

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Peter Osborne, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

DECISION NUMBER:

26/00051

Executive Decision – key

26/00051 - Chestfield Tunnel Ventilation Replacement

Decision:

As Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, I agree to

PROCEED with the replacement of the Chestfield Tunnel Ventilation System.

AUTHORISE the associated financial commitment, subject to the completion and approval of a satisfactory commercial business case demonstrating affordability, value for money and compliance with KCC procurement requirements.

DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, to take all necessary actions to implement the decision, including the procurement and award of contracts, subject to approval of the commercial business case.

Reasons for decision:

The existing ventilation system has reached the end of its serviceable life and presents an increasing risk of failure, with implications for tunnel users, maintainers, network resilience and the authority's duties as highway authority and tunnel operator.

Replacing the ventilation system is necessary to maintain safety standards, to discharge the authority's duties as tunnel operator and to maintain a safe and resilient highway network by ensuring that there is a tunnel system in place to reliably move pollutants and toxic gasses from the confined environment of a tunnel.

Financial implications:

The selected option is estimated to cost £2.789m capital, including design, labour, traffic management, supervision and a 30% contingency.

It is slightly higher than the original Option 2 estimate of £2.39m, because it includes relocating Fan 2 in each fan bank.

It remains significantly cheaper than the larger fan/portal deflector options, which were estimated at £5.78m–£7.72m.

Future maintenance costs are not expected to increase because scheduled maintenance rates are already covered through the Highways Term Maintenance Contract.

Legal implications:

Provision of the replacement ventilation system will support KCC in meeting its duty under Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 to maintain the highway and keep it reasonably safe for ordinary use.

Equalities implications:

The EQIA found no evidence that the scheme would result in a significant or disproportionate adverse impact on people sharing a protected characteristic.

Data Protection implications:

A DPIA was submitted and confirmed as not required for this project.

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

This proposed decision is being considered by Members of the Growth, environment and Transport Cabinet Committee at their meeting on 9 September.

A version of this PROD was included in the agenda pack for committee members to review ahead of the meeting.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

A longlist of 39 options was assessed and reduced to four shortlisted options for safety risk assessment. The options not taken forward were:

Option 1 – like-for-like replacement. Not taken forward because it would not improve smoke control and would leave the existing lighting maintenance constraint unresolved.

Option 2: retain 32 replacement jet fans of similar size, power and thrust. Not taken forward. Although this option improved smoke it did not resolve the safe maintenance access issue.

Option 3 – larger fans. Not taken forward because, while technically feasible, it would require significant electrical, control and structural works, a prolonged 24-hour bore closure, and substantially higher cost and construction risk.

Option 4 – passive portal deflectors and wind walls. Not taken forward because it has no UK road tunnel precedent, is discouraged by relevant design standards, would require extensive further analysis and could introduce additional hazards.

Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:

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Signed

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Date

