

Bath & North East Somerset Council			
MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Cabinet		
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	10th November 2022	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:	
		E	3403
TITLE:	CRSTS Programme – Funding and Next Steps		
WARD:	All		
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM			
List of attachments to this report: None			

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 In January 2022 Cabinet approved the Bath & North East Somerset (B&NES) element of the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement for submission to Department for Transport (DfT). In April 2022 the DfT approved the West of England Combined Authority's (CA) programme and confirmed the CA's five-year CRSTS allocation of £540m between 2022/23 and 2026/27, with a delivery deadline of March 2027.
- 1.2 The CRSTS programme is a significant uplift in capital funding relative to current levels and presents an unprecedented opportunity for the region to drive growth, decarbonisation and productivity. The scale of the CRSTS programme will require a step-up in delivery capacity across the region.
- 1.3 This report requests agreement to accept the CRSTS programme of investment comprising a combination of grant and assignment funding to develop business cases for the schemes, and grant funding for delivery.
- 1.4 This report summarises key items of the proposed spend, funding approval mechanisms and the key deliverables and outputs anticipated.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to;

2.1 Proposal 1

Delegate approval to the Directors of Sustainable Communities and Place Management, in consultation with the S151 Officer, to accept CRSTS grant funding from the Combined Authority for schemes led by B&NES, currently the Liveable Neighbourhoods Programme and the Maintenance Challenge Fund. As capacity increases within B&NES this may also include: Somer Valley Links to Bristol and Bath; Bath City Centre Sustainable Transport Corridor; and Bath Sustainable Walking and Cycling Links.

These funds will be spent over a four-year period (22/23 - 26/27), and progress through the documented approvals process with CA and B&NES. These grant awards, along with the funding local match requirement of 20%, will be approved into the B&NES Capital Programme and revenue budget.

2.2 Proposal 2

To note that for schemes which remain led by the CA B&NES officer time will be recharged to the CA. This will be undertaken through a process of quarterly recharges.

3 THE REPORT

3.1 The CRSTS programme is central to achieving the aims of B&NES in tackling the declared Climate Emergency, delivering carbon neutrality by 2030. This step change in funding is necessary to tackle the significant impact of transport on our natural and built environments, where reductions in emissions have typically been modest compared with those of other sectors. The programme aims to:

- *drive growth and productivity through infrastructure investment,*
- *level-up services towards the standards of the best; and*
- *decarbonise transport, especially promoting modal shift from cars to public transport, walking, wheeling, and cycling.*

3.2 For B&NES, the programme will deliver significant public transport infrastructure, improving connectivity across our communities and enabling better and more equitable access to sustainable transport choices. In particular, the Strategic Corridor projects passing through rural communities will offer improved access to sustainable travel options.

3.3 Of the 25 CRSTS schemes identified across the Combined Authority area, six are within the B&NES Unitary Authority (UA) area, creating a programme of spend in the region of £138m, comprising around £120m of grant funding.

3.4 The six schemes within B&NES are shown below in Table 1;

Theme	Scheme and description
Strategic Corridor	<p>Bristol to Bath Sustainable Transport Corridor – Keynsham to Bath</p> <p>There is no bus priority at present along this 12.5km route that connects Bath to its largest town, Keynsham. Therefore, improving the public transport offer along this section of the A4 is a priority. Walking and cycling infrastructure along the route will also be significantly improved.</p> <p>Bristol to Bath Sustainable Transport Corridor – Transport Hub</p> <p>The existing Park and Ride at Emery Road is near to capacity. Relocation to the A4/A4174 (ring road) junction would not only resolve the capacity issue but would also reduce the amount of travel between the ring road and the existing park and ride. This would reduce air quality issues and trip generation. There is a strong business case as the existing site is owned by Bristol City Council.</p>
	<p>Somer Valley Links to Bristol and Bath</p> <p>This scheme is focused on improving sustainable transport links from the Somer Valley to Bristol and Bath, principally via the A37, A362 and A367 corridors. The communities along and served by these corridors are locked-in to car dominance due to poor provision of Public Transport infrastructure, reliability, and low quality and discontinuous walking, wheeling and cycling provision.</p> <p>This scheme is a package of measures aimed at targeted improvements to infrastructure to ensure that sustainable travel is a genuine first choice for travel to/from communities in the Somer Valley. Interventions proposed include better bus priority measures (such as bus lanes and bus gates), creation of transport hubs in communities along the corridor to promote sustainable interchange, and provision of new cycling infrastructure designed to LTN1/20 standards including a mix of fully segregated and shared use facilities to connect rural communities.</p>
	<p>Bath City Centre Sustainable Transport Corridor</p> <p>Improving the appeal and effectiveness of the public transport offer in Bath City Centre, this project includes improvements around the Bus Station and upgrading cross-city cycling and walking infrastructure. This will deliver significant multi-modal transport benefits across the city.</p>
Maintenance	<p>Maintenance Challenge Fund</p> <p>Localised safety and highway management improvements at locations which are outside the main proposals in the CRSTS submission. This portion of funding will allow for any safety or traffic management issues which arise to be addressed in a timely fashion.</p>
Walking and Cycling	<p>Bath Sustainable Walking and Cycling Links</p> <p>Investment in walking and cycling facilities across Bath to</p>

Theme	Scheme and description
	improve the attractiveness of active travel, including new modes. The facilities include increased provision of cycle parking spaces and off-road and segregated walking and cycling routes.
	<p>Liveable Neighbourhoods</p> <p>This scheme is focused on the delivery of the Liveable Neighbourhood Strategy and policy across B&NES. The project will engage with residents and businesses through the 'co-design' process to understand the barriers to walking, cycling, public transport and wider 'liveability'.</p>

- 3.5 B&NES currently has leadership responsibility for the delivery of the Liveable Neighbourhoods scheme and the Maintenance Challenge fund.
- 3.6 As B&NES recruits the required staffing levels to enable delivery, it is anticipated that B&NES will take leadership responsibility for the following projects: Somer Valley Links to Bristol and Bath, Bath City Centre Sustainable Transport Corridor, Bath Sustainable Walking and Cycling Links.
- 3.7 Irrespective of the ultimate lead authority, B&NES officers are fully engaged with each of the schemes with material involvement in their development and project-level decisions that are being taken.
- 3.8 The Memorandum of Understanding between the Unitary Authorities and the Combined Authority stipulates that:
- 'Success is a collective responsibility. This will be enabled by working collaboratively across the region, harnessing, and developing existing as well as future capabilities. As with any relationship, this will be built on trust, mutual support, collaboration, and respect between all parties.'*
- 3.9 B&NES members will be engaged throughout the process at key gateway points. B&NES remains the Highway Authority and has ultimate responsibility for determining the schemes progressed on its network which includes assurance across the lifecycle of the project.

4 CRSTS DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

- 4.1 Schemes will be developed through a process of Outline Business Cases (OBC) and Full Business Cases (FBC). A single CRSTS-wide Strategic Outline Case (SOC) was produced by the Combined Authority and approved by the DfT as part of the funding settlement: this SOC underpins the CRSTS Programme.
- 4.2 In some cases, where interventions allow for early delivery, schemes are already sufficiently scoped and there is robust evidence of previous consultation, it will be possible to move direct to FBC – without producing an OBC – with agreement from the CA. This will generally be permissible for low value, low risk, repeatable works. This offers an opportunity to lock-in benefits and behaviour change early, driving future benefits across the programme.

4.3 Before Business Cases (both OBC and FBC) can be submitted to the Joint Committee for approval, the WECA Grant Assurance process comprising a review by the CA Investment Team and independent review (Consultant support) must be satisfied, with the business case demonstrating that the project meets the CRSTS Strategic Narrative and demonstrates Value for Money as per the transport appraisal process.

4.4 Two programmes, the Liveable Neighbourhoods programme, and the Maintenance Challenge Fund, are subject to Directors of Infrastructure sign off, following the 1st July 2022 Combined Authority approval of the following delegations:

- *delegate the responsibility for the two maintenance challenge fund (£32m) and non-highway maintenance fund (£1m) to the Director of Infrastructure of the Combined Authority in consultation with the other Directors of Infrastructure.*
- *business case approvals for those projects within the CRSTS programme that are £6m and below to be delegated to the Director of Infrastructure of the Combined Authority in consultation with the other Directors of Infrastructure.*

4.5 Funding will be released for these projects through a Grant Offer Letter which forms the agreement on the scope of work, outputs and assumed outcomes, alongside delivery responsibilities, milestones and risk management processes.

5 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

5.1 The proposed developments to be supported by this project funding are situated within the extent of the highway and as such falls within the responsibility of B&NES Council.

5.2 Planning, listed building and highways consents may all be required to deliver the range of projects proposed, and technical pre-planning and design work will be supported by the grant funding.

5.3 Consideration of B&NES duties under the Equality Act 2010 is central to the development of the CRSTS programme of investment. Accessibility and equalities impact assessments will inform the detailed design stage.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

6.1 The CRSTS schemes within the B&NES Unitary Authority (UA) area and the share of region-wide and maintenance elements, creates a programme of spend in the region of £138m, comprising around £120m of grant funding. The programmes and their costs- (£m, nominal) are indicated below:

Scheme	Value (£m)		
	Total	CA contribution	Local contribution
Bristol to Bath Sustainable Transport Corridor – Keynsham to Bath/Transport Hub	81.71	71.48	10.23

Somer Valley Links to Bristol and Bath	19.00	15.87	3.13
Bath City Centre Sustainable Transport Corridor	9.59	8.01	1.58
Bath Sustainable Walking and Cycling Links	5.00	4.17	0.83
Liveable Neighbourhoods	6.00	5.00	1.00
Maintenance Challenge Fund	8.00	8.00	-
Non-Highways Maintenance	0.33	0.33	-
Other (region-wide) CRSTS	8.07	7.63	0.44

6.2 Given the size and complexity of the programme B&NES will need to build capacity and capability within the existing staffing structures to enable the delivery. As such a recruitment campaign will shortly be underway, funded through the CRSTS programme, to recruit the required members of staff.

6.3 For schemes which are currently led by the CA, B&NES officer time will be recharged to the CA. For those schemes where B&NES is the lead authority, the CRSTS allocations will be used to fund the required staffing.

6.4 While recruitment is underway, the programme will be supported by the CA's framework consultants. It should be noted that the CA framework will expire in December 2023, part way through the CRSTS Programme. Discussions are ongoing with CA over early engagement for the replacement framework.

7 RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 Individual schemes will follow appropriate risk management processes to design and deliver high quality transport investment. A programme level risk assessment will also be undertaken.

8 EQUALITIES

8.1 An Equality and Diversity Assessment & Plan will be submitted alongside each of the Outline/Full Business Cases developed for the CRSTS Programme.

8.2 The project inception and subsequent design and consultation stages will consider equalities impacts at each stage, as an integral part of the design process.

9 CLIMATE CHANGE

9.1 B&NES Council has declared both a Climate and Ecological Emergency and is looking to provide leadership to enable carbon neutral B&NES by 2030 and enable greater citizen engagement.

9.2 Transport currently accounts for 29% of carbon emissions in the B&NES area. Ensuring the transport network can enable residents to shift to more sustainable modes and that sustainable transport is the first choice of travel in all cases is an essential part of the Journey to Net Zero strategy.

9.3 In delivery of the CRSTS projects, the schemes will need to demonstrate a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) of at least +10% in accordance with national guidance. Where opportunities exist to go beyond this, these will be explored and seized. There may be opportunities to link in with Green Infrastructure delivery, if sufficient synergies exist in the project corridors.

10 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

10.1 There is an option to decline the grant and not progress with the CRSTS programme; however, this would present a significant missed opportunity to deliver a step change in the sustainable transport offer within B&NES, essential for the delivery of a key component of the Net Zero commitment.

10.2 Rather than a programme level approval for the CRSTS schemes, it would be possible to return to Cabinet with each of the business cases to seek individual project level approvals. The programme is, however, constrained in terms of its budget and timescales for delivery and this approach would risk delays to implementation. The proposed delegated decision making to the Director for Sustainable Communities and Place Management in conjunction with the S151 Officer and the lead portfolio holders enables rigorous oversight while ensuring streamlined decision making.

10.3 Alternative means by which the objectives of the fund, and the B&NES' commitments to achieve net zero by 2030 will be rigorously assessed through the Outline and Full Business Cases for each scheme, and considered through the B&NES and the CA processes to ensure that the most effective schemes are progressed.

11 CONSULTATION

11.1 The development and design of individual transport schemes funded through the CRSTS will be developed following consultation with residents, businesses and the general public, incorporating learning from the Liveable Neighbourhoods programme.

Contact person	Pam Turton – Head of Transport Strategy
Background papers	May 5th 2022 Cabinet Report: Journey to Net Zero: Reducing the Environmental impact of transport in Bath E3358 January 27th 2022 Cabinet Report: City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement E3335
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