

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

31 January 2017

Report of the Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Communities

**ROAD SAFETY FUND (HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND
INFRASTRUCTURE)**

(1) **Purpose of Report** To advise Cabinet of the availability of funding to support projects on three specified County Council roads, to seek agreement in principle for the Authority to accept grant funding for these and to add them to the Capital Programme.

(2) **Information and Analysis** Amongst the resources announced through the Autumn Statement, 2016 was a Road Safety Fund designed to 'upgrade' 50 sections of roads in England that expose users to the highest risk of collision and injury. The value of the Fund is £175 million over four financial years beginning 2016-17.

The assessment of risk underlying this is the European Road Assessment Programme (EuroRAP) which comprises a review of the UK's motorway and 'A' road network alongside their equivalents in other European countries. It measures the number of deaths and serious injuries against the cumulative distance travelled by users on each road; the core statistic is "fatal and serious crashes per billion vehicle kilometres".

The UK continues to perform well in comparative terms under this assessment. However, the range of performance of individual roads against the statistic is wide, with single-carriageway A roads exposing users to eight times the risk of travelling on a motorway, and three times the risk of travelling on a dual carriageway. The Road Safety Fund aims to reduce the number of casualties on the highest-risk roads in England, offering resources for the relevant highway authority to upgrade them. Three of the 50 eligible sections of road are in Derbyshire:

- The A619 between Bakewell and Baslow
- The A5012 between Cromford and Newhaven
- The A5004 between Buxton and Whaley Bridge

The County Council carries out continual road safety assessments, producing an annual Casualty Report that includes appropriate schemes in the Capital

Programme and maintaining a team of road safety officers to work with those road-user groups most at risk. Each of the sections of road listed above, has been the subject of some recent investment, not least because they are attractive to leisure motorcyclists, a prominent group in Derbyshire's collision statistics. The Road Safety Fund though, offers the opportunity to examine far more comprehensive solutions and multi-million pound projects than would be possible given the resources otherwise available.

Full guidance on the Road Safety Fund is awaited from the Department for Transport (DfT), although a seminar for eligible authorities is due to be held on 19 January 2017. Ahead of this, DfT has already made clear that the Fund will be allocated through a process of negotiation around the proposals from each eligible highway authority. Although this initially creates some uncertainty over the resources available, it is preferable to allocation by formula or an open bidding process but inevitably will require detailed work to be undertaken by the Council in partnership with DfT. Cabinet will note that each of the three sections of Derbyshire road covered by the Fund is, at least in part, within the Peak District National Park, and proposals will require designs which take this properly into account.

The profile of funding available through the Road Safety Fund is £25 million in 2016-17 and £50 million in each of the three subsequent years. It is likely, therefore, that some funding will be offered during the current financial year for the preparation of projects and/or the introduction of any scheme elements ready for delivery. In order for the County Council to be in a position to make use of any initial support for projects, it is recommended that Cabinet gives its approval in principle to the acceptance of grant. The sums available for the three eligible projects clearly will only become known once negotiations with DfT are complete. Again, in order to permit the early development of solutions it is recommended that three schemes are added to the Capital Programme but without specified budgets:

- A619 Major Safety Scheme
- A5012 Major Safety Scheme
- A5004 Major Safety Scheme

In order to ensure that negotiations can be concluded as smoothly as possible, it is recommended that the Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Communities, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Infrastructure, be authorised to reach the necessary agreements with DfT regarding funding and monitoring. Cabinet will be updated on the schemes to be introduced through the Economy, Transport and Communities Department Service Plan. It is also intended, given the likely scale of the projects, that their progress and outcomes will be reported through the annual Casualty Report.

(3) **Financial Considerations** At this stage it is not known whether any local match funding will need to be offered towards projects supported by the Road Safety Fund. Officers are preparing a draft Capital Programme for the Economy, Transport and Communities Department Service Plan 2017-18 which makes allowance for some resources to be available if required.

(4) **Legal Considerations** The Director of Legal Services will advise in due course on any formal agreements required with the DfT for receiving grant from the Road Safety Fund.

(5) **Equality and Diversity, Environmental and Health Considerations** Health, environmental and equality and diversity impact assessments will be carried out alongside the detailed design of scheme proposals to ensure that any detrimental impacts are identified and mitigated where possible. Any casualty reduction schemes which have a business case to attract Road Safety Fund support will make a significant positive contribution to health and well-being.

(6) **Property Considerations** At this stage it is not known whether any land outside the highway would be beneficial to the introduction of schemes supported by the Road Safety Fund. Further reports will be brought to Cabinet in due course, should land assembly or the undertaking of necessary agreements be required.

(7) **Social Value Considerations** It is anticipated that the scale of any schemes brought forward, through the Road Safety Fund will offer a number of opportunities for local suppliers and apprenticeships. Civil engineering is likely to experience a skills shortage at national level over the next few years with a number of major infrastructure projects underway, not least high-speed rail. Social value considerations will form a specific, scored element of any procurement undertaken by the Council.

(8) **Transport Considerations** Although any schemes introduced through the Road Safety Fund will be on the Principal Road network, it is unlikely that these will make a major difference to the suitability for sustainable and public modes of transport of the routes concerned. Opportunities may exist to improve bus stop, shelter and information provision, footway and crossing facilities.

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: prevention of crime and disorder and human resources considerations.

(9) **Key Decision** No.

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

(11) **Background Papers** Held on file within the Economy, Transport and Communities Department. Officer contact details - Jim Seymour, extension 38557.

(12) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATIONS** That Cabinet:

- 12.1 Agrees to accept, in principle, grant towards the implementation of major road safety schemes for sections of the A619 between Bakewell and Baslow, A5102 between Cromford and Newhaven, and A5004 between Buxton and Whaley Bridge.
- 12.2 Agrees to add the Major Safety Schemes for each of the projects identified in 12.1 above to the Capital Programme, as and when the funding is confirmed.
- 12.3 Authorises the Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Communities, following consultation with the Cabinet Member – Highways, Transport and Infrastructure, to reach necessary agreements with the Department for Transport over funding and monitoring for these schemes.

Mike Ashworth
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