

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**MEETING OF CABINET MEMBER – JOBS, ECONOMY AND
TRANSPORT**

25 March 2014

Report of the Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Environment

LOCAL SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT FUND

(1) **Purpose of the Report** To seek the approval of the Cabinet Member to bid for revenue grant funding to support sustainable travel initiatives. Approval, in principle, is also sought to direct existing resources in the form of staff time towards this area of work should the bid be successful.

(2) **Information and Analysis** The Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) presents an opportunity to add to the significant benefits to local businesses and employment being brought about by the provision of cycling routes and the associated promotion of healthy travel. The fund has been in place for several years and, to date, has offered both capital and revenue resources through the Department for Transport (DfT). The County Council has made applications for packages of measures for the Chesterfield area and also to take forward the Pedal Peak initiative, neither of which has been successful in attracting LSTF funding. Pedal Peak is now receiving support through the Linking Communities Fund and the County is also benefiting from a joint LSTF 'Access to Stations' programme providing sustainable transport improvements around several rail stations, including Chesterfield.

The major re-arrangement of Government resources brought about by the establishment of the Local Growth Fund means that the capital resources which would have fallen within LSTF for the year 2015-16 are to be allocated through the Growth Deal against infrastructure plans contained within Strategic Economic Plans (SEPs) submitted by Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). These are not ring-fenced so do not have to be allocated by LEPs to sustainable transport measures. Revenue resources are still controlled by DfT with a total of £78 million available nationally. Bids for this must be made by 31 March, and it is expected that individual bids will seek no more than £1 million.

The above arrangements create some difficulties in assembling sensible LSTF bids:

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- The availability of revenue for a single financial year will place significant restrictions on the types of activity which it would be sensible to fund. For example, a non-commercial bus service would be provided with the likelihood that this would only operate for 12 months.
- Capital resources to work alongside LSTF revenue in 2015-16, if these are to be secured through the Growth Deal or Local Transport Plan, are not yet known.

Because of the above issues it is clear that many authorities which are currently supporting work through LSTF will simply seek to continue this for a further year. The County Council has no such current programmes but does have options for making best use of revenue resources for 2015-16.

The partners in the existing 'Access to Stations' programme, which is led by Bedford Borough Council in partnership with Sustrans, are proposing to bid for 2015-16 resources to fund a package of travel planning activity focussed on businesses within the spheres of influence of each station. This would involve one or more travel planning coordinators being placed within the area around each station, working with businesses to understand their travel needs and to encourage the use of sustainable modes where appropriate. Such activity would fit well with the County Council's existing areas of work, which would also allow an appropriate level of local resources to be identified. It has the potential to assist in taking pressure off local highway networks in an area where it is hoped to see significant new development in the near future. It is therefore recommended that the County Council offers its support to the partners in this bid and identifies from existing resources those elements which could be regarded as dedicated local match. Hosting an LSTF-funded travel plan coordinator within County Council premises is recommended as an important way of ensuring that 'overheads' such as office hire are minimised.

For an LSTF bid led by the County Council itself it is recommended that, for the reasons noted above, this does not attempt to put in place any projects or services which would not be financially sustainable in the longer term. Normally it would be necessary for a public transport service to be supported for several years in order for its patronage to build up sufficiently to justify a commercial operation. Other options for revenue funding would be to carry out further travel planning activity, but it is not possible to state with much certainty which capital projects may be carried out during 2015-16 in association with this. The County does, though, have one project which appears to be a strong candidate.

The Linking Communities Funding which is currently supporting Pedal Peak Phase II, is to be drawn down during 2013-14 and 2014-15. The project is providing extensions to the multi-user trail network in and around the National Park, including routes within the highway along the Hope Valley and development of the White Peak Loop. It has been recognised by Government,

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though, that the programme for delivery is tight and it is expected that the bulk of local contributions will be spent on completing the project during 2015-16. This will provide, from a confirmed source (approved by Cabinet on 10 September 2013 (Minute No. 366/13 refers)), a programme of activity and the opening of new infrastructure which would benefit from associated revenue-funded activity in a number of respects.

The Pedal Peak infrastructure improvements sit at the heart of the Peak District and Derbyshire 'Summer of Cycling' 2014 for Derbyshire and the Peak District, taking advantage of high-profile events such as the Tour de France and l'Eroica which were reported to Cabinet on 11 February 2014. LSTF offers an opportunity to keep up, in 2015, the momentum of encouraging cycling in the area, and it is recommended that a bid be made to fund a package of marketing and information (including web and smartphone-based applications), adult cycle training and work with local businesses aimed at capturing the economic benefits of cycling. Local contributions to the project can include both County Council and National Park Authority activities, as well as a Sustrans-funded Travel Planning Officer already working with schools in the area. The last of these is due to terminate mid-way through 2015-16 but could be continued using LSTF funding.

As noted above, other activities to take place during 2015-16 are yet to be confirmed through Growth Deal or Local Transport Plan resources. However, the Strategic Economic Plan for the Derby, Derbyshire, Nottingham and Nottinghamshire (D2N2) area identifies the Derwent Valley from Derby to Matlock as a key corridor for growing the visitor economy. In association with this, a conceptual ('V2V') route linking the Manchester and Derby velodromes via the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage site and the Pedal Peak Network is emerging as a high-profile and iconic infrastructure proposal. This has the benefit to add to local connectivity and create public health benefits, assist in dispersing visitor activity from local hotspots and add to the visitor 'offer'. It is therefore recommended that the LSTF proposal be used to support the 'Summer of Cycling 2015' in association with the development of the V2V network, as a minimum through completion of Pedal Peak Phase II, but ideally with further Local Growth Fund resources to develop routes within the Derwent Valley.

Local activity to serve as 'match' resource against the LSTF grant will inevitably have to be drawn from limited resources. However, staff involved in sustainable travel and network development will be engaged in relevant activity. Should either or both of the proposed bids be successful it will be necessary to commit to the continuation of these for the duration of the LSTF project (2015-16). A report to Cabinet will be required, in any case, to approve the acceptance of grant, and the implications for local resources can be confirmed at this time.

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(3) **Financial Considerations** A County Council contribution of £1.5 million towards Pedal Peak II project was approved by Cabinet on 10 September 2013 and was funded from the 2010/11 Local Transport Plan. Existing resources, in the form of staff time, will be required as Derbyshire County Council's contribution to the project.

(4) **Property Considerations** The hosting of the LSTF funded Travel Plan Coordinator will be located within suitable County Council premises.

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: legal, prevention of crime and disorder, equality and diversity, human resources, environmental, health and transport considerations.

(5) **Key Decision** No.

(6) **Call-In** Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report? No.

(7) **Background Papers** Information and guidance on the Local Sustainable Transport Fund can be found on the gov.uk website or from the Economy, Transport and Environment Department. Officer contact details – Jim Seymour, extension 38557.

(8) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATIONS** That the Cabinet Member:

8.1 Approves and supports the inclusion of Chesterfield within a proposed 'Access to Stations' project, in a bid for revenue funding to the Local Sustainable Transport Fund.

8.2 Approves the submission of a bid for revenue funding to the Local Sustainable Transport Fund for activity to support the Peak District and Derbyshire 'Summer of Cycling 2015'.

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