

Council

23 July 2020

Capital Investment Fund 2019/20: Warwick Town Centre Transport Package

Recommendations

That Council:

- 1) Approves an allocation of £4.046 million funding from the Capital Investment Fund (CIF) to deliver a transport package for Warwick town centre (as set out in paragraph 2.1 and 3.1) and the addition of the project to the Capital Programme at a full cost of £4.418 million with the balance of funding coming from the Community Infrastructure Levy.
- 2) Authorise the Strategic Director for Communities to procure and enter any agreements to give effect to the proposals on terms and conditions acceptable to the Strategic Director for Resources.

1. Purpose of the Report and Context

- 1.1 As part of the 2017/18 budget, Council approved the creation of the Capital Investment Fund (CIF) to provide an approach to funding capital schemes in support of the delivery of OOP 2020. Members approved a four-stage approval process for projects seeking funding from the CIF that would be run on a quarterly basis:
 - Stage 1: A service specific internal approval process, the conclusion of which is a bid to an Evaluation Panel submitted by the relevant Head of Service.
 - Stage 2: The CIF Evaluation Panel provides a technical evaluation and commentary on the proposal that results in a recommendation to Corporate Board.
 - Stage 3: Corporate Board review the evaluation and support/reject the proposal going forward to Members.
 - Stage 4: For those schemes Corporate Board support, Cabinet/Council approve/reject the allocation. If approved the scheme is added to the authority's capital programme.
- 1.2 Cabinet support the Warwick town centre transport package bid and recommended release of CIF funding at their meeting on 16 December 2019. Feedback from the CIF panel which informed this decision is included in the Appendix. This report was due to be considered at the March Council meeting which was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

2. Description of the scheme

2.1 The transport package for Warwick town centre has been developed following a transport strategy review for the Warwick and Leamington area carried out in 2014/15 and received public support through a consultation undertaken in 2016. The transport package can be summarised as follows:

- Traffic management proposals to introduce one-way routing on The Butts and High Street / Jury Street to ease vehicle flows and provide opportunities to reallocate road space to other users;
- Gateway improvements – reconfiguring the layout of highway junctions including Westgate, Eastgate and St Johns junctions to improve facilities for pedestrians and cyclists and enhance the historic built environment by reducing the footprint of junctions and enhancing the public realm;
- Improved connectivity for pedestrians and cyclists, including wider pavements and new crossing points for pedestrians and dedicated provision for cyclists with new cycle lanes / shared use cycleways and cycle-contraflow on some one-way streets;
- Priority signals for buses to allow ease of access from Warwick bus station.

2.2 Further public and stakeholder engagement will be carried out on the transport package as a whole along with statutory consultation associated with the individual elements of the transport package. The opportunity will also be taken to monitor the impact of changes to highway layout introduced to support social distancing measures in the town centre, including ongoing dialogue with local stakeholders.

2.3 The scheme offers high value for money, with a Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) of 5.64 and will help meet the following wider objectives:

Objectives	How the proposals will achieve the objectives
Improve air quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reducing the amount of stationary traffic by removing key conflict points for traffic in the town
Support and enhance the Local Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More pleasant streets with wider pavements, better facilities for cyclists, lower traffic speeds and less street clutter• Maximise footfall by improving pedestrian links across the town• Access will be maintained for car users and the amount of on-street parking will remain unchanged• Majority of road users will experience improved journey times due to the removal of conflict points
Promote a healthier and active community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encouraging active lifestyles with improved facilities for pedestrians and cyclists, ensuring that routes are improved both into and across the town• Health benefits associated with improved air quality
Protect the historic built environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improving the setting of historic buildings at key gateways and within the town centre by making changes to the road layout

2.4 The transport package will complement a number of schemes delivered in Warwick town centre during 2018/19 and 2019/20, including:

- 20mph zone for the town centre – including traffic calming features on Priory Road to help enforce the 20mph speed limit and the introduction of a shared use cycle/footway on Priory Road;
 - Improvements at Northgate junction, including improved pedestrian facilities and an enhanced public realm.
- 2.5 The County Councillors representing Warwick North, South and West have been involved in the development of the transport package and are fully supportive of them.

3. Financial implications

- 3.1 Following the most recent approvals for use of the CIF the fund had £11.042 million available to be allocated in 2019/20. The allocation of £4.046 million from the CIF was set aside as part of the 2020/21 capital budget resolution. Therefore, formally agreeing to the recommendations of this report and adding the full cost of the scheme to the capital programme does not change the remaining available 2019/20 CIF funding from £6.996 million as reported to Cabinet in December and Council in February. This balance will be rolled forward into 2020/21.
- 3.2 The transport package has been estimated to cost £4.418 million and CIF funding will provide a contribution of £4.046 million. The remaining £0.372 million has been secured from external Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions. There is a possibility that WCC will secure additional contributions towards this scheme in future years. Any additional funding secured would replace CIF funding and the CIF allocation would be repaid on a pound for pound basis.
- 3.3 An appropriate level of contingency has been built into the cost estimates to reflect the current stage of design and an allowance has been made for inflation to take into account the proposed delivery dates.
- 3.4 The on-going revenue costs would be as existing and will be funded from within approved highways maintenance budgets.
- 3.5 Monitoring of the capital project costs will be reported as part of the quarterly financial monitoring reports to Cabinet.

4. Environmental implications

- 4.1 The Warwick town centre transport package will enable residents and commuters to switch to cycling or walking for their journeys, thereby reducing their carbon footprint. In addition, by removing key conflict points for traffic in the town, the amount of stationary traffic is expected to reduce, thereby helping improve air quality.

5.0 Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 5.1 Approval by Council for the CIF funding allocation and the addition of the scheme to the Capital Programme will enable detailed design work and statutory processes necessary to deliver the scheme to be progressed.
- 5.2 Transport Planning will work closely with the Network Management team to ensure disruption during the construction phase is kept to a minimum. It is not anticipated that there will be any other large-scale highway construction works being undertaken at the same time as the town centre works.

6.0 Background Papers

None

7.0 Supporting Papers

WCC Cabinet report: Capital Investment Fund 2019/20 Quarter 3, 14 November 2019

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