

CABINET

DATE	13 th January 2021
REPORT OF	Councillor Stewart Swinburn – Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Clive Tritton – Director of Economy, Growth and Environment
SUBJECT	Formal acceptance of Department for Transport Emergency Active Travel Fund grant
STATUS	Open
FORWARD PLAN REF NO.	CB 12/20/02

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIMS

The Emergency Active Travel Fund grant will allow the delivery of projects which contribute towards the Council's Stronger Communities outcome by promoting physical activity, reducing transport related carbon emissions and supporting accessibility. In addition, it contributes to the Stronger Economy outcome by enabling and encouraging safe and sustainable access to employment, education, training and wider opportunities.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report seeks formal Cabinet approval to accept a sum of £319,200 of grant funding from the Department for Transport to deliver active travel infrastructure projects during 2020/21 and 2021/22.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Authorises the Director of Economy, Growth and Environment and Director of Resources and Governance, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport to accept £319,200 of grant funding from the Department for Transport on behalf of the Council.
2. Delegates authority to the Director of Economy, Growth and Environment, 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 and to make appropriate contract awards.
3. Authorises the Chief Legal and Monitoring Officer to settle, complete and execute all documentation arising from the above.

REASONS FOR DECISION

In order for the Department for Transport grant funding to be received by the Council and for the construction of the project to commence to meet the funding deadline

1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

- 1.1. In spring 2020 the Department for Transport announced the opportunity for local authorities in England to share a new Emergency Active Travel Fund allocation to support sustainable transport projects and the efforts to tackle the highway impacts of COVID-19.
- 1.2. In tranche 1 of funding North East Lincolnshire Council was awarded £42,000 to support the immediate response to COVID-19. This allocation was used to support the delivery of the barriers and traffic marshals along St Peters Avenue, North & Central Promenade and Sea View Street.
- 1.3. The tranche 2 funding is aimed at providing funds to make local highways easier and safer for pedestrians and cyclists.
- 1.4. The Council's submission to the DfT for tranche 2 funding identified two key projects:
 - Creation of on-road protected cycle lanes along the A46 between Cleethorpes and Fryston Corner.
 - Support for any additional COVID-19 response measures / amendments to current measures necessary within the highway in order to keep local residents and visitors to the resort safe.
- 1.5. The A46 (Clee Rd and Weelsby Rd) project will support sustainable access to GIFHE and other employment and education centres in the immediate vicinity of Clee Rd and Weelsby Rd and support sustainable access to the resort area in Cleethorpes. The project will primarily provide a segregated space within the highway for cyclists that is away from both motor vehicles and pedestrians. The introduction of these new measures is in line with the Government's renewed focus on active travel and the publication of the "Gear Change" national plan for cycling and walking and the new Local Transport Note LTN1/20 concerning cycle route infrastructure design in July 2020.
- 1.6. The new national plan for cycling and walking establishes a new body called "Active Travel England" amongst who's responsibilities will be to assess local authorities' performance in delivering improved cycling and walking infrastructure. This 'rating' given by Active Travel England will impact the amount of funding received by NELC in the future, for all modes.
- 1.7. As well as improving accessibility the project also looks to address road safety concerns raised by local cyclists concerning parking in cycle lanes and the dangers that result from cyclists weaving around parked vehicles. The width of both Clee Rd and Weelsby Rd allows for the creation of protected cycle lanes and marked car parking bays without impacting on the flow of moving traffic.
- 1.8. Since the funding bid was submitted the need for changes to the highway resulting from COVID-19 have reduced. It is considered prudent however to

retain the element of funding earmarked for the COVID-19 response measures until such a time that these measures are no longer necessary anymore.

2. RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- 2.1. Overall, the acceptance of the funding presents low risk to the Council, the project will help deliver a number of key Council strategies including the Local Plan and Local Transport Plan.
- 2.2. The project has been subject to a detailed budget estimate by the ENGIE Highway Design Engineers, this budget estimate includes an element of contingency. A full competitive tender exercise will be undertaken with the most economically advantageous tender being accepted. As such there is a low risk of budget overspend.
- 2.3. Delivery of the project on site presents some risks. Changes to parking and the reallocation of road space in favour of cyclists and pedestrians is unlikely to be universally welcomed. The DfT have put in place measures that require extensive local engagement with key stakeholders and well as residents and user groups before schemes can be committed on the ground. The outcome of the early-stage engagement will help steer the way the projects are delivered. Taking this approach means that risks can be identified at an early stage and appropriate measures put in place to ensure that the project mitigates as many of them as is reasonably practical. Wider communications and marketing will be handled in line with the comms plan that will be agreed with the DfT ahead of project start.
- 2.4. If an appropriate scheme cannot be established, based on the findings from the engagement and consultation carried out, the funds may be handed back to the DfT.

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1. When developing this programme, the Project Team considered a wide range of potential projects, taking into account their likely impact on sustainable travel and other modes within the wider A46 corridor. The team also considered the relative impact on the Local Transport Challenges and the Council's priority outcomes.
- 3.2. The option presented to the DfT included a "do nothing" approach that would have failed to address the identified problems with sustainable transport alternatives in the area. The ambition of the project is to address the lack of cycle infrastructure alongside Clee Rd and Weelsby Rd, both of which have the potential to be busy with motor traffic at times of the day when cyclists most want to use these routes.
- 3.3. Options for providing an off-road cycle path were also considered but discounted due to the potential for conflict at side roads and the overall budget that the DfT would be likely to make available to NELC.

4. REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 There are potential positive reputational implications for the Council resulting

from the decision. To deliver this an action plan will be agreed with the Council's communications service, covering the following issues: pre-site consultation requirements, liaison with neighbouring businesses / households during the delivery phases and post scheme delivery communication requirements. The DfT have also made it requirement that this information is shared with them ahead of agreeing to allow works to commence on site.

5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1. The proposal will be financed through external grant funding from the Greater Lincolnshire LEP totalling £319,200 during the financial year 2020/21 although the DfT have acknowledged that substantial expenditure may not be achievable by March 2021 and have agreed to allow funding to rollover into the next financial year. There is no local match funding requirement associated with this offer of grant funding.
- 5.2. There will be nil effect on Council revenue budgets during 2021/22.

6. CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. Delivery of the new cycle route infrastructure aims to encourage and enable more sustainable travel journeys around North East Lincolnshire. In doing so reducing the number of single occupancy car journeys which in turn will have a positive impact on local air quality and the impact of climate change.

7. CONSULTATION WITH SCRUTINY

- 7.1. There has been consultation with Economy Scrutiny and the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport has been briefed.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 As outlined within the report, the acceptance of the grant will allow investment in cycling and pedestrian infrastructure without any funding requirement from the Council.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The acceptance of the grant funding to deliver this project is consistent with, and contributes to, the Council's strategic aims and objectives and will help deliver a number of key Council strategies.
- 9.2 The delegations are consistent with a project of this nature.
- 9.3 Legal officers are available to support as necessary.

10. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct HR implications contained within this report

11. WARD IMPLICATIONS

The delivery of this project affects the Croft Baker, Heneage and Park wards although users of the new route may come from any ward.

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

13. CONTACT OFFICER(S)

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