

Meeting date: 12 JULY 2022

Report to: Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure

Subject/report title: Sustainable Travel – Update

Report from: Paul Tovey – Head of Highway Management

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Wards affected:

- All Wards | Bickenhill | Blythe | Castle Bromwich | Chelmsley Wood |
 Dorridge/Hockley Heath | Elmdon | Kingshurst/Fordbridge | Knowle |
 Lyndon | Meriden | Olton | Shirley East | Shirley South |
 Shirley West | Silhill | Smith's Wood | St Alphege
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Public/private report: Public

Exempt by virtue of paragraph: N/A
N/A

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To brief the Cabinet Member on progress of the Local Authority Capability Fund (L AFC) programme of works; provide a summary of Sustainable Travel Behaviour Change Interventions currently being implemented; and to seek permission to receive funding from Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to deliver our Sustainable Travel Local Carbon Reduction Plan.

2. Decision(s) recommended

- 2.1 The Cabinet Member is asked to:

- (a) Note progress on the delivery of the Local Authority Capability Fund.

- (b) Note progress of the Sustainable Travel Behaviour Change Interventions Programme.
- (c) Agree to re-purpose the remaining DEFRA A45 business support programme funding of £460,205 and receive an additional allocation of £392,000 from DEFRA for the purposes of delivering the Sustainable Travel Local Carbon Reduction Plan; and
- (d) Delegate authority to the Assistant Director of Highways and Environment to utilise the total budget of £852,205 in line with funding conditions to deliver behaviour change interventions and to carry out feasibility designs for future walking and cycling routes.

3. Matters for Consideration

- 3.1 An efficient, reliable and safe highway network is an essential element of economic productivity and social connectivity. To help achieve this and protect the environment, more low carbon transport and methods of commuting and/or active travel modes will be needed.
- 3.2 The Council delivers a range of activities that support schools to encourage and enable children and their parents to access school by active travel and, independently, as they get older. A summary of the interventions delivered by the Council is detailed in Appendix 1 which includes working with businesses and delivering bespoke projects that help to reduce single occupancy car journeys to work.
- 3.3 Sustainable Travel Programmes are summarised in Table 1 below. This sets out how the external grant funding of £2.893million, received to date, has been used over the last 5 years.

TABLE 1 – External Funding secured for Sustainable Travel Programmes delivered between 2017-2018 to 2022-2023							
Programme	2017-2018 £'000	2018-2019 £'000	2019-2020 £'000	2020-2021 £'000	2021-2022 £'000	2022-2023 Budget £'000	Totals £'000
DEFRA - Air Quality (tranche1)	0	9	104	133	10	0	256
Wildlife Ways	0	44	50	71	90	89	344
Independent Travel Training (Childrens Services)	151	172	184	209	242	287	1,245
Bikeability	118	129	123	91	194	235	890
LACF (local authority capability fund)	0	0	0	0	10	85	95
S106 PTP (personalised travel planning)	0	0	0	11	26	26	63
TOTALS £'000	269	354	461	515	572	722	2,893

- 3.4 The LAFC is the most recent initiative which will enable support to local businesses to be extended to the 31 October 2022. Achieving this timeline is critical and in turn leads to accessing further grant funding opportunities. A summary of activities included is set out in Appendix 2.
- 3.5 Although the DEFRA 1 A45 Business Support Project was aimed at improving air quality along a specific section of the A45 Coventry Road near to M42 Junction 6, this programme of travel behaviour changes also brought benefits to many other parts of the Borough. Unfortunately, it could not deliver all of its outputs due to the travel restrictions imposed by the Covid pandemic. This has been recognised by DEFRA which has allowed the unspent funding, of approximately £460,000, to be carried forward to support continued work in the DEFRA 2 Programme.
- 3.6 DEFRA recently announced that it will be awarding the Council a further £392,000 towards its behaviour change and active travel projects. This will enable the Council to continue to work with local businesses to enable employees to travel in more active ways to work, reduce single car journeys and increase their use of electric vehicles. The approved 3-year programme of activity titled The Sustainable Travel Local Carbon Reduction Plan is detailed in Appendix 3.

4. What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?

- 4.1 There remain huge challenges within our local communities and commercial sector to educate and influence how, when and why people travel around the Borough. Without this type of investment, which is closely aligned to both Government and Council priorities, it would not be possible to deliver this type of work.
- 4.2 An assessment of the Council's ability to deliver the required outputs within the agreed timescale indicates that there is both capacity and expertise to do so, and any associated risks will be managed in line with the Council's Risk Management Policy. It is also important to maintain the Council's excellent delivery reputation which is increasingly being linked to the possibility of future funding bid success.
- 4.3 Whilst there is always an option to not accept this funding offer, this would be a missed opportunity with low risk, would not align with the Council's priorities nor support its wider economic growth objectives, as set out in the draft Local Development Plan.

5. Reasons for recommending preferred option

- 5.1 The funding provides opportunities to deliver sustainable travel training programmes that align with objectives within the Council Plan. In particular, this work will also contribute to the carbon reduction targets, help improve air quality along with some of the social and healthy lifestyles agendas being promoted too.

6. Implications and Considerations

6.1 State how the proposals in this report contribute to the priorities in the [Council Plan](#):

Priority:	Contribution:
<p>People and Communities:</p> <p>7. Improving outcomes for children and young people in Solihull.</p> <p>8. Good quality, responsive, and dignified care and support for Adults in Solihull when they need it.</p> <p>9. Take action to improve life chances and health outcomes in our most disadvantaged communities.</p> <p>10. Enable communities to thrive.</p>	<p>Promoting alternatives to the car to more affordable options such as cycling has substantial benefits to our residents. Cycling is an affordable way to travel and offers many health and well-being benefits.</p>
<p>Economy:</p> <p>11. Develop and promote the borough's economy, with a focus on revitalising our town and local centres.</p> <p>12. Maximising the opportunities of UK Central and HS2.</p> <p>13. Increase the supply of affordable and social housing that is environmentally sustainable.</p>	<p>Promoting alternatives to single car journeys to commute to our town centres for work, school and leisure purposes supports the vision of the Town Centre Master Plan and will increase use of infrastructure implemented through Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans and the Active Travel Fund.</p>
<p>Environment:</p> <p>14. Enhance our natural environment, improve air quality and reduce net carbon emissions.</p>	<p>Supporting more people to have the confidence to choose to travel actively, such as walking or cycling, will reduce the number of car journeys in the Borough. This in turn will have a direct impact on congestion, improving air quality and reducing carbon emissions supporting the drive to Net Zero Carbon in 2041</p>
<p>15. Promote employee wellbeing</p>	<p>Active travel is proven to have a beneficial impact on employee wellbeing and health and fitness.</p>

6.2 Consultation and Scrutiny:

6.2.1 This Programme will be monitored by the Council internally and with regular reporting to DEFRA.

6.3 Financial implications:

6.3.1 The Sustainable Travel Team is funded by a combination of external grants, developer contributions and some Core Council revenue funding with an overall net budget for 2022-23 of £77,790. A summary of the £2.893million of external funding secured and utilised over the most recent 6-year period is summarised in Table 1 above.

6.3.2 The overall DEFRA funding of £852,205 secured to deliver the Sustainable Travel Local Carbon Reduction Plan consists of remaining funding of £460,205 from the previous DEFRA 1 A45 business support programme and an additional funding allocation of £392,000. The approved 3 year programme of activity for the Sustainable Travel Local Carbon Reduction Plan is detailed in Appendix 3.

6.4 Legal implications:

6.4.1 None due to this report.

6.5 Risk implications, including Risk Appetite:

6.5.1 The service's risk register is updated and reviewed regularly to ensure senior management has oversight of any future risks.

6.6 Equality implications:

6.6.1 None.

6.7 Linkages to our work with the West Midlands Combined Authority, Local Enterprise Partnership or the Birmingham & Solihull Integrated Care System:

6.7.1 The Capability Fund Solihull Programme is co-ordinated by Transport for West Midlands.

7. List of appendices referred to

7.1 Appendix 1 – Sustainable Travel Team – core activity

7.2 Appendix 2 – Local Authority Capability Fund – summary of activities

7.3 Appendix 3 – DEFRA - Sustainable Travel Local Carbon Reduction Plan

8. Background papers used to compile this report

8.1 n/a

9. List of other relevant documents

9.1 n/a