

**REPORT TO CABINET
22 October 2022****TITLE OF REPORT: Active Travel Social Prescribing Pilot****REPORT OF: Alice Wiseman, Director of Public Health and Wellbeing****Purpose of the Report**

1. This report seeks to update Cabinet on the outcome of the feasibility plan submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) for the Active Travel Social Prescribing Pilot. A previous paper came to Cabinet in March 2022.

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).
3. Part of this funding was aimed at developing a number of Social Prescribing Pilots. Gateshead submitted a successful Expression of Interest (EOI) and received revenue funding of 25k for a feasibility study to develop a proposal expanding on the EOI to bid for up to £1.5 million to implement the pilot.

Successful Funding Application

4. Based on the assessment of the feasibility study Gateshead are one of 11 successful local authorities, to have been awarded funding for the active travel and social prescribing pilot. The allocation is £1,431,240.14 over a 3-year period. The breakdown of the funding is outlined in Table 1 below.
5. The pilot programme nationally will be managed by the Behaviour Change Programme team at Active Travel England (ATE) and is the first multi-year funded project delivered by the new agency.

Table 1

Local Authority	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Gateshead Council	£515,246.45	£457,996.84	£457,996.84

Focus of the Pilot Programme

6. The feasibility study has identified two specific areas of Gateshead for the pilot (Central and East wards) linking to Gateshead's draft Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). This will act as pilots for the rest of the Borough in establishing locally driven, evolving plans to improve conditions for cycling and walking.
7. The promotion of walking and cycling for short journeys will be a priority: contributing to air quality, carbon, and congestion benefits.
8. The pilot will embed 'Active Travel Link Workers' into our existing Borough-wide, and nationally recognised, social prescribing team, offering one-to-one support, group activities and volunteer-led peer support overseen by a dedicated manager.
9. These link workers will liaise with mental health practitioners and peer support workers to build active travel opportunities into established patient pathways to encourage maximum engagement.
10. Develop active travel hubs, utilizing existing assets, at the heart of our communities, supported by trained volunteers. This will enable bikes on prescription, hire schemes, plus an annual calendar of fully inclusive programmes, events and challenges to encourage cycling and walking. This includes added focus on the less mobile and raising awareness of cycles as mobility aids.
11. The work will be overseen by the operational and strategic steering groups, who will be accountable to report back to Active Travel England as part of their monitoring procedures.
12. The first 3 months of the programme will focus on priority areas of evaluation and monitoring requirements, further consultation to inform year 2 and 3 of the pilot and recruitment of posts.

Recommendations

13. It is recommended that Cabinet supports the successful funding award allocation of £1,431,240.14 over a 3-year period, to implement the Active Travel Social Prescribing Pilot in Gateshead.

For the following reason:

The successful funding bid will allow further work with key communities -who will benefit from increased levels of physical activity and associated wellbeing 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 pilot 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 Strategy¹ (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 Change². 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 study³. This pilot seeks to understand the relationship between personalised

¹ [Health and wellbeing strategy 2020.pdf \(gateshead.gov.uk\)](#)

² https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904146/gear-change-a-bold-vision-for-cycling-and-walking.pdf

³ 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 Gateshead Pilot project are:
 - To make active travel a realistic option for short journeys for key communities.
 - Test out new brave and bold approaches with partners across the fields of active travel and social prescribing.
 - To increase physical activity levels in the 3 target PCN areas.
 - To offer a more inclusive cycling and walking experience in Gateshead.
 - For communities to have increased confidence and feel equipped to walk and cycle for short journeys.
 - To increase volunteer and peer support numbers for walking and cycling activities.
 - To increase emotional health and wellbeing and feelings of satisfaction.
 - To increase the skills and knowledge of the workforce across the Gateshead sector (active travel and social prescribing related).
 - To increase inclusive opportunities for active travel.
 - Testing out co-production approaches with communities.
 - Raise the profile of active travel through social prescribing opportunities.
 - Pilot and test out a social prescribing referral route for active travel.
 - To understand more about the lived experience of communities including barriers and opportunities to walk and cycle as part of their commuting journey.
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 following People and Groups have been consulted in the preparation of this report:
 - Paper shared with Public Health SMT on 18TH October 2022.
 - Paper shared with Environment and Transport Portfolio on 1st November 2022.
 - Healthy Weight Paper outlining pilot shared with the Adult and Health Portfolio on 7th October 2022.
 - Paper shared with Communities Portfolio on 14th November 2022.

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 any financial implications will be met from the Department of Transport Grant Funding.
 - b) **Human Resources Implications** – No Human Resource implications, other than the time of the Council Officers who will oversee the pilot programme. Staff recruitment for the pilot will be with one of the partner organisations from the steering group.
 - c) **Property Implications** - No property implications. Any direct property implications will be bought to Cabinet at a later date.
11. **Risk Management Implication** - Risks associated with the pilot have been identified in the pilot bid submission and measures will be put in place to mitigate risks.
12. **Equality and Diversity Implications** - No equality and diversity implications of the recommended option. A comprehensive impact assessment was completed as part of the bid process for the pilot.
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 Councils 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

-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-travelsurvey-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

-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 \(gateshead.gov.uk\)](https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing-strategy-2020)