

From: Matthew Balfour, Cabinet Member – Environment & Transport
Roger Wilkin, Interim Director – Highways, Transportation & Waste

To: Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee – 21 July 2015

Decision No: **15/00060**

Subject: **Kent Connected – Delivering improved ‘door to door’ travel options**

Key decision – Affects 2 or more electoral divisions

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Past Pathway of Paper: N/A

Future Pathway of Paper: For Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: Countywide

Summary: Following a successful bid to the Department for Transport’s (DfT) Sustainable Transport Fund, Kent County Council has been awarded £893k to deliver “Kent Connected”. “Kent Connected” comprises a website bringing together journey planning, real time travel information and smart travel card options, the roll out of a multi bus operator e-purse smart card, support for businesses & schools to develop and promote sustainable travel, audits of transport interchanges, promotional activities including Skyride and the Active Travel Challenge as well as extending existing driver and cyclist training offers. Members are asked to acknowledge this successful bid for external funding and approve its delivery to enhance the provision of travel information and sustainable travel options across Kent.

Recommendation(s):

The Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport to accept the DfT funding to enable the Kent Connected initiative to be delivered. Specifically this comprises approval to spend this grant in order to:

- i) pay staffing costs associated with delivering the initiative;
- ii) enter into and amend procured contracts as necessary and subject to the council’s approval process;
- iii) make grants to transport operators, business and schools, in accordance with our agreement procedures; and
- iv) promote the initiative to partner organisations and to the public.

1. Introduction & Background

- 1.1 In 2014, DfT invited local authorities to put forward proposals for funding for innovative Local Sustainable Transport schemes. The funding on offer was for revenue schemes to be delivered in 2015/16. Subsequently, Kent County Council put a bid in for “Kent Connected,” a £893k package of measures based around implementation of Government’s ‘Door to Door’ Transport Strategy (2013). The measures comprised provision of information, awareness raising, enhanced access to sustainable travel options and training opportunities. Our bid was successful.
- 1.2 This report provides an overview of “Kent Connected.” As an important high profile project, to be delivered using a significant amount of external funding, Kent Connected is being presented as a key decision for Cabinet Member approval. Whilst the overall amount represents a significant level of funding, the project is very much about enhancing and extending a wide range of existing initiatives. To illustrate this, the highest cost element is the Kent Connected website which is anticipated at £150k, subject to procurement.
- 1.3 Importantly, Kent Connected will be used to compliment the Local Enterprise Partnership funded Local Sustainable Transport Fund capital schemes in West Kent and Kent Thameside (reported to this committee on 9 April 2015) as well as to extend the benefits countywide.

2.0 Kent Connected

- 2.1 The Kent Connected initiative is made up of a package of measures across 6 principal areas:

An innovative website, bringing together journey planning, travel information and smart travel card options: A procurement process is in hand to appoint a provider to set up a ‘smart phone accessible’ web site for Kent Connected. This will bring together in one place: journey planning, lift sharing, updates to journey options based on real time travel information and smart card options including multi operator e-purse ticketing on buses and access to car club and bike hire schemes. Subject to procurement, the cost of this, to be funded through Kent Connected, is anticipated at £150k, including set up and maintenance for 3 years.

The roll out of a multi bus operator e-purse smart card: As part of the countywide Kent Card initiative, the County Council has been working in partnership with Arriva Southern Counties to trial an e-purse smart card on buses in Maidstone. Using the Kent Connected funding, it is planned to extend the trial to other bus operators and then, subject to agreement with the operators, to move to a public roll out on services across the town. In the longer term it is planned to extend the scheme to Medway, as well as to other areas of the county, to include operator and local authority specific products and to enable the pass holder to always pay the lowest price available.

Support for businesses & schools to develop and promote sustainable travel: The County Council has a successful grant programme for schools to enable them to implement measures such as

improved drop off points, pedestrian accesses and bike/scooter shelters to encourage car sharing, walking and cycling and to tackle school run congestion. The Kent Connected funding will enable more grants to be awarded to schools and to pilot a similar scheme to support businesses and other organisations. Stagecoach and Arriva are contributing match funding of £55k in total for discounted travel for employees.

Audits of key transport interchanges across Kent: Working with district councils, these audits are to be undertaken with a view to making improvements as funding opportunities arise such as the LEP funded Kent Thameside and West Kent Local Sustainable Transport schemes (reported to this committee on 9 April 2015) which include funding for enhancements to walking, cycling and bus routes to town centres and at transport interchanges between 2015/16 and 2020/21.

Promotional activities including Skyride and extending the Active Travel Challenge: Agreement has been reached with British Cycling, who are including £20k match funding, and KCC Public Health to double the number of Skyrides on offer this year to 65 which represents 1,700 places. The Kent wide Active Travel Challenge is being run in partnership with the Sustrans Charity.

Extending existing driver and cyclist training offers: Kent Connected funding will enable the County Council to roll out low cost safe and sustainable driver training to businesses and individuals. Cycle training is also being expanded including 750 free adult cycle training places and 3,000 Bikeability cycle training places for schools.

3. Financial Implications

3.1 There are no additional financial implications for the County Council. The DfT funding is being used to both improve and extend existing initiatives for the current financial year, as well as to leave a legacy of enhanced schemes where ever possible. The payments to the County Council will be released in 2 segments: 75% in August 2015 and 25% in May 2016. The match funding has been secured from other government programmes, and public transport providers as set out above, and it will be secured through a legal agreement to be signed by the contributors and the County Council as necessary.

4. The Strategic Statement and Corporate Objectives

4.1 Improving transport is identified in the KCC Strategic Statement 2015-2020 under outcome 2: Kent Communities feel the benefits of economic growth by being in-work, healthy and enjoying a good quality of life.

4.2 Kent Connected relates to priorities 1, 2, 4, 6 and 7 within the Growth Environment and Transport Business Plan 2015 - 2016:

- Contribute to the delivery of the Growth & Infrastructure outcomes
- Create successful bids to secure funding
- Facilitate partnerships between transport providers
- Deliver the Kent Environment Strategy, reducing the impact of traffic
- Contribute to Public Health by facilitating and promoting active travel

5. Conclusions

5.1 Kent Connected is an important scheme which aligns well with County Council policies to keep Kent moving, to improve accessibility, reduce congestion and pollution and encourage active travel to benefit the economy, the environment and public health. At a time of ongoing budget pressures on the County Council this is a welcome injection of revenue funding to enable the Council to remain at the forefront of delivering transport innovations to support Kent residents and Kent business travel needs.

6. Recommendation(s)

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- i) pay staffing costs associated with delivering the initiative;
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7. Background documents

None.

8. Appendices

Appendix A – Proposed Record of Decision

9. Contact details

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