

From: Simon Jones – Interim Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport

To: David Brazier, Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport

Subject: **Bath Street – Fastrack Infrastructure Scheme**

Decision Number: 21/00065

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Electoral Division: Northfleet and Gravesend West – Cllr Conrad Broadley and Cllr Dr Lauren Sullivan

Summary:

This report seeks approval for a fully funded scheme to provide a key Fastrack bus link between the Northfleet Embankment East development and Gravesham Town Centre in the form of a contraflow bus lane in Bath Street.

The purpose of the scheme is to improve journey times for Fastrack passengers by up to four minutes. The scheme will provide a short walk to access Fastrack for occupants and workers at the Northfleet Embankment East, Clifton Slipways and The Charter developments.

The total budget for this scheme is £5.52m and is fully externally funded by a capital grant from Ebbsfleet Development Corporation. No KCC funding will be used to deliver the scheme.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport is asked to accept the capital grant from Ebbsfleet Development Company and to take the Bath Street scheme through the stages of development and delivery as indicated on the proposed decision sheet attached at Appendix A and specifically for:

- i. Formal ratification of funding agreement with EDC following the approval of the Corporate Director of Finance, Corporate & Strategic Services
- ii. Approval to undertake the detailed design and surveys for the Bath Street Scheme.
- iii. Approval to progress all statutory approvals or consents required for the scheme, including any transfer of land and rights;
- iv. Approval to carry out any additional consultation required for the scheme;
- v. Approval to enter into construction contracts as necessary for the delivery and future maintenance of the scheme subject to a review of the procurement strategy by the Capital Officer Group;

- vi. Approval for any further decisions required to allow the scheme to proceed through to delivery to be taken by the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment & Transport under the Officer Scheme of Delegations following prior consultation with the Cabinet Member.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Bath Street scheme proposes to implement a key Fastrack link between the Northfleet Embankment East development and Gravesham Town Centre in the form of a contraflow bus lane in Bath Street.
- 1.2 The scheme is part of the overall Fastrack programme, which comprises 28 individual projects across Dartford, Gravesham and Ebbsfleet. Fastrack operates via congestion-free routes across a 40km network extending from Dartford to Gravesham. It is a combination of dedicated Fastrack busways, bus priority lanes and on-street running with priority at all signalled junctions.
- 1.3 The purpose of the scheme is to improve journey times for Fastrack passengers and facilitate additional bus stops for existing residents and those from new developments such as Clifton Slipways, The Charter and Northfleet Embankment.

2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 The total budget for this scheme is £5.52m (Table 1). Full funding for this scheme has been identified and will require no additional contributions from KCC.

Table 1: Capital Costs and funding sources for the Bath Street Scheme (£m at 2020 prices)

£000s	2020-21	2021-22*	2022-23	2022-23	Total
Gross Cost	£936,000		£1,880,000	£1,600,000	£4,416,000
Budget Risk	£234,000		£470,000	£400,000	£1,104,000
Total Cost	£1,170,000		£2,350,000	£2,000,000	£5,520,000
EDC Grant	£1,170,000	£0	£2,350,000	£2,000,000	£5,520,000
Total Funding	£1,170,000	£0	£2,350,000	£2,000,000	£5,520,000

* No funding allocation 2021-22; capital funding carried over from 2020/21

- 2.2 The scheme will be fully funded through a capital grant from Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC) that has been approved as a separate future year commitment by the The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).
- 2.3 Conditions of the grant agreement include taking the Fastrack development designated S106 from the Northfleet Embankment East development as a contribution (circa £0.99m) but without risk to KCC if the funding does not come forward.
- 2.4 There is no revenue or capital exposure to KCC in the delivery of this project and the project estimate includes sufficient risk allowance. KCC Officer time required for the delivery of the programme will be capitalised.

- 2.5 The risk allowance for the scheme has been increased to £5.52m to reflect the early development stage of this project. This figure has been included in the KCC Capital Investment Plan. As an additional measure, there will be a pause after the detailed design stage of the project to ensure it is still viable within the current budget.

3. The Report

Fastrack Context

- 3.1 This project is part of the overall Fastrack programme, which comprises 28 individual projects across Dartford, Gravesham and Ebbsfleet. Fastrack operates via congestion free routes across a 40km network extending from Dartford to Gravesham. It is a combination of dedicated Fastrack busways, bus priority lanes and on-street running with priority at all signalled junctions.
- 3.2 The Fastrack Route A will extend from Ebbsfleet International through Northfleet Embankment, on to Gravesend Bus Hub, via the Bath Street contraflow bus lane, as is proposed through this scheme.
- 3.3 Continual improvements to the Fastrack road network are required to achieve the modal shift target of 20% of journeys using public transport, and vital to this success is the high uptake in patronage from new residents within current and future developments. This requires an attractive, effective, fast service that rivals the private car for efficiency.

Bath Street Scheme

- 3.4 The Bath Street scheme (Appendix C) includes widening a section of the existing carriageway to incorporate a southbound bus lane. The proposed bus lane (Figure 1) will connect to West Street to the north at the West Street/Bath Street/Church Street Roundabout and the new Bus Hub on Garrick Street to the south via New Road. This new route will facilitate the extension of the Fastrack Route A service to Gravesend. Without the Bath Street bus lane Fastrack would need to be routed via Overcliffe as shown in Figure 2.

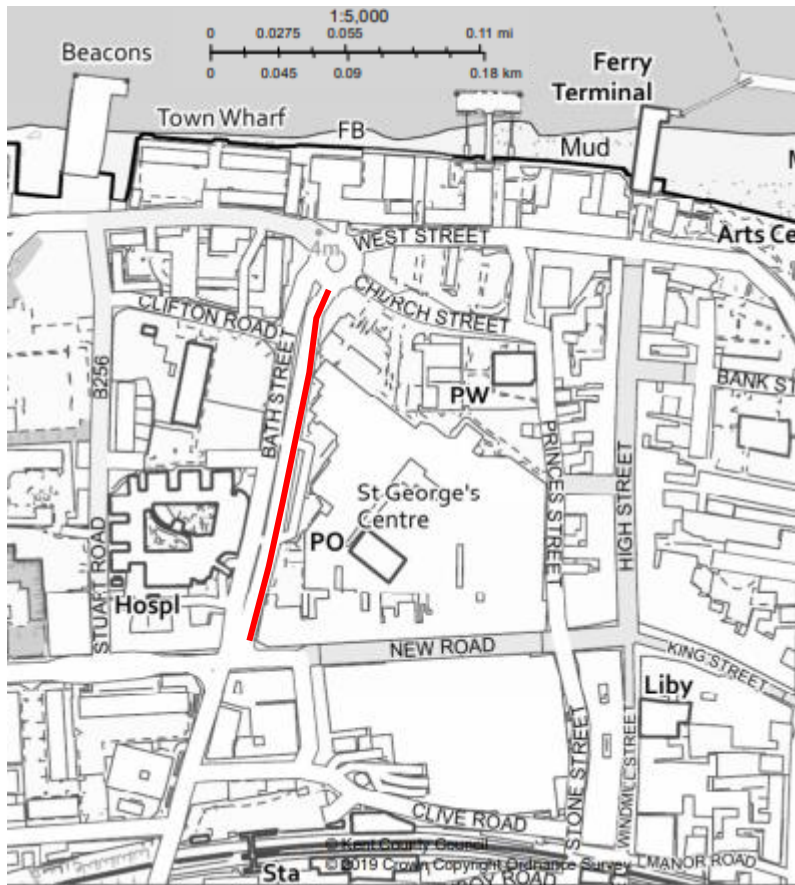


Figure 1: Location of Bath Street Scheme

3.5 The scheme will improve journey times for Fastrack users and also facilitate additional bus stops to service existing residents and those from new developments such as Clifton Slipways, The Charter and Northfleet Embankment. These significant improvements to journey time and route would enhance Fastrack's reputation as a premium service.

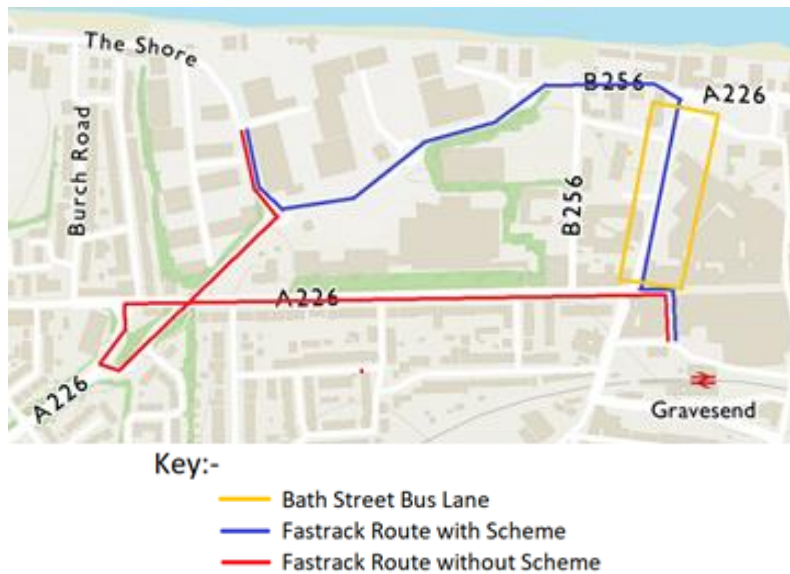


Figure 2: Bath Street Bus Lane location and Fastrack Routes

3.6 Should approval to proceed be given, the forecasted programme dates for the scheme are as follows:

- Outline design: Jan 21 - May 21
- Detailed design: June 21 - Mar 22
- Engagement: Summer 2022
- Procurement: Apr 22 - July 22
- Construction: August 22 - July 23

4. Policy Framework

- 4.1 This scheme aligns with the key outcomes of Local Transport Plan 4: Delivering Growth without Gridlock. In particular, Fastrack promotes *affordable, accessible and connected transport to services* and delivers integrated infrastructure that encourages modal shift and reduces congestion.
- 4.2 The Bath Street scheme will reduce congestion and improve accessibility through the delivery of a fully integrated sustainable Fastrack network, making sustainable transport a real alternative to the private car, particularly residents in new developments including Northfleet Embankment East. This will improve access to education and employment for Kent's residents supporting Kent's economic growth.
- 4.3 Furthermore, continual improvements to the Fastrack network are required to achieve the Ebbsfleet area target of 20% of journeys using public transport, and vital to this success is the high uptake in patronage from new residents within current and future developments
- 4.4 The delivery of approximately 9,000 new homes by 2026 is expected in Gravesham. Key development sites include Gravesend town centre and Canal Basin and Northfleet Embankment. Gravesham's existing road network is already operating at close to maximum capacity during peak periods. Continuing modal shift to Fastrack services is therefore crucial if future levels of housing and economic growth are to be accommodated.

5. Legal implications

- 5.1 KCC will be entering into a funding agreement with Ebbsfleet Development Corporation which will detail the conditions of the grant funding.
- 5.2 No further legal implications have been identified.

6. Equalities implications

- 6.1 An initial equalities impact assessment has been carried out for the scheme. This identified no adverse impacts or discrimination against any person with a protected characteristic. In addition, those members of the public who regularly use or rely exclusively on public transport should experience more reliable journey times by better functioning of Fastrack route junctions.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 The Bath Street scheme is a fully funded scheme which will provide a key bus link to the Fastrack route in Gravesham and forms part of the wider Fastrack A

route. No additional KCC funding will be used to deliver the scheme and officer time will be capitalised against the grant provided by EDC.

- 7.2 Implementing this scheme will directly improve journey times for Fastrack users. The scheme will reduce congestion and improve accessibility through the delivery of a fully integrated sustainable Fastrack network, making sustainable transport a real alternative to the private car, particularly residents in new developments including Northfleet Embankment East.

8. Recommendation(s):

- 8.1 The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport is asked to accept the capital grant from Ebbsfleet Development Corporation and to take the Bath Street scheme through the stages of development and delivery as indicated on the proposed decision sheet attached at Appendix A and specifically for:
- i. Formal ratification of funding agreement with EDC following the approval of the Corporate Director of Finance, Corporate & Strategic Services
 - ii Approval to undertake the detailed design and surveys for the project.
 - iii. Approval to progress all statutory approvals or consents required for the scheme, including any transfer of land and rights;
 - iv. Approval to carry out any additional consultation required for the scheme;
 - v. Approval to enter into construction contracts as necessary for the delivery and future maintenance of the scheme subject to a review of the procurement strategy by the Capital Officer Group;
 - vi. Approval for any further decisions required to allow the scheme to proceed through to delivery to be taken by the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment & Transport under the Officer Scheme of Delegations following prior consultation with the Cabinet Member.

9. Background Documents

Appendix A Record of Decision

Appendix B EqlA:

<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s104315/JBathStreetEqlAv1210621.doc.pdf>

Appendix C Bath Street Outline Design (North and South)

10. Contact details

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