

Cabinet

8 November 2018

HS2 Phase 1, Road Safety Fund

Recommendation

That Cabinet approve the proposed financial management of the HS2 Phase 1, Road Safety Fund (RSF).

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Following a decision made by the Department for Transport in November 2017, Ministers decided to allocate funds based on estimated construction traffic in each Local Authority area. Warwickshire County Council have been allocated £8.045M for road safety improvements.
- 1.2 Local Authorities (LA) are free to determine their own priorities, provided they meet the overall aims of the fund i.e. *“such schemes might include improvements not just for motor vehicle users but for cyclists, horse riders and walkers, as well as better provision for the young, old or disabled. In any event we would like HS2 to leave a legacy of improved road traffic risk identification and safety improvement along the route”*(House of Commons Select Committee Report).

The Department would also encourage you to consider whether you might wish to use the fund to support cycling projects in your area. Local authorities will be aware that a cycle feasibility study has been undertaken which looked at the potential for new and improved cycle routes within a corridor of the HS2 route
- 1.3. Funds will be available to draw down until 2026, allowing flexibility for the ongoing development of HS2's plans and to best serve the desire to leave a legacy of road safety improvements. Whilst the funding is welcome it needs to be considered in the context of typical infrastructure project costs. A new roundabout or junction scheme can easily costs circa £1m, 1Km of new cycleway adjacent to an existing road £400k/km and a modest box subway scheme can cost some £250-£500K. Accordingly a process of project prioritisation will be developed to ensure best use of the RSF.
- 1.4 There is no firm stipulation regarding the use of capital vs revenue – although there is an expectation that the aims of the Fund are more likely to be achieved by capital rather than revenue spend. It is anticipated that the revenue spend will be less than 5% of the RSF allocation over the period up to 2026.

1.5 Where this funding can be spent:

- The essential criterion is to “leave a legacy of road safety improvements”. This, therefore, excludes temporary works unless they are amended post-construction to leave a permanent legacy, and traffic control systems unless demonstrated to have a road safety legacy.
- The phrase ‘along the route’ – means communities affected by HS2 Phase 1 construction traffic – not a strict boundary, so any lorry routes or other roads used significantly by construction traffic would be acceptable.
- To support cycling projects and routes within a corridor of the HS2 route.
- These are one-off payments and do not provide for any commuted maintenance sums.
- Any overspend within any one scheme must be met within the total funding allocation.

2.0 Funding bids

2.1 It is expected that the Authority will bid periodically for funds from the total allocation. Early bids will include amounts for feasibility and other studies to inform future bids. Future bids will most likely be for discrete schemes identified through studies of collision and other data.

2.2 Road safety funding is generally allocated to resolve existing or emerging road safety problems. It is anticipated that some local areas affected by HS2 might think this funding is available to resolve perceived or feared road safety issues and this issue will need to be managed.

2.3 Bids for schemes should be tested against collision data to ensure good value for money and also give assurance that a recognised road safety risk is being addressed through engineering or other interventions, funded through this mechanism.

3.0 Financial implications

3.1 This funding stream is facilitated by HS2 Ltd. The £8.045M is available for Warwickshire County Council to draw down from the overall allocation at stages until 2026. There is no anticipation that any match funding will be required.

3.2 It is proposed that a small percentage (around 5%) of the allocation is to be used to facilitate road safety education and training and to enable feasibility works and collision studies to be carried out, to be included in the initial bid to HS2 Ltd. This is to ensure that the schemes selected for funding are robust, and will leave a lasting road safety benefit. This will enable an evidence based prioritised programme of works to be developed.

3.4 Further bids will follow, at stages when suitable schemes are identified and costed.

3.5 Future maintenance of the new infrastructure will be funded from within county highways' existing revenue budgets.

4.0 Bid approvals

4.1 It is expected that each capital bid will be presented to WCC's HS2 Project Board, Corporate Board and approved by the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning prior to submission to HS2. The Council's existing governance processes will be followed in order to seek members' approval to make bids and to add successful bids to the capital programme. An individual scheme up to the value of £2m can be added to the Capital Programme with approval from the Deputy Leader (Finance & Property).

4.2 The development of feasibility work will aid the process in developing project priorities. For road safety projects the prioritisation will largely reflect accident data and set cost benefit ratios. For cycleway the existing and likely future patronage will be considered.

5.0 Revenue bids

5.1 As previously mentioned, some of the funding can be used for revenue purposes. It is intended to include, in the initial bid, revenue allocations for Road Safety Education and training, feasibility and accident studies. The associated costs for these will be around £265,000. This is a small percentage of the overall allocation and will inform future capital bids.

5.2 A separate Cost Centre will be established to monitor this spend and will be ring-fenced. This will allow the funding to be carried forward over the life of the HS2 funding.

6.0 Future Capital Bids

6.1 Following detailed analysis and feasibility work it is expected that Capital projects will be identified. Where the costs of individual schemes is below £250k they will be reported as a programme of works under the heading "HS2 Road Safety Fund" (this is known as a Block Header). Projects will only be added to this programme as HS2 funding is confirmed. External funding will be released in agreed stages – indications from HS2 that this will be profiled at 20% at decision, 40% on start of project and 40% at completion of project.

Background papers

None

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Local Member(s): N/A

Other members: Councillors Butlin, Boad, Timms, Singh Birdi and O'Rourke