

Agenda Item 4: KCC Funding Offer

Following our discussion and decision at the Emergency Committee Meeting of 28 May to support the Kent County Council Active Travel team (KCC AT) proposal that a feasibility study is run in relation to active travel improvements in the Bysing Wood/ West Faversham area, KCC AT have come back to Swale Borough Council (SBC) to say that they are making £35k funding available.

The previous feasibility study KCC AT funded was for the North South Walking Route and was initially managed by the Active Travel Officer at SBC. The Active Travel Committee decided to contribute £10k towards project costs and the final stage of the project was managed by the Town Council directly, with the Town Clerk leading. The contractor was WPP, who were a KCC approved contractor.

On this occasion SBC seem keen to hand over project management responsibilities to the Town Council from the beginning of the project and happy for us to decide whether we want to use the Kent Highways commissioning framework or not. In responding initially we have said that we want to run the project but would like a bit more time before we decide whether to commit to using the KCC framework or to do the project commissioning ourselves.

Key tasks at this stage would appear to be:

1. Clarifying the detail of the offer. We need to be clear on what role SBC want to play; what the timescales for spending the funding would be; whether we are able to spend project funding on management and administration costs; what outcome expectations Kent Highways has; and what the scope of the work that we can commission is, as a minimum.
2. Developing a specification for what we want to commission. This will require some detailed work. The project idea has come from Kent Highways as the area has high levels of deprivation and exclusion and at the extraordinary meeting the committee were keen to ensure that some project activity could focus on obvious active travel issues in the West Faversham area, for example pedestrian safety on Ospringe Street.

A way forward here could be for the Chair and Vice Chair to work with the Office Manager and the Town Clerk to develop a proposal for how the project is commissioned and managed and a specification, drawing on the local knowledge of ward councillors and the technical and project management expertise of committee members. This could come back to the September meeting providing timescales allow.