



Committee Report

PURPOSE: Final Decision Report

KEY OR NON-KEY DECISION: Key decision over £500k

COMMITTEE: Transport and Connectivity Committee

DATE: 12 September 2024

TITLE: Bristol Regional Cycling Hub, Lawrence Weston

Ward(s): Avonmouth and Lawrence Weston

Officer presenting the report: Adam Crowther **Job title:** Head of City Transport

Committee Chair: Cllr Ed Plowden

Executive Director lead:

Proposal origin:

Purpose of Report:

To apprise the Committee of the proposed Bristol Regional Cycling Hub (BRCH) in Lawrence Weston and seek its approval for expenditure to develop the business case and submit a full planning application. To ensure efficient and effective delivery of this project before the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) spending deadline of March 2027, funding needs to be allocated and approved in a timely manner.

Strategic Context

1. The Bristol Family Cycling Centre, which has been in existence since 2010, is currently operating from a temporary location at the Old Whitchurch Athletics Track in Bamfield. The proposed BRCH will replace the existing cycling centre in Bamfield. The BRCH is a strategic and transformative initiative by Bristol City Council (BCC) to create a regional inclusive cycling infrastructure at a permanent site within the Henacre Open Space in Lawrence Weston, northwest Bristol.
2. The new facility in Lawrence Weston will expand current operational capabilities at the temporary cycling centre by providing cycle training to people of all ages and abilities socioeconomic backgrounds, and across a much wider geographic area. The proposed facility will build on current provision of specialist cycles for people with all abilities. The flagship centre will help boost levels of cycling and physical activity in Bristol and across the region by delivering leisure activities alongside an extensive programme of sporting activities and new pathways into cycling.
3. Delivery of the BRCH is contingent on developing a business case and securing full planning permission. In this regard, a full planning application will be submitted for determination by BCC - as a Regulation 3 Planning Application to ensure planning certainty. A Regulation 3 Planning Application is a type of full planning permission application that is typically required for a major proposal that is

being promoted or developed by a local authority. The proposed BRCH is a major strategic project and due consideration will be given to determining the planning application in a timely and objective manner to mitigate associated delivery risks.

Evidence Base / Options to consider:

4. The alternative to building a new permanent facility (BRCH) in Lawrence Weston is the discontinuation of cycling centre operations/services because the temporary location at the Old Whitchurch Athletics Track in Bamfield is earmarked for housing development within the next three years. This option will result in the loss of benefits and legacy impacts that have been realised over the past 10 years albeit from the modest but viable temporary facility in Bamfield
5. Current project budget of £300k was incrementally approved via delegated authority and Officer Executive Decision (OED), and this is being funded from CRSTS Integrated Transport Block allocations. This funding has enabled initiation and diligent planning of the project over the past 12 months, with formal kick off in April/May 2024.
6. A Feasibility and Development Funding Application was submitted to the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) on 29 April 2024 for initial investment funding of £813k to cover project development costs (Outline Business Case and submission of Full Planning Application) in FY 24/25 and part of FY 25/26. This funding request was approved by the West of England Directors of Infrastructure on 27 June 2024, and this will enable completion of the Outline Business Case in September/October 2024 and submission of the full planning application in April 2025 (including an Environmental Impact Assessment).
7. The current budget allocation of £300k will be replaced with the recently approved £813k from CRSTS investment funding after the Grant Offer Letter is issued by WECA and sealed. Additional funding will be required to develop the Full Business Case and Detailed Designs in FY 25/26, and a funding request/change request will be submitted to WECA before the end of FY 24/25.
8. From the recent unsuccessful bid for Levelling Up Fund (LUF), the estimated capital cost for the BRCH is £15m including contingency. A decision on reallocation of CRSTS overprogramming fund to deliver this project is expected before the end of 2024, with early indication of a positive outcome for this project

Officer Recommendations:

That the Committee for Transport and Connectivity:

1. Approve the proposed approach in relation to delivery of the Bristol Regional Cycling Hub (BRCH) as outlined in this report. The proposed approach will require the Committee to be updated upon completion of the Outline Business Case, but the Full Business Case will require Committee approval.
2. Authorise the Executive Director Growth and Regeneration, in consultation with the Chair of the Transport and Connectivity Committee, to take all steps required to proceed with the development

of the Outline Business Case and Full Business Case, and submission of the planning application.

3. Authorise the Executive Director Growth and Regeneration, in consultation with the Chair of the Transport and Connectivity Committee, to take all steps required to bid for, accept and spend CRSTS funding inclusive of the recently awarded funding of £813k) for procuring and awarding contracts for development and delivery of the project which may be over the key decision threshold
4. The above recommendations will apply to other funding opportunities that may arise during the project's life cycle but the Committee will be updated on any such funding opportunity.

Corporate Strategy alignment:

The BRCH underlines the importance of cycling as a key component of BCC's sustainable transport, urban development, public health, and socioeconomic policy goals. The facility aims to increase cycling participation, foster an inclusive environment, and in so doing reinforce the crucial role of Bristol Bikeability in achieving these aims.

Infrastructure is only beneficial if people use it as intended. The BRCH will complement investments in cycle infrastructure and liveable neighbourhood projects by providing people of all abilities with cycling skills and confidence in alignment with Bristol One City Plan

The BRCH will be built on a former landfill site at Lawrence Weston in northwest Bristol, which is one of the most deprived areas of the city. It will deliver an inclusive cycling community, offering programmes for skills improvement, social prescribing, and physical rehabilitation. It will also act as a hub for delivering targeted active travel and health programmes as well as local community programmes, creating additional employment, training, and local inclusion benefits for all demographic groups.

The BRCH will promote training and learning opportunities, host competition events, deliver classes for disabled training, and serve as the focal point of Bristol's travel behaviour change programme.

Benefits:

Regional cycling hub and sports facility to address current deficit within and beyond Bristol
Complement other investments in cycle infrastructure and transport connectivity
Increased cycling participation within Bristol and across the West of England region
Decarbonisation through modal shift
Cycling as a safe, viable and sustainable transport mode
Road safety training for scooters, cargo bikes and cycles
Improved physical, emotional and mental wellbeing through social prescribing
Support social/health interventions such as weight loss programmes
Inclusive environment and support community cohesion
Job retention from existing cycling centre and new employment opportunities
Skills acquisition/training, work experience and volunteering opportunities for the wider community
Collaboration with organisations such as LifeCycle & Bristol Bike Project

Consultation Details:

Over the past three years (as part of previous funding bids), there have been extensive engagements and consultations with local and regional stakeholders. There are several letters of support from stakeholders dating back to 2021.

There is considerable support from the local community and partner organisations such as Ambition Lawrence Weston, British Cycling, Bikeability Trust Bristol Bike Project, Bristol Cycling Campaign, Bristol Sport Foundation LifeCycle, Bristol Autism Project Sustrans and WECA.

The project is supported by local ward councillors, and the MP for Bristol North West Darren Jones is a strong advocate of this project and supported previous LUF bid.

The proposal has been endorsed and supported by Bristol City Council's senior management and executive leadership teams and recently received endorsement and approval for CRSTS investment funding from the West of England Directors of Infrastructure.

Further stakeholder engagements and consultations will be carried out over the next 12 months as part of the ongoing project development activities.

Background Documents:

West of England Joint Local Transport Plan 4 2020-2036, Section 8: Local Connectivity - [Joint Local Transport Plan 4 2020-2036 \(westofengland-ca.gov.uk\)](https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk)

Revenue Cost	£ TBC	Source of Revenue Funding	P15359-1002 Bristol Cycle Centre Relocation
Capital Cost	£15m	Source of Capital Funding	City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement
One off cost <input type="checkbox"/>	Ongoing cost <input type="checkbox"/>	Saving Proposal <input type="checkbox"/> If yes - existing or new saving? Choose an item. OR Income generation proposal <input type="checkbox"/>	

Professional comments section:

1. Finance Advice: The report seeks members' approval for the submission of the outline business case (OBC) for the proposed Bristol Regional Cycling Hub (BRCH) in Lawrence Weston. It also seeks approval for the expenditure to fund the development of the business case. The cost of developing the business has been calculated at £0.813m. These estimates have been based on a combination of fixed price quotes from external consultants as well as costings for internally provided services based on known rates already charged to the project. It also includes a reasonable allowance for contingency reflecting the carefully assessed risks that exist in the delivery of the OBC. This project is being put forward to the Combined Authority as a possible solution to the City Regional Sustainable Transport Scheme underspending.

Finance Business Partner: Ben Hegarty, Finance Business Partner Growth and Regeneration, 19 July 2024

2. Legal Advice: Under the Transport Act 2000 the Council as part of WECA has a duty to develop policies for

the promotion and encouragement of safe integrated efficient and economic transport and setting up the cycling centre will be part of these requirements and in accordance with the Joint Local Transport Plan 4. Under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011, the Council has the power to enter into the arrangements set out in this report under the general power of competence

The submission of bids for funding does not raise any specific legal implications. The procurement process must be conducted in line with the 2015 Procurement Regulations/Procurement Act 2023 and the Councils own procurement rules. Legal services will advise and assist officers with regard to the conduct of the procurement process and the resulting contractual arrangements.

Legal Team Leader: Husinara Jones and Joanne Mansfield, Team Manager/Solicitor, 8 August 2024

3. Implications on IT: I can see no implications on IT regarding this activity.

IT Team Leader: Alex Simpson, Lead Enterprise Architect, 15 July 2024

4. HR Advice: Having read the report, I can confirm that no HR implications are presented by these proposals.

HR Partner: Chris Hather, HR Consultancy Manager, 15 July 2024

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Further essential background / detail on the proposal

YES

Appendix B – Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)	YES
Appendix C – Environmental Impact Assessment (Environmental Impact Assessment	YES
Appendix D – Decision Risk Assessment	NO
Appendix E – Exempt Information	NO
Appendix F Details of consultation carried out - internal and external	YES
Appendix G Options appraisal matrix	NO
Appendix H Business case / financial analysis	NO