

Title of report: Capability Fund grant acceptance

Decision maker: Director Economy and Place

Decision Date: Tuesday 7 September 2021

Report by: Principal Sustainability and Climate Change Officer

Classification

Open

Decision type

Non-key

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

To seek approval to accept and spend £144,636 revenue funding from the Department for Transport (DfT) Local Authority Capability Fund to deliver a programme of walking and cycling activities and promotions across the county in 2021/22.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) The council accept and gives authority to spend grant funding of £144,636 from the Department for Transport;**
- b) Authority for all necessary operational decisions to deliver the programme be delegated to Assistant Director for Regulatory Environment and Waste.**

Alternative options

Not to accept the funds and not to proceed

- The council is currently delivering 'Destination Hereford Phase 3' (DH3), which is funded through the preceding, successful Department for Transport (DfT) Access Fund. If the council chooses not to proceed with accepting the new Capability Fund allocation continuation of current activities would cease in December 2021 and additional activities would not be undertaken.
- Not proceeding would result in a missed opportunity to improve and upscale existing walking and cycling activities and promotions across the county. These activities are in line with the council's policies within the Local Transport Plan and the complementary measures within the Hereford Transport Packages and help to achieve the corporate delivery plan objective to 'Improve and extend active travel options throughout the

county' and will support the delivery of the council's target of county wide carbon neutrality by 2030/31.

Key considerations

1. The main objectives of the DfT's Capability Fund are supporting the commitment made in Gear Change, the Prime Minister's Cycling and Walking Plan in July 2020, to increase the capabilities of local authorities to plan good active travel infrastructure and to develop both behaviour change and infrastructure projects together, rather than either one in isolation, the Capability Fund will also support traditional behaviour change initiatives, where linked to improvements in infrastructure.
2. The Capability Fund replaces the Access Fund of previous years. However, rather than inviting local authorities to bid, as in previous years, it has instead allocated an indicative sum from the Capability Fund to every local transport and combined authority.
3. On 3 March 2021 the DfT confirmed an indicative allocation of £144,636 for active travel activity 2021/22. The Sustainability and Climate Change Team submitted details of the proposed activity to be delivered during 2021/22 on 19 April 2021 and are anticipating acceptance of the intended works from DfT imminently, with a grant offer agreement to be provided by the end of June 2021.
4. The behaviour change activities that will be delivered will build on the successes of the previous Destination Hereford projects funded by the Access Fund. The activities included within the proposal include: Child cycle training, Cycle maintenance training, Workplace travel planning, School travel planning, Led Walks, Led rides, Cycle loan schemes, Bike marking events, Community active travel events, Business grants, Active travel marketing activities and Waymarking.
5. All new procurements and where appropriate existing contract variations relating to this grant will be undertaken in line with the council's contract procedure rules
6. The recommendations in this report support the delivery of the Local Transport Plan and will contribute towards the delivery of the following s County Plan objectives:
 - Improve and extend active travel options throughout the county (EN2)
 - Understand and support sustainable living (EN3)
 - Invest in low carbon projects (EN4)

Community impact

7. Increased levels of physical activity and improved access to education and employment through walking and cycling will have a positive impact on public health, wellbeing and the local economy.
8. Modal shift from car use to sustainable transport alternatives will have a positive impact on air quality and CO2 emissions whilst also helping to reduce traffic.
9. This proposal also 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

Environmental Impact

10. 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.
11. 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.
12. The proposed contract will encourage the uptake of cycling and walking in the county and this modal shift will contribute to a reduction and an improvement in air quality.

Equality duty

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 –

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
13. 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.
 14. An equality impact assessment was undertaken for the original project and is still applicable to this new funding, this is attached under Appendix 1. 14 All residents will benefit from reduced congestion and better access to education, employment and training.

15. Economic growth and reduced congestion will benefit all residents, road users and particularly local businesses.
16. Specific scheme elements will benefit young and low income job seekers, local businesses and their employees, primary and secondary school children and local residents in general.

Resource implications

17. The total project value is £144,636 from the DfT. Delivery of the activities will be undertaken by the Sustainability and Climate Change Team. As this is in effect a continuation of active travel funding existing staff resources and contracts are in place to deliver all cycling activities, business grants, waymarking and led walks. The team will procure consultancy support for the business and schools travel planning and a delivery partner to undertake the walk to school programme..
18. The proposed budget breakdown within the submitted proposal is set out below.

Child cycle training	£1,000
Cycle maintenance training	£1,000
Workplace travel planning	£25,000
School travel planning	£75,000
Led Walks	£3,000
Led rides	£2,000
Cycle loan schemes	£1,000
Bike marking events	£500
Community active travel events	£1,000
Business grants	£11,000
Active travel marketing activities	£3,000
Waymarking	£16,100
Monitoring and evaluation	£5,000
Total	£144,600

Legal implications

19. It is unclear whether the grant will be accompanied by any conditions. If so, such conditions will need to be checked before the grant is formally accepted. The activities which the grant is to fund may well require legal advice depending on the nature of an activity. Other than these matters there are no legal implications to bring to the attention of the Director.

Risk management

20. Not proceeding with this project will increase the risk of not delivering on the sustainable transport policies within the Local Transport Plan and moving towards the countywide target of net carbon neutral by 2030.

Delays to project delivery due to Covid-19	Sustainability & Climate Change team have reviewed work elements to re-profile activity to ensure early delivery of some projects giving those that will be delayed more resource later on.
Wet weather can deter people from active travel.	Acceleration of promotional campaigns June - Sept in order to maximise uptake during peak active travel season
Delays due to procurement, commissioning and project set-up	Some projects are continuations of successful, existing activities. ITT's being drafted ahead of final award and decision.
Not getting sufficient schools to engage in our Schools Programme	Strong established current school contacts via our Bikeability delivery and road safety programmes.
Not getting sufficient businesses to engage in our Active Travel in Businesses Programme	Strong, established contacts and commitment from businesses through Business Travel Network, Business Futures Forum, Job centre Plus, Chamber of Commerce, Hereford Enterprise Zone and Hereford Business Improvement District

21. The above risks will be managed at a service level.

Consultees

- None

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Equalities Impact Assessment (DH3)

Background papers

- None identified