

TITLE OF REPORT: **Active Travel Programme**

REPORT OF: **Peter Udall, Strategic Director, Economy, Innovation and Growth**

Purpose of the Report

1. This report updates Cabinet on the funding received by the Council through the Government's Capability Fund and seeks approval to utilise some of that funding to establish a scheme to provide small grants to businesses to encourage active travel.

Background

2. The Government launched the Local Authority Capability Fund in 2021, replacing the Access Fund which had previously only been offered to a subset of authorities. The Capability Fund supports the commitment made in 'Gear Change', the Government's Cycling and Walking Plan in July 2020, to increase the capabilities of local authorities to plan good active travel infrastructure, including building more expertise and undertaking more evidence-based planning.
3. It was intended that the grant would enable local transport authorities to promote cycling and walking in their areas by:
 - the development of infrastructure plans, including drawing up bids for capital funding that are compliant with recently updated guidance on the design of cycle infrastructure (known as LTN 1/20)
 - carrying out behaviour change activities, such as training and promotion
4. The Department for Transport notified all Combined and Local transport authorities of their indicative revenue funding allocations for 2021/22 in March 2021, however the actual confirmation of that award was delayed until November 2021. The award, totalling £283,400, was reported to Cabinet as part of the 'Local Transport Plan: Capital Programme Mid-Year Update' on 14th December, however, the funding not being received (via Transport North East on behalf of the North East Joint Transport Committee) until earlier this year.
5. Government deadlines for the funding are that it must be committed by the end of March 2022 and spent by the end of September 2022.

Programme

6. Capability guidance constrains the scope of activities which may be delivered with the funding. A programme has been developed in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport, which delivers enhanced provision of active travel to schools; opportunities for workplaces to improve levels of active travel; and enables the development of plans for more and better infrastructure for cycling and walking. The proposed programmed is summarised as follows:

Project	Activity to include
School travel planning	Led cycle rides, additional cycle training, school travel challenge Travel planning database School sustainable travel mapping software Resources to support school sustainable travel toolkit <i>Be Cool, Park away from school</i>
Workplace travel planning	Love to ride Travel planning database Park that Bike and business grants
Council travel plan	Travel plan measures to encourage staff to travel sustainably
Active travel marketing and comms	Resources and engagement promoting sustainable transport and behaviour change
Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)	Updating current draft LCWIP in line with LTN1/20 Expansion of the current draft LCWIP to wider Gateshead area Staff training
Monitoring and Evaluation	Walking and cycling journey purpose and origin/destination data collection and analysis
School Streets	Feasibility studies and engagement on how to develop in Gateshead

7. Given the tight rules and short timescales for this spend it is proposed that the Strategic Director, Economy, Innovation and Growth finalises the programme following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport.
8. As noted above, part of the funding is intended to be used to provide small grants (up to £500 each up to a total of £6,500) to businesses to help them promote and encourage active travel – e.g. to provide cycle parking, staff lockers etc. This report seeks Cabinet approval for the Strategic Director, Economy, Innovation and Growth to establish such a scheme.

Recommendations

9. It is recommended that Cabinet:
- (i) approves the proposed programme from the Capability Fund as outlined in paragraph 6 above and authorises the Strategic Director, Economy, Innovation and Growth to finalise programme spend following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport,

- (ii) authorises the Strategic Director, Economy, Innovation and Growth to establish the grant scheme outlined in paragraph 8 above.

For the following reason:

To enable the available funding to be put to best use in supporting active travel and climate change objectives in Gateshead.

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APPENDIX 1

Policy Context

1. Active travel measures, to be delivered through this programme, play a key role in supporting achievement of the Gateshead Council's climate change strategy and support the Council's health and wellbeing strategy. The proposed initiatives support our strategic approach; making Gateshead a place where everyone thrives. They also support the Core Strategy and Urban Core Plan. The indicative programme utilises funding available to the Council through specific government grants and is aligned with the objectives of the North East Transport Plan.

Consultation

2. The Leader, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport have been consulted on the proposals and are supportive of them. Given the limited timeframe for the spend no public consultation has taken place.

Alternative Options

3. Given the tight timescale for spend the scope to develop alternative options is limited. The programme has been developed with the aim of delivering action that is effective and compliant with the funding scope in the time available.

Implications of Recommended Option

4. Resources:

- a) **Financial Implications** – The Strategic Director, Resources & Digital confirms that the programme is fully grant funded and has no financial implications for the Council.
- b) **Human Resources Implications** – There are no human resources implications.
- c) **Property Implications** - No property implications have been identified.

5. **Risk Management Implication** - The main risk with the spending is that failure to meet the prescribed timescales could lead to grant having to be re-paid. This risk will be minimised by recommendation (ii) of this report.
6. **Equality and Diversity Implications** - Implementation of the proposed initiatives will assist in reducing social exclusion by improving accessibility across Gateshead.
7. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – Proposals within the programme will assist in improving safety and security for the travelling public.

8. **Health Implications** – Improving opportunities for active travel through improves individual health and also benefits the wider population by improving air quality.
9. **Climate Emergency and Sustainability Implications** – Active travel will be an important element in providing a sustainable transport system capable of supporting Gateshead’s environmental, social and economic objectives. It seeks to reduce car dependence thereby contributing to the reduction of carbon emissions.
10. **Human Rights Implications** - None.
11. **Ward Implications** - All wards will be affected.

Background Information

12. Further background information is contained in: