

Single Member Cabinet Decision

**Executive  
Forward Plan  
Reference**

**E3525**

## Scholars Way Active Travel project

<b>Decision maker/s</b>	<p><b>Cllr Sarah Warren, Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency and Sustainable Travel</b></p> <p><b>Cllr Mark Elliott, Cabinet Member for Resources</b></p>
<b>The Issue</b>	<p>The Scholars Way Active Travel project has been developed over recent years to enable healthier, safer and greener ways to travel, connecting residential areas to educational establishments across the south of Bath such as the University of Bath.</p> <p>The project has benefited from Council and West of England Combined Authority (the CA) grant funding for concept design and development to approval of an Outline Business Case (OBC) in spring 2023, followed by the current Full Business Case (FBC) stage.</p> <p>A programme to deliver the Western section was proposed within a £2m allocation, funded by revenue held in the Clean Air Zone (CAZ) reinvestment reserve.</p> <p>As part of the governance within Bath &amp; North East Somerset Council, there is a requirement for the capital funding to be fully approved, following inclusion as provisional in the Council budget (February 2024).</p>
<b>Decision Date</b>	3rd October 2024
<b>The decision</b>	<p>The Cabinet Members agree to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1 Approve capital budget of £2m, fully funded by the CAZ reinvestment reserve, for the Western section of Scholars Way (Combe Down village to Frome Road)</li><li>2 Note the remaining interventions in the Eastern section are proposed to progress through Final Business Case (FBC) stage to be submitted to WECA, in order to establish the evidence base for securing funding for delivery and construction. Should a decision be taken for the CRSTS to fund construction of the Eastern section, agreement has been reached with the West of England Combined Authority that the £2m investment in the Western Section will be counted as BANES local match to that investment.</li><li>3 Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Sustainable Communities, in consultation with the s151 Officer, to formally accept any future grants from the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority or other funding body, relating to this scheme.</li></ol>

	<p>4 Note the delivery of one crossing (Bathwick Hill, at Oakley/Copseland) and the progression of necessary approvals and final design for another (at Ralph Allen School) in the Eastern Section through the Highways programme for 2024/25.</p>
<p><b>Rationale for decision</b></p>	<p>The Western section being brought forward with this funding, comprises a new walking, wheeling and cycling route from Combe Road to St Martins Garden Primary School, via Mulberry Park, Foxhill and Entry Hill, including off-road sections and improved pedestrian and cycle crossings.</p> <p>It is a significant section to be delivered from the Council's emerging Active Travel Masterplan.</p> <p>The Western section with the interventions detailed in the full report will deliver benefits to the communities and residential areas through which it passes. This will be further enhanced as and when the Eastern section is delivered in future.</p> <p>The outcomes that the scheme is expected to deliver are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Increased walking and cycling</li> <li>○ Increased provision of active travel routes to key locations and services</li> <li>○ Improved access to employment, training and education</li> <li>○ Improved journey quality for active travel trips</li> <li>○ Improved ease of crossing the road</li> <li>○ Reduced car use</li> <li>○ Connection towards Somer Valley Links, the strategic City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement corridor project through Odd Down</li> <li>○ Future connections to housing developments in the area</li> <li>○ Facilitating access to the Entry Hill Green Space project (former golf course)</li> <li>○ Interfaces with the Entry Hill Liveable Neighbourhoods proposals</li> </ul>
<p><b>Financial and budget implications</b></p>	<p>Funding of £2m has been allocated from the CAZ reinvestment reserve for delivery of this scheme. The commitment to spending from the reserve gained the required approval through Transport members and the CAZ portfolio holder and is therefore ready to progress following this decision.</p> <p>The CAZ reserve is made up of revenue from daily charge and penalty charge payments from use of higher polluting vehicles within the zone since its launch in March 2021. Any revenue over the operating costs of the scheme is held in reserve for future use to support sustainable transport projects and initiatives that promote air quality improvements across the district</p> <p>This project to date has been part-funded by WECA and CRSTS for the FBC and detailed design stage. Grant allocation was not identified for the delivery/construction of the route, following the OBC approval in 2023.</p> <p>Funding of £2m from the CAZ reserve is allocated to fund the</p>

	<p>Western section of the scheme only. No obligation arises to deliver the rest of the scheme if funding is not secured.</p> <p>Funding options to complete the outstanding Eastern section of the route will be brought forward for consideration as and when CRSTS resources or other government grants are identified and made available for this scheme. The Council has submitted the Eastern section for consideration against CRSTS overprogramming (i.e. additional projects that could be delivered within the CRSTS funding window if funds allow).</p>
<b>Issues considered</b>	Social Inclusion; Customer Focus; Sustainability; Young People; Equality (age, race, disability, religion/belief, gender, sexual orientation); Human Rights; Corporate; Health & Safety; Other Legal Considerations
<b>Consultation undertaken</b>	Ward Councillors; Cabinet colleagues; Other B&NES Services; Service Users; Local Residents; Community Interest Groups; Stakeholders; Section 151 Finance Officer; Chief Executive; Executive Director for Sustainable Communities; Monitoring Officer
<b>How consultation was carried out</b>	Public consultation was carried out during summer 2022. Updates have been provided to cabinet members, ward councillors and stakeholders as the detailed design has progressed. Project delivery governance has been followed to gain necessary internal approvals.
<b>Other options considered</b>	<p>The option to keep seeking a source of funding for the whole proposed route was considered high risk to deliver within the CRSTS grant timescale of March 2027.</p> <p>The option to delay until full funding is secured carries risks of the designs becoming out of date, with further design work and public consultation needed; inability to use section 106 funding from the Mulberry Park development for the section on Bradford Road; and inflation increases on all construction costs.</p> <p>The option for the Council to progress the whole scheme with capital budget allocations through the Capital programme budget-setting process was considered unaffordable and unviable amongst other Council priorities.</p>
<b>Declaration of interest by Cabinet Member(s) for decision:</b>	N/A
<b>Any conflict of interest declared by anyone who is consulted by a Member taking the decision:</b>	N/A

<b>Name and Signature of Decision Maker/s</b>	Councillor Sarah Warren Deputy Council Leader, Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency and Sustainable Travel Bath and North East Somerset Council  Councillor Mark Elliott Cabinet Member for Resources Bath and North East Somerset Council
<b>Date of Signature</b>	3 October 2024
<b>Subject to Call-in until 5 Working days have elapsed following publication of the decision</b>	