

From: Neil Baker, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation
Simon Jones, Corporate Director, Growth, Environment & Transport

To: Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee – 15 November 2023

Subject: Active Travel Schemes

Key decision: 23/00099

Classification: Unrestricted

Past Pathway of Paper: Active Travel Schemes have been reported:

- 9 December 2020
- 19 January 2021
- 8 September 2021
- January 2022
- 17 March 2022
- 8 November 2022

Future Pathway of Paper: For Cabinet Member Decision

Summary: This paper provides an update on the Active Travel Fund Tranches 1, 2, 3 and 4 funded schemes and the strategic approach for how officers intend to deliver schemes.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport on the proposed decision to give approval to take the Active Travel Capital Fund Grant projects through their various stages of scheme development and delivery of the remaining schemes (specifically Gravesham, Folkestone, Sevenoaks, Herne Bay and Faversham):

- i. Approval to undertake the detailed design and any associated surveys required to inform the design of these remaining schemes;
- ii. Approval for KCC officers to project manage, input into the delivery and supervision of the projects, with the cost of all staff and consultant time being recoverable against the DfT project funding;
- iii. Approval to progress all statutory approvals or consents required for the schemes;
- iv. Approval to implement permanent Traffic Regulation Orders, if required as such associated with any speed limit reductions, subject to completing the statutory consultation process associated with Traffic Regulation Orders;
- v. Approval to carry out any additional consultation/engagement as required for the schemes;

- vi. Approval to enter into construction contracts as necessary for the delivery of the schemes subject to a review of the procurement strategy by the Strategic Commissioning team;
- vii. Approval for any further decisions required to allow the schemes 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 A.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 The Department for Transport (DfT) has provided four phases of active travel funding via Active Travel England (ATE). The first tranche supported the installation of temporary projects for the COVID-19 pandemic with the second, third and fourth tranches to enable and support the creation of permanent infrastructure to support walking, wheeling and cycling and active travel in general.
- 1.2 The tranche 2 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.
- 1.3 DfT awarded Kent County Council £6.098m for five named walking, wheeling and cycling active travel schemes across the County, which are:
- Canterbury: Littlebourne Road to the City Centre
 - Folkestone: Central Railway Station to Cheriton
 - Thanet: Birchington to Margate Sands
 - Folkestone: Hythe to Dymchurch
 - Gravesham: Gravesend to Northfleet
- 1.4 Kent County Council initially consulted on the five schemes between 9 December 2020 and 19 January 2021. The Active Travel Funding Tranche 2 report to the ETCC on 19 January 2021 gave approval to proceed to design and further consultation on the detailed designs of the five schemes (Decision number 21/00002).
- 1.5 A further ETCC report on 8 September 2021 gave approval for the Folkestone (Hythe to Dymchurch) Phases 5A & 5B active travel scheme to commence to construction. Decision number 21/00066. This phase is now complete.
- 1.6 Details of the Tranche 2 Active Travel Scheme in Canterbury came to this committee in January 2022 (21/00118) to request proceeding to construction. This decision was taken and the scheme is nearing completion on site.
- 1.7 A 17 March 2022 ETCC received a report seeking approval to proceed to consideration of alternative options for the remaining three schemes in Thanet, Gravesend and Folkestone. Officers were to continue revisiting design options for these three schemes.

1.8 A Tranche 3 bid was placed with the DfT on 9 August 2021 and consisted of nine schemes with a total value of £6,056,816. The nine schemes were based on local Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) produced by the Districts and Boroughs.

- Ashford Route 5 - £1,837,375
- Ashford Route 6 - £369,441
- **Herne Bay Central Parade seafront - £100,000**
- Golf Course Rd, Sandwich - £100,000
- Instead Rise to Meopham footway/cycleway - £600,000
- Aylesford Medway Towpath - £700,00
- **Sevenoaks Urban Area – East/West route - £1,200,000**
- Otford to Kemsing link - £50,000
- Faversham Town walking improvements - £1,100,000

1.9 KCC was awarded £1,300,000 for the design and delivery of the Herne Bay Central Parade and the Sevenoaks Urban area east/west route on 18 March 2022.

1.10 The 8 November 2022 ETCC, Active Travel update provided information on the requirement from Active Travel England (ATE) for all local authorities who were wanting to bid for Active Travel funds to submit a self assessment. KCC's self assessment was set at Level 1: *Some local leadership and support with basics plans and isolated interventions*. The importance of this self assessment was that it was a mechanism for ATE to allocate levels of funding to various levels of self assessments. ATE concurred with the Level 1 self assessment and indicated that KCC could bid for upto £2.8m with an additional option to put forward an additional competitive bid for a construction ready scheme.

1.11 In order to prioritise potential schemes, a consultant was commissioned (WSP) to assist. Schemes from LCWIPs, the PROW programme, previous Active Travel Fund bids, district /KCC officer ideas were pulled together to form a long list. Two stages of sifting schemes were introduced in order to produce a final list of schemes that had sufficient support and developed enough to produce a quality submission.

1.12 A cross-party Member Group was set up, led by the Cabinet Member informing all KCC Members of the working group and giving them an opportunity to join. This group provided support and guidance throughout the sifting process and to guide generally on Active Travel ideas. It has met regularly since August 2022.

1.13 On completion of the sifting process, a Tranche 4 bid was placed with Active Travel England on 24 February 2023. This bid was for a single year funding round and consisted of development only and construction schemes depending upon whether schemes were able to be built within the one year funding programme.

1.14 Based on the funding level set at £2.8m, KCC submitted the following schemes to date:

- **Faversham Cross Town Walking Route – construction - £0.995m**
- Medway Towpath Improvements – construction - £1.2m

- **Canterbury Riverside Cycle Route – Design Development - £0.09m**
- **Canterbury Braggs Lane to New Road Route – Design Development £0.15m**
- **Canterbury Whitstable Crab and Winkle Route Extension – Design Development - £0.1m**
- **Otford to Sevenoaks LCWIP Route 1 – Design Development £0.184m**
- **Tunbridge Wells Better Street pilot – Design Development - £0.05m**
- With an additional construction scheme in Ashford (Route 5) - £3.0m submitted under a competitive element.

1.15 KCC was successful in gaining funding of £1.569m for all but two of the schemes (Medway Towpath and Ashford Route 5). We did not secure funding from the competitive element (Ashford Route 5). The feedback received was linked to the maintenance nature of the works required to the Towpath and there was lack of funding to award the competitive element (Ashford Route 5).

1.16 The Grant governance for all ATF funding rounds requires KCC to work closely with ATE specifically on designs to the appropriate standards and a review of the designs and various stages along with regular financial and programme reviews. Should changes to finance and programme be required, a change control process is to be followed. The last change control request undertaken was in April 2023 and resulted in the reallocation of the funds for Thanet – A28 Birchington to Westgate to the Canterbury: Littlebourne Road to the City Centre scheme – reallocation value £1,283,375. The Canterbury scheme grew in size along with significant increases in costs and the lack of support from the local community for a cycle route along A28 following two consultations allowed the funding to be moved between the two schemes.

1.17 A reallocation of £500,000 of underspend from the completed ATF2 scheme “Hythe to Dymchurch” to the Herne Bay scheme (ATF3) was approved due to the significant extension in scope to provide an improved walking, wheeling and cycling provision from Herne Bay Rail Station to Central Parade. The scheme also now includes an extended 20mph Zone.

1.18 We are currently consulting on the Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (KCWIP), a strategic plan to set out clear priorities for the provision of infrastructure and will be an important element of the developing draft Local Transport Plan 5. The consultation runs from 1st November 2023 to 10th January 2024.

2.0 Update and governance

2.1 Tranche 2 schemes:

- Canterbury: Littlebourne Road to the City Centre – **nearing completion**
- Folkestone: Central Railway Station to Cheriton – **detailed design stage**
- Thanet: Birchington to Margate Sands – **abandoned due to lack of local or political support**
- Folkestone: Hythe to Dymchurch - **complete**
- Gravesham: Gravesend to Northfleet – **3rd consultation currently being undertaken**

The Tranche 2 grant is to be spent by the end of March 2024, as to date we have been successful in agreeing Change Control mechanisms with Active Travel England.

2.2 Tranche 3 schemes:

- Herne Bay Central Parade seafront - **nearing completion**
- Sevenoaks East/West route – **further consultation and detailed design stage.**

The Tranche 3 grant is to be spent by the end of April 2024, and this is currently on track.

2.3 Tranche 4 schemes:

- Faversham Cross Town Walking Route – **construction due to start March 2024**
- Canterbury Riverside Cycle Route – **outline design stage**
- Canterbury Braggs Lane to New Road Route – **outline design stage**
- Canterbury Whitstable Crab and Winkle Route Extension – **outline design stage**
- Otford to Sevenoaks LCWIP Route 1 – **outline design stage and initial stakeholder consultation**
- Tunbridge Wells Better Street pilot – **feasibility and consultations**

Tranche 4 funding is required to be fully committed by March 2024 but change control options to extend this are available with constant dialogue with Active Travel England taking place.

2.4 Any funding bid that is pulled together is and will be done so in partnership with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation and the Cross Party working group that we have established, with oversight from the Cabinet Member for Highways & Transportation.

2.5 In order to progress schemes as quickly and efficiently as possible, the Committee is being asked to approve the following governance:

1. KCC Officers develop bids with the Districts and Boroughs and assists them in producing their LCWIPs where applicable.
2. On completion of the KCWIP, officers use the agreed prioritised schemes for future funding rounds.
3. Consultations take place with the local communities and stakeholder groups prior to any progression of detailed designs and construction.
4. The KCC Cycling and Walking Member Group are kept up to date along with local KCC Members where schemes are within their elected ward boundaries.
5. Results of consultations and officer recommendations are reported to the local Joint Transportation Boards.
6. Joint Transport Board recommendations and agreed by the Cabinet Member for Highways & Transportation.

3.0 Financial Implications

- 3.1 The costs of the schemes can be fully covered by the granted awarded to KCC via Tranche 2, 3 and 4 of Active Travel funding. These grants makes allowance for the staff costs and design fees associated with the scheme delivery in addition to the construction costs and any legal costs associated. When necessary, change control is used with ATE to manage costs within the funding envelope with no additional KCC funds required from base budgets above some staffing time which is mostly capitilised to scheme project codes.
- 3.2 There are no revenue implications to KCC, the schemes' costs are scalable to suit the budgets available and Change Control with the DfT via Active Travel England can take place to adjust projects within the Programme.

4.0 Programme

- 4.1 A further change control request to ATE for an extension of time will be required for the two remaining Tranche 2 schemes still within the consultation and detailed design stage and tranches 3 and 4 schemes will be regularly reviewed.
- 4.2 It is anticipated that construction will be undertaken using a competitively selected sub-contractor via the the Highway Term Maintenance Contract or the Drainage Framework or via competitive tender procedures.

5.0 Equalities implications

- 5.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is undertaken for all schemes and will continue to be updated throughout the project and keep any affected groups informed and updated. The EqIA will be placed on KCC's website: www.kent.gov.uk/kentactivetravel.gov.uk

6.0 Recommendation(s)

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport on the proposed decision to give approval to take the Active Travel Capital Fund Grant projects through their various stages of scheme development and delivery of the remaining schemes (specifically Gravesham, Folkestone, Sevenoaks, Herne Bay and Faversham):

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

- iv. Approval to implement permanent Traffic Regulation Orders, if required as such associated with any speed limit reductions, subject to completing the statutory consultation process associated with Traffic Regulation Orders;
- v. Approval to carry out any additional consultation/engagement as required for the schemes;
- vi. Approval to enter into construction contracts as necessary for the delivery of the schemes subject to a review of the procurement strategy by the Strategic Commissioning team;
- vii. Approval for any further decisions required to allow the schemes 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 A.

7. Background documents

Appendix A – Proposed Record of Decision
EqIAs:

- Northfleet to Gravesend:
<https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/27521/widgets/77950/documents/47547>
- Cheriton to Folkestone:
<https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/25200/widgets/71263/documents/43422>
- Canterbury to Littlebourne Road:
<https://letstalk.kent.gov.uk/11828/widgets/33480/documents/16286>
- Sevenoaks East West Route:
<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s121617/sevenoaksEastWestrouteSDC.pdf>

8. Contact Details

Report Authors: Jamie Watson/Nikola Floodgate

- Job title: Senior Programme Manager (Active Travel) and Road Safety & Active Travel Group Manager
- Phone number: 03000 416239
- E-mail: nikola.floodgate@kent.gov.uk

Relevant Director:

- Lead Director: Haroona Chughtai
- Job title: Director, Highways and Transportation
- Phone number: 03000 412479
- E-mail: haroona.chughtai@kent.gov.uk

Corporate Director: Simon Jones - Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport

- Phone number: 03000 411683
- E-mail: Simon.Jones@kent.gov.uk