

From: Mike Whiting, Cabinet Member for Planning, Highways, Transport and Waste

Barbara Cooper, Corporate Director of Growth, Environment & Transport

To: Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee – 16 July 2019

Decision No: 19/00051

Subject: Fastrack Full Network – Bean Road Tunnel

Key Decision: Major Scheme with cost over £1m and affects more than two Electoral Divisions

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: None

Future Pathway of Paper: None

Electoral Division: Dartford East and Swanscombe & Greenhithe (with Dartford Rural just to the South)

Summary:

A key element of the large-scale regeneration that is underway at Ebbsfleet Garden City relies on a hugely increased use of public transport. Fastrack is a high-quality Bus Rapid Transit system which will provide the core infrastructure to deliver the public transport offer. The focus of this report is the Bean Road Tunnel which is an important element in the Fastrack Full Network and will provide a bus route and a footpath/cycleway linking Eastern Quarry and Bluewater.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Planning, Highways, Transport and Waste on the proposed decision to underwrite loan funding and, subject to formal sign off of the legal agreement and commissioning plan, take the scheme through the next stages of development and delivery. Specifically, for the Cabinet Member to:

- i) give approval to the progress of the reference design as shown on Drawing No. B2350500-JAC-HA-XX-DR-D-0001 Rev P01 for development control and land charge disclosures;
- ii) give approval to progress all statutory approvals or consents required for the scheme including transfer of land and rights;
- iii) give approval to carry out consultation on the scheme;

iv) give approval to underwrite and enter into forward funding and investment funding agreement(s) subject to the approval of the Infrastructure Commissioning Board;

v) give approval to enter into a design & build construction contract as necessary for the delivery of the scheme subject to the approval of the Infrastructure Commissioning Board to the recommended procurement strategy; and

vi) give approval for the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment & Transport, under the Officer Scheme of Delegations, to take further or other decisions as may be appropriate to deliver the Fastrack Full Network – Bean Road Tunnel scheme in accordance with these recommendations.

as attached at Appendix A.

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The Fastrack Project was identified in the late 1990's as being critical to the sustainable delivery of Kent Thameside. Fastrack is fundamentally a transport project, and Kent County Council as the local Highway and Transport Authority is responsible for delivery of the Fastrack network.
- 1.2 Fastrack is critical to the economic development and sustainable regeneration of Kent Thameside (Ebbsfleet Garden City) and in preventing unacceptable traffic congestion. A key element of the large-scale regeneration is a hugely increased use of public transport and without Fastrack, these plans cannot be delivered. Fastrack must continue to evolve to become a totally credible mass transit system carrying capacity of up to 30million passengers per annum when Kent Thameside (Ebbsfleet Garden City) is fully developed which is comparable to the capacity of light rail schemes such as the Docklands Light Railway or Croydon Tramlink.
- 1.3 Henley Camland are the developers of Eastern Quarry, a substantial housing development of 6,250 homes, which is located in the site of the former quarry, bordered by the B255 Bean Road/Bluewater to one side and Ebbsfleet International to the other side. The development incorporates the construction of a spine road which will run the length of the development, providing access to homes and acting as the main point of access for residents/visitors. It will also provide the key route for the Fastrack service and at the B255 Bean Road/Bluewater end, the Spine Road will connect to Bluewater. Henley Camland is committed to the delivery of the development platform in Eastern Quarry (Spine Road which they are funding) to facilitate the Fastrack link across Eastern Quarry. To provide the connection to Bluewater from the Spine Road, the B255 Bean Road which sits on a chalk spine between the two former quarries, must be crossed. The connection would provide for Fastrack and for a walking / cycling link, which is then connected into the road infrastructure in Bluewater.
- 1.4 Two haulage tunnels previously constructed through the chalk spine supporting B255 Bean Road to facilitate earthworks movements during the construction of Bluewater Shopping Centre during the mid-1990's, still exist and are suitable to

form a new direct connection. As part of the highway infrastructure for Eastern Quarry a residential road network will be constructed that crosses the Spine Road and will link to the existing Hedge End roundabout on Bean Road at the Northern edge of Bluewater. This route could be made available for Fastrack by moving from the dedicated Spine Road to shared use residential roads. The most obvious connection is a continuation of the dedicated Spine Road through a tunnel under B255 Bean Road going directly into the Bluewater road infrastructure and bus interchange.

- 1.5 The works will be delivered by KCC using forward funding and investment funding provided by Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC) and Bluewater with forward funding repaid by the Fastrack revenue surplus. These works are required to link up with the Fastrack Spine being complete across Eastern Quarry by developer Henley Camland who are also contributing to the scheme.

2. The Current Situation

- 2.1 Following work into the potential use of the haulage tunnels it has been determined that it would be more cost effective to construct a new tunnel for both Fastrack/cycling/walking and leave the existing tunnels as is. The proposed new bore tunnel with combined bus, walking and cycling renders both haulage tunnels redundant.
- 2.2 Recent ecological investigation in the haulage tunnels has revealed that there is some low-level bat activity and mitigation will be required in the construction of a new tunnel. Whilst one tunnel would be retained for bat conservation, the other would be filled to reduce maintenance and potential risk of exposure to unauthorised access.

3. Next Steps

- 3.1 Consultants have worked on the design and have produced a reference design and documentation for a Regulation 3 Planning Application. This planning application has been submitted, for resolution by October 2019. This will be followed by contract documentation for a NEC Design & Build (D&B) construction contract.
- 3.2 Using the SCAPE framework, a scheme estimate and feasibility report will be obtained which subject to cost will enable moving to the preconstruction stage followed by construction to commence in 2020.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 The works will be delivered by KCC using forward funding and some investment funding provided by Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC) and Bluewater.
- 4.2 The overall scheme budget is £12.20m (including risk) for a new bore tunnel with compliant one-way signal-controlled bus way and walking and cycling. This is detailed in **Table 1 & 2** below.

- 4.3 Repayment of the proposed forward funding from Bluewater is to be over the period 2025 to 2041 (16 years), funded from the Fastrack revenue surplus (Fare Box). There is no interest payable on this loan and the rate is a flat £250,000 per annum.
- 4.4 EDC has accepted that, in respect of the repayment of forward funding this is dependent on Fastrack achieving its mode share objectives, beyond the 25% that has been modelled by KCC and as such the funding could be paid over a longer time period. EDC also acknowledge that Fastrack will need continuous modernisation and funding must be allocated for this purpose. Subject to an annual surplus of £350,000 (after Bluewater repayment), EDC will receive £150,000 annually in repayment. The remaining balance will then be paid at £300,000 per annum from 2041, after the Bluewater payments have been completed. See **Table 3**.
- 4.5 The EDC and Bluewater investment will be confirmed through legal agreements to formally secure its repayment as the new Fastrack service becomes commercially successful. See Table 2.

Table 1. Scheme costs

	New one-way bus with walking & cycling provision (£m)	Bat mitigation measures (£m)	Total Estimate (£m)
Construction Cost	7.57	0.05	7.63
Scheme Costs (Inc. Risk)	3.68	0.04	3.72
Sub-Total	11.26	0.09	11.34
Inflation Cost	0.86	0.01	0.86
Total Estimate	12.11	0.09	12.21

Table 2. Funding

	Loan / Refundable Funding (£m)	Non-Refundable Funding (£m)	Contribution (£m)
Bluewater	4.00		
EDC	5.05	2.40	
Henley Camland			0.75
Total	9.05	2.40	0.75

Table 3. Fastrack Annual Budget (2025 Base figures at 25% mode share)

Item	Income (£)	Cost (£)	Running Total (£)
Annual Fastrack A&B Bus Operating cost		4,871,272	-4,871,272
Assumed operator profit margin		487,127	-5,358,399
KCC forecast management & infrastructure maintenance costs		300,000	-5,658,399
Annual farebox revenue	6,082,484		424,085
TfL Fastrack contribution	210,000		634,085
Bluewater Repayments 2025-2041		250,000	384,085
Forecast Surplus			384,085
Desired payment to Fastrack reserve for service ongoing upgrades and modernisation.		200,000	184,085
Payment to EDC if surplus of £600k is achieved		150,000	34,085

5. Policy Framework

- 5.1 Fastrack is one of the core infrastructure projects for the Ebbsfleet Garden City and the completed scheme will contribute substantially to enabling the Ebbsfleet Garden City to function effectively through modal shift from the private car to public transport. In the design of the new transport system the EDC has worked closely with KCC. Once delivered, every resident will be within 10 minutes of a Fastrack stop and 90% within 5 minutes ensuring that residents and business users can move freely around the development and between housing, business and leisure locations.
- 5.2 Expansion of the Fastrack bus network is also included as a Transport priority within the draft Local Transport Plan 4: Delivering Growth without Gridlock 2016-2031, which highlights how investment in these infrastructure projects is vital to boost Kent's economy and support a growing population.
- 5.3 The extension of Fastrack is covered in the HT&W Divisional Business Plan and Performance Management Framework 2019-20 under Service Unit Priorities:
- Maximise inward investment into Kent
- Working closely with the EDC, Department for Transport (DfT) and Highways England to support the planning, development and delivery of necessary infrastructure to support this key area of economic growth (including the Fastrack extension).

6. Legal Agreement

- 6.1 Appendix B summarises the overarching legal agreement between KCC, EDC and Bluewater, highlighting the key items and risk.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 Fastrack Bean Road Tunnels is a vital component of the expansion of the Fastrack network into Ebbsfleet Garden City. This will contribute substantially to enabling modal shift from the private car to public transport. The programme will be challenging but there is confidence that the scheme can be delivered to link with the Fastrack Spine being delivered across Eastern Quarry by developer Henley Camland.

8.0. Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Planning, Highways, Transport and Waste on the proposed decision to underwrite loan funding and, subject to formal sign off of the legal agreement and commissioning plan, take the scheme through the next stages of development and delivery. Specifically, for the Cabinet Member to:

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9.0 Background Documents

- Appendix A – Proposed Record of Decision
- Appendix B – Overarching Agreement For Fastrack Tunnels Works Contractual Summary June 27 2019
- Appendix C - Drawing No. B2350500-JAC-HA-XX-DR-D-0001 Rev P01
- Appendix D – EqIA: Fastrack Full Network

9.0 Contact details

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