

Single Member Cabinet Decision

**Executive
Forward Plan
Reference**

E3519

Somer Valley Links strategic corridor project

Decision maker/s	Cllr Sarah Warren, Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency and Sustainable Travel
The Issue	<p>Somer Valley Links (SVL) is a strategic corridor project within the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) programme, funded by the Department for Transport (DfT) and led by the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority (the CA).</p> <p>The SVL project aims to improve travel between Midsomer Norton, Radstock, Westfield and Bath via the A367 and Bristol via the A37; and the A362 link road between them, through better bus infrastructure and enabling more walking and cycling.</p> <p>It has been led to this point by the CA in partnership with the Council which is now to take the lead on management and delivery following the approval of the Outline Business Case (OBC) at the CA Committee meeting on 26 January 2024.</p> <p>The next stage is the Full Business Case (FBC), final Preliminary and Detailed Designs. As part of the governance within Bath & North East Somerset Council (B&NES), there is a requirement for the grant from the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) to be formally accepted by the Council.</p>
Decision Date	8 May 2024
The decision	<p>The Cabinet Member agrees that:</p> <p>Approval is delegated to the Executive Director of Sustainable Communities, in consultation with the s151 Officer, to formally accept grants from the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority relating to this scheme.</p> <p>Capital budget of £1.744m is approved to develop the Full Business Case (FBC), with final Preliminary and Detailed designs for the scheme; this comprises £1.414m CRSTS grant and £330k match funding from developer contributions.</p>
Rationale for decision	<p>A Climate Emergency was declared in March 2019 along with an Ecological Emergency in July 2019. In response to this B&NES has pledged to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. Active Travel (walking, wheeling and cycling) routes and enabling better travel choices for residents, are part of a package of measures to mitigate the climate crisis through the adoption of more sustainable and</p>

	<p>healthy transport options.</p> <p>The project will provide people with greater transport choice, providing those able to use alternative modes to the car with genuine choice in how they travel, making it easier and safer to use low carbon modes. This will help B&NES to decarbonise its transport system, promoting the move away from using cars to improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions along the corridor, with public health, regeneration and economic benefits.</p> <p>The proposed interventions include mobility hubs at key locations along the A37, A362, and A367 corridors where demand to switch between modes is likely to be high; walking, wheeling, and cycling route improvements; and bus stops, bus lanes and junction improvements. These will be developed through the FBC stage including final preliminary and detailed designs, full delivery & construction costings and value for money assessment, as well as further public consultation as designs are refined.</p>
Financial and budget implications	<p>Total funding of £1.414m has been formally offered by CRSTS grant to the Council by the West of England CA. This is supplemented by an additional £330k for project delivery, PMO and procurement support from B&NES match funding.</p> <p>There is a further approved commitment of £15.2m within the B&NES allocation of the CRSTS grant for delivery/construction, of which £2.75m will be met as part of our B&NES local match contribution. Delivery & Construction cost estimates and grant funding allocation will be an output of the FBC (scheduled for completion & approval by mid-2025). The remaining grant amount will be drawn down following the approval of the FBC.</p>
Issues considered	<p>Social Inclusion; Customer Focus; Sustainability; Human Resources; Property; Young People; Equality (age, race, disability, religion/belief, gender, sexual orientation); Human Rights; Corporate; Health & Safety; Impact on Staff; Other Legal Considerations</p>
Consultation undertaken	<p>Ward Councillors; Cabinet colleagues; Parish Council; Town Council; Other B&NES Services; Service Users; Local Residents; Community Interest Groups; Youth Council; Stakeholders/Partners; Other Public Sector Bodies; Section 151 Finance Officer; Monitoring Officer</p>
How consultation was carried out	<p>A period of public engagement on concept proposals in summer 2023 included a range of information available via dedicated web-pages, with opportunities to comment via in-person events and an online questionnaire. A full engagement report was compiled and is available to read here: https://haveyoursaywest.co.uk/index.php?contentid=79. The feedback from this public consultation has been taken through into the next stage for consideration in updating designs of specific interventions and the overall scope.</p>
Other options considered	<p>The Combined Authority to continue to lead the project, with B&NES officer time limited to advisory role and Highways approval only.</p>

	<p>The Council is the Highway Authority so the delivery of highway interventions would be more complex in that delivery model. Local community engagement will be enhanced through increased cross-service liaison and interfaces with other council projects.</p> <p>To not proceed with the project beyond OBC stage and return CRSTS grant funds to the Combined Authority for distribution across other projects within the sub-region, or to be returned to central government. This is a transformational opportunity for the corridors in question, not proceeding would prevent this scale of investment from taking place.</p>
Declaration of interest by Cabinet Member(s) for decision:	None
Any conflict of interest declared by anyone who is consulted by a Member taking the decision:	N/A

Name and Signature of Decision Maker/s	Cllr Sarah Warren
Date of Signature	8 th May 2024

Subject to Call-in until 5 Working days have elapsed following publication of the decision