OPERATIONAL MATTERS:

Fastrack Busway Enforcement:

Dartford Borough Council (DBC) have received a proposal from SEA Roadflow for the deployment of a ROADflow Flexi system trial for Fastrack. Following liaison between officers at DBC and Kent County Council (KCC) Public Transport, KCC have agreed to fund this trial. An approach has now been made to SEA to accept the proposal and a meeting has been requested to progress. The trial will take place on the Ingress Park – Greenhithe Station busway section where previous concerns on contraventions have been raised.

TfL Service 96:

As previously reported at this committee, since December 2017 TfL service 96 has been using the section of Fastrack busway between Bluewater and Darent Valley Hospital (DVH) in order to provide a service to the hospital with the same peak vehicle requirement. The 96 has also been using the section of busway between Gore Road and Dovedale Road on what is intended to be a temporary basis until works at the junction of Gore Road / DVH allow service 96 buses to make the left turn from Gore Road onto the hospital busway. Proposals are being worked up by KCC’s Traffic and Network Solutions Team and will be presented to TfL as soon as possible. The omission of the Gore Road – Dovedale Road section of route will also see the 96 re-routed from Park Road to Watling Street.

Service Reliability and Punctuality:

In recent months, following the issue of a formal contract warning, a change of operational management team and the addressing of driver shortages at Arriva’s Northfleet depot, KCC have noticed an improvement in the reliability and punctuality of the Fastrack B service. We continue to monitor performance closely through Inspector observations. Prologis continue to engage regularly with Arriva on the performance of Fastrack A and are currently analysing capacity in the morning peak, where there have been some concerns raised by residents.

Arriva are currently working on a proposal to amend the timetable for Fastrack B to improve reliability further and it is intended that this will be brought in to co-incide with the use of the Tiltman Avenue link at Ingress Park (see below update).

Ingress Park – Tiltman Avenue - Manor Way Link:

Following previous advice from Crest Nicholson that Fastrack could begin using this link from September 2018, recent correspondence has noted that works at the community centre and bus only section have progressed quicker than anticipated and as such the link is available for Fastrack from the end of May 2018. With this in mind, Arriva have been asked to submit a timetable proposal to KCC ASAP and advise of the earliest date for a service start (given the need for planning, driver schedule changes, registration period etc.). With respect to bus shelters to support the change, following negotiation with Crest Nicholson
(who are not obliged to provide bus shelters through the planning process), the following has been agreed:

With reference to the enclosed plan:

Sites 1 & 3 – To be progressed at later date if a funding source can be identified and subject to consultation with properties. When Fastrack starts operating through Ingress in its entirety, buses will stop opposite the existing marked stops when requested.

Sites 2 & 4 – To be replaced with Clearchannel Shelters and added to KCC’s maintenance agreement. Clearchannel are forming quotes and the shelters will be replaced ASAP.

Sites 5 & 6 – Clearchannel shelters to be delivered by Crest and added to KCC’s maintenance agreement with Clearchannel. Crest are obtaining quotes directly.

Sites 7 & 8 – To be delivered by Crest at a later date (as part of future development) and added to KCC’s maintenance agreement with Clearchannel.

A briefing note will be circulated to Local Members on the change once a date for implementation has been agreed.

**Operating Contract for Fastrack B:**

The current operating contract for Fastrack B expires in April 2019. A tender exercise will be taking place over the coming months in order to secure a new contract until March 2022 (when it is anticipated that a full future Fastrack network will be in place).

**Soft Landscapes Commission:**

KCC Public Transport have an ongoing call off commission with the KCC Soft Landscapes Team for Fastrack to cover vegetation clearance / maintenance on Fastrack busways when required. This provides additional coverage to the usual cut levels. If problems are observed with vegetation on Fastrack routes please advise dan.bruce@kent.gov.uk who will raise with the Soft Landscapes Team.

**Request for Stop on Trevithick Drive - Fastrack A:**

Following requests from residents, in recent months Fastrack service A has been serving an additional stop on Trevithick Drive, Dartford in order to limit the walking distance to the service for elderly residents. The stop was already on the line of route but was historically not served. Arriva, Prologis and KCC were in agreement that the stop could be introduced on a trial basis with no registration change required. The trial has gone well and we await confirmation from Prologis that they are happy for the change to be introduced on a permanent basis.

**Real Time Information (RTI):**

Any issues observed at screens on route B should be reported to the Fastrack mailbox: Info.Go-Fastrack@kent.gov.uk. Screen issues on route A should be reported to Prologis or to the Fastrack mailbox from where they will be passed on.
FUTURE FASTRACK DEVELOPMENT:

**Governance – Fastrack Advisory Board (FAB) and Working Group**

Work has been ongoing for some time looking at the future development of Fastrack, which is seen as key to the transport strategy for Ebbsfleet. There is a need to push Fastrack forwards to realise the full network plan and to provide a system which meets the transport demands of the growing population in the area. KCC is taking steps to realise the development of the full network and has developed a list of 24 key projects required to achieve this.

To support this work, a Fastrack Advisory Board (FAB) has been agreed which will consist of representation from Dartford Borough Council, Gravesham Borough Council, Ebbsfleet Development Corporation and Kent County Council. Cllr Kite has confirmed that he will represent Dartford Borough Council along with officer representation. It is the intention that private sector stakeholders (e.g. Land Securities / Prologis) will be invited to meetings as deemed appropriate by the Board. It is the intention to hold the inaugural meeting in June / July as availability permits.

To support the FAB, an officer working group has been formed consisting of officer representation from the same partners.

**Staff resource**

To support the future development, a dedicated Fastrack Engineer within KCC’s Major Projects Team has been appointed and is working closely with EDC on key civils projects such as the Eastern Quarry spine road and Bluewater tunnels link.

In addition, KCC are in the process of recruiting a Fastrack Development Manager who will be responsible for such areas as future procurement strategy, operating models, adoption of Fastrack A / development of new route C, detailed business cases, land acquisitions, developer contributions etc.

It will be ensured that the JTB is kept regularly informed of developments with respect to the future development of the scheme.

**Electric Bus Trial:**

For a seven week period from March – May 2018, a trial of an Opp Charge electric bus and related infrastructure took place on the Fastrack A route. An information sheet is attached. Some key facts / figures on the trial are as follows:

- The trial began on 21st March 2018 and ended on 8th May 2018. Overall passenger feedback has been very positive and has been received via social media (Twitter) and through engagement with Stakeholders through 8 stakeholder events.

- KCC would like to thank all partners for their input into the trial including Volvo, ABB, Prologis, Arriva, Bluewater, Southeastern and Dartford Borough Council. Jointly we are proud that Kent was able to secure a trial of this innovative technology.
• A final report will be produced on the trial, collating information such as passenger feedback (both positive and negative), environmental impacts, vehicle performance and future learnings. The trial will enable KCC to consider whether the technology may be suitable for longer term use on Fastrack when a full network is developed to coincide with ongoing development in Ebbsfleet. The trial has also enabled operators to consider whether the technology could work for them in other areas. A key outcome we wish to take from the trial is a list of steps which can be taken to future proof infrastructure so that the technology can be installed at a later date if this is seen as appropriate.

• The bus has operated approximately 80% of the time it was scheduled to. Lost mileage has been caused by software issues which have been quickly resolved by Arriva, ABB and Volvo. Passengers were kept regularly informed via social media. When an issue has occurred the scheduled service has been operated with a regular Fastrack vehicle. Ultimately, it should be remembered that this was a trial and any issues were part of the learning for Volvo, ABB and other stakeholders.

• One Stakeholder event involved interaction with Leigh UTC in Dartford. As a result of this event, a number of students will be visiting Volvo in Warwick and have information on apprenticeship opportunities. The students were highly engaged and enthusiastic about the technology and showed a high level of technical knowledge. The vehicle also featured in the mock exams for the college this Spring.

• Average energy consumption was very good and coupled with high speeds it would indicate that the vehicle was receiving a high percentage of energy from regeneration. The fast track dedicated bus ways seem to indicate that higher speeds are giving a greater efficiency.

• High passenger loadings have been seen throughout the trial.

• The vehicle covered 5936.8 miles or 617.61km in the first 6 weeks of operation. Final figures are to be confirmed.

• There have been a very small number of missed charges which would indicate that the drivers have been very accurate with the charging process.

Report by Dan Bruce – Policy, Infrastructure and Community Team Leader, KCC Public Transport