

Bath & North East Somerset Council

DECISION MAKER:	Cllr Sarah Warren, Cabinet Member for Climate and Sustainable Travel		
DECISION DATE:	Not before 29 March 2025	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:	
		E	3604
TITLE:	CRSTS Bath City Centre Phase 2: Handover of project responsibility and associated grant funding from the West of England Combined Authority to the council		
WARD:	Kingsmead		
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM			
List of attachments to this report:			
Appendix A – Risk Assessment			
Appendix B – Equalities Impact Assessment			

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 2 of this project aims to improve the experience of passengers using local buses by implementing a series of low cost, high impact measures in the city centre, following suggestions from bus operators and the highways authority team, including, but not limited to, signals optimisation, parking and bus stop enforcement, bus stop improvements and lining improvements. 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 2 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 Note approval of capital budget of £711.96k funded by entirely by CRSTS grant to develop the Full Business Case (FBC), final preliminary and detailed designs for the scheme on acceptance of this Grant Offer Letter
- 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 2 project.
- 2.5 Note the intention for an immediate de-scope of the project to exclude the implementation of any bus gate and the re-allocation of any remaining funding via a subsequent Change Request to the Combined Authority.

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 and passenger experience.
- 3.3 The objectives of Phase 2 include:
 - a) Improve accessibility of Bath city centre by Public Transport through measures such as the prioritisation of bus movement at problem areas for reliability and congestion, re-routeing of buses to more direct routes, and segregation of buses from general traffic. Interventions will deliver journey time benefits and corridor cohesion for CRSTS Strategic Corridor projects where they interface with the city centre, improving reliability, and strengthening the end-to-end impact of the schemes.
 - b) 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 Strategic Transport, 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 This report refers to the handover for Phase 2 only. Initial proposals for Phase 2 included the implantation of a bus gate in the vicinity of Ambury gyratory, as well as smaller scale interventions developed in partnership with local bus operators. Following analysis of traffic modelling undertaken by the Combined Authority, it has been determined that the benefits of a bus gate in this location are limited, and therefore the smaller-scale interventions will be prioritised.

- 3.6 The handover of Phase 2 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.
- 3.7 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.
- 3.8 Funding required for the council to complete the Phase 2 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 £711.96k 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.
- 3.9 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 has been formally issued by the Combined Authority and is awaiting acceptance from the council following this report. At this 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 £711.96k grant funding identified for this element of the scheme has been calculated with input from officers at the Combined Authority 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 The grant funding is based upon milestones being achieved as per a schedule agreed with the Combined Authority. These milestones include design completion, Full Business Case approval, construction start and construction completion. Detail behind these milestones has been shared with members and key officers.
- 5.3 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.
- 5.4 Following the acceptance of this Grant Offer Letter, a Change Request will be submitted to the Combined Authority outlining the re-allocation of funding for the

de-scoped elements of this project to other CRSTS schemes in B&NES. This may include further funding for Phase 1 of this project, or additional funds for the delivery elements of Phase 2.

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. This can be found in Appendix A of this report.
- 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.

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 can be found at Appendix B of this report. 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 support the access to public transport, 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. 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.

Contact person	<p>Yasmin Zanker – Project Manager Yasmin_zanker@bathnes.gov.uk</p> <p>Ryan Duncan – Senior Project Manager Ryan_duncan@bathnes.gov.uk</p>
Background papers	<p>West of England Combined Authority Decision – November 2024 https://westofengland-ca.moderngov.co.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?Id=780</p>
<p>Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format</p>	