

Cabinet

02 September 2025

Part 1 - Public

Executive Non-key Decision



Cabinet Member	Des Keers (Cabinet Member for Communities) & Adem Mehmet (Cabinet Member for Infrastructure & Tonbridge Regeneration)
Responsible Officer	Robert Styles (Director of Street Scene, Leisure & Technical Services)
Report Author	Dean Radmore (Tonbridge Town Centre Programme Manager)

Riverside Route Lighting Project, Tonbridge

1 Summary and Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report brings forward the design, subject to any further comments from external bodies such as the Environment Agency, for the Riverside Route Lighting project between Vale Road and Town Lock, Tonbridge. The project will provide high quality lighting to create a safe and secure public realm, minimising opportunities for crime during the night and in low natural light conditions for pedestrians moving between the Town Lock area and the industrial/retail estates in Vale Road/Cannon Lane and/or vice versa.
- 1.2 The report seeks approval to move the project forward for construction later in this calendar year.

2 Corporate Strategy Priority Area

- 2.1 The Riverside Route Lighting project aligns to the Council's Corporate Strategy 2023-2027 - sustaining a borough which cares for the environment – by improving pedestrian safety and encouraging sustainable travel along this route at all hours of the day. The project is included in the 2025/26 Annual Service Delivery Plan.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 Cabinet is requested to consider the design report carried out by consultant Project Centre included at **Annex 1** to the report and approve that the project for riverside lighting between Vale Road and the northwest boundary of the former gasholder site is progressed through the tender and construction stages.

- 3.2 Cabinet is requested to grant delegated authority to the Director of Street Scene, Leisure and Technical Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities and local members, to amend the design to take into account any findings from the ecological appraisal and any further comments from external bodies including the Environment Agency and Kent Wildlife Trust.
- 3.3 Approve a project budget of £94,000 funded in full from developer contributions.

4 Introduction and Background

- 4.1 The Vale Road to Town Lock section of the Riverside Route is approximately 380m in length. The section between Vale Road and the northwest boundary of the former gasholder site, has a lack of lighting combined with a narrow path that is lined with trees and shrubbery and unprotected river edge, making this an uninviting section of the route.
- 4.2 In order to assist the Council, a procurement process was undertaken, and external consultants Project Centre were appointed to undertake a feasibility study that was reviewed by members of the Finance, Regeneration and Scrutiny Select Committee at the meeting on 27th May 2025.
- 4.3 At the Cabinet meeting on 3rd June 2025 it was resolved that 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 that arrangement be made for Members to have 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.
- 4.4 At the Council meeting on 8th July 2025, it was resolved that the Scheme be transferred to List A of the Capital Plan
- 4.5 Project Centre were then re-appointed, following a procurement process, to carry out the stage 4 design.

5 Proposal

- 5.1 The proposal outlined in Project Centre's design report at **Annex 1** is to progress the tendering and construction of the project. Whilst Annex 1 includes the full report, any supporting documentation can be made available upon request. In order to be able to progress the project this will need to be subject to any findings from the ecological appraisal and any further comments from external bodies including the Environment Agency and Kent Wildlife Trust.
- 5.2 Any further comments which could result in changes to the design will be considered by the Director of Street Scene, Leisure and Technical Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Communities and local Members.

- 5.3 Cabinet will note from Annex 1 that the current proposal is to install nine hinged lighting columns along the path. A site visit to view the columns recommended by Project Centre will be arranged involving any Members wishing to attend.

6 Other Options

- 6.1 The only other option is not progressing the project.

7 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 7.1 The capital plan estimated build costs including contingency is currently £90,000 based on the original feasibility report provided by Project Centre. Cabinet will note from Annex 1 that the revised budget is £94,000 due to improved accuracy following stage 4 design. It is felt prudent to allow a contingency sum for issues arising from the ecological appraisal and any further comments from external bodies including the Environment Agency and Kent Wildlife Trust.
- 7.2 There is currently S106 funding of circa £150,000 allocated for this project. Taking this into account, the project can be delivered in full with external funding and no funding will be needed from the Council.

8 Risk Assessment

- 8.1 As outlined in the Riverside Route Risk Register at **Annex 2**, key risks within the project relate to:
- Issues arising from the preliminary ecological appraisal and any further comments from external bodies including the Environment Agency and Kent Wildlife Trust.
 - Issues arising from UKPN delivery timescales
 - Issues arising due to existing tree roots during construction.

9 Legal Implications

- 9.1 The project is being progressed through an internal Officer Delivery Group with representation from Legal Services. Mid Kent Procurement Partnership have also been engaged to ensure all procurement requirements are met.
- 9.2 There could be legal implications if the correct processes are not followed with the Environment Agency and Kent Wildlife Trust.

10 Consultation and Communications

- 10.1 Consultation has taken place with adjacent landowners, internal officers, Kent County Council, Environment Agency and the Wildlife Trust. Planning Services has also been consulted and planning permission is not required.

- 10.2 The Designing Out Crime Team at Kent Police has also been consulted and have provided the following statement; “I can confirm my approval for the crime prevention measure of the proposal to install column lighting along the section of the Riverside Route between Vale Road and Town Lock. Please can my following comments regarding this be captured within the appropriate report which shall be used to seek approval to move to the design stage. “Lighting - Please note, whilst we are not qualified lighting engineers, any lighting plan should be approved by a professional lighting engineer (e.g., a member of the ILP), particularly where a lighting condition is imposed, to help avoid conflict and light pollution. Bollard lighting should be avoided, Secured By Design Residential (Homes) Guide 2025 states: “19.3 SBD does not advocate the use of bollard lighting to achieve lighting uniformity. Bollard lighting is purely for wayfinding and can be easily obscured or damaged. It should be avoided, as it can increase the fear of crime, because it does not project sufficient light at the right height to recognise facial features.” Therefore, we recommend column lighting aligned with a suitable lighting policy to be installed to ensure that members of the public are able to walk along the river safely and to help deflect criminality. External lighting to conform to min standard of BS5489-1:2020.”

11 Implementation

- 11.1 A project timeline is attached at **Annex 3**. It is planned that construction will commence in Autumn/Winter 2025 and be handed over to the Council by March 2026. Every effort will be made to meet this timescale, subject to comments from external bodies.

12 Cross Cutting Issues

12.1 Climate Change and Biodiversity

- 12.1.1 Limited or low impact on emissions and environment.

- 12.1.2 Climate change advice has not been sought in the preparation of the options and recommendations in this report.

- 12.1.3 Limiting the environmental impact of new lighting on this section of the Riverside Route is a key consideration. The height and spacing of the lighting columns, the colour temperature and possible use of lighting shields has all been done to minimise the impact on biodiversity whilst providing a safe route for pedestrians.

12.2 Equalities and Diversity

- 12.2.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

12.3 Other If Relevant

- Procurement – Advice has been sought from the Mid-Kent Procurement Partnership
- Health and Safety – The installation of lighting will create a safer public realm, minimising opportunities for crime.
- Healthy Lifestyles – The installation of lighting will enable the route to be used by pedestrians at all hours.

Background Papers	None
Annexes	Annex 1 – Project Centre Design Report Annex 2 – Risk Register Annex 3 – Project Timeline