

MERSEY GATEWAY EXECUTIVE BOARD

*At a meeting of the Mersey Gateway Executive Board on Thursday, 17 November 2011
in The Board Room - Municipal Building, Widnes*

Present: Councillors Polhill (Chairman), Stockton and Wharton

Apologies for Absence: Councillor McDermott

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: B Dodd, L Derbyshire, M Noone, S Nicholson, D. Parr and M Reaney

Also In Attendance: (Observers) Councillors: Browne, Jones, McInerney and Redhead

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

MGEB8 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chairman of the Board reported that Councillors Browne, Jones, McDermott, McInerney and Redhead would be attending future meetings as observers.

MGEB9 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2011 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

MGEB10 CONFIRMATION OF CONDITIONAL FUNDING APPROVAL AND THE COUNCIL ACCEPTANCE OF THE FUNDING CONDITIONS (KEY DECISION)

The Board considered a report of the Chief Executive which informed Members that the terms of the Conditional Funding Approval proposed by Ministers had been reported to Council on 19 October 2011. The Council had agreed unanimously to accept the funding offer without modification. The report gave advice on the formal exchange of correspondence between the Department for Transport and the Chief Executive which put the funding agreement in place.

The Board was further advised that the draft terms of the Conditional Funding Approval had been considered by the Board on 22 September and forwarded to full Council on 19 October, with a recommendation that the terms be accepted. The Council resolved unanimously that:

- (1) the Council accepts the Conditional Funding Offer from Government in the form received;
- (2) the Council supports the further development of the Mersey Gateway Project on the basis of:-
 - (a) the Conditional Funding Offer; and
 - (b) the information set out in the report and the attachments to this report (attachments to Council report not included in this report to MGEB);
- (3) the Council and its Officers take all reasonable steps to maximise toll discounts for residents of Halton; and
- (4) the Council delegate to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council, the Portfolio Holder for Resources and the Portfolio Holder for Transportation the power to take all reasonable steps necessary to achieve the delivery of the Mersey Gateway Project.

The Board was further advised that the funding offer had been confirmed in a letter of 19 October 2011 from Mostaque Ahmed to the Chief Executive. The terms of the funding offer had been accepted by the Chief Executive in his reply of 20 October 2011. This exchange of letters established the Conditional Funding Agreement with Ministers and the correspondence was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

RESOLVED: That the Board note that the Conditional Funding Agreement is now in place.

MGEB11 COMMENCEMENT OF PROCUREMENT

The Board considered a report of the Chief Executive which informed Members that the Conditional Funding Agreement with Ministers allowed the procurement process for Mersey Gateway Bridge to commence. The report also advised Members of the procurement actions that had been

taken to date and provided an overview of the activity planned for the next two years.

The Board was further advised that the procurement process commenced with the publication of the Contract Notice in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU), which invited interested parties to express an interest in the procurement of Mersey Gateway Bridge. The Contract Notice had been dispatched on 20 October 2011 and responses were required by 14 December 2011. The Contract Notice had been published in the OJEU on Monday 24 October 2011. The terms of the Contract Notice had been drawn to allow the procurement process to develop the most economically advantageous solution (referred to as a bid).

It was reported that the invitation to the private sector to express an interest in procurement was supported by a project brief called the 'The Prequalification Document', which was available on the project website, www.merseygateway.co.uk and was circulated at the meeting. The Prequalification Document Appendices contained instructions for candidates wishing to express an interest and responses were required in the form of a Prequalification Questionnaire. The project team were also using the northwest Local Authorities' procurement portal, 'the Chest', to administer the prequalification process. Candidates had to register on the Chest to gain access to the Project portal. Candidates would need to register in order to request access to project information (the Dataroom), name their authorised representative, and to receive subsequent prequalification circulars (containing clarifications and responses to queries). Guidance on registering and using the Chest during the prequalification period was included in the Prequalification Document. The prequalification evaluation team (evaluators and moderators) had been identified and the process would use the 'Award' evaluation software proven to provide a robust selection procedure that could stand up to scrutiny.

Furthermore, it was reported that the evaluation of prequalification submissions would take place from mid December to the end of January 2012. The aim was to select the three best candidates based on the published evaluation criteria. In February 2012 recommendations would be reported to the Board leading to the successful candidates being informed. The announcement of the prequalification result would enable the selected candidates to mobilise for the Competitive Dialogue process. The dialogue stage was programmed to start in February 2012.

The bidders would submit Draft Final Tenders towards the end of the dialogue stage. The Council would evaluate these, close the dialogue, and invite Final Tenders around February 2012. A preferred bidder would be selected on the basis of the Final Tenders. The programme of key procurement events was set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

In addition, it was reported that to enable an efficient Competitive Dialogue to take place the project team were preparing the draft contract documents, including guidance and instructions for the bidders. The documentation would be embraced in the Invitation To Participate in Dialogue (ITPD). The project team planned to complete the ITPD in time for dialogue to commence next February.

In conclusion it was reported that additional planning applications were being developed (called the Further Applications) with consultation currently taking place. The aim was to enable the Council as Local Planning Authority, to consider the Further Applications so that a decision would be available at the commencement of Dialogue.

RESOLVED: That the Board note that the procurement process had commenced.

MINUTES ISSUED: 17 November 2011

CALL-IN: 24 November 2011

Any matter decided by the Mersey Gateway Executive Board may be called in no later than 5.00pm on 24 November 2011

Meeting ended at 3.10 p.m.