

06/02/2023 Portfolio Holder for Highways, Transport and Parks

Briefing note: Active travel funding update

Keith Morgan – Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Manager

1. Purpose:

To update on up-coming capital funding grants applications and a secured revenue grant to promote and encourage active travel.

If the applications are successful reports will then be taken to Capital Board and Executive Board for approvals.

2. Recommendations:

1. Capability and Ambition fund: To note that a revenue grant for £348,252 has been awarded to the Council and that a PfH decision is being prepared that will enable officers to spend the grant in line with the grant funding conditions.
2. Agree that the Active Travel Fund round 4 grant application can proceed to the DfT.
3. Agree that Nottingham is included within Sustrans active travel fund bid to the DfT.
4. To note that if an award is made (3 and 4) approval to accept and allocate the funding will be sought from the Council's Executive Board.

3. Background

Funding for Active Travel is a priority for the Department for Transport (DfT) which has led to the creation of Active Travel England (ATE) as a specific organisation to work with Local Authorities on design, delivery and funding allocations. The DfT have also brought in a new design guide (LTN1/20) which stipulates designs must comply in order to secure funding and Authorities must have a long term strategy in place through a Local Walking Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

We have engaged well with ATE including hosting a visit to discuss plans. The Council has an established LCWIP and demonstrated political support for walking and cycling. As a result of these measures and the Council demonstrating that it can deliver schemes to a high design standard, it has meant that ATE have ranked Nottingham as one of the top Authorities in the country for walking and cycling ambition and delivery (Level 3 out of 4). We believe no Authority is at Level 4 and no more than 5 are currently at Level 3.

Additional funding will also be secured through the national sustainable transport charity Sustrans who receive grants from ATE to then work with Authorities on infrastructure and revenue activities. Nottingham is one of Sustrans priority cities for similar reasons that ATE have ranked the Council. As a result Sustrans will prioritise Nottingham for grant funding which they secure at a national level.

Capability and Ambition Fund (DfT/ATE revenue)

The fund was designed to allow Councils to bid for funding to upskill staff through training alongside the development of a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) in order to forward the delivery of cycling and walking infrastructure.

As Nottingham is ranked as one of the top authorities for cycle and walking scheme delivery and demonstrated strong ambition and political commitment this allowed an expanded remit for how the funding can be used, allowing it to be put towards scheme design and behaviour change initiatives without requiring further upskilling of Council staff.

There were two themes to our application with key areas listed below.

Capability building activities - £222,000

- The development and design of small scale walking and cycling improvements across the City.
- Survey information to inform scheme development for future capital bids including traffic surveys, topographical surveys and transport modelling.
- Preparation of designs for cycle corridors, junction upgrades and walking scheme designs to put forward within future capital funding bids.
- Public engagement and consultation on proposed concepts and designs.
- School streets engagement and co-design to support the work being undertaken within the Levelling Up programme.

Behaviour change initiatives - £126,252

- Community cycle centres offering cycle training, bike repairs and led rides.
- Working with British Cycling;
 - to target women and girls, lower income communities and ethnically diverse groups through come and try events, group training, Breeze group rides and coaching;
 - to target cycling clubs, youth groups and schools through the Go Ride training package;
 - to provide ride leaders, coaching and education to sustain cycle promotion within communities.
- Workplace travel service to provide businesses with promotional events, cycle training and bike repairs
- Love to Ride cycle challenge 2023. Event platform and incentives, marketing support and business engagement
- Active Travel communications and marketing, design and print, web development and photos.
- Data collection, monitoring and evaluation activities.

Active Travel Fund round 4 (DfT/ATE capital)

The Active Travel Fund grant for expenditure in 2023/24 is subject to what has become an annual bidding process and following an initial letter we await further updates following notification of an unspecified delay to the issuing of the individual funding allocations. There is a very short timescale to make a bid (by 24th February) and indicative funding allocations are still to be announced due to delays to Government communications and the lifting of an embargo.

We are awaiting an ATE/DfT briefing as the letter received to date states:

'Active Travel England will provide indicative funding allocations to all eligible authorities. You are encouraged to bid for more than this allocation (to a maximum of 300% the initial allocation) and identify pipeline schemes that can be taken into consideration and inform future funding rounds. Exceptionally strong bids may be eligible to attract funding above the indicative allocation.'

We expect the funding allocation to be in the region of £2 million - £3 million. £2.2 million was allocated and secured with the round 3 grant. This will see investment into walking and cycling improvements along the St Ann's Well Road.

We have already sent an indicative programme of potential schemes for investment for the next 3 years and we are currently in a second round of consultation on the LCWIP. Once we have collated the comments and feedback a pipeline of schemes for the next 10 – 15 years will be drawn up and brought back for discussion.

Given that we are highly ranked we would be expected to show strong ambition with our bid. This is subject to the need to demonstrate through an economic appraisal and BCR calculation that the proposal offers value for money with S151 sign off for the application.

Assurances will also be required that public consultation will be carried out, which we consider an essential element of scheme delivery.

The bid will focus on Porchester Road. This is a key part of the strategic cycle network which connects investment currently taking place on Carlton Road and supports ATF investment to the east of the city in St Anns. It also considers the impact on the network whilst we balance the delivery needs of other investment programmes such as previous ATF allocations and on-going TCF delivery.

Sustrans grant (capital)

The sustainable transport charity Sustrans promote and act as custodians for the National Cycle Network (NCN).

Sustrans put forward an annual bid for grant funding to the Department for Transport for funding which primarily will be used to enhance infrastructure associated with the NCN.

This grant would be used for a section of NCN6 along Bestwood Road which straddles Bulwell and Bulwell Forest wards. Any works would be subject to consultation with local elected members, the Portfolio Holder as well as residents and formal Traffic regulation processes.

4. Financial Implications:

There will be no additional cost to the Council as in making or receiving the grant applications. No match funding was required to be offered to secure the grants.

Design and construction will consider future maintenance liability.

Bids/grant allocations will be subject to a value for money assessment and S151 sign off.

5. Next Steps

The table below highlights approvals and dates which are currently being worked towards, these are subject to change dependent on when funding awards are announced.

Where necessary reports will also be taken to DLT, CLT and Leadership.

Grant name	Value	Governance	Date
Capability and Ambition	£348,252	Portfolio Holder decision	February
Active Travel Fund	Between £2,000,000 and £3,000,000	Capital Board - pre application	February
		Capital Board - post decision	May
		Executive Board – if funding awarded	May
Sustrans	£450,000	Capital Board pre application	February
		Capital Board post decision	May
		Portfolio Holder decision or Exec Board if funding awarded	May