

Bath & North East Somerset Council			
MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Cllr Lucy Hodge, Cabinet Member for Sustainable Transport Delivery		
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	On or after 13 December 2025	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE	
		E	3663
TITLE:	Scholars Way – Acceptance of Grant Offer Letter for Construction		
WARD:	Widcombe & Lyncombe, Combe Down, Odd Down		
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM			
List of attachments to this report:			
None			

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 The Scholars Way project forms part of the City Regional Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) Programme, a package of funding provided by the Department for Transport and administered by the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority.
- 1.2 This project aims to provide a series of active travel improvements to be delivered by B&NES in the 2022-2027 funding period. The route comprises of an eastern and western section, proposing to link the University of Bath, Combe Down & St Martins School, via Mulberry Park
- 1.3 The Scholars Way 'Final Business Case' was approved by the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) on 15 August 2025. B&NES have funding approved to deliver the Western section of the route and are now ready to progress with the Eastern section of the project.
- 1.4 See approved Full Business Case here: <https://westofengland-ca.moderngov.co.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=1072>

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet Member is asked to;

- 2.1 Accept the funding provided by the MCA, and approve the capital budget of £2.984m, fully funded from CRSTS grant, to proceed with delivery of the Eastern section of the scheme.

- 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 received.

3 THE REPORT

- 3.1 Scholars Way is a CRSTS project designed to connect educational establishments and residential areas across the south of the city and make walking, wheeling and cycling an alternative mode of transport. The route comprises of an eastern and western section, proposing to link the University of Bath, Combe Down & St Martins School, via Mulberry Park
- 3.2 The project will provide a healthier, safer and greener route for people in the south of Bath. The proposed western section of the project would see a new cycling and walking route from Combe Road to St Martins Garden Primary School, via Mulberry Park, featuring off-road sections and improved pedestrian and cycle crossings.
- 3.3 The route is part of B&NES' [Active Travel Masterplan](#), a comprehensive plan that sets out the existing and future network of active travel infrastructure. Consultation took place during summer 2024 and aims to enable walking, cycling, and other forms of active travel, ensuring safer, healthier, and more accessible transportation options for everyone. It will support all types of journeys, including commuting, education, leisure, and tourism.
- 3.4 Objectives achieved as part of the project include:
- (1) Deliver priority infrastructure in B&NES for pedestrians, cyclists and other non-motorised users
 - (2) Improve safety within the south of the city, particularly for vulnerable users, by enhancing accessibility and reducing the potential for conflict between walking, wheeling, cycling, public transport, and private vehicles
 - (3) 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

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 The eastern section of the project is not subject to a statutory consultation given Rainbow Woods is on National Trust property. The whole project undertook a consultation exercise in summer 2022.
- 4.2 An adjacent crossing at Copseland was subject to statutory Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) consultation for six weeks in July 2025. 3 objections were received and design changes made where appropriate. The order sign off is progressing through the Council's governance process. Oakley will go to TRO in Jan/Feb 2026.
- 4.3 Further TRO statutory consultation has previously been undertaken on the 'western' section of the route in July/August 2025.
- 4.4 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 This report seeks approval of £2.984m for construction delivery of the Eastern section of Scholars Way, all fully funded by CRSTS grant.
- 5.2 Total scheme value for the Scholars Way scheme is £6.1m, made up of £750k for feasibility to FBC, £2.37m for construction delivery of the Western section and £2.984m for construction delivery of the Eastern section.
- 5.3 Total scheme funding of £6.1m comprises:
- a) £3.493m CRSTS funding
 - b) £2.090 BANES match funding
 - c) £0.5m other WECA grant (TCF / IF)
- 5.4 The grant funding identified for this stage of the project has been calculated with input from officers at the MCA and B&NES. This figure will cover internal staff costs, consultancy support, construction costs, and contingency.
- 5.5 This report now seeks approval to proceed with the capital project and accept the Grant Offer Letter, once received from WECA.

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 MCA as part of the FBC submission and will be managed by B&NES throughout construction. Key risks identified include ensuring traffic impact is limited, utilities impacts and possible diversions, 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 Cost Risk Assessment (QCRA) 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 A EQIA is deemed not to be necessary for this decision.
- 7.2 Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion impacts are assessed both at a programme level and as part of the individual scheme. A full and specific Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been published in June 2025 (Scholars Way East and West), with input from relevant colleagues across the organisation. Please see here: <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, and therefore actively contributes towards B&NES targets for carbon neutrality by 2030.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 A single member is required to accept the construction funding and prepare the scheme for construction. The alternative option is not to proceed. However, with allocated funding and a political commitment to deliver the scheme, it is agreed that this scheme should be progressed within the current timeframes outlined by the MCA for delivery.

10 CONSULTATION

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

10.2 Senior officers have been engaged throughout the process, via Scholars Way Project Board, CRSTS Programme Board, Transport Steering Group, and Capital Strategy 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 public consultation exercise was undertaken in July-August 2022. This included in-person events and online materials, to gather views on the scheme. 59% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the concept of the scheme. The MCA published the consultation report in full, please see here: https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/BNES-Walking-and-Cycle-Scheme-Consultation-Feedback-Report.1.1-008_Redacted.pdf

10.4 This report has been shared with B&NES Cllr Lucy Hodge, Executive Director Sophie Broadfield, S151 Jeff Wring / Gary Adams, and Monitoring Officer Michael Hewitt.

Contact person	Paul Tucker, CRSTS Programme Delivery Manager, Kate Clements, CRSTS Finance Lead
Background papers	None
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	