

## **Divisions Affected – County Wide**

### **CABINET 20 JULY 2021**

#### **Department for Transport Active Travel Fund – Tranche 3**

#### **Report by Corporate Director Environment and Place**

### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to authorise officers to finalise and submit Oxfordshire County Council's bid to the Department for Transport Active Travel Fund Tranche 3 submission.

### **Executive Summary**

2. This paper has been produced to provide Cabinet with an overview of the Department of Transport (DfT) Active Travel Fund and to seek Cabinet approval to delegate the decision to approve the Tranche 3 submission to officers due to the short timescale set by the DfT.
3. The Council was previously successful in the award of Capital funding for Active Travel Tranche 2 in 2020. In 2020 an indicative allocation of the expected funding was provided, however the DfT have confirmed there will be no allocations this year, but that bids should be developed based upon previous years allocations combined with Council ambitions. Previous years allocations to Oxfordshire County Council for Tranche 1 have been £298,500 and £2.98m for Tranche 2. We are also expected to receive a minimum of £237,000 in revenue funding for Active Travel measures by the end of July.

### **Active Travel – Department for Transport Tranche 3 bid**

4. The DfT announced on June 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021 Active Travel Capital funding amount across the country worth £239m 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 and forms part of the Governments £2 billion commitment set-out in [Gear change: a bold vision for cycling and walking \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/94422/gear-change-a-bold-vision-for-cycling-and-walking.pdf).
5. There are three main components to the bid:

- (a) Details on scheme information
  - (b) Cycle and Walking Scheme pipeline information – 1, 4 and 10 year pipeline, supported by a network plan.
  - (c) Expressions of interest for the development of a Mini Holland and a GP Prescribing Pilot.
6. For the council to be successful all schemes put forward need to comply with cycling design standards as set out in local transport note LTN 1/20. Cycling schemes will also need to include segregation or point closures to through traffic, exceptions are possible although they are expected to be limited in nature, focused around physical capacity. Advisory lanes and those marked only with white paint will not be funded.
7. The Council should continue to develop Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) and schemes will need to be developed with local communities. In addition, all schemes put forward will need written confirmation from the Leader of the Council's long-term commitment to them.
8. Whilst no indicative funding has been made available to Oxfordshire County Council for Tranche 3 it is expected that the Council's allocation to be in excess of last years allocation i.e. £3m. To signify the Council's ambitions and reflect the full scale of investment needed to make a significant difference to communities it is proposed to bid for significantly more than the previous allocation. An officer working group has been established to develop the bid that has to be submitted on 9 August 2021. In addition, shortlisted local authorities who submit and EOI for Mini-Holland will receive up to £100,000 in revenue funding.
9. The timeline for the submission of the bid is very short and therefore it is not possible for the proposed measures and DfT submission document to be presented to the Cabinet for Approval. It is requested that Cabinet agree to delegating final sign-off to officers.

## **Corporate Policies and Priorities**

10. This bid will support the following objectives as set-out in the Council's Corporate plan:
- a) Provide services that enhance the quality of life and take action to reduce the impact of climate change and protect the local environment.
  - b) Tackle inequality help people live safe and healthy lives and enable everyone to play an active part in their community.
  - c) The schemes put forward will also help to delivery those already set out in the area based Local Cycle and Walking Infrastructure Plans.

## Financial Implications

11. The criteria for Tranche 3 funding includes a requirement to spend the funding by March 2023. The DfT have stated that performance in scheme delivery will be taken into account in future funding allocations, poor performing authorities can expect future grant payments to be adjusted downwards. The financial deliverability of the bid will be signed off in accordance with the scheme of delegation.
12. 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.

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## Legal Implications

13. No immediate legal implications are envisaging at this stage. Upon successful receipt of funding, all schemes that are delivered will be subject to the statutory Consultation process where necessary as part of the powers set out in the Highways Act (1980).

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## Staff Implications

14. As the bid is developed and finalised resources will be identified to deliver the bid if successful. The intention is to only create new staff posts that are funded from the bid and to appoint once funding is confirmed from DfT. Any posts generated will be employed on fixed term contracts within the duration of the bid and funding constraints.

## Equality & Inclusion Implications

15. At the time of writing, there are no known equalities implications however, there is the understanding that as schemes are developed where necessary an Equalities and Climate Impact Assessment will be produced.

## **Sustainability Implications**

16. The core aims of the bid submission is to support and encourage increased levels of walking and cycling as such it isn't envisaged that there would be any adverse impacts to the Council's overall Sustainability goals.

## **Risk Management**

17. A risk register and management strategy are in development. The project is being proactively managed through the development of the funding bid and, if that is successful, the Business Case development stage and on to implementation of the bid.
18. There are likely to be a wide range of risks associated with both the bidding process and the delivery of the bid. These range from ensuring due diligence is completed to minimise cost risk exposure; capital implications on the council's budget for supporting the ongoing maintenance of the infrastructure; delivering effective communication and engagement strategies to meet community expectations; to contractually ensuring delivery can be expedited.
19. The consultation and engagement undertaken for Tranche 2 schemes has identified there is significant interest in some of the schemes. As a result of this, a review of the existing consultation approaches being used is ongoing. Any new approach will be developed in liaison with the Cabinet member.
20. The DfT have asked for a pipeline of schemes for future years funding, with the intention of providing a longer -term settlement plan. This will enable the Council to plan and manage schemes more effectively in the future.
21. These and other risks are being identified and assessed with officers across the council and will be managed through the Council's established processes.

## **Consultations**

22. The proposed list of schemes to be included in the bid have been developed from the previous proposals submitted by members and stakeholders as part of development of Tranche 2 bidding process and adopted LCWIPs. This process resulted in the submission of some 475 proposals across the County. .
23. To finalise the list of schemes for inclusion within Tranche 3, LCWIP schemes have been considered along with those considered during the Tranche 2 process. Collectively they have been considered and assessed against the latest funding requirements, scheme deliverability and cost. This has enabled a large number of schemes be considered within the time available. These have been discussed with key stakeholders.

