

Record of Officer Decision

Decision title:	Travel Fund, Towns Fund
Date of decision:	17 February 2021
Decision maker:	Director for Economy & Place
Authority for delegated decision:	<p>On 26 November 2020 Cabinet approved recommendations That:</p> <p>(a) The £750,000 funding from government for the Towns Fund accelerated projects be accepted by the council;</p> <p>(b) The spending of the £750,000 funding from government on the Towns Fund accelerated projects as detailed within this report is approved</p> <p>(c) The Director of Economy and Place be authorised to take all operational decisions to implement recommendation (b) including, but not limited to, the procurement and commissioning of new projects, and, following consultation with the S151 officer, the movement of budgets between projects to ensure the full expenditure of funding.</p> <p>The projects identified by Cabinet as accelerated projects and approved for funding included:</p> <p>Project 2: eCargo & eBike Scheme</p> <p>http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?lId=50035605</p>
Ward:	Belmont Rural; Bobblestock; Central; College; Eign Hill; Greyfriars; Hinton & Hunderton; Holmer; Kings Acre; Newton Farm; Redhill; Tupsley & Whitecross
Consultation:	This decision has been taken in consultation with the council's Section 151 officer and in light of the Cabinet decision accept the £750,000 Towns Fund grant funding from government:
Decision made:	<p>No more than a total of £117,500 of grant funding from the Towns Deal Accelerated Fund will be utilised to implement a city-wide grant scheme, promoted as TravelFund, and administered by Delegated Grants.</p> <p>TravelFund will offer 100% grant funding to local businesses to purchase e-bikes and/or e-cargo bikes.</p> <p>This expenditure is included within the £750,000 funding from government for the Towns Fund accelerated projects as recommended in the Cabinet report of 26 November 2020.</p>
Reasons for decision:	<p>In July 2020 government announced that under the Towns Fund programme they were offering Hereford a grant of £750,000 to fund capital projects that can be delivered this financial year. This grant will be used to support capital spend within the intervention framework as set out in the Towns Fund Further Guidance.</p> <p>The expenditure will be included within the medium term financial strategy and capital programme.</p> <p>The business case details the revenue impact of the project which will be managed within current revenue budgets. There is no additional funding requirement, with all projects managed within existing teams for delivery.</p>

	<p>TravelFund grant schemes have been very successful in promoting increased sustainable travel in local businesses and organisations. In spring 2020 a TravelFund grant scheme, funded by the Department for Transport, provided video-conferencing equipment and e-bikes to help local businesses to continue to trade during the pandemic. Fifty four applications were received and twenty businesses were supported.</p> <p>This grant scheme will promote and encourage low carbon transport solutions. It will help to reduce congestion and improve air quality, with the added benefit of reducing fuel and vehicle maintenance costs. It will also raise awareness of low carbon travel options, encourage healthier choices and help reach the carbon neutrality target by 2030.</p> <p>Private sector businesses will be prioritised, SME and sole traders will be eligible for funding. Charities and public sector organisations will be considered where demand and benefit can be demonstrated.</p> <p>Likewise businesses within the boundary area will be prioritised and those sitting outside the Towns Fund accelerated projects boundary will only be considered where they can definitively state they will use the equipment within the Towns Fund accelerated projects boundary.</p> <p>Awards will be paid on receipt of a valid suppliers invoice unless the lead time for an order goes beyond 31 March 2021. In that case the award will be paid in advance with a claw back clause included in the grant agreement.</p> <p>Total mileage and numbers of users will be monitored and recorded.</p> <p>We will publicise the grant on the council website, twitter and via the Travel for Work network, to business organisations and to local networks as well as previous recipients of previous Travel Fund grants.</p>
Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:	<p>All costs outlined in this report will be covered by the £117,500 allocated for this project from the Towns Fund bid. No more than £117,500 will be spent in implementing the TravelFund grant scheme.</p> <p>There will be no financial on costs to the council beyond the period financial year 2020/2021.</p> <p>There will be no revenue generation for the council. There will be no additional funding requirements for the project.</p> <p>The TravelFund grant scheme will increase low carbon travel in the city and allow local many local people to try riding an e-bike or e-cargo bike at work. That may also contribute to the growth of private e-bikes.</p> <p>A risk assessment is included in the business case.</p>
Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:	<p>The council could decide not to approve expenditure on this accelerated project. The council would not be exposed to potential financial risk of the project but would miss out on securing the government investment to assist in economic regeneration, with associated reputational consequences. This option is not recommended because of the loss of grant income that will deliver a project within the city that help to deliver the council's county plan 2020 - 2024.</p>

Details of any declarations of interest made:	None
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Signed

Richard Ball
Director for Economy & Place

Date: 17 February 2021