be possible. At this point we are unsure if the works will fall over the Christmas period but we will ensure the contractor's programme takes due consideration of any affects or issues raised.

Traffic Management

The traffic management envisaged will be a full road closure and the contractor, once appointed, will create a diversion route.

Further Information

Email bridges@somerset.gov.uk and mark for the attention of Paul Nation.