

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

David Brazier, Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport

DECISION NO:

22/000086

For publication

Key decision: YES

Subject Matter / Title of Decision: Fastrack Electrification and ZEBRA Commission

Decision: As Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport I agree to:

(a) grant permission to procure contracts required to implement the electrification of Fastrack Bus Services in Kent, including the roll-out of environmentally friendly infrastructure across the Fastrack bus networks; and

(b) grant permission for contract award decisions (including the award of any future contract extension(s)) relating to these contracts to be taken by the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment & Transport under the Officer Scheme of Delegations following prior consultation with the Cabinet Member insofar as:

1. Electric Fastrack Bus Services to operate the future electric Fastrack bus networks:
 - a. Fastrack Kent Thameside network effective from 2024.
 - b. Dover Fastrack network (pending completion of infrastructure works).
2. Electric Bus Charging Solutions to power the new zero emission electric bus fleet(s) including:
 - a. Electric Vehicle Charging Systems.
 - b. Electricity Supply.
3. Environmentally focused Bus Shelter Services for the repair and maintenance of bus shelters including the phased replacement of existing bus shelters with pollinator-friendly living roof bus shelters.
4. Real Time Information (RTI) Display Services providing real time passenger information and media advertising at bus shelters.

Reason(s) for decision:

Fastrack is Kent County Council's Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). The service provides fast, reliable, and affordable transport across Kent Thameside. The service model will be emulated in Dover from 2023. In 2021, Kent County Council submitted a successful bid to Department for Transport (DfT) funding towards electrifying our Fastrack networks. Comprising of 33 buses and the supporting infrastructure, ZEBRA (Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas) cover 75% of the cost difference between an electric bus and the equivalent diesel bus. The fund also covers 75% of the capital infrastructure costs. As part of the next generation of Electric Fastrack and zero emission operation, KCC's ambition is to also procure a preferred supplier for future bus shelters. Seeking a 'living roof design and next generation Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI).

Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

The proposed decision is being discussed by Members of the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee at their meeting on 8 September.

Any alternatives considered and rejected:

1. Continued use of diesel buses with existing operator for Kent Thameside Fastrack. Considered

operationally more expensive and contradicts KCC strategic plan. This would be anti-competitive and not test best value.

2. Excluding Dover Fastrack from DfT ZEBRA. Without ZEBRA this new service would move forward with diesel buses and not meet the ambitions for Fastrack to become a net zero operation.

3. Let the bus operators resolve the charging infrastructure. Due to the implementation costs and timescales involved. As contracted services, it is vital that the transference of charging equipment is possible in the future. The infrastructure also represents future revenue opportunities for KCC.

4. Retain the existing bus shelter. The shelters are the 'shop window' of Fastrack and must be a continuation of the premium brand. The existing infrastructure is reaching the end of its useful life and furthermore, a preferred supplier needs to be identified for new shelters as the network expands, particularly in new developments where KCC commonly receives the funding directly to implement new shelters.

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