

Division(s):

CABINET – 21 JULY 2020

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT ACTIVE TRAVEL EMERGENCY FUND – TRANCHE 2

Report by Director of Planning and Place

RECOMMENDATION

1. **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:**
 - (a) Note the criteria of Tranche 2 of the Department of Transport Active Travel Emergency Fund; and
 - (b) Delegate to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment (and Transport), the final sign off of the Oxfordshire County Council's bid for the Department of Transport Active Travel Emergency Fund Tranche 2 submission.

Introduction

2. This paper has been produced to provide Cabinet with an overview of the Department of Transport (DfT) Active Travel Emergency Fund and to seek Cabinet approval to delegate the decision to approve the Tranche 2 submission to the Chief Executive due to the short timescale set by the DfT.
3. The DfT announced on May 9th, 2020 of the establishment of an Active Travel Emergency fund worth £225m to be provided to local transport authorities to embed walking and cycling as part of the new long-term commuting habits and to reap the associated health, air quality and congestion benefits. The key aim of the fund is to develop temporary and permanent measures to create environments that are safe for both walking and cycling in line with Government's current social distancing requirements.
4. The allocations for OCC are:
 - Tranche 1: £597k
 - Tranche 2: £2.38m
5. The application for Tranche 1 was submitted on 5 June 2020 and a financial award of £297k was confirmed on 25 June 2020. Delivery of the confirmed measures are underway.
6. The Tranche 2 notification of funding together with its criteria for scheme approval was received on July 10th, 2020 with a return submission date of 7 August 2020.

7. The letter received by the County Council can be seen at Appendix 1: DfT Active Travel Emergency Fund letter (10 July 2020).

Active Travel - The Department of Transport Emergency Fund

8. The Department of Transport announced on 9 May 2020 an Active Travel Emergency fund worth £225m. The objectives of the Fund are to help local authorities implement measures to create an environment that is safer for both walking and cycling (both, not one or the other). This will allow cycling to replace journeys previously made by public transport and will have an essential role to play in the short term in helping to avoid overcrowding on public transport systems. Longer term, it will also help deliver significant health, environmental and congestion benefits.
9. The fund has been divided into two tranches, the first worth £45m and the second £180m. Allocations for Oxfordshire County Council are £597k and £2.38m respectively. The first tranche submission has already been made and award received with progress being made against defined measures.
10. Notification of Tranche 2 was received on 10 July 2020. The guidance/criteria is very clear "Authorities will need to satisfy the Department that they have swift and meaningful plans to reallocate road space to cyclists and pedestrians (both groups rather than one or the other), including on strategic corridors. Schemes that do not meaningfully alter the status quo on the road will not be funded. All cycling schemes, permanent or temporary, will need to include segregation or point closures to through traffic: advisory cycle lanes, and those marked only with white paint, will not be funded".
11. There is an expectation that schemes will be delivered within this financial year with the ability for DfT to clawback funding not spent. The DfT has provided authorities with potential routes that they believe should be considered and have also made it clear that the use of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) to support applications will be viewed positively.
12. Whilst the indicative funding being made available to Oxfordshire County Council for Tranche 2 remains approximately £2.3m. There is an opportunity for us to bid for higher than this amount, and the Council will be ambitious and reflect the full scale of investment we need to make a significant difference to communities. A working group has been established to develop the bid that has to be submitted on 7 August 2020.
13. The timeline for the submission of the bid is very short (less than four weeks) and therefore it is not possible for the proposed measures and DfT submission document to be presented to the Cabinet for Approval. We are therefore requesting that Cabinet agree to delegating final sign-off to the Chief Executive.

Financial and Staff Implications

14. The criteria for Tranche 2 funding includes a requirement to spend the funding by March 2021. The financial deliverability of the bid will be signed off in accordance with the scheme of delegation. In accordance with the grant terms and conditions, if/where an individual scheme is over £2m the S151 Officer will be required to sign off the business case submitted
15. The County Council's submission may also include approved OCC or partner funding where available to strengthen the submission, but there is no additional capital or revenue impact associated with this submission.

Equalities Implications

16. At the time of writing this document there are no known equalities implications however, there is the understanding that as schemes are developed where necessary Social Community Impact Assessments will be produced.

SUSAN HALLIWELL
Director of Planning and Place

Contact Officer: Melanie Graham, GM Service/Business Improvement, Communities
July 2020