

BRIEFING NOTE: EMERGENCY ACTIVE TRAVEL FUND

1 Background

- 1.1 On Saturday 9th May the Secretary of State for Transport announced a £250m Emergency Active Travel Fund (EATF) to facilitate walking and cycling as a mode of transport in England. The EATF is part of an overall £2bn long term package announced in February 2020. The £250m included £25m for cycle maintenance vouchers and £225m for temporary measures that support reopening the economy and the easing of COVID-19 lockdown restrictions. Government guidance on funding for EATF was published on 28 May 2020. The maximum funding for WSCC is £3.919m which is split into two tranches. Tranche 1 contained a maximum of £784k and Tranche 2 a maximum of approximately £3.1m.
- 1.2 The main purpose of the funding is to promote cycling as a replacement for journeys previously made by public transport. Funding is weighted towards areas which until the crisis had high levels of public transport use, especially for short and local journeys which can now be cycled. Schemes were expected to be temporary in nature but may evolve into permanent changes.
- 1.3 The Department for Transport (DfT) required Tranche 1 proposals by 5 June 2020 and will then determine if they are suitable for funding. The £784k funding is not guaranteed and may be clawed back should schemes not be started within four weeks and completed within eight weeks of works commencement. The money will be needed to implement, maintain and monitor the schemes. The bidding process for Tranche 2 is not yet understood. However, DfT have suggested that this will be based on more stringent business cases and long-term permanent plans and contingent on successful Tranche 1 applications.
- 1.4 Separately, district and borough councils were offered the opportunity to claim a share of £50m from the 'Re-launching the High Street Fund', which varies by local authority on a per capita basis.

2 Identification of Potential Measures

- 2.1 Following the announcement on 9 May, and prior to the Department's letter of 28 May outlining details of the Tranche 1

funding, officers opened dialogue with district and borough council colleagues and the South Downs National Park. Each of these submitted a list of priority routes that they considered would benefit from temporary 'pop-up' active travel measures and in some cases other ideas linked with opening the high street.

- 2.2 Independently, the various local cycle forums in West Sussex produced their own list of suggestions. In addition, a number of cycle forums contacted their local county councillor or parish / town councils about their list, and this prompted a number of additional suggestions. Furthermore, some requests for improvements were received directly from residents and other organisations such as Sustrans.
- 2.3 The Cabinet Member of Highways and Transport wrote to all county councillors on 21 May with information describing how potential ideas were being collated, the process being followed and inviting members to contribute should they so wish. In total over 250 suggestions were received, and a database established to record them. Central to the process dealing with the various sorts of requests being made of the County Council was to categorise each request. These were divided into three scheme types:
 - a) Type 1 walking and cycling routes aimed primarily at cycling schemes as an alternative to public transport. These will be prioritised by WSCC and form the basis of the tranche 1 bid.
 - b) Type 1 & 2 schemes that are considered to be priorities by district and borough councils but not included in WSCC bid for EATF. Such schemes, should they progress, will be funded by district and borough councils.
 - c) Type 3 schemes identified, prioritised and funded by the district and borough councils.
- 2.4 Given the restrictions around use of funding and timescale for submission only Type 1 schemes were subject to technical assessment. During the week commencing 1 June 2020 each Type 1 suggestion was scored by a panel of officers against the following technical criteria:
 - Scope to make the scheme permanent
 - Priority within a Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)

- Stakeholder support
 - Output from the Rapid Cycleway Prioritisation Toolkit (University of Leeds)
 - Presence of a public transport/key worker corridor
 - Buildability/ease of implementation
- 2.5 An estimated scheme cost per linear kilometre was derived from information provided by our delivery partner (Balfour Beatty Living Places) and neighbouring local authorities. In some cases various scheme suggestions were combined into a composite scheme to ensure the best chance of a successful bid. The highest scoring Type 1 scheme from each district be included in the Tranche 1 bid.
- 2.6 The Cabinet Member for Highways & Infrastructure wrote to all county councillors on 3 June 2020 to provide an opportunity to comment on the proposed shortlist prior to submission on 5 June. A number of responses were received in support of the approach taken.
- 2.7 The programme of works listed below includes reallocating road space to cycle lanes using temporary traffic management and other forms of light segregation, supported in some instances with 20mph speed limits and other temporary traffic regulation orders (TROs). The programme will deliver 21 linear kilometres of temporary cycle lanes in the major conurbations across the seven districts in West Sussex, facilitating travel choice in major urban centres and linking commuting destinations.

3 Tranche 1 Funding Bid

- 3.1 The following programme of temporary Active Travel measures was submitted to the Department on Friday 5th June:

**a) A286 Chichester Ring-Road (2.0km) Estimated cost
£74,000**

Reallocation of carriageway space by segregating lane 1 of the dual carriageway to form a cycle lane, widening and providing light segregation on existing cycleway on a busy gyratory, works supported by 20mph speed limit. Creates links to existing cycle facilities including a pop-up route through a large central car park or provides alternatives to cycle paths where social distancing may be difficult to maintain. Route links central retail area, Further Education College, County & District Council

Offices, Chichester University, Leisure Centre and St Richards Hospital. (Provides cycle lanes in both directions).
(Potential for parts of the route to become permanent)

b) A259 Chichester to Bognor Regis (5.0km) Estimated cost £185,000

Widening existing off-carriageway cycle track to enable social distancing (on this busy commuter route). Potential for converting one lane of western dual carriageway at end of cycle track. (Potential for permanent improvement)

c) Three Bridges to Manor Royal, Crawley and Pound Hill to Crawley Town Centre (4.5km) Estimated cost £166,500

Bring forward an existing light segregated cycle way connecting with existing NCN21 (potential to improve this section). Provides alternative travel link to Manor Royal Business District, Crawley and Gatwick.

A2220 Hastlett Avenue – providing continuity and protecting the existing cycleway, linking the residential areas of Pound Hill, Three Bridges and Burley’s Wood to the Town Centre. (Potential for permanent improvement).

d) A270 Upper Shoreham Road, Shoreham-By-Sea (4.6km) Estimated cost £170,200

Reallocation of road space to provide light segregated cycleways in both directions linking Shoreham to Brighton and Hove. (Includes reallocation of lane 1 on sections of dual carriageways). (Potential for parts of the route to become permanent).

e) A24 Worthing (2.9km) Estimated cost £107,300

Create cycle provision connecting the north and south of Worthing: A24/A259 Grove Lodge to The Steyne (seafront). Route is primarily urban dual carriageway. Scheme comprises of reallocation of road space (lane 1) and introduction of 20mph speed limits in retail areas. (Potential for parts of the route to become permanent).

f) A281/B2237 Horsham Ring Road (0.4km) Estimated cost £14,800

Urban dual carriageway, reallocation lane one of Albion Way in both directions. Scheme comprises segregated cycle lanes. (Temporary).

g) A22 Felbridge to East Grinstead Town Centre (1.7km)
Estimated cost £62,900

Works to protect existing cycle way including extension to link to town centre. Light segregation (Permanent)

- 3.2 The total amount requested for Tranche 1 is £0.781m and comprises £0.547m capital and £0.234m revenue.
- 3.3 A media release was issued ahead of the submission detailing the above schemes and details have been included in the County Council's COVID-19 e-newsletter.
- 3.4 At the time of producing this briefing, the Council had yet to receive confirmation that its Tranche 1 proposal has been accepted by DfT. Any update on this will be provided verbally to the Committee.
- 3.5 In addition, district and borough councils have the opportunity to promote additional schemes in their areas that are priorities for them, but not included in WSCC bid. Currently this includes Worthing seafront and Middle Road & Stoney Lane Shoreham.

4 Tranche 2 Funding Bid

- 4.1 Details of the Tranche 2 funding have not yet been published and are expected during June / July. Any further updates on this will be provided to the Committee as appropriate.
- 4.2 Officers are in the process of reviewing all scheme proposal ideas previously submitted ahead of any potential Tranche 2 bid. Once a technical assessment is complete as described above members will be contacted and asked for their view. Members will be advised of the bidding criteria and which schemes best meet the criteria. It should be noted that Tranche 2 is likely to require robust long-term plans to be in place and high benefit cost ratios linked with economic recovery.
- 4.3 It is important to note that the total amount of funding available is £3.1m and that this is not guaranteed. Given that a permanent cycle track can cost approximately £0.5m per km and that through Tranche 1 the Council has bid for 21km of temporary cycle track, the Tranche 2 bid will be necessarily limited in scope. Priorities for Tranche 2 will be determined by those schemes that best meet DfT funding criteria.

5 Safe Space Schemes Promoted by the District and Borough Councils

- 5.1 In a separate but related exercise, officers have been working closely with colleagues in district and borough councils to help determine what schemes are necessary to allow for safe reopening of shops and businesses. Again this work has had to be carried out quickly, given the announcement that shops may reopen from 15th June.
- 5.2 West Sussex County Council has acted in its capacity as Highway Authority to agree scope and operation; ensure key consultation is completed; assist in design and implementation and to make traffic regulation orders where required.
- 5.3 In order to assist colleagues in the district and borough councils, officers have made our consultants WSP available to assist in design and Balfour Beatty Living Places colleagues available in respect of implementation. All works are funded by the district and borough councils.

6 Resources

- 6.1 Responding to the Emergency Active Travel Fund (Tranches 1 and 2) and the Safe Space changes has to date required the Local Transport Improvement Team (approx. 5 FTE) to be diverted away from primarily developing programmed transport improvements. This will remain the case assuming the Tranche 1 bid is successful in order that implementation of temporary improvements can be managed. In addition, the Tranche 2 bid will need to be made and further works may stem from that bid.
- 6.2 It is therefore expected that programmed highway schemes under the Local Transport Improvements Programme 2021/22. (e.g. safety, school gate, bus priority and other cycling and walking schemes) will be necessarily deferred. Community TROs and Community Highways Schemes may be similarly affected.
- 6.3 To support design work, consultants WSP have been commissioned to support development of Tranche 1 schemes and are in discussion with contractors in respect of speedy implementation. In addition, conversations with emergency services, and bus operators are progressing so that their concerns may be considered.

7 **Issues Identified and Lessons Learned**

- 7.1 The announcement by the Secretary of State on 9 May 2020 was largely unexpected and generated significant interest. It was rapidly shared and as a result the Council received a high volume of unsolicited enquiries and suggestions in a very short space of time. That trend continues and such enquiries take considerable time to respond to.
- 7.2 The DfT gave no indication what criteria would be applied to the fund. As a result, no attempt was made to prioritise schemes during mid-May because there was no foundation upon which to base such a prioritisation. The DfT gave five working days in which to submit a bid and the criteria was quite restrictive, as described under 1 above. Such prioritisation work therefore had to be undertaken very quickly and with extremely limited consultation.
- 7.3 The limitations placed upon the County Council meant that, with the support of the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure, and colleagues in the district and borough councils, 7 schemes were identified, assessed and prioritised within 3 weeks. We furthermore expect to make a start on these schemes on site within 4 weeks of funding confirmation.
- 7.4 In order to manage expectations associated with any Tranche 2 funding bid, it is recommended that the Council is proactive in relation to the following messages:
- No further schemes are considered beyond those already submitted
 - The list is shared with members so that they are aware of what has been submitted
 - Officers continue to work closely with district and borough colleagues
 - Officers carry out technical assessments on these schemes over the coming weeks
 - Members are contacted in respect of schemes in their area as part of the technical assessment
 - Once the details of the Tranche 2 bid have been released members are advised and a press statement is released containing details of the bid including timescales and process.

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