

CABINET

DATE	20 th July 2022
REPORT OF	Councillor Stewart Swinburn, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Sharon Wroot Executive Director Environment, Economy and Resources
SUBJECT	Department for Transport Active Travel Fund (Capital) grant (Tranche 3)
STATUS	Open
FORWARD PLAN REF NO.	CB10/21/02

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS

There are strong synergies between the infrastructure improvements being delivered utilising the Department for Transport (DfT) Active Travel Fund grant and the twin priorities of Stronger Communities and Stronger Economy identified in the Council Plan. The new infrastructure will make it safer and more convenient for local residents to choose active travel for short local journeys. This supports accessibility to key education, training and employment sites as well as supporting sustainable access to retail and leisure opportunities in Grimsby town centre.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Spring 2022, the DfT awarded North East Lincolnshire Council £264,000 of capital grant funding through the third tranche of Active Travel Fund grant allocation. The receipt of tranche three builds on the success of receiving tranche one and two. This report seeks formal acceptance of the grant award on behalf of North East Lincolnshire Council in line with the DfT funding requirements

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. approves the acceptance of the Department for Transport grant funding for the Active Travel Fund (Tranche 3) project.
2. delegates authority to the Executive Director Environment, Economy and Resources, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport to:
 - a) finalise the terms of the funding arrangement with the Department for Transport and receive the funds.
 - b) commence related procurement exercises to deliver projects within the programme in accordance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015, to make appropriate contract awards and oversee implementation.

REASONS FOR DECISION

In order for the Active Travel Fund (Tranche 3) projects to be delivered within the necessary timescales and to ensure effective and transparent delivery of the projects.

1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

- 1.1 The DfT has continued to make capital grant funding available to Local Authorities to deliver capital infrastructure improvements to local cycling and walking networks through the Active Travel Fund (Tranche 3) grant.
- 1.2 The fund aims to support the delivery of high-quality pedestrian and cycle infrastructure (delivered in line with the DfT's recently published LTN1/20 guidance document) in support of the Government's national strategy for active travel. 'Gear Change'. This will increase the number of short local journeys made by both walking and cycling.
- 1.3 In Spring 2022, the Council was awarded £264,000 of external grant funding to deliver a programme of schemes mainly in the vicinity of the Park Ward to the south of Grimsby town centre. The programme of schemes comprises:
 - Introduction of pedestrian and cycle safety measures at the junction of Hainton Avenue and Wintringham Road.
 - Conversion of existing advisory cycle lanes on Ainslie Street and Abbey Drive East to create protected cycle lanes.
 - Conversion of the existing pedestrian crossing on Weelsby Road at the junction with Park Drive to a toucan crossing (allowing use by cyclists as well as pedestrians) along with minor kerb amendments at the junction.
 - Introduction of four School Street trial sites across the Borough. The four trial sites are at Pilgrim Academy, Reynolds Academy, Ormiston South Parade Academy and Macaulay Primary Academy.
- 1.4 The grant from the DfT is supported by a further £132,000 of funding through the Council's approved Local Transport Plan (LTP) capital programme for 2022/23. It is anticipated that the schemes will be delivered in the second half of the current financial year with all expenditure being incurred by March 2023 in line with the DfT grant funding requirements.

2. RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- 2.1 Overall, acceptance of the grant funding presents a low risk to the Council, the projects identified above have/are currently subject to multi-stage public consultation. The DfT have indicated that where improvements do not receive an appropriate level of public support, they will consider suitable alternative schemes if proposed by the local authority. There does however remain a risk associated with this public and stakeholder engagement which needs to be managed at this time.
- 2.2 The introduction of the four School Street trial sites will see timed closures of the road outside the school gates to coincide with start and finish times. They will provide a safer and more attractive place for pedestrians by removing most of the traffic from outside the school gate each term-time morning and afternoon. They will be subject to a normal experimental traffic regulation order (ETRO) process, this allows public feedback to be received for up to 6 months after the implementation of the schemes. The responses received from the public and schools will guide whether the schemes are made permanent once the experimental 18-month period has concluded.

- 2.3 The delivery of these four trial sites presents an opportunity to test the national School Streets concept at a local level. To date, engagement with the school heads and staff has been very positive and subject to the outcome of the trial sites it may be that further School Streets are implemented in the future.
- 2.4 Prior to submission to the DfT the individual projects were subject to robust budget estimates from the EQUANS, Highway Design Engineers to ensure that the Council was bidding for an appropriate level of funding to deliver these schemes without putting additional pressure on local funding. We are however currently experiencing significant price fluctuations; this is a significant risk that will need to be kept under review throughout the scheme delivery phase.

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1. In developing this list of schemes a number of options were considered and currently discounted due to lack of fit with grant objectives or the availability of funding.
- 3.2. The schemes for delivery are identified in the draft Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) which provides a higher level strategic overview of the necessary cycling and walking infrastructure needed to support the growth and development aspirations identified in the Local Plan.

4. REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1. There are potential positive/negative reputational implications for the Council resulting from the decision. An action plan has been/will be agreed with the Council's communications service, covering the following issues –
- Award of funding
 - Design stage consultation and stakeholder engagement
 - On site delivery (scheme phasing and timings)
 - Scheme completion and longer-term monitoring of outputs.

5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1. The project is mainly funded through the DfT supported by a local contribution from the Council's LTP capital programme for 2022/23.
- 5.2. In total there is a budget of £396,000 to deliver the complete list of schemes identified above (DfT £264,000, NELC £132,000). The programme of schemes will be tailored to fit the funding available.
- 5.3. The projects all consist of the introduction of new or improved highway infrastructure and as such are unlikely to add additional pressure on existing Council revenue budgets. It is anticipated that the infrastructure works are likely to have a useful life of in excess of 20 years before there are any significant maintenance requirements.

6. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. The School Streets project is specifically aimed at improving road safety and

pedestrian comfort at or near the school gate. For this reason, there are additional benefits for children at these schools over and above other residents. The cycle route infrastructure improvements in Park Ward are unlikely to have any implications specifically on children and young people other than those that would affect any local resident using the facilities.

7. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. The projects within this package of measures will encourage a modal shift to active travel, it is anticipated that these schemes will increase the proportion of short, local journeys, which are made via active travel. This project will therefore support the ambitions of the Council's carbon roadmap and Natural Assets Plan to mitigate the impact of climate change, including by contributing to priorities around climate conscious behaviours and low carbon transport.

8. CONSULTATION WITH SCRUTINY

- 8.1. There has been no engagement with Scrutiny specifically on this matter. They have however reviewed the LTP Delivery Plan and LTP Capital Programme for 2022/23 which includes reference to the local contribution to the project of £132,000.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. The acceptance of the funding will allow additional investment on the Council's transport infrastructure and facilities to be fully covered through external grant.

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. Immediate legal implications arising will be around the terms and conditions of the external grant funding and the completion of funding agreements and ancillary documentation. Legal Services will support this process, ensuring the interests of the Council are protected.
- 10.2. As individual projects arise throughout the delivery phase Legal Services will continue to support colleagues.
- 10.3. The delegations sought are appropriate to an exercise of this nature.

11. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct HR implications.

12. WARD IMPLICATIONS

The majority of the infrastructure works are taking place in Park Ward, the School Street pilot schemes are located in Immingham, Sidney Sussex and West Marsh Wards.

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

14. CONTACT OFFICER(S)

- Sharon Wroot Executive Director Environment, Economy and Resources
- Mark Nearney, Assistant Director Housing, Highways & Transport, NELC
- Paul Thorpe, Operations Director, EQUANS

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