

RIVERSIDE ROUTE LIGHTING PROJECT, TONBRIDGE

Item FRP 25/11 referred from Finance, Regeneration and Property Scrutiny Select Committee of 27 May 2025

The report brought forward a List C Capital Plan Evaluation for riverside lighting between Town Lock and Vale Road in Tonbridge and sought approval to move the project forward for construction later in the calendar year.

Members considered the feasibility study report (Annex 2) and the Capital Plan Evaluation (Annex 1) and welcomed the provision of high-quality lighting for pedestrians and the opportunity to create a safe and secure environment and reduce crime. The lack of lighting, combined with a narrow path lined with trees and shrubbery and unprotected river edge, made this an uninviting area and there had been a long-term aspiration from successive Ward Members to improve safety along this section of the riverside route.

Discussions had taken place with Kent County Council Public Rights of Way and it was confirmed that lighting may be installed on the route using powers under s161 of the Public Health Act 1875.

The Committee was assured that lighting levels would be consistent but would be low to protect and maintain the environment for wildlife, such as bats. The feasibility study provided a guide that developers should follow. In addition, comments from Kent Police would be reflected in the scheme.

On the grounds of understanding whether the introduction of a lighting scheme would impact local residents, Cllr Rhodes proposed that Members should have physical sight of the likely intended lighting columns by means of a demonstration in a low light at a future meeting of the Committee. This was seconded by Cllr Cannon and supported by the majority of Members.

Subsequent to the vote and for reasons of practicality it was agreed that a future meeting of the Committee could mean a visit to the project site.

***RECOMMENDED:** That

- (1) Phase 1 of the project be taken forward through the design stages up to and including the preparation of tender documents;
- (2) the scheme be transferred to List A of the Capital Plan;
- (3) the use of the Borough Council's powers under s161 of the Public Health Act 1875 for the delivery of the project, with agreement from Kent County Councils Public Rights of Way Team, be authorised; and
- (4) Members had physical sight of the likely intended lighting columns by means of a demonstration in a low light at a future meeting or a site visit.

***Recommended to Cabinet – Council Decision**

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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