

Portfolio Holder Decisions – Approval for Applying for the Traffic Signal Grant Awards from DfT

Portfolio Holders	Portfolio Holder for Finance and Property
Date of decision	21st December 2023
	Signed

1. Recommendations

That the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Property

1. Approves the submission of a bid to the Department for Transport (DfT) Local Transport Capital Block Funding Specific Grant Determination (2023/24) for an additional sum to replace traffic signals and associated assets that are reaching obsolescence and delegates to the Executive Director for Communities in consultation with the s151 Officer the finalising of that bid on terms and conditions acceptable to the Executive Director for Resources.
2. Approves subject to the bid being successful, the addition to the Capital Programme of a project to upgrade traffic signals and the Urban Traffic Management Control System detailed in this report at a value of up to £601,700.

2. Reasons for recommendations

- 2.1 Under the County Council's Constitution authority has been given to the relevant Portfolio Holder to approve the submission of funding bids on behalf of the County Council. This report seeks approval in relation to a bid to the Department for Transport (DfT) Local Transport Capital Block Funding Specific Grant Determination (2023/24) for an additional sum for upgrading traffic signals and the Urban Traffic Management Control System.
- 2.2 On 16 May 2023 delegated power was reconfirmed to the Leader, or body nominated by them, to approve the addition to the Capital Programme of projects costing less than £2m which are fully funded from external grants, developer contributions or revenue. The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Property is that nominated body.

3. Reasons for urgency

- 3.1 Due to the short notice period for applying to the fund and the work required to consider and prepare the funding application, it is not possible to comply with the usual rules around publication of reports, decisions and call in.
- 3.2 Pursuant to Standing Order 18 where a decision is urgent a decision can still be taken where the consent of the chair of a relevant overview and scrutiny committee consents and agrees that the decision cannot reasonably be deferred and should be treated as a matter of urgency.
- 3.3 A decision will be urgent if any delay likely to be caused by call-in would seriously prejudice the council or the public interest. In this case, call in would prevent the submission of a bid to the fund and thus prejudice delivery of the proposed project.

4. Background information

- 4.1 On 14 November 2023 the DfT informed the Council that, further to the Local Transport Capital Block Funding (Integrated Transport and Highway Maintenance) Specific Grant Determination for 2023/24, they are intending to award £70m in funding for the period 2024/25 to 2025/26 to English local transport authorities with responsibility for traffic signal maintenance and upgrades.
- 4.2 As part of the Department for Transport's Plan for Drivers, the "Traffic Signals Grant Awards" funds will be awarded to projects covering a range of solutions including upgrading traffic signal systems, replacing unreliable and obsolete equipment to improve reliability, tuning up signals to better reflect current traffic conditions and get traffic flowing, and the deployment of advanced technology to make use of emerging technologies to optimise traffic flow and balance traffic across city centres.
- 4.3 The sums available will be distributed through three separate funds that all English local highway and combined authorities outside London are eligible to apply for. The details of the three grants are listed within the financial section of this report.
- 4.4 The Council intends to seek funding of £500,000 from the challenge element of Traffic Signal Obsolescence Grant. Around 80 local authorities are expected to be awarded this funding based upon demonstration of appropriate policies and procedures through a challenge process as outlined in their document Annex A, which is attached to this report.
- 4.5 The application window for both the Traffic Signal Obsolescence Grant and Green Light Fund closes at noon on Friday 22nd December 2023.
- 4.6 The application process for Intelligent Traffic Management Fund is expected to open in April 2024 and further information will be provided by DfT nearer the time on the bidding process.

- 4.7 Approval is therefore sought initially to bid for £500,000 to the Traffic Signal Obsolescence Grant. This funding will enable the Council to address areas of greatest replacement need in respect of obsolescence assets associated with (i) remote monitoring system, (ii) traffic signal equipment and (iii) telecommunication network. The associated works will ensure that the sites covered will be working safely and effectively for all road users.
- 4.8 If the bid is successful, the projects covered by the grant will be added to the Capital Programme.

5. Financial implications

- 5.1 The first fund of £30 million is provided under the Traffic Signal Obsolescence Grant and forms two parts. The first part provides a share of £10 million to all authorities based upon the transport metrics within the Integrated Transport Block formula mechanism. The second part (£20 million) will be distributed as targeted funding awarded to areas with particular obsolescence issues through the set challenge process appended to this Report.
- 5.2 A further £20 million is available via the Green Light Fund to projects aiming to “tune up” traffic signals to better reflect current traffic conditions and get traffic flowing more smoothly through the network.
- 5.3 A further £20 million is available via the Intelligent Traffic Management Fund to projects seeking to deploy advanced technology for traffic signals, making use of emerging technologies to optimise traffic flow and balance traffic across city centres. The detailed requirements for bidding for the Intelligent Traffic Management Fund will be published in January 2024 and if appropriate authority will be sought to submit a further bid at that time.
- 5.4 Accordingly, the Council will automatically receive a share of the available fund of £10 million within the Traffic Signal Obsolescence Grant based upon the transport metrics within the Integrated Transport Block formula mechanism and which is calculated to be £101,700.
- 5.5 To receive the additional funding of £500,000 the Council must make an application for either the challenge element of Traffic Signal Obsolescence Grant or Green Light Fund (but not both). The Council has chosen to submit a bid to the Traffic Signal Obsolescence Grant.
- 5.6 If the Council’s application is successful funding is expected to be received in March 2024 and will be required to be spent in the period April 2024 to March 2026.
- 5.7 Any shortfall in funding for the proposed projects will be met from the Traffic Signal Block Header.

6. Environmental implications

6.1 Transport is the single largest cause of carbon emissions in the UK. Securing funding for upgrading existing infrastructure and the Urban Traffic Management Control System will enable us to ensure that the existing traffic signal junctions are working more effectively in order to reducing congestion thereby contributing to the reduction in carbon emissions as well as improved air quality.

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Director	Scott Tompkins – Director of Environment, Planning & Transport
Executive Director	Mark Ryder – Executive Director for Communities
Portfolio Holder	Councillor Peter Butlin Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Property

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

List of background papers

Appendix 1 Annex A issued by DfT

Members and officers consulted and informed

Portfolio Holder – Councillor Jan Matecki

Portfolio Holder – Councillor Peter Butlin

Corporate Board – Mark Ryder

Legal – Nic Vine

Finance – Andrew Felton

Equality – Keira Rounsley

Democratic Services – Helen Barnsley

Councillors – Cllr Warwick (consent to urgency)

Local Member(s): n/a