

From: Neil Baker, Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport and  
Haroon Chughtai – Director of Highways & Transportation

To: Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee  
15 November 2023

Subject: Pencester Road, Dover – Northbound Bus Contraflow

Decision No: 23/00095

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of report: ETCC 17 March 2023 – Signed executive decision no.  
23/00027 dated 23 March 2023 - Acceptance of  
Department for Transport (DfT) Bus Service Improvement  
Plan (BSIP) Funding for 23/24.

Future Pathway of report: For Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: Pencester Road, Dover falls within Dover Town, represented  
by Nigel Collor and Oliver Richardson.

**Summary:** Under decision 23/00027 the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport agreed to accept the DfT BSIP offer of £18,985,735, for delivery of agreed initiatives, in the year 23/24. To ensure that the Pencester Road scheme as one of the BSIP initiatives can progress to time, a further decision is required for approval to plan and spend the DFT BSIP funding.

**Recommendation(s):**

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport on the proposed decision to:

- i) Approval to undertake the detailed design and any associated surveys required to inform the design;
- ii) Approval for KCC officers to project manage, input into the delivery and supervision of the project, with the cost of all staff and consultant time being recoverable against the project funding;
- iii) Approval to progress all statutory approvals or consents required for the scheme;
- iv) Approval to implement permanent Traffic Regulation Orders, associated with the contraflow bus lane, amendments to current parking/taxi bay provisions and ANPR enforcement cameras, subject to completing the statutory consultation process associated with Traffic Regulation Orders;
- v) Approval to carry out any additional consultation required for the scheme;
- vi) Approval to enter into construction contracts as necessary for the delivery of the scheme subject to a review of the procurement strategy by the Capital Officers Group / Strategic Commissioning;

vii) 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;

as shown at Appendix C.

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. The proposed bus contraflow scheme in Pencester Road aims to support and enhance the upcoming Dover Fastrack bus service that is due to become operational in Spring 2024. The Housing Infrastructure Funding (HIF) funded Dover Fastrack project has been developed to mitigate the traffic impacts of the major housing allocations of the Whitfield Urban Expansion (5,750 Homes) and Connaught Barracks (500 Homes), by providing a high quality, frequent and reliable public transport service to link the new developments to the Town Centre and Dover Priory Station. The Pencester Road scheme could not be afforded within the HIF allocation, so BSIP funding is allowing this scheme to be progressed.
- 1.2. Part of the proposed northbound Fastrack route within the Town Centre, uses the existing A20 Townwall Street, between York Street and Woolcomber Street. This route experiences a high volume of traffic heading to the Port of Dover and leads to regular congestion and delays along this part of the highway network. This is further compounded when ferries are delayed at the Port, leading to the implementation of Operation Tap and Operation Brock.
- 1.3. The use of the A20 for the northbound route is not ideal as journey times cannot be guaranteed, and it also does not provide a direct access to the town centre amenities. Therefore, alternative options to improve the journey time reliability and better access to the town centre were considered as part of the original route planning for the service. Traffic movements within Dover are restricted due to its one-way routes but, two main alternative routes were identified:
  - 1.3.1. A256 Priory Road, Ladywell, Park Street and the A256 Maison Dieu Road. This route was considered to offer little or no benefit to the A20 as it was also prone to congestion and delays. We found that there was little opportunity to provide bus priority measures or a direct access to the town centre amenities.
  - 1.3.2. Worthington Street, Pencester Road and A256 Maison Dieu Road. This offered a more direct route than the A20 and would provide better access to the town centre amenities. With this route we are also able to consider bus priority measures which would provide greater journey time reliability for the service and is hence the option now being promoted.

## **2. Scheme Description**

- 2.1 To access the Pencester Road contraflow, Fastrack buses will use Worthington Street, joining at its junction with the A256 York Street. Worthington Street is one-way northbound and will require some physical changes at its junction with

Biggin Street to realign the existing footways to allow buses to make the manoeuvre across into Pencester Road.

- 2.2 To ensure a bus can proceed unhindered, there will also be the need to make changes to existing parking provisions in Worthington Street, as follows:
  - One taxi space moved from Worthington Street and an additional taxi space provided at the taxi rank in Biggin Street and two spaces retained in Worthington Street – No loss in Taxi spaces.
  - An additional disabled bay added – An increase in one disabled space.
  - One on-street parking space relocated to accommodate the relocation of a taxi space and one space added – An increase in one additional on-street parking space.
- 2.3 A dedicated bus and cycle only contraflow lane will be provided along the western side of Pencester Road between Biggin Street and A256 Maison Dieu Road. This will require the realignment of the existing footways at both junctions to provide the additional space for two-way traffic, and the introduction of new central islands, new signing and coloured surfacing at the two 'bus gates' at either end of the contraflow lane.
- 2.4 New junction signals will be provided at the Worthington Street, Biggin Street and Pencester Road junction, which will retain the existing controlled crossing of Pencester Road.
- 2.5 New junction signals will be provided at the A256 Maison Dieu Road and Pencester Road Junction. This will retain the existing controlled crossing of Maison Dieu Road and will also provide an additional controlled crossing of Pencester Road.
- 2.6 As a result of the contraflow lane, there will be a need to make changes to the existing parking provisions in Pencester Road, as follows:
  - The removal of two taxi spaces
  - The removal of four disabled spaces
  - The removal of five limited waiting bays (1 hour, no return within 2 hours).
  - The removal of eleven pay and display spaces on western side and provision of five new spaces on eastern side – net removal of six pay and display spaces.
- 2.7 Initial discussions with the local parking authority, Dover District Council, has identified that the nearby public car parks at Pencester Road, Maison Dieu Road and Stembrook have capacity that will help to mitigate the removal of the on-street parking and disabled bays. Disabled drivers will also be able to use the five pay and display spaces being provided in Pencester Road, and the additional space being provided in Worthington Street.
- 2.8 The new contraflow lane would also allow the bus operator to review existing bus routes which have been limited by the existing road network. This could

help to improve the wider efficiency, performance and resilience of bus services within Dover town Centre. There would also be an opportunity to provide a direct connection between Dover Priory Station and the Port of Dover, via Pencester Road, providing better integration of different modes of transport.

- 2.9 The new Fastrack bus service, and the opportunities to improve the existing bus services, will also provide a greater choice in the mode of travel for residents when wishing to travel to the town centre, particularly the elderly and mobility impaired by providing services to heart of the town centre.
- 2.10 The contraflow lane could also be used by cyclists, supporting active travel and increasing accessibility within the town.
- 2.11 The bus contraflow lane and changes to the parking provisions will each require a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) and the consultation on the scheme and TRO's is due to commence on 17 November 2023.
- 2.12 Following the completion of the consultation a report and recommendation will be prepared for the Cabinet Member to make a decision on the scheme and TRO's.
- 2.13 If a decision is taken to proceed, the TRO's will be advertised as Made Orders in January 2024, with works likely to commence in February 2024 to allow completion as close as possible to the funding deadline of 31 March 2024.
- 2.14 The proposals can be seen on the scheme drawings nos. 1000009228-1-0050-0001, 0002, 0003 and 0004, included as Appendix A.

### **3. Financial Implications**

- 3.1 The estimated project cost for the Pencester Road Scheme based on the outline design is £2,300,000 including a risk allowance of £700,000. This will be fully funded from the capital element of the BSIP funding of £18,985,735, which is split as £12,454,840 capital, for which £3m has been allocated for the Pencester Road scheme, and £6,530,895 revenue.
- 3.2 The funding has been released by DfT to KCC and has been allocated to the budget line.
- 3.3 A condition for all BSIP funding is that it needs to be spent, and the full BSIP programme delivered by 31 March 2024, unless agreed otherwise with the DfT through their Project Adjustment Request (PAR) process. KCC is monitoring spend and delivery timescales to determine if and when this process maybe required.
- 3.4 The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for BSIP funding does raise the potential that KCC would be responsible for overspend should this occur and may incur abortive costs should schemes not progress fully. The ongoing relationship with the DfT and the PAR process is in place to mitigate this risk.

### **4. Legal implications**

- 4.1 There are no legal implications associated with this scheme.

## 5. Policy Framework

- 5.1 The scheme supports the priorities of Framing Kent's Future 2022-2026 by improving the highway infrastructure to provide more reliable journey times and improved public transport links, accessibility and to support Kent business and housing growth and encourage economic activity in one of the more deprived areas in Kent.
- 5.2 This scheme will also support KCC's commitment to ensure residents have access to viable and attractive travel options that allow them to make safe, efficient and more sustainable journeys. This scheme will improve connectivity of the proposed route between the key transport hub of Dover Priory Station, the town centre and new housing being built in Whitfield. In addition, the use of Zero emission buses means reduced transport CO2 emissions and reduced air pollution in the area.

## 6. Equalities implications

- 6.1 An EqIA was published on 28 September 2023 and is attach as Appendix B

## 7. Conclusions

- 7.1 The Pencester Road bus contraflow scheme will enhance and support the upcoming Dover Fastrack service that also supports housing and economic growth by improving journey time and reliability as well as providing direct access to the town centre amenities.
- 7.2 The scheme would also allow the bus operator to review existing bus routes which have been limited by the existing road network. This could help to improve the wider efficiency, performance and resilience of bus services within Dover town Centre. There would also be an opportunity to provide a direct connection between Dover Priory Station and the Port of Dover, via Pencester Road, providing better integration of different modes of transport.
- 7.3 As part of the DfT BSIP funding offer, deliver this agreed initiative, by the 31 March 2024.

## 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 as follows and as indicated on the proposed decision sheet attached at Appendix C to give approval to:

- i) Approval to undertake the detailed design and any associated surveys required to inform the design;
- ii) Approval for KCC officers to project manage, input into the delivery and supervision of the project, with the cost of all staff and consultant time being recoverable against the project funding;
- iii) Approval to progress all statutory approvals or consents required for the scheme;

- iv) Approval to implement permanent Traffic Regulation Orders, associated with the contraflow bus lane, amendments to current parking/taxi bay provisions and ANPR enforcement cameras, subject to completing the statutory consultation process associated with Traffic Regulation Orders;
- v) Approval to carry out any additional consultation required for the scheme;
- vi) Approval to enter into construction contracts as necessary for the delivery of the scheme subject to a review of the procurement strategy by the Capital Officers Group / Strategic Commissioning;
- vii) 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;

as shown at Appendix C.

## **9. Background Documents**

- Appendix A – Scheme Drawings 1000009228-1-0050-0001, 0002, 0003 and 0004.
- Appendix B – Equalities Impact Assessment
- Appendix C Proposed Record of Decision

## **10. Contact details**

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