

Portfolio Holder Decision – Approval to Submit Bid to the Department for Transport Active Travel Fund: Local Authority Capital Funding for 2021/22

Portfolio Holder	Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning
Date of decision	14 July 2021
	Signed

Decision taken

Recommendation

That the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning:

- approves the submission of the bid to the Department for Transport (DfT) Active Travel Fund: Local Authority Capital Funding for 2021/22, subject to sign off by the Section 151 Officer

Reasons for decisions

It is a requirement of the County Council's constitution that Portfolio Holders approve funding bids submitted on behalf of the County Council. This report seeks such approval in relation to a bid to the Department for Transport Active Travel Fund: Local Authority Capital Funding for 2021/22.

Since the funding guidance was released on 14th June 2021, officers have explored the best possible options for funding which meets the criteria set out in the guidance. The deadline for the submission of bids is 9th August 2021. The funding bid requires approval by the County Council's S151 Finance Officer prior to submission.

Background information

1.0 Options and Proposal

- 1.1 The purpose of the 2021/22 tranche of Active Travel funding is to deliver the Government's longer-term ambitions for walking and cycling, in line with objectives set out in [Gear Change: Cycling and Walking Plan for England, July 2020](#). The DfT is therefore looking to fund ambitious new cycling and walking infrastructure schemes that are supported by well-developed, long-term infrastructure plans, backed by local engagement and strongly supported by council leaders.
- 1.2 Earlier tranches of active travel funding were delivered at a rapid pace in response to the COVID emergency and the urgent need to socially distance and provide relief to public transport capacity. Warwickshire County Council has already demonstrated that it can deliver quickly and to budget, with Active Travel [Tranche 2 schemes underway in Rugby and Nuneaton](#).
- 1.3 DfT will assess latest bids in line with the following criteria:
1. Propensity to convert short vehicle journeys into cycling and walking, resulting in carbon, air quality and congestion benefits;
 2. Tackling areas with poor health outcomes and with high levels of deprivation;
 3. Number of people that will benefit from the measures;
 4. Compliance with key principles, including design standards, community consultation and support by council leaders.
- 1.4 There is no maximum amount for bids, although DfT suggests that eligible local authorities could expect similar levels of funding to 2020/21 (Warwickshire County Council received £783,560 capital funding and £195,890 revenue funding (Total of £979,450) for Tranche 2 Active Travel Fund in 2020/21).
- 1.5 There is no requirement for match funding.
- 1.6 Funding is available for the financial years 2021/22 and 2022/23 but schemes must be committed (i.e. authorised or contracts signed) by end of March 2022.
- 1.7 Officers assessed potential schemes against the fund criteria and identified two projects that meet the criteria and are considered deliverable within this tight timescale. It is proposed that bids are submitted for these two schemes.
- Harbury Lane Active Travel Connections, Warwick – Leamington Spa
- 1.8 It is proposed to bid for £1.4m towards the delivery of connected walking and cycling routes along the Harbury Lane corridor between Warwick and Leamington Spa. In addition, Section 106 match funding has already been secured for cycling connections on Harbury Lane (£0.14m), as well as multi-million pound major scheme on [A452 Europa Way](#) which includes crossing improvements and walking and cycling connections.
- 1.9 The Harbury Lane Active Travel Connections project meets the criteria for DfT funding for reasons including:

- **Opening of new secondary school and sixth form** (up to 1,200 pupils) at Oakley Grove on the southeast side of Harbury Lane is expected in September 2023. Design and delivery of new routes in 2021/22 and 2022/23 would enable these facilities to be ready in advance of the school opening, and support a key transition point in terms of local travel behaviour. The secondary school will be located alongside a primary school for up to 420 pupils and includes indoor and outdoor sports facilities, available outside of school hours for community use.
- **Mode shift** – quality routes segregated from traffic would fill in gaps in the local network and enable a real alternative to the car for local journeys
- **Health outcomes** – the delivery of these routes alongside the new Tachbrook Country Park would enable all residents of south Warwick and Whitnash to easily access healthy spaces and participate in physical activity, both formal (at new sports facilities) and informal (country park) without the need to use private cars. Tachbrook Country Park includes several miles of new walking and cycling routes.
- **Number of people** – the benefits to the growing population of this area are considerable. Approximately 4,500 new homes are planned within the south Warwick and Leamington Spa Strategic Urban Extension.
- **Design** – the provision of new and wider footways and cycle tracks will provide coherent, direct, safe, comfortable and attractive facilities in accordance with the core design principles of latest design guidance [LTN1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design](#).
- **Community support** – there is widespread support for active travel in Warwick District, demonstrated by recent discussions on the [Local Transport Plan key themes](#), [Warwick District People's Inquiry on Climate Change](#) and comments about Harbury Lane on the [Commonplace](#) platform as part of development of Warwickshire's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. The draft [Bishop's Tachbrook Neighbourhood Development Plan](#) also supports better footpath provision along Harbury Lane to link the development at The Asps, Heathcote and Oakley Grove.

1.10 The scheme comprises the following improvements along Harbury Lane, and is scalable so could be phased if full funding is not available:

- Creation of new footways incorporating cycle tracks to connect up existing footways and link to bus stops and greenways through open space
- Widening and surfacing of 1km path through open space running parallel to Harbury Lane behind a hedge
- Investigation of additional crossing facilities and upgrades of existing crossings
- Provision of street lighting on new footways and access points to greenways
- Installation of cycle and pedestrian direction signing to and from Harbury Lane, including to new destinations such as schools, local centre and country park

A425 Radford Semele – Leamington Cycle Route

- 1.11 It is proposed to bid for £0.5m to extend cycle provision from Newbold Comyn to Radford Semele, along the A425 Radford Road. In addition, £0.1m of Section 106 funding has recently been secured from housing developments towards this route, and £0.04 of Section 106 funding has been secured by the Canal and River Trust for an access ramp.
- 1.12 The A425 Radford Semele – Leamington Cycle Route meets the criteria for DfT funding for reasons including:
- **Lack of facilities and growing demand** for walking and cycling for utility journeys and leisure trips. Radford Semele is within comfortable cycling distance of employment and education facilities in Leamington Spa, including the catchment secondary school, Campion. Growth in demand for leisure trips is expected to increase significantly with the development of the country park at Newbold Comyn, access improvements from Radford Road onto the Grand Union Canal (National Cycle Network Route 41) and opening up of the Lias Line disused railway to Long Itchington, Draycote Water and Rugby, including works by HS2 to provide a new bridge and crossing improvements.
 - **Mode shift** – quality routes segregated from traffic would fill in gaps in the local network and enable a real alternative to the car for local journeys
 - **Health outcomes** – the delivery of these routes alongside the Newbold Comyn Country Park and Lias Line improvements would enable residents of Leamington Spa and Radford Semele to easily access healthy spaces and participate in physical activity, without the need to use private cars. The new cycle route and accessible connection onto the Grand Union Canal at Radford Road bridge would benefit people with protected characteristics of age, disability and pregnancy/ maternity.
 - **Design** – the provision of wider footways and cycle tracks, and reallocation of road space will provide coherent, direct, safe, comfortable and attractive facilities in accordance with the core design principles of latest design guidance [LTN1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design](#).
 - **Community support** – there is widespread support for active travel in Warwick District, demonstrated by recent discussions on the [Local Transport Plan key themes](#), [Warwick District People’s Inquiry on Climate Change](#) and comments about the A425 on the [Commonplace](#) platform as part of development of Warwickshire’s Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. The [Radford Semele Neighbourhood Development Plan](#) includes Policy RS9: Cycling which specifically supports ‘extending the shared-use cycle lane from Leamington to Radford Semele to increase cycling and thereby providing a means for a safe, sustainable means of transport into Leamington Spa’.

1.13 The scheme comprises the following improvements:

- Widening of footway and reallocation of road space on the A425 Radford Road between Newbold Comyn path (National Cycle Network Route 41) and Church Lane, Radford Semele
- Accessible ramp to Grand Union Canal at Radford Road Bridge

2.0 Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 2.1 Since the funding guidance was released on 14th June 2021, officers have explored the best possible options for funding which meets the criteria set out in the guidance. The deadline for the submission of bids is 9th August 2021.
- 2.2 The funding bid requires approval by the County Council's S151 Finance Officer prior to submission.
- 2.3 A decision on the outcome of the bids is expected in early Autumn 2021.
- 2.4 If the funding is obtained the schemes will be programmed for delivery during 2021/22 and 2022/23. In order to comply with the funding conditions, the schemes must be delivered, as far as possible, by the end of March 2023, and committed by March 2022.

Financial implications

The table below summarises the funding proposals of the two schemes. *However, it should be noted that these are subject to further work and confirmation as part of the bid preparation.*

Scheme	Total cost	S106 funding	Proposed Active Travel Fund bid
Harbury Lane Active Travel Connections	£1.54m	£0.14m	£1.4m
A425 Radford Semele – Leamington Cycle Route	£0.64m	£0.14m	£0.5m
TOTAL	£2.18m	£0.28	£1.9m

In order to reduce the level of financial risk in delivering these schemes in the short timescale required by this funding, the County Council has taken the following steps:

- Selected projects which already have community support, thereby reducing risk of major changes or cost overruns following local consultation
- Selected projects that include land managed by the County Council (adopted highway) or third-party land where partnerships are already underway (Warwick

District Council for path at Harbury Lane and Canal and River Trust for access ramp at Radford Road) thereby reducing the cost of land purchase and legal negotiations

- Selected schemes which have flexibility to be delivered in phases, should funding not be allocated in a timely manner, or funding allocation is lower, or road space permits are not available.
- Commissioned design work through internal resources (Engineering Design Services) or partners (Canal and River Trust). Detailed designs are already in progress for the A425 Radford Semele – Leamington Cycle Route and the canal access ramp.
- Included appropriate allowances within cost estimates for contingency and risks for design phase.

Environmental implications

Transport is the single largest cause of carbon emissions in the UK. Securing funding from the Active Travel Fund to deliver cycling and walking infrastructure will enable more journeys to be made by active travel modes, thereby contributing to reduced carbon emissions as well as lower levels of congestion and improved air quality.

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Lead Director	Strategic Director for Communities
Lead Member	Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning

Urgent matter?	No
Confidential or exempt?	No
Is the decision contrary to the budget and policy framework?	No

List of background papers

None

Members and officers consulted and informed

Portfolio Holder – Councillor Wallace Redford

Corporate Board – Mark Ryder

Legal –

Finance –

Equality – Keira Rounsley

Democratic Services – Helen Barnsley

Councillors – Cllr Clarke, Cllr Chilvers, Cllr Fradgley, Cllr D’Arcy

Local Member(s):

Harbury Lane Active Travel Connections: Cllr Birdi, Cllr Matecki, Cllr Falp

A425 Radford Semele – Leamington Cycle Route: Cllr W Roberts, Cllr Redford