

Title of report: Review of Cycle Training and Promotion

Decision maker: Director for Economy and Place

Decision date: Thursday 25 March 2021

Report by: Principal Sustainability and Climate Change Officer

Classification

Open

Decision type

Non-key

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

This report seeks authority to improve service delivery and meet the new Bikeability standards for cycle training, cycle activities and led rides through a competitive tender exercise to appoint a delivery partner.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) **The council undertake a competitive procurement exercise to outsource the delivery of Bikeability cycle training, bike loans, led rides and cycle activities for younger children at a cost not exceeding £235,000 across the maximum three years of the contract;**
- b) **Authority is delegated to the Sustainability and Climate Change Manager to take all operational decisions to implement the recommendations within this report.**

Alternative options

1. Continue with in-house delivery of Bikeability cycle training, led rides and cycle activities. This would continue to put greater pressure on the team to deliver with reducing

outcomes and greater burden in terms of new training guidance issued in light of Covid-19.

2. Stop delivering Bikeability cycle training, led rides, bike loans and cycle activities. This is not recommended because these activities play an important role in ensuring children and adults are cycling safely. In addition the activities are well received by the public and it would be detrimental to the council's reputation to cease delivery.

Key considerations

3. Bikeability was launched by the Department for Transport (DfT) through Cycle England in 2007 as "cycling proficiency for the 21st century". The scheme is underpinned by a National Standard for cycle training, which clearly defines the outcomes participants must demonstrate before passing the course. The council registered as a Bikeability Scheme Provider in July 2009.
4. The council delivers Bikeability Level 1, 2 and 3 training to an average of 1,000 pupils in approximately 85% of primary schools in Herefordshire.
5. Bikeability is funded via a separate DfT funding stream at £45 per pupil trained for level 2 and 3, and £10 for level 1. There is no draw down on Local Transport Plan monies. As the funding is only available to Local Authorities, if the council does not utilise this funding then Bikeability cycle training would not be delivered in the county.
6. We currently have nine cycle trainers, nine are employed on an agency basis by Hoople. The starting hourly rate is £9.68, the cost to the council is £12.64.
7. In addition, the council offers one to one adult cycle training free of charge to Herefordshire residents. The training is delivered to approximately 30-40 adults per annum and undertaken by Bikeability Instructors. Adult cycle training has recently been included as a Bikeability module. This has previously been funded from an external DfT Access Fund grant at a cost of £5,000 per annum.
8. We also deliver led rides for women and families (known as Shirley's Wheels) with around 100 rides taking place every year. These rides are organised and led by five Community Bicycle Ambassadors with occasional support from cycle trainers. As part of this project we also offer bike loans and the loan scheme will be included in this procurement exercise.
9. Led rides and bike loans cost the council approximately £40,000 per annum funded by the external DfT Access Fund grant, plus officer time which is estimated at £15,000. Use of the £40,000 allocated for 2020/21 has been extended to March 2022 because of the impact of Covid-19.
10. In addition, via the DfT Access Fund grant the Council commissioned Sustrans until July 2020 to work with Hereford City schools. As part of this contract Sustrans delivered holiday cycling activities. It is proposed that the delivery of a number of holiday and weekend children's cycling activities, such as Learn to Ride and Cycle Skills sessions, as well as scooter and cycle skills sessions in Hereford City schools for Year 4 and below

is included in the procurement exercise. This would be a cost effective way of continuing to deliver these activities.

11. There have been a number of changes to Bikeability delivery within the last couple of years that have placed a greater burden on both instructors and the council as the Bikeability scheme manager. These changes include:
 - A new Delivery Guide;
 - New Recognised Delivery Centres (RDCs) - existing Instructor Training Organisations were asked to register as RDCs;
 - New instructor qualification with 1st4Sport meaning that all existing instructors need to undertake Recognised Prior Learning. For new instructors the 1st4Sport qualification entails completion of an online e-portfolio in addition to the existing 4-day training course and post course assessment;
 - Annual registration charge for instructors;
 - New Internal Quality Assurance and CPD requirements.
12. The additional resource and management time to implement the above has put an additional burden on the council.
13. We have nine cycle trainers in post but in many cases they have a portfolio of part-time jobs and are available to train fewer hours per week than previously. This has led to a reduction in the number of pupils trained at level 2 standard for the financial year 2019/20. This pattern of reduced hours per instructor may be an issue going forward as the new requirement for instructors is to deliver a minimum of 72 hours per annum.
14. Covid-19 has created an additional burden on delivery of the above services, with Bikeability training, led rides and holiday activities all having to be cancelled. The Bikeability Trust has issued additional guidance around delivering training whilst maintaining social distancing and will have further time implications, for example regularly reviewing and updating all risk assessments, and financial implications to upskill the workforce. There are also more practical issues such as reduced space and available free time on school playgrounds, and cleaning all equipment between training groups.
15. To deliver led rides and cycle activities for younger children we will also have to adhere to new Health and Safety guidelines.
16. Enabling the delivery of all these activities by a professional cycling delivery organisation will reduce the need for officer involvement in the scheme, which is anticipated to increase as the schemes delivery guidance becomes more complex, including in light of Covid-19. Officer resources will be used to further deliver the wider Destination Hereford programme, county-wide climate plan and the council's Carbon Management Plan.
17. Following the significant changes to Bikeability delivery the council consulted with a range of other Local Authorities to consider a variety of service delivery options. This

review, and the successful adoption of this model elsewhere in the Country has informed the recommended approach to outsource the service delivery in Herefordshire. Notable feedback from other Local Authorities was that all existing instructors were given the option to continue delivery with the new provider and that the majority of instructors were supportive of the new terms and conditions offered by external delivery companies.

Procurement Approach

18. The contract will be for an initial one year, with the option to extend for two more years in one year intervals, with an anticipated commencement in April 2021. The contract will include targets for numbers of pupils undertaking Bikeability levels one, two and three; numbers of children participating in out of school cycling activities; numbers of adults undertaking adult cycle training; number of bike loans; numbers of adults joining led rides.
19. In line with the above UK threshold competition requirements set out in the council's contract procedure rules, the contract will be tendered via an open competitive process and advertised on our portal.
20. Informal soft market testing took place in late 2019 with two independent Bikeability Providers. Both expressed interest and noted that including led rides and out of school activities for younger children made the contract even more attractive.

Community impact

21. Bikeability cycle training, led rides, bike loans and cycling activities for younger children will continue to be offered to Herefordshire residents by a professional organisation free of charge. This supports the council's health and well-being, transportation and climate change policies.
22. The external provider will be a Recognised Delivery Centre (RDC) and will therefore be working closely with the Bikeability Trust to develop Continuing Professional Development (CPD), new health and safety procedures and will therefore be at the forefront of new delivery guidance, including the new Covid-19 health and safety delivery guidance so the scheme and wider community will benefit.
23. Delivery plan indicator is to increase the percentage of journey-kilometres made by walking, cycling and public transport. The council has an aim to increase travel to work/school – encouraging more walking and cycling.
24. County plan commitment: We want Herefordshire to be a destination of choice for walking and cycling tourism and to increase significantly the use of these active means of travel by local residents. We will enable more healthy low carbon travel options, including walking, public transport and cycling, to reduce congestion, improve local air quality and enhance health and wellbeing

Environmental Impact

25. The council provides and purchases a wide range of services for the people of Herefordshire. Together with partner organisations in the private, public and voluntary sectors the council shares a strong commitment to improving our environmental sustainability, achieving carbon neutrality and to protect and enhance Herefordshire's outstanding natural environment.
26. The environmental impact of this proposal has been considered and through the service specification which will include appropriate requirements on the contractor/delivery partner to minimise waste, reduce energy and carbon emissions and to consider opportunities to enhance biodiversity. This will be managed and reported through ongoing contract management.
27. The proposed contract will encourage the uptake of cycling in the county and this modal shift will contribute to a reduction and an improvement in air quality.
28. The recommendations in this report support the council's environmental policy commitments in aiming to:
 - Improve and extend active travel options throughout the county (EN2)
 - Understand and support sustainable living (EN3)
 - Invest in low carbon projects (EN4)
29. It strongly supports the County Plan's ambitions for Herefordshire to:
 - Protect and enhance our environment and keep Herefordshire a great place to live
 - Support an economy which builds on the county's strengths and resources

Equality duty

30. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

31. The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying ‘due regard’ in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. Our providers will be made aware of their contractual requirements in regards to equality legislation.
32. Through the procurement process the council will ensure that the appointed provider will have an inclusivity policy and experience with delivery of training for children/adults with additional requirements. The external DfT funding for Bikeability in schools and adult cycle training means there is no service user charge. The result of this is the activities are open to all families of all income levels.

Resource implications

33. There will be no increase in capital or revenue burdens on the council and the project will continue to be grant funded.
34. Funding comes directly from the DfT through the Bikeability grant, claimed retrospectively based on numbers of pupils and adults trained. Funding for other cycling activities, bike loans and led rides is from the DfT funded Access Fund grant. The figures included here are based on anticipated grant amounts based on previous year’s profile. We are awaiting confirmation of future allocations and activity will be tailored to the money allocated.

Project costs	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Future Years	Total
Revenue costs	£0	£0	£82,000	£75,000	£157,000
TOTAL			£82,000	£75,000	£157,000

Funding streams (indicate whether base budget / external / grant / capital borrowing)	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Future Years	Total
External Bikeability grant (DfT) (including adult cycle training) – estimate based on previous allocations Note – Zero spend in 2020/21 because activities paused because of covid-19	£0	£0	£40,000	£40,000	£80,000
External Access Fund grant (DfT) Led rides, bike loans, children's out of school and Year 4 and under cycling activities in school. 2021/22 funds secured (approved rollover from 20/21).		£0	£42,000	£35,000	£77,000
TOTAL			£82,000	£75,000	£157,000

Revenue budget implications	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Future Years	Total
N/A	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
TOTAL	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0

35. The resources required from the council include staff time to put together the tender document and review responses over the next 3-4 months. However, this is heavily outweighed by the significant anticipated officer time saved over the next 1-3 years.

Legal implications

36. The proposed procurement exercise will be undertaken in accordance with the council's Contract Procedure Rules and the overarching Public Contracts Regulations 2015. Legal services will be involved in advising on the suitable form of contractual arrangement required to secure the new outsourced service.
37. Legal services have been consulted in relation to the possible implications of the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) and have confirmed that those staff employed directly by Hoople will not be in scope for TUPE.

Risk management

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
Risk – Covid-19 may impact on interest from independent providers in bidding	Undertake informal soft market testing with providers to gauge interest
Opportunity -to provide a full range of cycling activities confident in knowledge that workforce has been upskilled and latest guidance and delivery are being adhered to ensure safe delivery	
Opportunity - a professional organisation that has efficient back office systems in place and is thus able to co-ordinate with schools and trainers efficiently will generate a cost saving	
Risk - if this procurement exercise does not go ahead the implementation of latest delivery guide, new CPD and Covid-19 guidelines will have significant resource implications on the team	Need to recruit an additional team member with no budget allocated
Risk -of having limited internal resources available to support a tender	Advice regarding tender approach from other Local Authorities will enable time saving in writing the specification and shaping tender approach.

38. Any identified risks will be managed at a service level and will be entered onto the Environment and Waste risk register.

Consultees

39. There has been no significant consultation.

40. Appendices

- None

Background papers

- None identified