

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 22/00022

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Past Pathway of report: A paper titled 'DfT Emergency Active Travel Fund' in relation to Tranche 1 of the funds went to the 17th of July 2020 meeting of the ETCC. Details of the Tranche 2 Active Travel Canterbury Scheme came to this committee in January 2022 (21/00118).

Future Pathway of report: Due to the size and local nature of the remaining schemes we will take the detail of these schemes through the appropriate democratic channels, Joint Transportation Boards.

Electoral Division:

District	Electoral Division	County Member
Folkestone & Hythe	Cheriton Sandgate & Hythe East	Rory Love OBE
Folkestone & Hythe	Folkestone West	Dylan Jeffrey
Folkestone & Hythe	Hythe West	Andy Weatherhead
Gravesham	Gravesend East	Jordan Meade
Gravesham	Gravesend East	Alan Ridgers
Gravesham	Northfleet & Gravesend West	Dr Lauren Sullivan
Gravesham	Northfleet & Gravesend West	Conrad Broadley
Thanet	Birchington & Rural	Derek Crow-Brown
Thanet	Birchington & Rural	Linda Wright

Summary: Following the results of the second round of consultation carried out 14th September to 25th October 2021, this paper provides an updated position on the remaining three Active Travel Funded schemes and seeks approval to proceed with the alternative scheme extents and scope for the Thanet, Gravesend, and Folkestone Active Travel Schemes.

Recommendation(s): The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport is asked to agree to proceed to consideration of alternative options for all three schemes as shown at Appendix A.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Department for Transport has provided two phases of active travel funding to date. 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 and 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 Local Authorities could include in the bids, and these were:

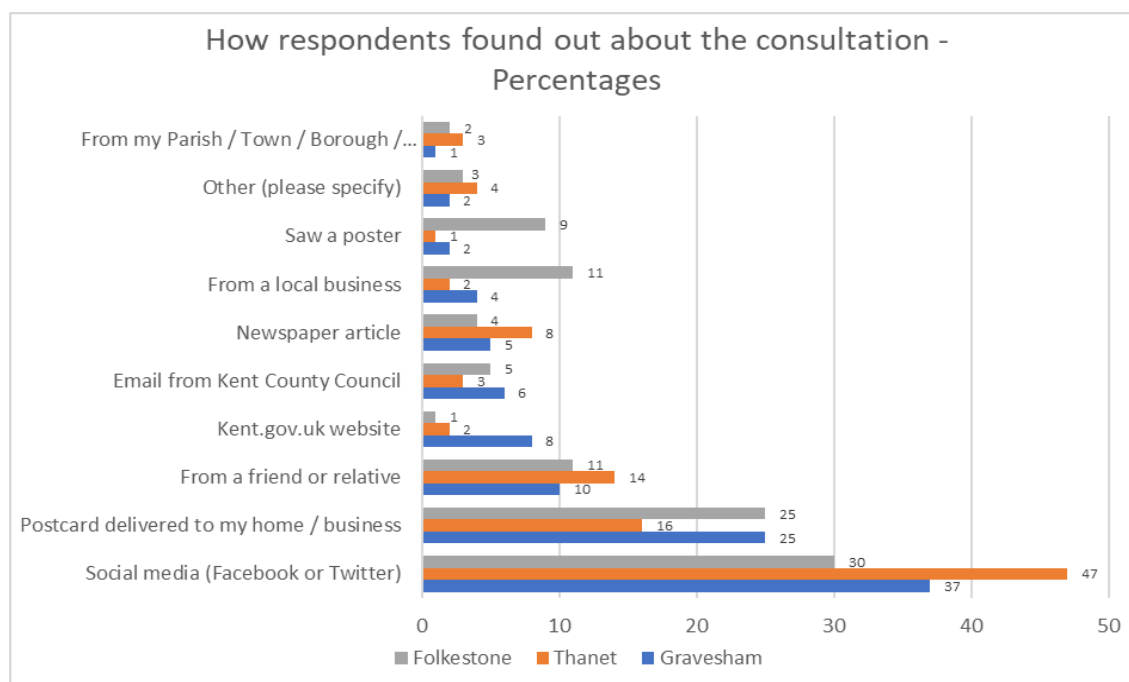
- Strategic schemes that challenged the status quo of the network
- Segregated cycle routes only (no shared or lining schemes to be included)
- The schemes had to score highly on the Government’s ‘Propensity to Cycle’ tool and the ‘Rapid Cycleway Prioritisation Tool’

1.3 The bid was submitted on 6th August 2020 and the announcement was made on 27th 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.

1.4 Considering the nationwide push back on the tranche one schemes (mostly related to the unrealistic timescales preventing consultation) the Government made some key amendments to the grant conditions of this fund, and added in some flexibility around spend deadlines, mandating that consultation was key. Expenditure by March 2023 has now been suggested by the DfT.

1.5 The Hythe, Cinque Ports scheme has proceeded to construction stage due to the overwhelming support in the first consultation. Following approval by this Cabinet Committee on 17th January 2022 the Canterbury scheme (21/00118) is now in the detailed design stage with an ongoing steering group to oversee it with involvement from the local member. This report will identify the results of the consultation for Gravesham, Thanet, and Folkestone proposals.

1.6 Targeted social media was used to advertise each consultation and this has proven to be the most successful tool to ensure local communities were aware of the need to respond. See Fig 1 identifying “How did you find out about this consultation?” Officers also delivered postcards, put up posters along the route and issued a press release.



1.7 Across all schemes, most respondents were strongly opposed/ opposed to the proposed design. Percentages are shown under the relevant scheme updates below.

1.8 Full consultation reports for each scheme are attached as appendices to this report.

2 The report

2.1 This report captures the key themes identified as part of the consultation process in relation to the Gravesham, Thanet, and Folkestone proposals.

2.2 An independent consultancy was used to collate the results as follows:

Gravesham Update

2.3 The consultation received **260** responses with **213** respondents leaving a comment on the proposed scheme There were **2,290** visits to the Gravesham scheme webpage and **867** document downloads.

2.4 The majority of respondents strongly opposed/opposed the initial design. The results shown in the table below.

Strongly Support	26%
Support	8%
Neither Support nor Oppose	3%
Oppose	7%
Strongly Oppose	55%
Don't Know	1%

2.5 The consultation identified eleven key themes. These were:

- Concerns raised regarding the removal of parking
- The scheme is unnecessary / not needed
- Scheme favours cyclists over drivers / concern of prioritising cyclists needs over drivers
- The scheme is a waste of public funding
- Concerns that it will increase congestion
- Concerns for the one-way system(s) proposed
- The scheme will improve walking and / or cycling facilities
- The scheme will displace traffic onto other local streets
- Opposed to vehicle restrictions / closures
- Concerns for vulnerable road users (elderly/disabled)
- Opposition based on concerns for safety

2.6 Based on the consultation feedback, alternative options being pursued will consider:

West section:

- Review measures to reduce speed on London Road, including vertical and horizontal alignment measures including the possibility of surface treatments.

This will be dependent upon conversations with the local district manager as asset manager and also the bus companies.

- Review options for improved pedestrian facilities, including crossings and widened footways.
- Review of options for additional cycling facilities including Advanced Stop Lines for cyclists, side road connections and cycle parking.
- Review of option to improve existing advisory cycle lane on London Road with semi-permanent measures.

Centre section / Rosherville:

- Review of public realm opportunities at Rosherville shops, including pedestrian areas and side road junctions.
- Review of improved cycle facilities through the commercial area without a detrimental impact on parking.

East section:

- Review of London Road east section, including Thames Way junction for improved pedestrian and cycling measures.
- Review of opportunities for the Overcliffe Road route to the town centre and consider pedestrian and cycling measures.
- Review of St James Road through to the station route.

2.7 Officers are not proposing to deliver a bi-directional cycleway facility and it should be noted that the scheme designs referred to above will need to be developed, shared with a steering group, and then confirmed as appropriate by DfT in terms of the grant funding.

2.8 A steering group will be established to provide local governance for this scheme and report via the Joint Transportation Board. Officers will seek to involve the local members in this steering group.

Thanet Update

2.9 There were **504** responses to the consultation with **415** respondents leaving a comment on the proposal. There were **2,930** visits to the Thanet scheme webpage with **1,300** document downloads.

2.10 The majority of respondents strongly opposed/opposed the initial design. The results shown in the table below.

Strongly Support	20%
Support	9%
Neither Support nor Oppose	4%
Oppose	10%
Strongly Oppose	57%
Don't Know	0%

2.11 The consultation identified ten key themes. These were:

- Concerns that it will increase congestion
- The scheme is unnecessary/not needed
- The scheme is a waste of public funding

- Oppose to vehicle restrictions/closures
- Scheme favours cyclists over drivers/concern of prioritising cyclists needs over drivers
- Opposition based on concerns for safety
- Concerns for increased levels of pollution
- The scheme will improve walking and / or cycling facilities
- Concerns raised regarding removal of parking
- The scheme will improve safety

2.12 Based on the consultation feedback, alternative options being pursued will consider:

West section:

- Review of two identified options for connection to Birchington Station and identify a recommended option.
- Review options for cycle route/quietway route along Alpha Road/Epple Road to Birchington station.
- Review options for cycle track route along Canterbury Road/Station Road to Birchington station.

Central section:

- Review existing proposed route from Charlesworth Drive to Domneva Road with considerations for connections to west and east alternatives sections.
- Proposal for connection with KCC's new crossing at Hengist Road.
- Review cycle lane arrangement adjacent to Ursuline College and King Ethelbert School following comments raised during consultation and further engagement with the school.

East section:

- Review of two identified options for connection to Westgate Station and identify recommended option
- Review options for Hengist Road, including cycle track and footways to connect with Ryder's Avenue/Cuthbert Road and the Viking Coastal Trail.
- Review options for Domneva Road to connect with Ryder Road/Cuthbert Road and the Viking Coastal Trail.
- Develop an option to connect Cuthbert Road to Westgate.

2.13 Officers are not proposing to re-purpose any whole sections of traffic lanes to deliver full width cycle lanes along the A28. The intention is to design a more locally appropriate cycle route using some existing desire lines, with a mixture of quietways and improvements for pedestrians and cyclists. We would like to drastically improve the opportunities for local children to walk and cycle to school. The scheme designs referred to above will need to be developed, shared with a steering group, and then confirmed as appropriate by DfT in terms of the grant funding.

2.14 A steering group will be established to provide local governance for this scheme and report via the Joint Transportation Board. Officers will seek to involve the local members in this steering group

Folkestone Update

- 2.15 The consultation received **919** responses, with **777** respondents leaving a comment on the proposal. There were **6,650** visits to the Folkestone scheme webpage, with **2,100** document downloads.
- 2.16 The majority of respondents strongly opposed/opposed the initial design. The results shown in the table below.

Strongly Support	17%
Support	7%
Neither Support nor Oppose	2%
Oppose	9%
Strongly Oppose	64%
Don't Know	1%

- 2.17 The consultation identified six key themes. These were:

- Scheme will negatively impact businesses
- Concerns raised regarding parking removal
- The scheme is unnecessary/not needed
- Concerns for vulnerable road users (elderly/disabled)
- Oppose to the removal of trees
- Opposition to the closure of Stanley Road

- 2.18 A petition opposing the Cheriton Cycle Lane Scheme was received in October 2021 containing approximately 3,500 signatures. In accordance with KCC's petition scheme this was debated at the Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee meeting on 18th January 2022 where it was reported that petition was being supported and officers were not proceeding with the proposals shown in the consultation thereby closing the petition.

- 2.19 Based on the consultation feedback, alternative options being pursued will consider:

- Provision of a scheme only to the east of Coombe Road to have minimal impact on parking and the business activity in the High Street.
- Identification of additional pedestrian crossings, public realm, and speed management along the route.
- Improvements along Cheriton High Street to encourage and enhance the experience for pedestrians and visitors (with no detriment to parking).
- Identify some improvements as suggested by businesses.

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.
- 3.2 The funds were originally intended for expenditure by March 2021, however since the Department for Transport spent some months deliberating the grant offer; we now have an extension, and the schemes should be delivered as soon as possible, preferably before the end of March 2023. If any capital funding is left; we will seek approval from the DfT to use it for smaller active travel

measures such as cycle storage and/or other measures to compliment walking and cycling in the local vicinity.

3.3 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

3.4 The schemes' 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 Nothing to report at this stage.

5 Equalities implications

5.1 Equality Impact Assessments have been completed for the individual projects. KCC will review these documents whilst keeping any affected groups informed and updated.

6 Conclusions

6.1 Kent County Council has been working closely with a consultant through the Kent Professional Services Framework Contract to deliver the second consultation on the outline design of the active travel schemes. Following the responses from the consultation officers need to look at alternative design options for Gravesham, Thanet and Folkestone that consider the comments received during the public consultation. KCC would like to harness this investment in an appropriate way and it will be important to work closely with local communities and locally elected members to get the right schemes in the right places.

6.2 Joint Transportation Boards would appear to be the democratically appropriate channel to debate the detail of these schemes since they are limited to individual districts and are not going to be in excess of £1m in value.

6.3 There is highly likely to be more funding opportunities coming forward from Central Government under the Active Travel agenda. Central Government is establishing 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.

6.4 The DfT have asked us to engage in design assurance processes for future rounds of Active Travel Funding prior to making capital grant payments to local authorities. Active Travel England design experts are now on board and undertaking regular design reviews along with recommendations which are necessary to consider in order to ensure schemes comply with LTN 1/20.

7 Background Documents

- Appendix A: Proposed Record of Decision
- Gravesend Consultation Report - <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s109790/GravesendConsultationReport.pdf>
- Thanet Consultation Report - <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s109778/ThanetConsultationReport.pdf>
- Folkestone Consultation Report - <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s109775/FolkestoneConsultationReport.pdf>
- The five EQIA's can be seen on our corporate website: www.kent.gov.uk/kentactivetravel

8. Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport is asked to agree to proceed to consideration of alternative options for all three schemes as shown at Appendix A.

9. Contact details

Report Author: Nikola Floodgate
Schemes Planning & Delivery Manager
Telephone number 03000 416239
Email: Nikola.floodgate@kent.gov.uk

Relevant Director: Phil Lightowler
Interim Director Transportation
Telephone number 03000 411683
Email: Philip.lightowler@kent.gov.uk