

From: Michael Payne, Cabinet Member for Highways & Transportation  
Barbara Cooper, Corporate Director, Growth, Environment and Transport

To: Environment and Transport Ca020binet Committee – 15 September 2020

Subject: Gravesend Bus Hub (Barrack Row & Garrick Street)

Key Decision: 20/00077

Classification: Unrestricted

**Past Pathway of Paper:** ETCC May 2015

**Future Pathway of Paper:** For Cabinet Member decision

**Electoral Division:** Northfleet & Gravesend West

**Summary:** This report provides an update on the Gravesend Bus Hub scheme, which forms an integral part of the Kent Thameside Local Sustainable Transport Fund proposals identified in a paper to this Committee in May 2015.

The Gravesend Bus Hub has secured funding from a number of additional sources as well as Local Growth Funding and this report provides an update on the scheme and the next steps of delivery and procurement that are required.

**Recommendation(s):**

**The Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee** is asked to note that the May 2015 Decision (15/00011) approved to take 7 Local Growth Fund schemes through the next stages of development and delivery, including authority to enter into funding and construction contracts. The Kent Thameside Local Sustainable Transport Fund was one of these schemes which is the initial funding stream for the now larger Gravesend Bus Hub.

The Cabinet Committee is therefore also asked to consider and endorse, or make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Highways & Transport on the proposed decision sheet as follows and as indicated on the proposed decision sheet attached at Appendix A:

- i. Approval to enter into the Local Growth Fund and Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC) Grant funding agreements subject to the approval of the Corporate Director of Finance & Procurement;
- ii. Approval to undertake the detailed design and surveys for the project, including development control and land charge disclosures. This work will be undertaken by appointing a consultant through the KCC Professional Services Framework Contract;

- iii. Approval to progress all statutory approvals or consents required for the scheme, including transfer of land and rights;
- iv. Approval to carry out any additional consultation required for the scheme;
- v. Approval to enter into construction contracts as necessary for the delivery of the scheme subject to the approval of the Capital Officer Group to the recommended procurement strategy
- vi. Approval for any further decisions required to allow the scheme 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.

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Funding for a number of highway and transportation improvement schemes was allocated to Kent County Council, following successful Local Growth Fund (LGF) bids to central government via the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP).
- 1.2 One of the schemes Kent Thameside – Integrated Door-to-Door Journeys has secured £4.51m from the Local Growth Fund. It comprises a package of measures to reduce congestion and improve accessibility through the delivery of a fully integrated sustainable transport network, allowing the user to transfer seamlessly between modes and making sustainable transport a real alternative to the private car.
- 1.3 Part of the package of measures was the funding of a new fleet of vehicles for the Fastrack service. However, following funding from another source the required new vehicle fleet allocation was considerably reduced. To ensure full use of the LGF allocation, it was agreed that the funding be re-allocated towards the provision of a Bus Hub in Barrack Row, Gravesend. The scheme has since expanded to include Garrick Street and will now provide an enhanced transport interchange facility, which is fully funded by the additional funding.
- 1.4 The existing Fastrack project in Kent Thameside has delivered an internationally recognised high frequency Bus Rapid Transit scheme and the Kent Thameside LGF package has built upon this success by part funding new vehicles for the service and implementing significant enhancements to interchange facilities across the network.
- 1.5 The Gravesend Bus Hub scheme is one of the enhancements to interchange facilities and will deliver a bus interchange in Gravesend Town Centre to improve the transport connections between rail, bus, cycling and walking, linking with the recently completed Rathmore Road improvement LGF scheme.
- 1.6 Initially the Gravesend Bus Hub scheme was to deliver a new interchange provision in Barrack Row for local buses using the Local Growth Funding only. KCC officers have investigated an enlarged scheme which would include Garrick Street and improvements to the existing Fastrack interchange utilising

underspend from the completed Rathmore Road scheme (using remaining Strategic Transport Infrastructure Programme funding) and a contribution from the Fastrack programme. The enlarged scheme will provide additional benefit and overall cost savings by delivering the two elements at one time through a single procurement exercise.

- 1.7 The building of a transport interchange also represents the final phase of the delivery of the Gravesend Transport Quarter (GTQ) master plan which originates from 2005. Gravesham BC as an active stakeholder are also keen to see the interchange constructed to complete the GTQ.

## 2. Financial Implications

- 2.1 The current estimated cost of the scheme is £4,173m. Total funding is £1.613m of LGF and £1.48m of Strategic Transport Infrastructure Programme (STIP) funding which has been reallocated to this project from the Rathmore Road scheme as it was delivered under budget. A Fastrack contribution for the cost of the canopies within the Bus Hub and the public realm works in Garrick Street has been confirmed at £0.7m together with a Public Transport contribution of £0.15m in addition to the overall funding for the scheme. Gravesham Borough Council have also confirmed a £0.015m contribution.

- 2.2 The funding allocations identified above will cover the basic scheme but will not provide the enhanced public realm element sought by Gravesham Borough Council. However, following discussions and recent Board approval, Ebbsfleet Development Corporation (EDC) will grant fund the additional £0.215m that is required for the full scheme and to install the granite public realm.

<b>Bus Hub - identified funding</b>	
LGF project funding	£1,613,000
STIPS funding	£1,480,000
GBC contribution	£15,000
Public Transport contribution	£150,000
Fastrack allocation	£700,000
EDC grant	£215,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£4,173,000</b>

- 2.3 The scheme cost estimate includes a risk contingency commensurate with the status of the design. A Risk Register has been prepared and will be regularly reviewed in parallel with the scheme delivery.

## 3. Policy Framework

- 3.1 The scheme has a strong fit with the objectives of 'Increasing Opportunities, Improving Outcomes: Kent County Council's Strategic Statement (2015-2020)'.
- 3.2 The scheme particularly supports Strategic Outcome 2 "Kent communities feel the benefits of economic growth by being in work, healthy and enjoying a good quality of life". The improvement scheme aims to reduce congestion, by providing more reliable journey times and improved public transport links and accessibility. This in turn will support Kent business and housing growth and encourage economic activity to benefit the local and wider communities.

## 4. The Report

- 4.1 The Gravesend Bus Hub scheme was made possible with the completion of the Rathmore Road scheme, which implemented a re-routing of the one-way traffic system traffic flows along the new Rathmore Road. This was separately delivered through the LGF programme and creates the road space for the building of the interchange at Barrack Row.
- 4.2 A Cycle Hub at Gravesend railway station is now also open and provides 218 secure cycle parking spaces, which are accessed by individual fobs. There are also an additional 48 drop and go cycle parking spaces as well as lockers and bike maintenance equipment. This improves station access and links to the town centre for cycles. Funding of £181,613 was allocated from LGF with £684,000 of match funding from Southeastern.
- 4.3 Land previously owned by Network Rail to the south of Barrack Row has been acquired in order to provide the space necessary for the 4 bus stops in this location. KCC completed this land purchase in March 2018. The two tenants in place on the land - Hertz Rentals and Saturn Taxis - have both now vacated and the property has been made secure. There is also a small section of land owned by GBC, which has been surrendered for the scheme and the bins removed.
- 4.4 Ground investigation and a geo-environmental assessment has found that when applying current Eurocode 7 principles, the existing slope supporting the land acquired from Network Rail is unstable. As such strengthening or stabilisation works are likely to be required to the slope. These will require agreement with Network Rail, as the relevant landowner.
- 4.5 Further consultation with Network Rail has commenced and a Basic Asset Protection Agreement (BAPA) has been signed to enable discussions to take place regarding works to the NR slope. As the land acquired from NR came without any Right of Support, the slope stability presents a risk of undermining the new infrastructure works and canopies to be installed as part of the bus interchange in Barrack Row. To mitigate the risk, slope stabilisation works will be undertaken and funded from the scheme budget.
- 4.6 Following initial Outline Design work by Amey TESC in 2016-17, Waterman have been commissioned to prepare the detail design for the Gravesend Bus Hub incorporating four new bus stops in Barrack Row, improvements to the Garrick Street Fastrack stops and the removal of the old bus stops in Clive Road. (see Appendix B for General Arrangement drawing).
- 4.7 For the Garrick Street improvements, KCC Public Transport require a high-quality product that enhances the premium bus service offered by Fastrack. Through Waterman, a Kent based architect Kaner Olette has been commissioned to work up canopy designs for Fastrack in Garrick Street. The style and type of canopy will then be used along Barrack Row to give a similar quality feel and look for the local bus stops.
- 4.8 The canopy design has been finalised and the preparation of the planning permission drawings and documents are being progressed. Submission will be to KCC Planning as the works are not covered by permitted development rights and

will come under a Regulation 3 application, with Gravesham Planning being consulted as part of the planning process.

- 4.9 Detail design and contract preparation will follow the planning application as the works are planned to commence on site in early 2021 to ensure that the LGF allocation is spent before the end of the Growth Deal.
- 4.10 Part of the Rathmore Road scheme installed a bus gate in Clive Road, so that only buses could access Barrack Row from Clive Road. This bus gate is currently being used by other motorists wanting to access Darnley Road, which has an impact on the overall traffic flow around Rathmore Road and Darnley Road. Proposals are being considered to incorporate an ANPR camera to enable enforcement to be undertaken.
- 4.11 A paper has been presented to both Gravesham and Dartford JTB's to ratify the use of ANPR or Automatic Number Plate Recognition cameras and associated enforcement for use on dedicated bus lanes and bus gates where abuse is prevalent, and enforcement is required for safe and effective bus operation. The matter is now with the Head of KCC Public Transport to obtain final approval through KCC governance and confirm roll out and installation at key sites in the County.

## **5 Consultation**

- 5.1 The Gravesend Transport Quarter (GTQ) master plan was consulted on by GBC in 2009, where respondents were asked if 'an integrated public transport interchange bringing together buses, trains, taxis and Fastrack was a good idea? 80% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.
- 5.2 In June 2018 KCC held a public event to update residents on the plans to achieve this vision, where the designs for Barrack Row and local bus services were shared. In addition, a meeting with Gravesend Access Group was held to discuss the design in more detail to ensure it met the needs of all users. Feedback on the scheme was largely positive with some points to consider being taken forward within the detailed design. A major concern was minimising disruption, and this led to the decision to deliver both improvements to Barrack Row and Garrick Street as one scheme.
- 5.3 A further information event may be required closer to the construction beginning to communicate the phasing of the works across both Barrack Row, Garrick Street and the use of temporary bus stops in Clive Road. Arriva have been engaged throughout the design process and will assist in publicising the works on their services.

## **6 Next Steps**

- 6.1 The current scheme timescales are as follows:
  - April 2020 - Confirm canopy design and commence final detail design;
  - July 2020 – Submit Planning Application for canopies;
  - August 2020 – Prepare tender documents;
  - October 2020 – Planning Application Determined / Issue Tender;
  - December 2020 – Contract Award;

- February 2020 – Commence Construction;
- November 2021 - Completion

## 7 Equalities Impact Assessment

- 7.1 The design of the schemes is at an advanced stage and the Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) screening opinion has indicated a 'Low' impact but the EqIA will be regularly reviewed in parallel with the scheme final development.

## 8 Conclusions

- 8.1 Working in partnership, Gravesham Borough Council and KCC have developed a project that will deliver a bus interchange in Gravesend Town Centre. The Gravesend Bus Hub is an important project that aims to reduce congestion and improve accessibility through the delivery of a fully integrated sustainable transport network. The scheme will allow the user to transfer seamlessly between modes making sustainable transport a real alternative to the private car. The project is fully funded and will represent the final phase of the delivery of the Gravesend Transport Quarter (GTQ) master plan.

## 9 Recommendation(s)

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## **10 Background Documents**

Appendix A – Proposed Record of Decision

Appendix B – Scheme Drawing

Appendix C - Cabinet Member Decision 15/00011 15 May 2015

Appendix D - Equalities Impact Assessment Screening Report v1 – May 2019

## **11 Contact details**

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## Appendix B – Gravesend Bus Hub General Arrangement



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Appendix C – Cabinet Member Decision 15/00011 15 May 2015



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Appendix D - Equalities Impact Assessment Screening Report v1 – May 2019



Gravesend Bus Hub  
EqIA.pdf