

Isles of Scilly Link Project

Minutes of the Route Partnership - Political Sub-Group
Friday 13th November 2009, 13:00 – 15:00

Chief Executive's Office, Town Hall, St Mary's, Isles of Scilly

Attending

Cornwall Councillors:

Graeme Hicks – (Chairman) Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport & Planning
Tamsin Williams – Penzance Central (including harbour)
Sue Pass – Penzance Promenade
Roger Harding – (part) Newlyn & Mousehole

Isles of Scilly Councillors:

Julia Day – Chairman of the Council, & St Mary's
Marian Bennett – Vice Chairman & Bryher
Dudley Mumford – Transport Committee Chairman & St Mary's

Officers:

Philip Hygate – RP Chairman, Chief Executive CIOs
Tim Wood – Project Director, CC
Nicola Yeates - Project Manager, CC (Minutes)

1. Apologies:

Councillor Chris Thomas (CIOS)

2. Minutes of the 18th September Meeting:

Agreed as a true record

3. Route Partnership Update:

Philip Hygate reported that the tender processes for vessel builder and operator were going well and a sustainable business case was being developed. Final tender bids have been received for the operator and Cornwall Council's Finance team have confirmed that the tendered charter fees will support the £10m Prudential Borrowing. Councillor Julia Day asked for clarification that this meant that there was no cost to the ratepayers of Cornwall to finance the vessel. Tim Wood confirmed that this was the case.

4. Project Update:

Tim Wood reported

- both options A and C are being progressed;
- Option A - photomontages circulated around the table in respect of:
 - i View from Jubilee Pool for previous application and for current
 - ii option A
 - iii Oblique aerial view of option A

- Option C - architect's sketch of Trinity House internal alterations circulated;
- Work is ongoing to identify all costs and timescales for delivery;
- The procurement and financial aspects of Option A and Option C will be considered by Cornwall Council's Procurement Assurance Scheme Panel on 25th November.

A High Court challenge of the Penzance Harbour Revision Order 2009 was lodged on 13th October 2009 by Charlie Cartwright (a member of the Friends of Penzance Harbour). The challenge is against the Secretary of State's decision to approve the HRO. Councillor Roger Harding said that Mr Cartwright might not be acting on behalf of FoPH. If this challenge is successful then NO Penzance option can be delivered. Councillor Tamsin Williams asked if the challenge can be withdrawn or will it have to take its course. Councillor Graeme Hicks responded that it is yet to be considered by a judge who will decide if there is a case to be answered. The Council and Treasury solicitors believe the challenge is weak but it may take several weeks before the case can be heard. DfT will not award Full Approval whilst the HRO is being challenged.

Councillor Julia Day suggested that FoPH are informed about the effect of the challenge to the HRO. Charlie Cartwright is also questioning again the single ship proposal. Tim Wood to seek legal guidance on approach that CC can take.

Action: TW

Philip Hygate recommended that the CIOs should continue to look at Falmouth as a fall-back proposal as the islands could be left without any credible option for a sea link. Councillor Graeme Hicks commented that he has also met with Falmouth Docks regarding a possible mainland base for the new vessel.

Councillor Julia Day expressed concern that Council members and officers are constrained in what they are able to say whereas FoPH are not so constrained. Tim Wood informed the meeting of a leaflet that had just been issued by FOPH claiming 'Two years of hell' for Option A but no disruption for Option C.

Tim Wood stated that the Listed Building Consent application would include mitigation proposals in the form of repairs and enhancement works to the existing quay. Councillor Roger Harding asked if the application would be referred. Tim Wood confirmed that as CC was the applicant the Committee can only be 'minded to approve' and that in that event the application would need to be confirmed by Government Office.

Councillor Graeme Hicks asked how soon we will know the viability of option C. Tim Wood responded that this will be after the PAS meeting (25th November).

Councillor Tamsin Williams asked if the funding is transferable. Tim Wood replied that it was not and an economic case would need to be made to DfT for a change to that which has already received conditional funding approval. Philip Hygate added that regardless of any mainland port option, the vessel and St Mary's harbour improvements are ready to be delivered. Tim Wood noted that the DfT have previously advised that the project cannot be disaggregated, it is all or nothing.

Councillor Roger Harding commented that there is a greater risk of competition if the new vessel operates from Falmouth.

Councillor Julia Day stressed that whatever mainland option is finally secured the improvements to St Mary's harbour are essential to ensure continued provision of a sea link.

5. Vessel Operation – SLA:

Paper circulated setting out key headings within SLA followed by a brief discussion.

Councillor Julia Day asked if agreement covered Option C or just A. Tim Wood confirmed that cannot go back to bidders on option C without repeating at least part of the procurement and therefore SLA as currently worded had been based on Option A.

6. Any Other Business:

- a) Councillor Roger Harding gave feedback on the heritage meeting that was held in Penzance on 12th November 2009 by Nick Cahill:
 - The meeting was well attended by the public and Andrew George MP.
 - The presentation recounted the history of the harbour from 1545 onwards, showing its development to meet the needs of the day
 - FoPH provided guidance on how to object to the Penzance harbour planning application/LBC application on heritage grounds (writing to EH)
 - FoPH stated that it was morally wrong for the Council to be making a decision on one of their own projects
- b) Tim Wood reported that he had attended a recent Regional Funding Allocation meeting (12th November) in which one project had failed to be delivered to the agreed timescale and DfT had directed a reallocation of this funding. This clearly demonstrates the risk to funding for the IoS Link Project.

7. Date of Next Meeting:

Friday 18th December 2009, 16.00, New County Hall, Truro (meeting invitation to follow by Microsoft Outlook to confirm venue)