

From: David Brazier, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation
Simon Jones, Corporate Director, Growth, Environment & Transport

To: Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee - 8 September 2021

Subject: Active Travel Fund Tranche 2 – Cinque Ports Phase 5 cycle facility from Hythe (Palmarsh) to Dymchurch

Key decision: 21/00066

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of paper: Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee – 19 January 2021

Future Pathway of Paper: For Cabinet Member Decision

Summary: This paper provides an update on the Active Travel Fund Tranche 2 funded scheme; a cycle facility between Hythe (Palmarsh) and Dymchurch.

Recommendation(s):

The Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport on the proposed decision to proceed to construction for phases 5A and 5B pending satisfactory land agreements as shown at Appendix C.

1 Background

- 1.1 The Department for Transport has provided two phases of active travel funding. The first tranche supported the installation of temporary projects for the COVID-19 pandemic and the second tranche is to enable and support the creation of permanent infrastructure to support walking and cycling and active travel.
- 1.2 The bid was submitted on 6th August 2020 and the announcement was made on 27th November 2020. Kent was awarded £6.098million. This was the third highest settlement in the Country.
- 1.4 The award is for five named walking and cycling active travel schemes across the County:
 - Canterbury: Littlebourne Road to the City Centre
 - Folkestone: Central Railway Station to Cheriton
 - Thanet: Birchington to Margate Sands
 - **Folkestone: Hythe to Dymchurch**
 - Gravesham: Gravesend to Northfleet

- 1.5 Kent County Council initially consulted on the 5 schemes between 9 December 2020 and 19 January 2021. The Active Travel Funding Tranche 2 report to this Cabinet Committee on 19 January 2021 gave approval to proceed to design and further consultation on the detailed designs of the 5 schemes.

2 The Report – Cinque Ports Phase 5 Palmarsh to Dymchurch

- 2.1 The full extent of the Cinque Ports Cycleway will eventually provide a continual walking and cycling route connecting the coastline from Folkestone to Lydd. It aims to encourage sustainable transport within the area, making it easier for people to walk and cycle, helping to deliver Kent County Council's Active Travel Strategy.
- 2.2 The scheme started in 2016 with the installation of a shared use foot/cycleway from Folkestone Harbour to Sandgate Esplanade funded by the Local Growth Fund. This was followed by the installation of a zebra pedestrian crossing point, localised widening of the footway and cycle route signs on A259 Sandgate Esplanade, extending the route to Hythe and Saltwood Sailing Club in 2017.
- 2.3 In 2019, we introduced a shared use foot/cycleway from the A259 junction with Reachfields to Palmarsh junction with Nickolls Road funded through the Department for Transport's (DfT) Emergency Active Travel Fund. This phase also included the installation of a toucan crossing at the junction of St George's Place. A plan detailing all phases of the scheme to date can be seen in **appendix A**.
- 2.4 The initial consultation on Phase 5 of the Cinque Ports cycle facility between Palmarsh and Dymchurch received 193 responses. The proposed cycling and walking improvements were well received and strongly supported with 76% support for a new cycle route. 76% of respondents stated that they would cycle more and 73% walk more as a result of the proposed improvements.
- 2.5 As the initial plans provided in the consultation have not changed and the proposal is to still to provide a 3.0m wide shared footway/cycleway it is anticipated that a further consultation on this project is not required. An update will be sent to the responders to the consultation if they provided email addresses and all local residents and businesses in the vicinity will be informed should authority be given to proceed to construction. The scheme which converts an existing grassed verge and is entirely off road was brought to this Cabinet Committee in January 2021 and received unanimous support.

3 Legal implications

- 3.1 During the detailed design stage it was identified that part of the route required land from the Ministry of Defence (MoD). At present the design team is liaising with the MoD on the amount of land that would need to be dedicated as Highway Land and any restrictions needed for them to give their consent and approval. Early discussions are positive however land negotiations can be time consuming so the designs have been split into 2 sections. Phase 5A (approximately 1,000m) can be achieved without MoD land and therefore construction can commence once we are satisfied there

are no additional consents/requirements needed from the MoD – see **appendix B**. Phase 5A can operate without Phase 5B being undertaken.

- 3.2 Phase 5B requires land from the MoD to be dedicated as Highway Land and also requires a retaining wall or embankment to be built to facilitate the required cycleway width. This stage is likely to closely follow on from phase 5A once all approvals from the MoD have been given. Early indications are that the MoD will support the proposals and would prefer their land to be dedicated as highway rather than the land transferred to KCC which is an accepted method.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The costs of the scheme can be fully covered by the grant awarded to KCC via Tranche 2 of Active Travel funding. This grant makes allowance for the staff costs and design fees associated with the scheme delivery in addition to the construction costs and any legal costs associated.

5 Programme

- 5.1 Subject to the endorsement by this committee, it is intended to commence construction of Phase 5A in early October 2021 with a build programme of 4 months shortly followed by phase 5B (pending finalising the land negotiations). It is anticipated that the work will be undertaken using a competitively selected sub-contractor via the the Highway Term Maintenance Contract.

6 Equalities implications

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken and will continue to be updated throughout the project and keep any affected groups informed and updated. At present there are no mitigating actions. The EqIA will be placed on KCC's website: www.kent.gov.uk/kentactivetravel.gov.uk

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 The detailed designs have progressed to convert a grass verge to a shared footway/cycleway with the scheme split into 2 phases due to additional land requirements on part of the route. Phase 5A is now ready to move to the construction stage without the need for further consultation as the options and designs are as informed at the initial consultation stage. Local residents and businesses will be informed via a newsletter and information will be placed on KCC's website once a recommendation is given.

8. Recommendation(s)

The Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport on the proposed decision to proceed to construction for phases 5A and 5B pending satisfactory land agreements as shown at Appendix C.

9. Contact details

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APPENDICES

- Appendix A – Overview of Cinque Ports phase 1-5 between Folkestone and Dymchurch
- Appendix B – Phase 5A and 5B
- Appendix C – Proposed Record of Decision
- Background document : Equality Impact Assessment : <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s105336/Kent%20Active%20Travel%20Fund%20Folkestone%20to%20Lydd%20EqIA.pdf>