Manchester City Council
Report for Resolution

Committee: Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee – 11 December 2012
Executive - 19 December 2012

Subject: Ordsall Chord - Consultation on the Network Rail Order

Report of: The Chief Executive

Purpose of Report

To inform members of Network Rail’s proposals to construct a new chord line in the vicinity of the Museum of Science and Industry to create a new rail link between Manchester Victoria and Manchester Piccadilly stations.

To enable members of the Scrutiny Committee to consider proposals for the Council’s response to the consultation

Recommendations

That the Scrutiny Committee members note the content of this report

That the Executive:

a. supports Network Rail’s proposal to construct the Ordsall Chord;

b. welcomes the progress being made to bring forward the scheme as the first key component of the “Northern Hub” project;

c. asks officers to continue to work with Network Rail to ensure that the Council’s comments are taken into account and incorporated in proposals to be included in an application to the National Infrastructure Directorate for Development Consent; and

d. authorises the Chief Executive to finalise the Council's formal response to consultation in consultation with the Leader and the Executive Member for Environment.

Wards Affected:

City Centre

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Community Strategy Spine</th>
<th>Summary of the contribution to the strategy</th>
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<tr>
<td>Performance of the economy of the region and sub region</td>
<td>The Ordsall Chord will represent a key strategic rail connection that will improve connectivity across the north of England. As such it is forecast to bring economic benefits to the city, Greater Manchester and the UK as a whole.</td>
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Reaching full potential in education and employment
The development will create a direct employment opportunities and drive further indirect jobs growth.

Individual and collective self esteem – mutual respect
Additional opportunities are forecast to arise as a result of the scheme across the city region that will be of benefit to city residents.

Neighbourhoods of Choice
The chord will enhance the connectivity of the city improving its accessibility. The Council will wish to ensure that the design and construction of the scheme minimises local impacts and that the impact on the city’s heritage assets is also minimised.

Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

Financial Consequences – Revenue
None

Financial Consequences – Capital
None

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

MCC letter in response to first consultation (November 2011)
Report to Executive on the Transport Strategy for Manchester City Centre (July 2010)
Network Rail Ordsall Chord Consultation Documentation (November 2012) including:
- Location Plan
- Initial Alignment Options
- Preferred Alignment
- Constraints Plan
- Update on Preliminary Environmental Information
- Replacement Pedestrian and Cycle Bridge Location
- Options to Divert Utilities
- Compound Locations and Strategic Construction Routes
- Land Plans
- Ordsall Chord s42 Consultation Pack (included as appendix 1)

Ordsall Chord Update Leaflet (Network Rail, May 2012)
1.0 INTRODUCTION

Network Rail is currently undertaking the second of three phases of consultation on proposals to construct a new railway chord between the Deal Street Junction Line in Salford and the Castlefield Junction Line in Manchester in the vicinity of the Museum of Science and Industry (MOSI). The Ordsall Chord will create a new rail link between Manchester Victoria and Manchester Piccadilly stations. It forms part of a wider package of improvements to the rail network in and around Manchester which will create additional rail capacity and allow up to 700 additional trains per day to run across the north of England. It is intended that services will start running over the chord in December 2016. During 2013 Network Rail will be making a Development Consent Order application to the National Infrastructure Directorate. This application procedure is followed because the scheme is a nationally significant infrastructure project and planning permission for such schemes is granted by the Secretary of State for Transport and not the local planning authority. The Council is however being formally consulted on the proposals.

2.0 BACKGROUND

The Ordsall Chord forms the first part of a £560m package of rail infrastructure improvements in and around Manchester known as the Northern Hub. It will allow trains from Yorkshire and the North East to reach Manchester Airport without crossing over the West Coast Main Line south of Manchester Piccadilly station. This will remove a critical bottleneck from the Manchester rail network and will enable:

- Two new fast trains per hour between Manchester Victoria and Liverpool with journey times reduced by 10-15 minutes
- Six fast trains per hour between Leeds and Manchester with journey times reduced by about 10 minutes
- New direct services from the Calder Valley and Rochdale to Manchester Airport
- Faster journey times to Hull, Newcastle and the North East.

The Ordsall Chord will connect the Deal Street Junction Line with the Castlefield Junction Line crossing The Manchester / Salford Inner Ring Road (A6042 Trinity Way), the River Irwell, the railway viaduct connection to MOSI and Water Street. The railway will be electrified and will allow trains to run directly between Manchester Victoria and Manchester Piccadilly and vice versa without having to reverse.

Network Rail has been working with Manchester City Council, Salford City Council and English Heritage to develop the proposals for the chord through a consultative design development process.

The current proposal consists of a preferred railway alignment and two bridge/viaduct conceptual design options. Following this round of consultation, a preferred option will be chosen by Network Rail who will then engage in a third and final round of consultation before making a formal application for a
Development Consent Order. It is expected that this will be submitted to the National Infrastructure Directorate within the Planning Inspectorate in the summer of 2013.

3.0 CONSULTATION TO DATE

The Council was consulted as part of the first phase of consultation in November 2011. The Council’s response supported the proposal subject to several concerns being addressed including access to MOSI, pedestrian and cyclist links, and the impact (and mitigation thereof) of the proposal on the City Centre and on the residents of Castlefield. Network Rail received over 400 responses to the consultation and more than 75% were supportive of the proposal. Furthermore, 84% agreed that it is important to connect Victoria with Piccadilly and provide additional passenger services. Information from Network Rail shows that respondents supported the principles of the scheme to reduce journey times, improve connectivity and that it would be good for business. However, it should also be noted that – in line with the comments made by the Council – respondents expressed concern that historic rail links to MOSI be maintained; that Network Rail should strive to minimise the impact on listed buildings and bridges.

Following this consultation, a working party of officers from Manchester, Salford, English Heritage, Network Rail and their consultants, (Parsons Brinkerhoff and BDP) was established to take forward the project and to inform the proposed designs for the chord. The City Policy, City Centre Regeneration and City Centre Planning teams have been represented on the working party. Through the on-going engagement offered by this working party, the issues raised through the consultation process are in the process of being addressed by Network Rail and its design / engineering teams.

Prior to the current consultation process starting, Network Rail held two briefing sessions. The first session briefed the Leader, related Executive Members and City Centre Ward councillors. The second session was a joint meeting with Salford City Council and other interested parties at MOSI to which all members were invited. A bespoke session will be held with the Castlefield Forum to discuss any issues and concerns its members might have so that they are able to submit any comments on the proposal before the December 21st deadline.

4.0 THE STRATEGIC CASE FOR THE PROPOSAL

Subject to gaining the necessary approvals, the Ordsall Chord will be the first element to be delivered of the Northern Hub project. This is a suite of interventions centred on Manchester which will deliver benefits across the whole of the North of England. Regional bodies – including the Council – have campaigned for a number of years for this additional capacity to be provided and the package was finally launched by Network Rail in February 2010. The Northern Hub will be a key driver of economic growth for Manchester and will be essential if we are to achieve the aims set out in the Transport Strategy for Manchester City Centre of delivering up to 50,000 additional jobs in central
Manchester whilst containing the growth in private car use. It will relieve a critically important bottleneck on the rail network which inhibits growth in rail patronage and causes disruption and delay to services.

Construction of the Ordsall Chord will remove the requirement for services between Yorkshire and the Airport and Liverpool having to cross the “throat” of Manchester Piccadilly. This movement – where trains have to cross over all six lines to travel from Ardwick Junction to platforms 13 and 14 – uses up a significant amount of capacity as it stops all trains entering or leaving the terminus platforms at Piccadilly. By building the chord, through services from Yorkshire will be able to run via Manchester Victoria and the “Chat Moss” line avoiding the need to cross the throat at Piccadilly. Furthermore, Airport services will run via Victoria, the Ordsall Chord, Oxford Road and Piccadilly which places them on the “right” side of the alignment for the airport and removes the conflict with West Cost Main Line long-distance and commuter services.

The Northern Hub is comprised of: the Ordsall Chord; two additional through platforms at Manchester Piccadilly (platforms 15 and 16); additional tracks between Stockport and Sheffield; additional tracks between Huyton and Liverpool; and line-speed improvements across the network. It is further supported by the programme of electrification of the North West Triangle (Manchester to Liverpool, Preston, Blackpool and Wigan to Liverpool) and North Transpennine (Manchester to Leeds via Huddersfield).

This will enable faster and more frequent trains to run bringing benefits not just to Manchester but to the whole of the North of England. Key benefits to passengers include:

- Up to 700 more trains per day across the North;
- Space for up to 44 million additional passengers every year;
- Two new fast trains per hour between Manchester Victoria and Liverpool;
- Six fast trains per hour between Manchester and Leeds (up from four today);
- Reduced journey times between Manchester and Leeds (by up to 10 minutes);
- Reduced journey times between Manchester and Liverpool (by 10-15 minutes);
- New direct services through central Manchester from Rochdale and the Calder Valley to Manchester Airport; and
- Faster journey times to Sheffield and the East Midlands, Bradford, Halifax, Hull, York and the North East

The Northern Hub will also bring significant benefits to businesses in the North as it will deliver:

- More paths for freight trains serving Trafford Park which will double the capacity into what is the North’s busiest intermodal freight terminal;
• Improved access to markets; more flexibility; greater business connectivity; and access to a larger pool of talent; and
• Greater use of the rail network by passengers and freight will reduce road congestion and costs for businesses – every freight train takes up to 50 large goods vehicles off the roads.

The benefits of this package are significant. It represents an investment of over £560 million pounds in the rail network around Manchester and it has been estimated that this will translate to £4 billion of benefits to Manchester and the North. This translates to an estimated 20,000 to 30,000 new jobs. The package also has a very good benefit to cost ratio – Network Rail have estimated that it will boost the economy by £4 for every £1 spent.

5.0 OPTIONS ASSESSMENT

Two options were considered to remove the bottleneck south of Manchester Piccadilly station. The Piccadilly option consisted of a fly-over to the south of Piccadilly station to provide a bypass of the West Coast Main Line and the Victoria option consists of the Ordsall Chord. Network Rail assessed both options against a number of criteria including train performance, disruption during construction, value for money and affordability and concluded that the Ordsall Chord /Victoria option performed significantly better than Piccadilly.

The next stage of the process was to examine the options for the chord. This included long and short fly-overs, a tunnel and a new line at the same height as the existing lines. The options considered are set out below:

• Short chord fly-over: it was not possible to accommodate this option between the Metrolink line and connect it into the Middlewood Viaduct without significant modifications to the existing railway lines and adjacent highway infrastructure. It would also require long closures of the railway with significant disruption for rail users. A second option was also considered extending over Trinity Way and the Middlewood Viaduct but this option would have had significant impacts on several large regeneration sites in Salford, was not good value for money and would not have provided the gradients required to operate freight trains over the chord.

• Long chord fly-over: this would have gone over the Metrolink line (Cornbrook Viaduct). To deliver gradient requirements this would have resulted in significant structures between Piccadilly and Victoria which would have had a severe impact on the skyline in Manchester. Furthermore, it would have a significant environmental impact, require compulsory purchase of a large amount of land and was not good value for money.

• Tunnel: this would have minimal impact on Castlefield but due to the shallow gradients required, the majority of the structure would remain above ground along its length. One option would have required the stopping up of eight roads in the city centre (including Oxford Road) and would have required the diversion of the River Medlock. Furthermore, this option also required significant compulsory purchase of land and would have a significant
environmental impact. It was not considered to be good value for money.

- At grade junction: this option would see at grade junctions constructed to link Middlewood Viaduct to the Castlefield Viaduct via the Ordsall Chord. This option would require the Castlefield Viaduct to be shortened along a short length to accommodate the required turn-out speeds at the junction. It does not have an impact on the highway network other than during construction and minimises the amount of land that is required. Furthermore, as it minimises the structures and length of line required it is also the most cost-effective option.

Based on the information presented above, the at-grade option was selected as the preferred way forward. Following this decision, a detailed assessment of alignment options for the at-grade chord was undertaken. The chord has to be able to accommodate a six-car passenger train between the two new junctions, have a 30mph line-speed and not preclude the operation of freight trains. Fourteen options were considered before the current alignment was chosen. This option meets the design criteria whilst having the least impact on the surrounding built environment which has a significant number of listed buildings, structures and non-designated heritage assets – including the Grade 1 listed Stephenson’s Bridge.

6.0 DESIGN OPTIONS

A total of seven structural options were considered for the chord all of which were a mix of bridges and viaducts. This process quickly identified that, due to the nature of the location – with the railway having to span a river and a dual-carriageway and tie into existing viaducts at both ends – there were only two suitable structures for the chord. A number of considerations were identified by the architectural design team to inform this process:

- the relationship of each structural form to adjacent listed structures and their setting
- the townscape and visual quality created at long and short distances
- ongoing maintenance requirements
- minimising disruption during construction, particularly for traffic using the inner ring road

The two options are set out below and consist of a “half through” and a “bowstring” structure. The aim of the architects in identifying these designs has been to acknowledge and complement the existing railway heritage in the area without trying to copy or replicate it. Both designs propose the use of weathered steel which tapers at both ends to create as minimal a form as possible:
“Half Through” Bridge
“Bowstring” Bridge
Whilst both of these options are deliverable in engineering terms, it should be noted that the “half through” option requires an additional pier in the River Irwell and modifications to the canal entrance to the Middlewood Lock basin. It would also make navigation of the waterway more difficult at this point. The river authority at this point – the Manchester Ship Canal Company – are unlikely to support construction of additional piers in the river and it would significantly increase the cost and complexity of maintenance of the railway.

Both options require the Castlefield Viaduct to be widened by a small amount in the vicinity of a former car dealership on Water Street. Design options for this element of the scheme are included in Appendix 1.

7.0 CONNECTIONS FOR PEDESTRIANS, CYCLISTS AND UTILITIES

In order to construct the railway bridge, the existing pedestrian and cyclist link between Manchester and Salford – Princes Bridge / Hampson Street – will need to be removed as the construction of the bridge means that it cannot be moved or modified. A new pedestrian and footbridge will be constructed between Salford and Manchester to provide a replacement. The precise location is still to be determined as it will be informed, to a certain extent, by the two regeneration projects either side of the river, the details of which are still under development. Network Rail is working with the developers of these sites, Salford City Council and Manchester City Council to determine the most appropriate location and will be informed and assisted by the Ordsall Chord Design Panel (see section 9).

Princes Bridge is also an important link for utilities between Salford and Manchester with at least seven connections in place across the bridge including telecoms, gas and water. Options for replacement connections are still under consideration but could consist of either a separate utilities bridge or the incorporation of these facilities into the pedestrian/cyclist bridge.

8.0 HERITAGE, URBAN DESIGN AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Whilst there are significant benefits to Manchester from the construction of the Ordsall Chord, there will be an unavoidable and significant impact on the built environment of the Castlefield area. A team of heritage and archaeological advisors has been appointed by Network Rail to provide an assessment of the impacts of the proposal. Their report will be critical to the justification of the scheme and will include a full heritage and archaeological assessment. The work to date has been informed by a character appraisal and an assessment of the key assets in the area against a set of criteria approved by English Heritage.

The key heritage issues to consider are the impacts of the chord on heritage assets and on the character and appearance of the area. Whilst the proposed alignment would completely avoid the Grade 1 listed Stephenson’s Bridge, the adjacent Grade 2 listed “zig-zag” bridge would need to be modified to accommodate the chord and part of it would need to be removed. It should be noted that this listed structure is in extremely poor condition. It should also be
noted that its removal would, if justified and approved, reveal the Grade 1 listed Stephenson's Bridge. Construction of the chord would also have an adverse impact on rail access to MOSI as the current route into the museum by rail would be severed. Network Rail are continuing to consult with both the museum and the Friends of MOSI to identify the best possible solution in this location.

Finally, the Water Street bridge would need to be modified and rebuilt to accommodate the widened railway. Whilst this is not listed it is considered to be a non-designated heritage asset and Network Rail is working with the Council and English Heritage to determine the best solution for this location.

All of these issues would have to be fully justified in the context of the relevant national legislation and advice in order for Network Rail to get the go ahead to construct the Chord. Section 16 (2) of the Listed Building Act provides that special regard should be had to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses when considering proposals that would affect it. Section 72 of the Listed Building Act provides that when considering proposals for land or buildings within a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

The Council will fully consider the relevant heritage assessments before finalising its response to the proposals

9.0 THE COUNCIL’S ROLE
The Ordsall Chord is a railway major infrastructure application registered with the National Infrastructure Directorate (NID) of the Planning Inspectorate. The NID will examine the application and make recommendations to the Secretary of State as to whether or not to grant planning permission / compulsory purchase powers.

When the NID accept an application for a major infrastructure project, the applicant must give Manchester (and Salford as a neighbouring authority) a formal opportunity to comment on the detailed proposals before they are considered by NID. In the case of Ordsall Chord, the Council will have the status of a “interested party” in the determination of the application and will be entitled to participate in an examination in public. After the examination in public, NID will make a recommendation to the Secretary of State who will have three months to make a decision on whether to grant the various permissions required for the project. In order to ensure that the Council's formal comments are provided within the timetable for the project, this report seeks authorisation for the Chief Executive to finalise the Council's formal response after consulting the Leader and the Executive Member for the Environment.

10.0 CONSTRUCTION ISSUES
Both options for the chord require the construction of a “half through” structure over the Inner Ring Road as this is the most appropriate structure for this location given that it will have to be tied into the existing Middlewood Viaduct. This type of structure is limited in the maximum span length so cannot cross the Inner Ring Road in a single span. This will necessitate the construction of a pier in the central reservation of the road. Given the critical importance of this road in the context of the transport network serving the City Centre it is considered essential that four lanes are maintained on the Inner Ring Road at all times. Whilst it is inevitable that there will have to be some scheduled closures of the road to lift bridges into place, Network Rail have committed to identifying a solution that delivers the requirements of Salford and Manchester in this respect for this road.

For pedestrians and cyclists it is likely that there will be a period when Princes Bridge has been removed, but the new bridge will not have been constructed. Network Rail have committed to providing high quality walking and cycling routes at all times during construction and are currently examining options including, potentially, the construction of a temporary pedestrian / cyclist bridge in a location between the Inner Ring Road bridge over the River Irwell and the Victoria and Albert Hotel.

Whilst Network Rail are working with the Council to minimise disruption to the local area, there will, inevitably, be impacts on the local community during construction. Further details of Network Rail’s proposed approach can be found at Appendix A.

11.0 EXPERT PANEL

In order to assist in determining the most appropriate designs for the chord, pedestrian / cycle bridge and associated structures, a design panel has been established. The design panel consists of a mix of local and national experts in architecture, design, engineering and heritage in this area. The Council will be represented on the panel by the Leader.

12.0 SUGGESTED RESPONSE AND NEXT STEPS

It is recommended:

That the Scrutiny Committee members note the content of this report

That the Executive:

a. supports Network Rail’s proposal to construct the Ordsall Chord
b. welcomes the progress being made to bring forward the scheme as the first key component of the “Northern Hub” project;

c. asks officers to continue to work with Network Rail to ensure that the Council’s comments are taken into account and incorporated in proposals to be included in an application to the National Infrastructure Directorate for Development Consent
d. authorises the Chief Executive to finalise the Council's formal response to consultation in consultation with the Leader and the Executive Member for Environment.

Following this consultation and based on the feedback received, Network Rail will refine their proposals for the Ordsall Chord. The updated proposals will inform the third and final consultation on the design which Network Rail intend to submit to the Planning Inspectorate for a Development Consent Order. It is expected that this will take place in Spring 2013.

13.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations appear at the front of the report.