

# **Title of report: To allocate and spend the Active Travel Fund Grant on the delivery of various Active Travel Measures**

**Decision maker: Cabinet Member Transport and Infrastructure**

**Decision date: 31 August 2023**

**Report by: William Merriman, Senior Project Manager**

**Corporate Director – Economy & Environment**

## **Classification**

Open

## **Decision type**

Non-key

## **Wards affected**

(All Wards);

## **Purpose**

The Council has recently been successful in securing £306k funding from Active Travel England. The purpose of this paper is to allocate and spend this funding on the delivery of the following Active Travel Measures development work; School Streets, Barton Road, Aylestone Hill and Dropped Crossings.

## **Recommendation(s)**

**That:**

- a) The Council accepts and spends the £306K Active Travel Fund grant on the delivery of active travel measures work identified within this report; and**
- b) The Corporate Director of Economy and Environment be authorised to take all operational decisions necessary to implement the proposed active travel schemes.**

## Alternative options

1. Reject the decision to accept and spend the £306k grant funding from Active Travel England (ATE). The Council would be required to return the funds back to ATE. This would also downgrade Herefordshire Council's capability level which will reduce the potential for securing future funding from ATE.

## Key considerations

2. Herefordshire Council was offered the opportunity to submit a bid for the Active Travel Fund 4 (ATF4) in early 2023. ATF4 provides Herefordshire Council the opportunity to deliver infrastructure that enables walking, wheeling and cycling within the County, supporting an uptake of active travel for everyday trips. Herefordshire Council was successful in being awarded £306k of grant funding to be used on four active travel schemes; School Streets, Barton Road, Aylestone Hill and Dropped Crossings. The grant funding must be committed during the 2023/24 financial year with works completed as reasonably as possible thereafter.
3. ATF4 is part of the Government £2 billion commitment set out in Gear Change to deliver a step change in the provision of active travel and better streets for everyone. Further information on Gear Change can be found here: [Gear change: a bold vision for cycling and walking \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)
4. The School Streets scheme will consist of designing and implementing an alternative parking strategy during the school drop off and pick up period. The scheme would look to restrict access of vehicles outside of the school to residents only during certain times of the day. This will enable safer routes to be established for children when walking to and from school.
5. Funding for the School Streets scheme will allow for a pilot consisting of two schools; Lugwardine Primary School and Trinity Primary School. These schools have already expressed an interest and have been highlighted as suitable schools for a pilot to take place.
6. The Barton Road scheme will look at conducting a feasibility study of options on how best to link Great Western Way to the City Centre. Great Western Way is considered the main active travel spine in Hereford with key links to neighbourhoods both North and South of the River Wye.
7. The Barton Road scheme will also look at better ways for pedestrians and cyclists to cross the A49 junction from Barton Road into the City Centre.
8. Funding for Aylestone Hill will be allocated to carry out feasibility work on the city side of the hill to identify how best to incorporate future Active Travel Measures (ATM). The carriageway width over the railway bridge is a significant constraint, meaning various options (including an additional bolt on bridge) will need to be considered.
9. The Dropped Crossing scheme will upgrade the route between the college and city centre. This route has been identified as an issue by the Royal National College for the Blind for visually impaired pedestrians. Funding will also consist of installation of tactile paving along the route to assist visually impaired users.
10. The ATF4 schemes were developed in close consultation with the emerging Hereford City Masterplan and the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan in order to ensure that activities align with wider strategic aspirations.
11. A procurement strategy has recently been approved covering all Levelling Up and ATF4 projects. All procurement will be carried out in line with the Council's contract procedure rules.

## **Community impact**

12. The Local Transport Plan 2016 – 2031 highlights that as well as reducing congestion and emissions, switching to walking, cycling and public transport will also improve public health, fitness and well-being. By improving public transport infrastructure and providing a more pedestrian and cycle friendly environment it is intended there will be less congestion and a benefit to wide range of people and groups within the business and resident community.
13. The schemes will also help residents to avoid cycling and walking along busy roads, thus reducing the likelihood of accidents, whilst creating a more pleasant way for people to travel between communities.
14. The schemes will also help to realise the ambitions of the County Plan by investing in improved community infrastructure which is considered to be an important factor in delivering community resilience as the county's population grows.

## **Environmental Impact**

15. In March 2019, Herefordshire Council unanimously declared a Climate Emergency and formally adopted commitments to lead a local response, aspiring for the county to become carbon neutral by 2030. The proposed ATM will help to realise this ambition by providing the required infrastructure for residents to walk and cycle, thus reducing the number of short journeys taking place.
16. The project has also been developed in close consultation with the Hereford City Masterplan to ensure that it helps to meet the wider objectives of this work.
17. Measures will be taken whilst developing all ATM projects to ensure that trees are neither harmed nor removed, whilst any works carried out will also take account of tree roots to ensure that no damage is sustained.
18. The project will also contribute towards the following objectives set out within the County Plan:
  - i. 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
  - ii. 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.

## **Equality duty**

19. 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.
20. 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.
21. The Equality Act 2010 established a positive obligation on local authorities to promote equality and to reduce discrimination in relation to any of the nine 'protected characteristics' (age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; marriage and civil partnership; race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation). This project aims to improve the infrastructure for visually impaired pedestrians, through the dropped kerb scheme, and use of tactile paving.

### Resource implications

22. There are no capital or revenue implications of the project to Herefordshire Council, all costs will be covered by the grant funding available to Herefordshire Council.
23. Funds are required to be spent or committed before 31 March 2024 and cannot be carried over for future usage.
24. Note that each of the below budget headings includes scope for Programme Management Office (PMO) and consultancy project management costs.

Capital cost of project	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Future Years	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<i>School Streets</i>	50	50	0	0	100
<i>Barton Road</i>	50	50	0	0	100
<i>Aylestone Hill</i>	100	0	0	0	100
<i>Dropped Crossings</i>	6	0	0	0	6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>306</b>

Funding streams	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Future Years	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<i>ATF4 Grant Funding</i>	306	0	0	0	306
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>306</b>

## Legal implications

25. Paragraph 65 (page 22) of the Financial Procedure Rules in the Constitution requires a Cabinet Member decision for the acceptance and spend of grant.

## Risk management

26. The following risks and mitigations have been identified:

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
Slippage in the spend of Council Funds	Establish agreed programme of works. Review progress at monthly project board meetings. Monitor of up to date register.
Budget Overpend / Cost Escalation / Inflation	Contingency budgets have been factored into the overall design package, which also take account of inflation. Works also scalable so can be tailored towards the available budget.
Capacity within the construction sector	Early stage engagement is already taking place to ensure capacity is available.
Delayed completion of detailed designs	Clear protocols have been established for delivery and sign off.
Delayed response to designers early warnings	Escalating issues to senior management to ensure appropriate actions.
Delays in securing required Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs)	TRO applications profiled to be submitted as early as possible as a contingency against unforeseeable delays.
Unexpected obstacles in ground or contamination	Extensive survey work has been undertaken to minimise the likelihood of such occurrences. The work programme also allows time for unforeseeable delays.
Poor Quality / Inadequate construction	Project management and legal input will be used to select and implement appropriate contract with close monitoring procedures.
Project delays could lead to reputational damage with Department for Transport	Project delivery plan devised to ensure prompt delivery. Project currently scheduled to commit costs before the end of 2023/24 financial year.

27. An up to date risk register will be retained by the PMO and presented to the project boards on a monthly basis to ensure that activities are monitored and mitigated against accordingly. In accordance with the Risk Management Plan, any risks considered significant by the relevant Delivery Board will be escalated to a directorate risk register.

## Consultees

28. An extensive stakeholder consultation was carried out when the ATF4 bid was being prepared by our consultants. Further consultations on the various schemes will take place as each project progresses.
29. The cabinet member for Transport and Infrastructure will also be consulted closely during all stages for each scheme.

## Appendices

None.

## Background papers

None Identified.

## Report Reviewers Used for appraising this report:

Please note this section must be completed before the report can be published		
Governance	Ben Baugh	Date 21/08/2023
Finance	Karen Morris	Date 16/08/2023
Legal	Sean O'Connor	Date 11/08/2023
Communications	Rory O'Rafferty	Date 21/08/2023
Equality Duty	Harriet Yellin	Date 21/08/2023
Procurement	Lee Robertson	Date 14/08/2023
Risk	Kevin Lloyd	Date 13/08/2023
Approved by	Ross Cook	Date 22/08/2023