

Single Member Cabinet Decision

Executive Forward Plan Reference	E3561
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Bath Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Links: Handover of project responsibility and associated grant funding from the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority to the council

Decision maker/s	Cllr Sarah Warren, Cabinet Member for Climate and Sustainable Travel
The Issue	<p>The Bath Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Links (BWWCL) project aims to provide continuous cycle routes, as well as walking and wheeling improvements designed to connect key areas within Bath through a network of dedicated cycle lanes, advisory routes, and improved pedestrian paths.</p> <p>The four proposed routes will create more than 6km of cycling routes across Bath through advisory lanes, dedicated spaces, and quiet routes. It will also provide significant walking and wheeling improvements such as crossings and more convenient and safer options. This will enable more travel choices, healthier places and people, and greater connectivity in and out of the city centre.</p> <p>It is funded through the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS), 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 MCA).</p> <p>To date, the project has been managed by the MCA as the responsible body, with the council involved as a key stakeholder and Highway Authority.</p>
Decision Date	12th December 2024
The decision	<p>The Cabinet Member agrees that:</p> <p>1.1 the council is to assume the position of responsible body for the BWWCL scheme to be delivered according to milestones agreed with the MCA in accordance with the CRSTS programme.</p> <p>1.2 approval is delegated to the Executive Director - Sustainable Communities, in consultation with the S151 Officer, to accept the Grant Offer Letter (GOL) from the MCA when it is provided.</p> <p>1.3 capital budget of £900k is approved to develop the Full Business Case (FBC), including final Preliminary and Detailed Designs for the scheme. This is entirely funded by CRSTS grant.</p> <p>1.4 further approval of grant funding acceptance, is delegated to the Executive Director - Sustainable Communities, in consultation with the S151 Officer, at the time of MCA approval of the FBC, for delivery of the works, scheduled for 2026.</p>
Rationale for	The handover sees the council become the responsible body for

<p>decision</p>	<p>the project and contract management, including the establishment of new contracts with consultants and other suppliers, as well as directly managing budget, programme and risk, and retaining responsibility for reporting to the MCA.</p> <p>Funding required for the council to complete the FBC, including preliminary and detailed design, cost summaries and risk assessment, has been allocated by the MCA as part of its governance of the handover, via a change request. The scheme will be proposed for consideration by the MCA as a Low Risk Traffic Scheme (LRTS).</p> <p>The BWWCL project is categorised as an Active Travel scheme within the CRSTS programme. The scheme has been managed to date by the MCA, which has engaged consultants for design and business case work themselves, acting as commercial client.</p> <p>This has been in collaboration with B&NES as the key stakeholder, which has involved input as the Highway Authority as well as engagement with key teams across the council, including regeneration, planning, heritage, parks, equalities and community engagement, as well as interfaces with other council CRSTS projects such as Liveable Neighbourhoods, Bath City Centre and A4 Bath to Bristol.</p> <p>The objectives of the scheme include more travel choices for everyone. As part of our Corporate Strategy, we want to make walking, wheeling, and cycling safer, more convenient and accessible, while helping to reduce congestion and improve air quality.</p> <p>The scheme is part of our emerging Active Travel Masterplan (ATM), a comprehensive plan that sets out the existing and future network of active travel infrastructure. Feedback on the consultation during the summer is currently being considered and an update is expected in 2024/25. The ATM consultation page can be viewed here: https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/active-travel-masterplan</p>
<p>Financial and budget implications</p>	<p>The £900k grant funding identified for the FBC stage has been estimated with input from officers at the MCA and the council. This figure is proposed to 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.</p> <p>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, scheduled to be confirmed in autumn 2025.</p> <p>Currently the delivery/construction allocation within the CRSTS programme by the MCA has been recognised as having a shortfall to deliver the 4 proposed routes in full within the CRSTS1</p>

	<p>programme window of March 2027.</p> <p>The MCA's decision to approve the handover, included authorising the phasing of the project with Phase 1 fast tracking those elements which can be delivered on time and within the remaining balance of delivery allocation (estimated at £2.9m).</p> <p>It is proposed that the Phase 1 option is to be defined following the current public consultation, whereas Phase 2 (likely to include more complex and higher cost elements) may be paused subject to funding availability.</p>
Issues considered	Social Inclusion; Customer Focus; Sustainability; Human Resources; Property; Young People; Equality (age, race, disability, religion/belief, gender, sexual orientation); Human Rights; Corporate; Health & Safety; Other Legal Considerations
Consultation undertaken	<p>Ward Councillors; Cabinet colleagues; Staff; Other B&NES Services; Service Users; Local Residents; Community Interest Groups; Stakeholders/Partners; Other Public Sector Bodies; Executive Director - Sustainable Communities, Section 151 Finance Officer; Monitoring Officer.</p> <p>Senior officers have been engaged throughout the process, via BWWCL Project Board and Transport Steering Group. This has included specific engagement with the S151 officer and the Executive Director - Sustainable Communities with regards to the decision in this report and the delegated authority sought within.</p>
How consultation was carried out	A public consultation on the 4 proposed routes is currently in progress, accessed via this link: https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/bath-walking-wheeling-and-cycling-links-scheme .
Other options considered	<p>A) 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.</p> <p>B) 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 routes in question and not proceeding would prevent this scale of investment and improvement 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:	None

Name and Signature of Decision Maker	Councillor Sarah Warren Deputy Council Leader, Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency and Sustainable Travel Bath and North East Somerset Council
Date of Signature	12 December 2024

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