



## **Update - Waiau Toa / Clarence River Bridge Project – November 2023**

Since the last update in October the main areas of progress have been as follows:

### **Resource Consent Application**

The period for submissions by the 5 notified parties on KDC's applications for resource consents for the construction of the bridge closed on 26 October, with 2 submissions received by that date.

One of those submissions, from an affected private landowner, was supportive of the project whilst the other submission, from Te Rūnanga o Kaikōura (TRoK) opposed it on cultural grounds, expressing a view that access to Glen Alton should be on the southern side of the river.

Because an opposing submission has been received Environment Canterbury must now conduct a hearing where the applicants and submitters can put forward their cases.

Council is engaging expert resource management lawyers to represent it in this hearing and coordinate preparation of supporting evidence, but the need for a hearing and the associated processes means that a decision on KDC's application is now likely to be delayed until March 2024.

### **Bridge Design and Construction**

Final tenders for design and construction of the bridge and associated works from three short-listed contractors closed on 11 September and these tenders have now been evaluated taking account of both the tender prices and other aspects with a decision made that Concrete Structures Ltd (CCL) should be the preferred contractor.

Concrete Structures Ltd is a well-respected medium sized contractor with considerable experience in bridge construction and a reputation for a practical approach and getting things done.

Whilst the tender process was based upon a particular set of specifications provided by Council (done to ensure that tenders can be compared on a consistent and fair basis) the selection of a preferred contractor will however not represent a commitment to the construction of any specific works.

It will instead provide a suitable contractor with whom Council can work with towards eventual construction of an appropriate access solution.

It is currently envisaged that an initial request to CCL will be for them to conduct some high-level investigation of the cost to re-establish access to the northern abutment of the former Glen Alton bridge, since it is recognised that this may be preferable to the currently proposed downstream site in a number of respects other than cost. It should be noted that this is high level investigation only and does not represent a change of preferred option. Work done to this point from a number of parties indicate that the restoring access to the northern abutment would be cost prohibitive.

A formal contract for any construction works also cannot be granted to CCL until issues relating to the acquisition of resource consents, supply of large rocks and project funding have been successfully resolved.

### **Obtaining Large Rocks**

As described in the previous update, there is a need to source a substantial quantity of very large rocks to protect the proposed bridge and new road from erosion by the river.

It is becoming increasingly apparent that there may be no practical substitute for these rocks, and that as such their acquisition is key to delivery of the project.

Two sources that are believed to contain rocks of the required sizes are the beds of the Miller and George streams, but to date KDC has not pursued extraction of rocks from these sources because it is known that doing so would be strongly opposed by both TRoK and some local residents.

A point has however now been reached where it is being proposed to Council that applications must be made for resource consents to take rocks from these sources, because no other practical option exist.

### **Project Cost and Funding**

The completion of the recent tender process has however again highlighted the financial challenges that the project faces, since whilst the tender prices of CCL were lower than those from the other two shortlisted contractors and appear to represent best value, they may still be unaffordable within the funding envelope that has been approved by Waka Kotahi.

Whilst as mentioned before it is believed that it would be worthwhile to have CCL investigate the cost of potentially returning the bridge to its original site, previous investigation has suggested that doing so would have a substantially higher cost than the currently proposed downstream bridge, making it even more unaffordable.

Council staff have recently engaged with senior Waka Kotahi representatives regarding the consenting and funding challenges that the project faces, and whilst Waka Kotahi are appreciative of these matters they are also in an environment where they have limited funding available and a wide range of demands for that funding which may constrain their ability to increase the budget for this project. They have agreed with our current course of action and are keen to see the outcomes from the consent hearings in March before considering any further requests for both time and budget.

**Dave Clibbery**

**Senior Manager Operations**

**22 November 2023**