

**REPORT TO CABINET**  
22 March 2022**TITLE OF REPORT:** Active Travel Social Prescribing Bid**REPORT OF:** Alice Wiseman, Director of Public Health and Wellbeing

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**Purpose of the Report**

1. This report seeks the support of Cabinet on the Council submitting a feasibility plan to progress to the next stage of the Department for Transport (DfT) Active Travel Social Prescribing Pilot in order to bid for up to £1.5 million.

**Background**

2. In June 2021, The Department for Transport (DfT) announced 'Active Travel' Capital funding across the country worth £239m. This was 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 (Gear Change)<sup>1</sup>.
3. The pilot seeks to understand the relationship between personalised support plans for cycling and walking and increased cycling/walking infrastructure in a local authority to increase physical activity and a modal shift in behaviour.
4. Expressions of interests (EOI) were invited for the development of an Active Travel Social Prescribing Pilot. Shortlisted local authorities could receive up to £100,000 in revenue funding for a feasibility study to proceed to stage 2 of funding.
5. A steering group was set up in June 2021, which included the Council (Public Health, Planning Policy, Climate Change & Strategic Transport, Leisure alongside Edberts House, and Newcastle Gateshead CCG).
6. The Council submitted an EOI to the DfT in August 2021 (Appendix 2).
7. In December 2021 the Council was informed that it had been successful in the first round and, as such, was invited to submit a more detailed feasibility plan by 30<sup>th</sup> April to progress to the next stage of funding.

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<sup>1</sup>[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/904146/gear-change-a-bold-vision-for-cycling-and-walking.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904146/gear-change-a-bold-vision-for-cycling-and-walking.pdf)

## Proposal

8. DfT have provided the Council with 25K, to support the steering group with the completion of the feasibility study. The feasibility study needs to outline a detailed proposal for Gateshead setting out how the prescribing pilots and related infrastructure improvements will be properly integrated into wider cycling and walking network plans.
9. The focus of the work will be in areas where there is high levels of deprivation and poor health indicators. A focus is on promoting walking and cycling for short journeys, contributing to air quality, carbon, and congestion benefits. The focus of this work will support the Council's draft Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).
10. A key part of the feasibility phase includes consultation and capturing the voices of local people. This will be done by working with community groups, Voluntary, Community, Social Enterprise Organisations (VCSE) and Primary Care Networks (PCN's). Edberts House, as the Social Prescribing Provider for Gateshead, will play a key role in linking with Primary Care Networks.
11. Due to the short timescale for this work, it is proposed that the Council uses some of the feasibility resource to secure additional external capacity from an organisation/consultant with expertise in the area to support the feasibility study. This work is underway with procurement.
12. The work will be overseen by the steering group (Public Health, Transport Planning Policy, Climate Change and Strategic Colleagues, Leisure, Edberts House and Newcastle Gateshead CCG).

## Recommendations

13. It is recommended that Cabinet supports the submission of a feasibility plan to bid for up to £1.5 million, to progress to the next stage of the Department for Transport (DfT) Active Travel Social Prescribing Pilot.

For the following reason:

A successful funding bid will allow further work with key communities -who will most benefit from increased levels of physical activity through cycling and walking social prescribing activities in Gateshead.

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## APPENDIX 1

### Policy Context

1. As outlined in the Council Strategic Approach, Thrive, we want to help our communities not just survive, but to flourish, prosper and succeed. We have committed to five pledges to help and guide us when we make decisions. These are:
  - Putting people and families at the heart of everything we do.
  - Tackle inequality so people have a fair chance.
  - Support communities to support themselves and to support each other.
  - Invest in our economy to provide opportunities for employment, innovation, and growth.
  - Work together to fight for a better future for Gateshead

The Active Travel Social Prescribing Bid, if successful will support four of the five Thrive strategic areas. “Invest in our economy to provide opportunities for employment, innovation and growth” is not directly linked to the funding bid. The Thrive approach is at the heart of our preventative work on increasing physical activity and wellbeing through cycling and walking for some of our most deprived communities.

Gateshead’s Health and Wellbeing Strategy<sup>2</sup> (2020) states “Our understanding of the impact of climate change, air pollution, housing and active forms of travel, is improving rapidly.” By using place-shaping approaches, our vision is that by 2030 Gateshead will be a more prosperous, attractive sustainable place to live with improved quality of life and thriving communities

### Background

2. The Department for Transport (DfT) published their Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy in April 2017, setting out the Government’s ambition to make cycling and walking a natural choice for shorter journeys, or as part of longer journeys by 2040.
3. Tranche 3 of the Active Travel Fund Capital Funding 2021-22 for Local and Combined Authorities is focused on delivering the Department of Transport’s longer term ambitions for walking and cycling, in line with Government objectives set out in Gear Change<sup>3</sup>. DfT want local authority feasibility bids that are supported by well-developed, long-term infrastructure plans, that are backed by thorough local engagement and are strongly supported by council leaders.
4. Heralded in ‘Gear Change’, the social prescribing and active travel pilot is about helping people to live healthier lives. Taking up cycling is among the most effective health interventions a person can make according to a recent Glasgow University study<sup>4</sup>. This pilot seeks to understand the relationship between personalised

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<sup>2</sup> [Health and wellbeing strategy 2020.pdf \(gateshead.gov.uk\)](https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing-strategy-2020.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/904146/gear-change-a-bold-vision-for-cycling-and-walking.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904146/gear-change-a-bold-vision-for-cycling-and-walking.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.gla.ac.uk/news/archiveofnews/2017/may/headline\\_522765\\_en.html](https://www.gla.ac.uk/news/archiveofnews/2017/may/headline_522765_en.html)

support plans to cycle and increased cycling infrastructure in a local authority as a means to increase physical activity and modal shift to cycling.

5. The Department of Transport is keen to evaluate the impact on cycling and walking levels with a holistic approach to increasing physical activity and developing the local environment. The pilot aims to improve physical and mental well-being of individuals referred to the social prescribing pilot, managing existing physical and mental health conditions, and reducing the prevalence of future conditions. This will be supported by developing the transport environment to support efficient and safe travel.
6. The aims of the project are: (Defined by DfT)
  - address local community identified need relating to underrepresented groups, high levels of deprivation and health inequalities,
  - actively promote increased levels of physical activity through cycling and walking,
  - demonstrate clear links between infrastructure development and the proposed social prescribing schemes
  - support modal shift to active travel providing people with travel choices and supporting changes in behaviour.
7. The intention is to focus the pilot on two specific areas of Gateshead (Central and East wards) linking to Gateshead's first Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. (LCWIP). This would act as pilots for the rest of the Borough in establishing locally driven, ongoing, evolving plans to improve conditions for cycling and walking.

### **Consultation**

8. The Cabinet Members for Environment & Transport and Health & Wellbeing have been consulted.

### **Alternative Options**

9. There are no alternative funding options available at the present time from DfT or other funding bodies, that are focused solely on active travel and social prescribing.

### **Implications of Recommended Option**

#### **10. Resources:**

- a) **Financial Implications** –The Strategic Director, Resources and Digital confirms that there are no direct financial implications resulting from this report. Any financial implications will be brought to Cabinet at a later date.
- b) **Human Resources Implications** – No Human Resource implications, other than the time of the Officers who will oversee the feasibility work and pilot programme if successful.
- c) **Property Implications** - No property implications.

11. **Risk Management Implication** - No risks associated with the proposal have been identified and therefore no requirement for measures to be taken to mitigate risks.

12. **Equality and Diversity Implications** - No equality and diversity implications of the recommended option.
13. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – No crime and disorder implications of the recommended option.
14. **Health Implications** - The Active Travel Social Prescribing work aims to improve physical and mental well-being of individuals as part of a social prescribing programme. This work falls in line with the Council's aspirations for 'health and wellbeing' as part of Gateshead's Thrive approach.
15. **Climate Emergency and Sustainability Implications** - There is an opportunity through the work programme to convert short vehicle journeys into cycling and walking, resulting in potential carbon, air quality and congestion benefits for Gateshead.
16. **Human Rights Implications** - No Human Rights implications.
17. **Ward Implications** – The bid is focused on Gateshead wards linked to the Draft Gateshead Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plan (LCWIP). If successful, the pilot will enable work to be targeted at specific communities living in our most deprived wards of Central and East Gateshead e.g., Felling, Deckham and Birtley.

### **Background Information**

18. See list of documents that have been referenced as part of the registration document attached to this report:
  - DFT (2018) Government Response to Call for Evidence Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy: Safety Review (online). Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/758519/cycling-walking-investment-strategy-safety-review.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/758519/cycling-walking-investment-strategy-safety-review.pdf)
  - Saunders, L.E., Green, J.M., Petticrew, M.P., Steinbach, R., Roberts, H.. What are the health benefits of active travel? A systematic review of trials and cohort studies. PLoS One. 2013;8(8):e69912. Published 2013 Aug 15. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0069912
  - Celis-Morales, C.A., Lyall, D.M., Welsh, P., (2017) Association between active commuting and incident cardiovascular disease, cancer, and mortality: prospective cohort study. BMJ. 2017;357:j1456. Published 2017 Apr 19. doi:10.1136/bmj.j1456 <https://www.bmj.com/content/357/bmj.j1456.full.print><http://www.bmj.com/content/357/bmj.j1456>
  - Public Health England (2019) Physical activity: applying All Our Health (online). Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/physical-activity-applying-all-our-health/physical-activity-applying-all-our-health>
  - DFT (2020) Cycling & Walking Investment Strategy Report to Parliament (online). Available at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/>

uploads/attachment\_data/file/863723/cycling-and-walking\_investment-strategy-report-to-parliament.pdf

-DfT (2018) National Travel Survey (online). Available at: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/823068/national-travel-survey-2018.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/823068/national-travel-survey-2018.pdf)

-Marmot, M., Allen, J., Boyce, T., Goldblatt, T., Morrison, J. (2020) Health equity in England: The Marmot Review 10 years on. London: Institute of Health Equity (online) Available at: [https://www.health.org.uk/sites/default/files/upload/publications/2020/Health%20Equity%20in%20England\\_The%20Marmot%20Review%2010%20Years%20On\\_full%20report.pdf](https://www.health.org.uk/sites/default/files/upload/publications/2020/Health%20Equity%20in%20England_The%20Marmot%20Review%2010%20Years%20On_full%20report.pdf)

-DfT (2020) Statistics on transport use during the coronavirus pandemic (online). Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/transport-use-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic>

-Gateshead Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Good jobs, homes, health and friends (2020) [Health and wellbeing strategy 2020.pdf \(gateshead.gov.uk\)](#)

## **APPENDIX 2- Expression of Interest Active Travel Social Prescribing pilot**

2<sup>nd</sup> August 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

### **Active Travel Fund-Social Prescribing Pilot**

Please find the expression of interest for the active travel fund - GP Prescribing Pilot from Gateshead Council and partners, including Edberts House, Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Gateshead Primary Care Networks. This is a joint project group of partners with expertise from public health, the community and voluntary sector, health, transport, and active travel.

To achieve our vision ‘Making Gateshead a place where everyone Thrives,’ we understand the importance of working together, across Gateshead, with communities, breaking down boundaries between organisations and services. Gateshead’s Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2020) has been developed and agreed by all strategic partners. Rather than acting on individual issues we recognise the need for a place-based approach.

Gateshead’s Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) helps us to understand ongoing challenges, and emerging issues, for the health and wellbeing of communities in Gateshead. Gateshead has further developed a Local Index of Need (LIoN) to identify geographically where our most vulnerable communities are within Gateshead, so that we can effectively target our resources. We know that people in Gateshead experience significant health inequalities. The Director of Public Health Annual Report 2017-18 “Inequalities – ‘it never rains but it pours’” focused specifically on this issue.

Gateshead’s aim through the ‘thrive approach’ is to deliver the most positive outcomes for everyone, however the focus is for resources is to benefit those in most need. There is a need to do more to address inequalities and we have prioritised the use of our collective resources to those communities in Gateshead that need us most. This is very different to how we have previously allocated resources based on equality (everyone getting the same).

### **Gateshead’s Profile**

Health in Gateshead is poorer than average health outcomes across England as a whole. Gateshead is the 47th most deprived area out of the 317 local authorities in England. Furthermore, life expectancy varies by up to ten years among local communities within electoral wards. Not only do local people live shorter lives but the average quality of life is

poorer when compared to England as a whole – a higher proportion of people suffer from limiting long-term illnesses such as heart disease, cancers or respiratory disease.

- Healthy life expectancy for men in Gateshead is about 2 1/2 years less than across England as a whole and for women it is about 6 years less. In Gateshead males can expect to have 60 years of disability free life compared to the England average of 64.1 years. A woman can expect to have an average of 61.8 years compared to the England average of 65 years.
- Around 32,700 (16%) people in Gateshead live in one of the 10% most deprived areas of England. There are ten wards containing areas within the 10% most deprived in England. At 82%, Felling ward is estimated to have the highest proportion of its population living in the 10% most deprived areas in England. This is followed by Deckham (60%) and High Fell (53%) wards.

### **Health and Wellbeing indicators**

- The percentage of adults classed as overweight or obese in Gateshead is 70.8% (2019/20), significantly higher than the England average of 62.8%.
- Percentage of physically inactive adults is 26.6% in Gateshead (2019/20), significantly worse than the England average of 22.9% (2019/20). The percentage of adults walking for travel at least three days a week 16.4%, this compares to the regional rate of 18.4% and England rate of 27.7% (2018/2019).
- Percentage of adults cycling for travel at least three days a week 2.1%, compared to an England average of 3.1%.<sup>5</sup>
- 14.5% of adults in Gateshead were found to utilise outdoor spaces for exercise/health reasons, compared to 17.3% regionally and 17.9% nationally.
- GP Patient Survey data estimates that the proportion of the adult population in Newcastle and Gateshead with both depression and anxiety is 17.3%, which is significantly higher than the estimated England average of 13.7%.<sup>6</sup>

### **Air quality indicators**

- Gateshead Council currently monitors Nitrogen Dioxide and in 2019 3.5% of adult deaths (aged 30+) in Gateshead were estimated to be attributable to particulate air pollution. Applying this to the number of deaths of those aged 30+ in Gateshead for 2019 (from MYE components of change) means there may have been 72 deaths.
- Gateshead has an AQMA in the Town Centre which although shows improving and compliant (under LAQM,) NO2 levels remains in place. Further, Gateshead Council along with Newcastle Council are subject to a legal direction (March 2020) from government requiring submission of a Full Business Case for a Clean Air Plan and the implementation of the Plan.

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<sup>5</sup> [Physical Activity - PHE](#)

<sup>6</sup> Estimated Depression and anxiety prevalence <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile-group/mental-health/profile/common-mental-disorders/data#page/4/qid/8000026/pat/46/par/E39000047/ati/154/are/E38000212/iid/90647/age/168/sex/4>



## **Infrastructure and behaviour change**

Gateshead has a long-standing commitment to the improvement of sustainable transport infrastructure. Existing walking and cycling networks include major traffic free routes providing access to the countryside (such as the Derwent Walk and Bowes railway path) as well as connections to local services and facilities.

Work to improve existing networks continues, from major corridor-based improvements to more minor works, as well the rolling out of 20mph zones across the borough. One example is the improvement at Wellington Street at the north end of Gateshead town centre in 2016/17. This saw daily cycle use increase by 35% between 2015 and 2018 (weekday flows, June each year). More recent major investment includes improvements to the Great North Cycleway approaching Gateshead town centre in 2018/19 (£1.3 million) and investment under the Transforming Cities Fund Tranche 1 in improvements to a cycleway leading to the major employment growth area at IAMP/Follingsby (£0.5 million). Due to the abnormal travel patterns resulting from Covid it has not been possible as yet to monitor the outcome from these more recent schemes.

Development of proposals to improve walking and cycling networks is underway through a number of Transforming Cities Fund (Tranche 2) projects. These include two major cycle corridor improvements and improved networks in two major regeneration areas within Gateshead. The Council has developed a draft Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plan (LCWIP), with technical support funded by DfT. The draft focuses on two pilot areas: East Gateshead and Birtley & Kibblesworth. The East Gateshead pilot covers the Felling and Deckham wards and was chosen specifically because of the current poor health outcomes in the area. The Council is intending to review the draft to ensure compliance with LTN1/20 (the draft pre-dates the guidance) before adoption. The Council is also intending to then expand coverage of the LCWIP to the whole borough. Both of these workstreams will utilise funding from the Capability Fund.

The Council is, however, already bringing forward schemes from the draft LCWIP. Some of the measures included in the draft Plan for Birtley & Kibblesworth are being taken forward through Tranche 2 of the Transforming Cities Fund. In addition, the elements proposed by Gateshead for inclusion in the North East regional bid for Tranche 3 of the Active Travel Fund are taken entirely from the draft LCWIP with a main focus on local links in and around Felling and Deckham. The current, and subsequently expanded, LCWIP will form the basis of the development of a pipeline of walking and cycling schemes for future investment.

## **Social Prescribing Programme**

Gateshead is ideally placed to host one of the GP Prescribing Pilots. We have strong established relationships across Local Authority, Primary and Secondary care, Police and (Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise) (VCSE) and meet regularly across the system, creating effective pieces of partnership work. Our social prescribing scheme is well established, having begun prior to the establishment of the PCN's in 2014, and benefitting from 6 years' of experience. Nominated this year for 'Social Prescribing Scheme of the Year' by the National Association of Link Workers, our social prescribing is managed across the whole Borough by Edberts House, an innovative community charity, who were cited as an national example of good practice in Michael Marmot's 10 year

review. Edberts House CEO and Development Manager also work for NHSE as Regional Learning Co-ordinators and PCN Advisors, and support the NHSE National Social Prescribing team, advising on national policy, leading national webinars and supporting the establishment of new schemes.

The pilot would support the 5 Gateshead PCN's, 'Care and Support Planning' approach already undertaken in four practices with patients as part of their annual long term conditions reviews (LTC) which supports identification of opportunities where patients will benefit from social prescribing and does this by enabling patient focused care and support planning conversations to agree priorities for the patient to improve their health and wellbeing.

Working with the Edberts House social prescribing scheme across the Borough has allowed us to develop a number of innovative projects to tackle multiple issues. Gateshead have an established track record of innovative pilots around physical activity. For example, data demonstrated that local usage of Gateshead International Stadium – one of our Borough's finest assets – was very low. This was concerning, as it is situated in one of the areas of highest deprivation in the UK, with 45% child poverty, and in the top 5% IMD. Partnership work between Gateshead Public Health, Edberts House, Gateshead Harriers and local primary schools enabled local young people to get priority access to the club: young people who had never run on a 'proper' track before, and 2 young people went on to achieve further honours with the Harriers. The importance of this work was recognised by England Athletics, who awarded it a national Innovation in Athletics award.

Gateshead are committed to exploring new and innovative ways to link staff across our systems, creating the best possible platforms for our residents to try new forms of physical activity. We have seconded leisure staff into the VCSE to work alongside our communities to increase physical activity and have developed bike clinics at some of our community venues and promotion of bike safety alongside, community led walking groups.

We feel we could utilise our existing experience, desire to continue to learn, and flexible multi-sector approach to be the perfect pilot site for this project in evaluating the impact of walking and cycling levels, linked to behaviour change interventions and infrastructure developments. As a project group we would like to target specific communities living in our most deprived wards of Central and East Gateshead e.g., Felling, Deckham and Birtley linking this to the builds on the work of the Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plan (LCWIP) in these areas. We would propose to use the funding to further develop bike and walk clinics at community venues at the heart of communities, promoting bike safety and to encourage children and families to take up cycling and walking. This would be inclusive with a focus on the use of bikes as mobility aids for disabled cyclists and raising awareness of cycles as mobility aids with communities. We would build on the existing community led approaches utilised by our link workers and would look to support to further train local people to be bike leaders/walk leaders and trained in bike maintenance, to empower our communities and to embed the expertise required for sustainability.

### **Connections to local health campaigns**

Gateshead runs several successful local and national health campaigns, information, and support through the Gateshead Resource Hub and One you Gateshead. Local and national campaigns which would support this pilot, include Change4 Life, One You, Active at home, Better Health, Change 4 Life and Healthier you campaign to support lifestyle

changes. This programme of work links with local weight management interventions from PHE, currently being delivered by the local authority for adults to increase their physical activity and improve their lifestyle choices through a tier 2 behaviour change weight management programme, which link workers will refer into.

Gateshead also has a nationally recognised Covid Community Champions programme and Making Every Contact Count (MECC) programme supporting the community and workforce with the skills to engage individuals in conversations about the benefits of behaviour change to boost physical and mental health and wellbeing.

### **Active travel work/campaigns**

Gateshead is part of the regionally based Go Smarter, Go Active Steering Group and cycling based roadshows. The social prescribing work will link with the [Go Smarter, Go Active](#) Microsite which can also be used to access brand new regional interactive walking and cycling maps. Part of this work incorporates guides for days out in the North East by foot and by bike on the website. Gateshead is also signed up to 'Bike Life,' which is the biggest assessment of cycling in urban areas in the UK and Ireland. It is delivered by Sustrans and the reports on inequalities in cycling and walking in Gateshead, has allowed us to look at the opportunities in getting more people active, in our communities.

Living Streets is engaged with 17 schools within Gateshead to deliver their [walk to school](#) initiative. The Council delivers Bikeability across schools in Gateshead and child pedestrian training to children in Gateshead and five other authorities in the region. We promote active travel engagement through Modeshift Stars and have in place a developing toolkit "[Be Cool](#)" to enable schools to engage in active travel. During 2020 we implemented a bike amnesty to support access to services by bike during a period in COVID where use of public transport was discouraged.

Gateshead has a proven track record of social prescribing involving a number of local partners which would provide an excellent foundation on which to build new and extended activity in the areas of- community bike and walk clinics that are accessible for communities, led by physical activity staff and link workers, the promotion of bikes as mobility aids and building on community led approaches utilised by our link workers to train and empower local people to be bike leaders/walk leaders. The similar commitment to improving walking and cycling infrastructure across the borough will complement this and help ensure that the enhanced activities can be carried out safely and successfully. The established record of delivery and partnership working in these areas together mean that Gateshead is an excellent candidate for this Social Prescribing Pilot initiative.

Yours sincerely

Chief Executive of Gateshead Council