

From: Simon Jones, Corporate Director, Growth, Environment & Transport

To: David Brazier, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

Subject: Active Travel Funding Tranche 2

Key decision 21/00118

Classification: **Unrestricted**

District	Electoral Division	County Member
Canterbury	Canterbury City South	Mel Dawkins

Summary: Following the results of the second-round consultation carried out 14 September to 25ⁿ October 2021, this paper seeks approval to move the Canterbury scheme to a detailed design stage and construction. The three remaining schemes (Gravesham, Thanet, and Folkestone) received a high number of detailed responses which officers are continuing to analyse to bring them to the March Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee for an informed decision on how to proceed.

Recommendation(s): The Cabinet Member is asked to agree to proceed to the detailed design and then construction of the Canterbury: Littlebourne to City Centre as shown at Appendix A.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Department for Transport has provided two tranches 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, cycling and active travel.
- 1.2 The DfT ran a competitive bidding process for tranche two, and Local Authorities were invited to submit their top five named schemes for consideration. There were very clear criteria to establish the types of schemes that LAs could include in the bids, and these were:
 - Strategic schemes that challenged the status quo of the network
 - Segregated cycle routes only (no shared or lining schemes to be included)
 - The schemes had to score highly on the Government's 'Propensity to Cycle' tool and the 'Rapid Cycleway Prioritisation Tool'
- 1.3 Schemes were selected on this basis and Kent included an additional 10 schemes above the five requested. It was an ambitious bid that referred to the unique and rural nature of Kent and the different landscapes and ambitions of the various districts.
- 1.4 The bid was submitted on 6 August 2020 and the announcement was made on 27 November 2020. Kent was awarded £6.098million. This was the third highest settlement in the Country. It covers the cost of the five named schemes.

- 1.5 Considering the nationwide push back on the tranche one schemes (mostly related to the unrealistic timescales preventing consultation) the Government has now made some key amendments to the grant conditions of this fund, including
- Prior to the 11 December, Kent must evidence public consultation with local communities. Kent has made a positive start on this by launching a high-level early consultation on the five named schemes to test the community appetite of the principles around the active travel investment. www.kent.gov.uk/kentactivetravel
 - The timescales for spending this fund have been relaxed to enable proper time to consult communities and develop the schemes fully.
- 1.6 The five schemes that were submitted have three broad strands to them: walking and cycling infrastructure, healthy neighbourhoods and placemaking improvements.
- 1.7 The scheme proposals are intended to give people more opportunities to choose cycling and walking for their day-to-day journeys, as part of wider government plans to boost active travel.
- 1.8 The Cinque Ports scheme has proceeded to construction stage due to the overwhelming support in the first consultation. In line with the Government Guidance, a comprehensive consultation has been carried out on the remaining four schemes, which ran between 19 September to the 25 October 2021.
- 1.9 The consultation gave residents, businesses, and stakeholders the opportunity to provide feedback via KCC's consultation process.
- 1.10 Following the closure of the consultations, analysis has been undertaken to better understand the appetite for these schemes and learn from the comments received to make an informed judgement as to the next steps.
- 1.11 This report will identify the results of the consultation for one scheme only, Canterbury: Littlebourne to the City Centre.
- 1.12 Analysis continues for the other three schemes (Gravesham, Thanet and Folkestone following the significant number of responses and detailed comments. This report provides an update on the likely direction of these three schemes.

2 The report

- 2.1 This report captures the key themes identified as part of the consultation process in relation to the Canterbury: Littlebourne to City Centre proposal.
- 2.2 An independent consultancy was used to collate the results.

- 2.3 The consultation received **162** responses with **125** respondents leaving a comment to the proposal. There were **1.37k** visits to the Canterbury scheme webpage with **660** document downloads.
- 2.4 Targeted social media was used to advertise the consultation and this has proven to be the most successful tool to ensure local communities were aware of the need to respond. We also delivered postcards, put up posters along the route and issued a press release. See Fig 1 identifying “How did you find out about this consultation?”

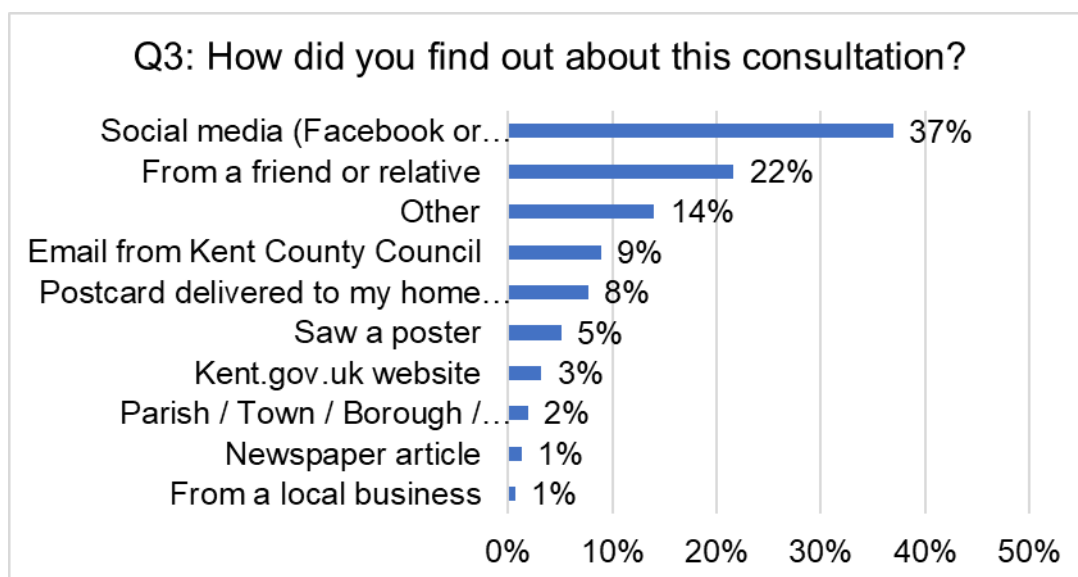


Fig 1.

- 2.5 **161** responses were provided to the question, “To what extent do you support or oppose the overall design being proposed for the Canterbury: Littlebourne Road to City Centre scheme?” 76% of respondents either supported or strongly supported the scheme as shown in the table below.

Strongly Support	56%
Support	20%
Neither Support nor Oppose	7%
Oppose	6%
Strongly Oppose	10%
Don't Know	1%

Table 1

- 2.6 Stakeholder mapping was undertaken prior to the consultation commencing, this allowed targeted engagement with the relevant stakeholders. This included local businesses and residents, giving everyone the opportunity to respond. A selection of responses and their support for the scheme can be seen in Fig 2.

Business/Organisation	Strongly support	Support	Neither support nor oppose	Oppose	Strongly Oppose
Canterbury City Council	X				
Canterbury Christ Church University (Student)	X				
Canterbury Christ Church University (President of Sport and Engagement Student Union)	X				

Canterbury Alliance for Sustainable Transport	X				
St Paul's Church Canterbury					X
British Horse Society			X		
Canterbury World Heritage Site Management Committee			X		
English Heritage Trust		X			
San Fairy Ann Cycling Club, Kent	X				

Fig 2.

2.7 The consultation identified five key themes. These were:

- The scheme will improve safety
- Pedestrian/cyclist safety
- The scheme will improve walking and/or cycling facilities
- Opposition to vehicle restrictions/closures
- Parking removal

The full consultation report is attached as an appendix. Local member and stakeholder consultation will continue throughout the detailed design stage to ensure the detailed decisions are agreeable including consideration of comments received concerning the closure of Monastery Street, raised tables and removal and relocation of trees.

2.8 Gravesham Update

The consultation received **260** responses with **213** respondents leaving a comment on the proposed scheme. There were **2.29k** visits to the Gravesham scheme webpage and **867** document downloads.

A thorough analysis of the responses is being undertaken. However, from the initial review it is clear a lot of concern has been raised about the removal of parking. We will complete the analysis and bring our proposals for next steps to this Cabinet Committee in March 2022. This may include incorporating measures for slower speeds and raised tables/entry treatments at side roads to encourage more walking in place of the current bi-directional cycleway to minimise the loss of parking for local residents. Officers will also explore treatments along the route to encourage and promote the crossing points and public realm improvements near the schools and the small retail areas. Detailed conversations with local members and stakeholders will be undertaken once the implications of the consultation responses have been fully considered and assessed.

2.9 Thanet Update

There were **484** responses to the consultation with **415** respondents leaving a comment on the proposal. There were **2.93k** visits to the Thanet scheme webpage with **1.3k** document downloads.

Concerns have been raised regarding the potential for increased congestion with the removal of a traffic lane on the A28 and there has been opposition to the road closure at Epple Road. Further analysis will be carried out to thoroughly consider all comments and proposals will be brought to this

Cabinet Committee in March 2022. The final scheme is likely to be a more local provision of walking and cycling improvements to promote safer journeys to and from school and also link to the recently implemented crossing improvements in the vicinity. The details will need to be agreeable to DfT in terms of the grant funding.

2.10 Folkestone

The consultation received **919** responses, with **777** respondents leaving a comment on the proposal. There were **6.65k** visits to the Folkestone scheme webpage, with **2.1k** document downloads.

A petition to oppose the scheme and the officer response is being discussed at this Cabinet Committee.

3 Financial Implications

3.1 The DfT's grant conditions state that the expenditure is for the named schemes contained in the bid, for the purpose and benefit of Active Travel and it requires Kent to carry out advanced consultation. The funds were originally intended for expenditure by March 2021, however since the Department for Transport spent some months deliberating the grant offer, an extension has been agreed, and the schemes should be delivered as soon as possible. Officers have had recent discussions with the Department who accept this can be a difficult matter and schemes take time to develop and for this reason we have suitable flexibility in the spend deadlines at this time.

3.2 The DfT grant of £6.098m will fully cover both the capital and revenue costs associated with the scheme as per current concept designs. These costs are split as follows:

- Revenue £1.220m
- Capital £4.878m

3.3 The scheme costs are scalable to suit the budget available and therefore present no financial risk to KCC. A proportion to allow for risk was included in the cost estimates. Independent cost consultants will be used throughout the design process to ensure cost assurance for the whole life costs of the schemes.

4 Legal implications

4.1 None at this stage.

5 Equalities implications

5.1 Five Equality Impact Assessments have been completed for the individual projects, see background documents. Officers will review these documents whilst keeping any affected groups informed and updated via the webpage.

6 Conclusions

- 6.1 Kent County Council have been working closely with a consultant through the Kent Professional Services Framework Contract to deliver the second consultation on the outline design of four schemes. Following the responses from the consultation the proposal is to move to the next stage of design and construction for Canterbury and update the Cabinet Committee on Gravesham, Thanet, and Folkestone schemes. Officers will bring a further update on these schemes in March 2022.
- 6.2 There is highly likely to be more funding opportunities coming forward from Central Government under the Active Travel agenda. Central Government has established an Ofsted style body to assess Local Authorities' active travel achievements and it is understood that Local Authorities will receive a sliding scale of funding in the future depending on their active travel achievements.

7. Recommendation(s):

- 7.1 The Cabinet Member is asked to agree to proceed to the detailed design and then construction of the Canterbury: Littlebourne to City Centre as shown at Appendix A.

8. Background Documents and Appendices

- 8.1 The relevant documents can be seen on our corporate website:
<https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/kent-active-travel-second-consultation>
- 8.2 Appendix A: Proposed Record of Decision
- 8.3 Canterbury – Littlebourne Road to the City Centre Consultation Findings
<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s108701/KentActiveTravelCanterburyLittlebourneRoadtotheCityCentreConsultationFindings.pdf>

9. Contact details

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