

ECONOMY REGENERATION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**8 JUNE 2021**

REPORT TITLE:	ACTIVE TRAVEL FUNDING – TRANCHE 1, TRANCHE 2 AND LOCAL AUTHORITY CAPABILITY FUNDING
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND PLACE

REPORT SUMMARY

This report seeks approval for the Active Travel Fund Tranche 1 and 2 and Capability Fund Programmes for 2021/22 and to allocate the funds to priorities and projects as outlined in the report.

The Wirral Plan 2025 sets out the Council's vision to secure the best possible future for our residents, defined by the community prosperity we create and supported by our excellent people and services. This proposal directly supports the following key themes within that plan:

- A cleaner, greener borough which celebrates, protects and improves; our environment and urgently tackles the environmental emergency
- A prosperous inclusive economy where local people can get good jobs and achieve their aspirations; and
- Safe, vibrant communities where people want to live and raise their families

This matter affects all Wards within the Borough.

This matter is a Key Decision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Economy, Regeneration & Development Committee are requested to make a recommendation to Policy and Resources Committee to:

- (1) Authorise the Director of Regeneration and Place to accept the grant funding of £1,153,380 allocated to Wirral Council by Liverpool City Region Combined Authority for the Active Travel Fund Tranche 1 and 2 Programmes and accept the Local Authority Active Travel Capability Fund Programme indicative allocation of £286,000.

- (2) Approve the proposed Active Travel Fund Tranche 1 and 2 Programmes and the Active Travel Capability Fund Programme (“the Programmes”) as set out in Appendices 1, 2 and 3 of this report.
- (3) Authorise the Director of Regeneration and Place, in consultation with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and the Chair and Spokespersons of the Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee to amend the Programmes if required having due regard to any issues that may arise during design or consultation stages of projects.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 To ensure that the Council achieves development and delivery of active travel schemes within the Borough as part of a Liverpool City Region (LCR) wide programme of schemes and interventions.
- 1.2 To ensure that the Council supports schemes which will deliver increased levels of sustainable travel as set out in the emerging Local Plan and to support actions required to address the Climate Emergency and the target in the Cool2 Strategy to 'a complete transition to fossil fuel free local travel by around 2030'.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The Council could not accept the funding. This is not considered to be an appropriate option given that supporting active travel is in line with our commitment to addressing the climate emergency, improving the health of our residents and encouraging alternative modes of transport to the private car.
- 2.2 The funding could be used for other purposes. This is not considered an appropriate option as it would not meet the terms of the grant award which has been specifically provided to deliver infrastructure or develop projects that will enable active travel. Schemes and projects have been developed in line with guidance provided by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) and in line with the criteria of the individual funding stream. Feedback from the Liveable Streets Commonplace consultation undertaken during Summer 2020 was also taken into account to support scheme identification.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Tranche 1 Emergency Active Travel Fund

- 3.1 On the 9 May 2020 the Secretary of State for Transport announced a £250 million Emergency Active Travel Fund. For Tranche 1 of the funding. In line with Department for Transport guidance, the LCRCA identified the need to develop a programme of measures to reduce the dependency on car-based journeys and through segregation provide increased confidence to people wishing to cycle. As part of Tranche 1 the LCRCA received £1.97 million and from this Wirral Council received £308,380 to implement light segregation measures to improve existing on road cycle facilities on New Chester Road (between Bebington Road, New Ferry and St Paul's Road, Rock Ferry) and to create a new on carriageway cycle lane on Fender Lane (from Hoylake Rd, Moreton to Hoylake Rd, Bidston) and £15,000 to install cycle parking. (see Appendix 1).
- 3.2 The Department for Transport intended that Tranche 1 was delivered at a rapid pace to address the COVID emergency. Wirral, along with many other authorities, has faced challenges in obtaining appropriate segregation equipment from suppliers who have been inundated with authorities across the country placing orders at the same time. Supply chain issues have resulted in schemes not being delivered as quickly

as originally anticipated. Government and the LCRCA have been understanding of these challenges and have extended the timescales for delivery of the Tranche 1 schemes.

- 3.3. Following consultation held last year, the majority of the scheme on New Chester Road is now completed with the remainder expected to be completed shortly. Ward members have been consulted regarding the Fender Lane scheme and following this member engagement, a consultation has taken place with affected residents. The results of this are currently being reviewed in line with our statutory consultation procedures.

Tranche 2 Active Travel Fund

- 3.4 The Tranche 2 schemes have been developed by officers in line with guidance provided by the LCRCA which required schemes to focus on either linking to key employment sites, improving existing on road cycle lanes with light segregation or linking residential areas to key transport hubs or high streets.
- 3.5 In November 2020 the LCRCA were notified they had been awarded £7,716,000. Wirral has been awarded £830,000 of this (£680,606 capital and £149,394 revenue).
- 3.6. The proposed programme, set out in Appendix 2 of this report, includes light segregation of cycle lanes on Duke Street (Bidston and St James ward); Arrowe Park Road (Pensby and Thingwall Ward); Harrison Drive, (Wallasey Ward); Leasowe Road (Leasowe and Moreton East Ward/Wallasey Ward), and a pilot road closure on The Crescent, West Kirby (Hoylake and Meols Ward) The LCR wide bid also included funding for 3 School Streets projects at Liscard Primary (Liscard), Greenleas Primary (Wallasey) and Christ Church Primary (Moreton).
- 3.7 Although it was intended that Tranche 1 Emergency Active Travel Fund was delivered at a rapid pace to address the COVID emergency, Tranche 2 has less of an emphasis on social distancing and providing relief to public transport capacity. Tranche 2 has more of an emphasis on increasing cycling and walking in the longer term in line with Government objectives set out in 'Gear Change', the Department of Transport (DfT) strategy and policy document for active travel released in July 2020. The 'Gear Change' strategy sets out the DfT's vision for cycling and walking setting out plans to 'revolutionise active travel'. The objective of Tranche 2 funding is to cement the benefits and legacy of change over the past 12 months during periods of lockdown, and to reflect this 'Emergency' has been removed from the grant title, which is now 'Active Travel Fund'.
- 3.8 The DfT have stated that they would like schemes to be delivered as soon as 'reasonably practicable' and as far as possible, schemes will be expected to be delivered by 31 March 2022.
- 3.9 The relevant ward members are in the process of being engaged regarding the proposed tranche 2 schemes within their area. Members views regarding the suitability of the schemes and proposals will be used to further develop and refine or amend the proposed programme. Following consultation with ward members regarding the draft programme design work can be commenced prior to public

consultation on the detail of the individual schemes. Further discussions will also commence on the school streets schemes, the locations of these have previously been the subject of consultation with ward members.

Active Travel Capability Fund

- 3.10 On 3 March 2021 the DfT notified all Combined and Local transport authorities of their indicative revenue funding allocations for 2021/22 under a new one year Local Authority Capability Fund. The 2021/22 Capability Fund is designed to support behaviour change activities and the development of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans.
- 3.11 The Local Authority Capability Fund replaces the Access Fund, previously offered to a subset of authorities. It supports the commitment made in Gear Change to increase the capabilities of local authorities to plan good active travel infrastructure, including building more expertise and undertaking more evidence-based planning.
- 3.12 The total amount of revenue funding that will be provided in 2021/22 is £30 million across England. The amount of funding for each authority has been calculated according to a formula which takes account of value for money and the Government’s key objectives to level up the economy and to support jobs and skills to help the economy recover from Covid-19. This takes into account population, the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) and propensity for walking and cycling.
- 3.13 Wirral Council have indicatively been awarded £286,000 from the Local Authority Capability Fund and as part of a LCRCA submission to the DfT have submitted a provisional programme as per Appendix 3.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 All schemes detailed in Appendices 1 and 2 are funded from the LCRCA grant allocation for Active Travel Fund Tranche 1 and Tranche 2 respectively. This is as per table 1 below:

Table 1: Wirral Active Travel Fund Allocations (£)

	Capital	Revenue	Total
Tranche 1	308,380	0	308,380
Tranche 1 Cycle Parking	15,000	0	15,000
Tranche 2	680,606	149,394	830,000
Total	1,003,986	149,394	1,153,380

- 4.2. Projects detailed in Appendix 3 are proposed to be funded from an indicative Active Travel Capability Fund revenue allocation of £286,000. Confirmation of this allocation is awaited from the LCRCA.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council has statutory duties as defined by the Highways Act 1980, Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984, Road Traffic Act 1988, Local Government Act 1972 and the Traffic Management Act 2004.
- 5.2 If successful in securing funding the Council will be required to enter into a grant funding agreement with the LCRCA. Advice will be required from Legal Services prior to entering into such an agreement.
- 5.3 Following scheme delivery the Section 151 Officer will be required to sign a declaration confirming that the funding was defrayed in accordance with the grant conditions.
- 5.4 In accordance with the Council's Constitution any amendment to the Capital Programme requested by a Committee or officer in excess of £100,000 is reserved to Policy & Resources Committee.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 All capital schemes are funded from Tranche 1 and Tranche 2 allocations and will be added to the Council's Capital Programme. Existing staff resources will be used for the detailed investigation, design and supervision of these schemes, supplemented by external support where required. Future revenue maintenance costs will be met from the Highway Maintenance Revenue Budget.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 Failure to undertake the identified programme of works would result in a failure to support the delivery of the priorities of the LCRCA and have reputational impact on Wirral and the LCR. Consequently, this could result in the loss or clawback of funding or impact on future funding decisions and awards.
- 7.2 The list of schemes identified has been prepared with initial estimates, however it should be noted that final schemes will be subject to discussions with ward members and consultations. The costing of detailed designs and further detailed investigations will be required prior to any final scheme being designed. Some of these schemes may also be subject to the requirement of a Traffic Regulation Order(s), and delivery may be dependent on resolving objections to proposals during consultation.
- 7.3 Failure to adhere to the Gear Change strategy and associated technical guidance LTN1/20 may result in the Council failing to meet the standards set by the new Active Travel England body. The soon to be established Active Travel England body will assess Wirral's performance with respect to sustainable travel outcomes, particularly cycling and walking, which will be taken into account when considering funding allocations. The new Active Travel England funding body will enforce the standards with the aim of raising performance.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Wirral Council has a statutory consultation processes that is required for the undertaking of work on the adopted highway which will require public consultation, objections to which would be considered under the Scheme of Delegation in the Council's Constitution or by the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee once a level of objections has been reached exceeding the current scheme of Delegation number.
- 8.2 Consultations will be undertaken in accordance with the following guiding principles:
- It should be at a time when proposals are at a formative stage;
 - Must include sufficient reasons for particular proposals to allow those consulted to give intelligent consideration and an intelligent response;
 - Those consulted should be made aware of the factors that are of decisive relevance to the decision;
 - Adequate time should be given for consideration and response;
 - The product of the consultation should be conscientiously taken into account by the decision makers in finalising their statutory proposals/ when the ultimate decision is taken.
- 8.3 The Wirral Active Travel Forum is a formally constituted group which meets quarterly with interested public and private organisations and individuals, to support active travel as a simple, low cost and effective way for people to access life opportunities whilst increasing levels of physical activity in their day to day life. Membership of this group is open to all and the forum will continue to be engaged as these programmes develop.
- 8.4 Members will recall at their meeting on the 4th March 2021 it was agreed to establish an Active Travel Working Group to support the work of this committee. The newly formed Active Travel Members Working Group will also be engaged as these programmes develop.
- 8.5 The LCRCA are also required to evidence to the DfT that appropriate consultation has taken place with a wider focus on engagement with the public to gather opinion on cycle lanes in general across with wider sections of the population. The LCRCA proposes to engage with residents across the City Region to gauge opinion on issues such as investment into walking and cycling, reducing congestion, and reallocation of road space. The method of consultation is yet to be confirmed, the LCRCA has previously used the Commonplace web portal for similar consultations.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.
- 9.2. Whilst there are no equality implications arising from this report, the associated

actions arising from the delivery may need to assess any equality issues and mitigate any negative impact that may emerge.

- 9.3 The Council has an obligation under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality duty (Sect 149 2011) to show due regard to the duty and show due regard to mitigate any negative impacts that may affect people with protected characteristics under the Act. The Director of Regeneration and Place recognises that this decision may have an impact on those who would wish to access certain locations by motor vehicle and other modes of transport. Where applicable details of any restrictions and alternative routes would be published and an equality impact assessment would be undertaken.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Increasing cycling and walking will help combat climate change. By encouraging and enabling people to travel more on foot and by cycle instead of private car harmful emissions will be reduced. Promoting active travel can result in reduced emissions of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂), particulate matter (PM) and CO₂ helping to tackle climate change and improve air quality.
- 10.2 Gear Change identifies that mode shift to active transport is one of the most cost effective ways of reducing transport emissions and that meeting the targets to double cycling and increasing walking would lead to savings of £567million annually from air quality alone and prevent 8.300 premature deaths each year in England and provide opportunity to improve green spaces and biodiversity.

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APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 Tranche 1 Emergency Active Travel Programme
- Appendix 2 Tranche 2 Active Travel Programme
- Appendix 3 Active Travel Capability Fund Programme

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Gear Change Plan for Cycling and Walking – Department for Transport July 2020
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycling-and-walking-plan-for-england>

Cycling Infrastructure Design Local Transport Note 1/20
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-120>

Department for Transport Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy 2017
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/918442/cycling-walking-investment-strategy.pdf

Sustrans Bike Life Report Liverpool City Region

<https://www.sustrans.org.uk/bike-life/bike-life-liverpool-city-region/>

Wirral Liveable Streets Consultation Summer 2020

<https://wirralliveablestreets.commonplace.is/comments/5ee10851c9dc0f515e52f007>

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE 'GEAR CHANGE' DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT PLAN FOR CYCLING AND WALKING	Tuesday, 16 March 2021
ECONOMY REGENERATION & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH AN ACTIVE TRAVEL MEMBER WORKING GROUP	Thursday, 4 March 2021