

From: Simon Jones, Corporate Director, Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Neil Baker, Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport

Subject: **Bus Stop Maintenance & Civils Contract**

Key Decision: **25/00015**

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Electoral Divisions Affected: **All**

Summary: Kent County Council (KCC) currently has a Bus Stop Infrastructure and Information Management (BSIIM) contract in place, which facilitates the maintenance of the Council's existing bus stop assets. This activity includes the replacement of bus stop parts such as flags, timetable cases, clearway plates etc., and the posting of publicity for some of the county's bus services. The contract expires in March 2026.

Separate to this contract, the Council also conducts groundworks activity relating to the repair & upgrade of existing bus stop assets and works to meet local demand for new infrastructure as funding allows. This is currently managed and procured on an individual site basis.

This paper details a proposed decision which seeks to secure a new contract for the delivery of all bus stop infrastructure activity to ensure best value to the Council, increased efficiency and greater control over outcomes.

The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport is asked to:

- (i) APPROVE the procurement and subsequent contract award for Bus Stop Maintenance and Civils
- (ii) DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth Environment & Transport, to take relevant actions to facilitate the required procurement activity.
- (iii) DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth Environment & Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, to take relevant actions, including but not limited to, awarding, finalising the terms of and entering into the relevant contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary, to implement the decision.
- (iv) DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth Environment and Transport, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, to award extensions of the contract in accordance with the relevant clauses within the contract as shown at Appendix A

1. Overview

- 1.1 As part of its function as Kent's Highways Authority, KCC has responsibility for the provision and maintenance of bus stop infrastructure and supporting physical access to Kent's local bus network. Kent has for many years issued a contract known as Bus Stop Infrastructure and Information Management (BSIIM) which facilitates the maintenance of its existing bus stop assets to a suitable standard. This existing contract covers maintenance work such as the replacement of timetable cases, flags and clearway plates and facilitates the posting of bus timetable information and the placement of temporary bus stop when this activity falls outside of the responsibility of commercial operators (e.g. for KCC contracted services).
- 1.2 KCC also considers requests for and installs where and when appropriate new bus stops and undertakes civils repairs and groundworks. This activity includes works such as the provision of bus stop poles, bus boarder kerbs and hardstanding areas (as per equalities / DfT Guidance), dropped kerbs & crossing points and bus stop clearway markings. This is currently managed and procured on an individual site basis.
- 1.3 Due to an upcoming contract end date for BSIIM (March 2026), an opportunity has been identified to combine the activities detailed in 1.1 and 1.2, delivering contract management and delivery efficiencies and best value for the Council for these services, in line with the Council's policy of Securing Kent's Future. The intention is to deliver a combined contract providing Lot A - BSIIM and Lot B - Bus Stop Civils to commence from 1st April 2026 for three years, with potential of two extensions of one year each.
- 1.4 The activities carried out under Lot A and Lot B are typically fulfilled by different markets, and it is not considered likely that any one supplier will be able to deliver both cost-effectively. It is therefore expected that the lots will be awarded to separate contractors, but KCC will retain the right to award both to the same contractor, if a single supplier demonstrates its ability to offer best value for money across both lots. This would bring the additional benefit of management efficiencies for the Infrastructure Team.
- 1.5 The contract would also provide an improved model for the delivery of any bus stop infrastructure initiatives related to Kent's ongoing work on its Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) from April 2026 onwards, particularly in the funding stream continues.

2. Future Contract Requirements

- 2.1 To date, existing arrangements for bus stop infrastructure, particularly for BSIIM, have worked well and have delivered a high standard of work at competitive rates to the authority. The existing BSIIM contract was awarded following a competitive tender process to Arriva South-East Kent.

- 2.2 The Council therefore wishes to secure a replacement contract for BSIIIM which continues these standards whilst integrating wider civils activity.
- 2.3 The above is particularly important given the emergence of the National Bus Strategy agenda, which has and is anticipated to continue to make funding available to the council for capital bus related schemes.
- 2.4 The contract is proposed to cover KCC's usual annual activities relating to bus stop infrastructure, with no new implications on the authorities overall base budgets. In addition to this, it is also proposed to utilise the contract to deliver any infrastructure related BSIP initiatives from April 2026 onwards. This arrangement could apply for some or all of the lifespan of the contract if further central government funding is made available. If this is not forthcoming, activities relating to the contract will be limited in scope to meet KCC's obligations as the Highway Authority.
- 2.5 The contract is proposed to run for a minimum of three years, with two optional extensions of one year. Extensions will only be considered provided good performance is demonstrated by the contractor through the monitoring of KPIs. The contract length will also be short enough to enable a new tender process during the 2028 – 2029 financial year if necessary.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 The contract value of the existing BSIIIM contract is £101,710.67 per annum, running for three years with a one-year extension adjusted for inflation at £112,618.49. The total value of the contract during its active period is therefore £435,411.59.
- 3.2 The Council also currently allocated £60,000 per annum through its Policy & Strategy budget on bus stop civils works. Of this, approximately £25,000 per annum is spent on maintaining existing infrastructure. £35,000 per annum is allocated to upgrading the network where opportunities arise, including bus boarder kerbs, bus stop clearways, installation of hard standing etc.
- 3.3 The new contract combining both activities will utilise the same Policy & Strategy budget allocation. The cost of the statutory "BSIIIM" related activities and essential repairs is anticipated to increase due to inflation; these costs will be absorbed by the £35,000 allocated to proactive works. The new contract is therefore not expected to result in increased costs to the authority.
- 3.4 The new contract value is therefore estimated at £500,000 for three years, with yearly extensions individually costing £160,000. The overall cost to the authority utilising both extensions is anticipated to be approximately £820,000.
- 3.5 The value of the contract beyond the above core work is dependent on opportunities linked to external funding (e.g. Kent's Bus Service Improvement Plan) which may put the value of the contract over £1m during its lifespan of

potentially five years. Any activity that will be subject to a further key decision because of external funding will be taken through the appropriate governance.

4. Legal Implications

4.1 None anticipated. A full legal review of the commissioning activity will be undertaken as part of the procurement process.

5. Equality implications

5.1 An EQIA has been completed for this proposed contract. Several positive impacts have been identified regarding accessibility of the Public Transport Network. Procuring this contract will support the authority with efficiently providing 'bus boarder' kerbs and clearways compliant with DfT and Equalities Act guidelines, along with posting of paper timetabling information for groups with lower digital skills

6. Governance

6.1 The Corporate Director of Growth, Environment & Transport will inherit the main delegations as set out in the proposed decision.

7. Recommendations

Recommendations: The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport is asked to:

- (ii) APPROVE the procurement and subsequent contract award for Bus Stop Maintenance and Civils
- (ii) DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth Environment & Transport, to take relevant actions to facilitate the required procurement activity.
- (iii) DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth Environment & Transport in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, to take relevant actions, including but not limited to, awarding, finalising the terms of and entering into the relevant contracts or other legal agreements, as necessary, to implement the decision.
- (iv) DELEGATE authority to the Corporate Director of Growth Environment and Transport, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, to award extensions of the contract in accordance with the relevant clauses within the contract as shown at Appendix A.

Appendices:

Appendix A – Proposed Record of Decision
EqIA

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