

## Bath & North East Somerset Council

DECISION MAKER:	<b>Cllr Sarah Warren, Cabinet Member for Climate and Sustainable Travel</b>	
DECISION DATE:	<b>Not before 26 October 2024</b>	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		<b>E 3568</b>
TITLE:	<b>CRSTS Bath City Centre Phase 1: Handover of project responsibility and associated grant funding from the West of England Combined Authority to the council</b>	
WARD:	Kingsmead	
<b>AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>		
<b>List of attachments to this report:</b> N/A		

### 1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 The City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement is a package of funding provided by the Department for Transport and administered in the south west by the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority (the Combined Authority). Bath & North East Somerset Council (the council) have identified a number of infrastructure improvement projects eligible for this funding, including the Bath City Centre Sustainable Transport Corridor.
- 1.2 Phase 1 of this project aims to introduce and rationalise walking and cycling infrastructure across the city centre, from Green Park Road in the west to Pulteney Bridge in the east. To date, this has been managed by the Combined Authority as the responsible body, with the council involved as a key consultee.

### 2 RECOMMENDATION

**The Cabinet Member is asked to;**

- 2.1 Note the intention for the council to assume the position of responsible body for Phase 1 of the Bath City Centre project, to be delivered according to milestones agreed with the Combined Authority.
- 2.2 Delegate approval to the Executive Director of Sustainable Communities, in consultation with the S151 Officer, to accept the Grant Offer Letter (GOL) from the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority when it is provided.
- 2.3 Approve capital budget of £455k to develop the Full Business Case (FBC), final Preliminary and Detailed Designs for the scheme. This is entirely funded by CRSTS grant.

2.4 Note the intention for further approval of grant funding acceptance to be sought at an appropriate time, following Combined Authority approval of the Full Business Case, for delivery of the works associated with the Bath City Centre Phase 1 project.

### **3 THE REPORT**

3.1 The Bath City Centre project is defined as a Strategic Transport Corridor (STC) under the West of England Combined Authority's CRSTS programme, which focuses on improvements to strategic, inter-urban movements across the region.

3.2 The scheme is currently managed in two parts. Phase 1 refers to walking and cycling infrastructure improvements in the city centre, from Green Park Road in the west, to Pulteney Bridge in the east, encouraging safe and active travel. Phase 2 refers to proposed public transport improvements, with intended benefits to bus journey times.

3.3 The objectives of Phase 1 include:

- a) Improve connectivity for walking, wheeling and cycling across the city centre and to the city's bus and rail stations, creating continuous walking and cycling links that connect the wider CRSTS programme and enhance existing provision
- b) Deliver priority infrastructure in Bath City Centre for pedestrians, cyclists and other non-motorised users
- c) Improve safety within the city centre, particularly for vulnerable users, by enhancing accessibility and reducing the potential for conflict between walking/wheeling, cycling, Public Transport, and private vehicles
- d) Positively contribute to a reduction in transport-related emissions, and an improvement in air quality within the city centre, helping Bath to achieve net-zero carbon by 2030

3.4 To date, the project has been managed by the Combined Authority, with the council assuming the role of key stakeholder and consultee. This has involved input as the Highway Authority as well as engagement with key teams across the council, including regeneration, town centre management, waste management and planning and heritage. A public consultation on both phases was held at the end of 2023 – for further information, see Section 10 of this report. Thus far, the Combined Authority has engaged consultants for design and business case work themselves, acting as commercial client.

3.5 Work on Phase 1 of the project has progressed, with preliminary design work approaching completion subject to technical assurance from the Highway Authority. The scheme has been identified by the Combined Authority as a Low Risk Traffic Scheme (LRTS) and therefore is due to proceed directly to Full Business Case. Further work is required on Phase 2, for which an Outline Business Case is currently due to be developed.

3.6 This report refers to the handover for Phase 1 only. Phase 2 will remain the responsibility of the Combined Authority and any handover arrangements will be subject to separate governance arrangements at a later date.

- 3.7 The handover of Phase 1 will see the council become the responsible body for these elements of the project, including the establishment of new contracts with consultants and other suppliers, as well as directly managing budget, programme and risk.
- 3.8 Project and contract management will become the direct responsibility of the council (see Section 5), acting as commercial client and ensuring direct communication between the design team and the Highway Authority as part of the project team.
- 3.9 Funding required for the council to complete the Phase 1 Full Business Case, including preliminary and detailed design, cost summaries and risk assessment, has been agreed with the Combined Authority. This figure will be up to £455k and will be formalised by the issue of a Grant Offer Letter; further detail behind this amount is included in Section 5 of this report.
- 3.10 The GOL will also include milestones and requirements associated with the handover; these are included in further detail in Section 5 of this report. The GOL is due to be issued on 1 October 2024, at which point responsibility of the project will formally be the council's.

#### **4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 4.1 The delivery and construction element of the scheme – subject to Full Business Case approval and receipt of further grant funding – will be subject to the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) process, where applicable.
- 4.2 The public sector equality duty (as per the Equalities Act 2010) requires equality considerations to be reflected in the design of policies and the delivery of services. For further information, please see Section 7 of this report.

#### **5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)**

- 5.1 The £455k grant funding identified for this element of the scheme has been calculated with input from officers at the CA and the council. This figure will cover the consultancy support required in terms of design and Business Case development, as well as internal staff costs across technical assurance, highways, project and programme management, and other council teams. Costs are also included for surveys to support design, contractor advice and an amount of inflation and contingency.
- 5.2 These figures have been shared and approved via a Project Initiation Document signed off by the council's Capital Strategy Group, including the Section 151 officer.
- 5.3 The grant funding is based upon milestones being achieved as per a schedule agreed with the Combined Authority. These milestones include design completion, FBC approval, construction start and construction completion. Detail behind these milestones has been shared with members and key officers.
- 5.4 The Full Business Case work will include full cost summaries and contractor advice which will inform a detailed cost estimate for the delivery and construction of the scheme. This will then form the basis for further grant funding for a delivery stage, likely to be received in 2025.

## **6 RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 6.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.
- 6.2 A full risk register has been agreed with the Combined Authority as part of the handover documentation, and will be managed by the council going forward. Key risks identified include ensuring the designs are safe and traffic impact is limited, utilities, and ensuring works are completed within the funding window.
- 6.3 Risk will be managed according to the council's risk management processes and procedures, and will include a Quantitative Risk Assessment as part of support from consultants. This will ensure that any contingency allowed for during delivery is calculated as accurately as reasonably practicable.

## **7 EQUALITIES**

- 7.1 Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion impacts are assessed both at a programme level and from the preliminary design stage, as part of the individual scheme design process.
- 7.2 Ahead of inheritance of project responsibility, a full and specific Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been drafted and will be managed by the council, with input from relevant colleagues across the organisation. This will be published online at the following location once adopted  
<https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments>

## **8 CLIMATE CHANGE**

- 8.1 A Climate Emergency was declared in March 2019 along with an Ecological Emergency in July 2019. In response to this, the council 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 healthy transport options.
- 8.2 This 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 to use low carbon modes. This will help the council to decarbonise its transport system, promoting the move away from using cars to improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions along the corridor.

## **9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 9.1 The Combined Authority could continue to lead the project, with council time limited to an advisory role and Highway approval only. However, the council is the Highway Authority so the delivery of highway interventions would be more complex in this delivery model. Local community engagement will be enhanced through increased cross-service liaison and interfaces with other council projects.
- 9.2 To not proceed with the project beyond its current phase, 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. However, this is a

transformational opportunity for the corridors in question and not proceeding would prevent this scale of investment and improvement from taking place.

## 10 CONSULTATION

10.1 Consultation has been undertaken with both ward members and cabinet members, via Transport Members Board.

10.2 Senior officers have been engaged throughout the process, via Bath City Centre Project Board and Transport Steering Group. This has included specific engagement with the S151 officer and the Executive Director of Sustainable Communities with regards to the recommendations in this report and the delegated authority sought within.

10.3 A full engagement exercise was undertaken by the Combined Authority at the end of 2023. This included in-person events, online materials, online drop-in sessions and sessions held at the university and other locations, to gather views on both Phase 1 and 2. Over one thousand responses were received. In terms of Phase 1, the majority felt the proposals would encourage more people to cycle in Bath. The Combined Authority are due to publish the full findings of this report.

10.4 Further consultation with statutory stakeholders is expected prior to delivery as part of any TRO applications.

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<b>Background papers</b>	West of England Combined Authority Decision – June 2024 <a href="https://westofengland-ca.moderngov.co.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=693">https://westofengland-ca.moderngov.co.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=693</a>
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