

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Town Centres, Economic Growth & Prosperity
2.	Date:	6th February 2012
3.	Title:	Local Transport Capital Programme - Cycle Parking Grants
4.	Directorate:	Environment and Development Service

5. Summary

To seek approval to offer cycle parking grants from the Local Transport Capital Programme to support Bikeability cycle training and other sustainable transport projects in Rotherham schools and businesses.

6. Recommendations

That the Cabinet Member endorses the cycle parking grant offer for 2011/12 and 2012/13.

7. Proposals and Details

The Council's Corporate Plan has specific objectives aimed at promoting and delivering sustainable travel. In particular:

- More people are cycling, walking and using public transport
- Reduced CO2 emissions
- More people are physically active and have a healthier way of life

In 2011, these objectives were supported by three main funding streams including:

- DfT Bikeability Training Grants (£68K)
- Local Sustainable Transport Funding Key Component (£5M across South Yorkshire with around £130K allocated in Rotherham for 2011/12)
- The Local Transport Plan 2011-15 (£100K from the local allocation and £30 K from the Countywide Quality of Life central allocation).

Progress has been good with many new sustainable transport projects being delivered during the year. These include:

- Bikeability cycle training in schools (1500 pupils trained)
- Adult and family cycle training
- Try Cycling projects
- New cycling and walking infrastructure
- New paper and on-line mapping
- Walking schemes (Fitter for Walking project)

The development and implementation of the schemes listed above is beginning to show benefits. For example, cycling across Rotherham town centre traffic cordons has doubled over the last five years. Whilst cyclists appreciate the increased commitment to the development of cycling infrastructure (including public cycle parking) and promotion in the public realm, the development of quality trip end cycle parking provision in many schools and businesses is not keeping pace and requests for good quality secure cycle parking have become commonplace. The lack of parking is 'a weak link in the chain' and as a result, less trips by bicycle tend to be made to places where trip end parking is poor.

The Council has previously attempted to address this anomaly and it currently offers conditional cycle parking grants to businesses with Travel Plans but grants are capped at 50% of the capital value of an individual parking installation. (Council Minute 298 of the 21st May 2007 refers). Unfortunately, this level of grant is not attractive to businesses and take up has been low and in the current financial climate, it is very unlikely that take up of grants will improve. Moreover, the existing grants are not available to schools where we are attempting to grow cycling culture over the longer term through initiatives such as the Bikeability cycle training programme.

It is reasonable to say that our own Corporate appetite to promote sustainable transport is proving to be absolutely correct bearing in mind rapidly growing concerns about traffic, CO2 / global climate change, inactive lifestyles, rising fuel costs etc., but it may not yet top the agenda of other organisations in the public and private sector. Nevertheless, inaction will deliver nothing and some further incentive is therefore required to maximise the current investment in public cycling infrastructure and promotion.

It is proposed that, alongside our programme of LSTF and LTP sustainable transport projects, schools and businesses are offered 100% grants for cycle parking to encourage them to introduce secure, covered and convenient facilities for people using their premises. Recipients of grants will be asked to offer benefits in kind in lieu of a cash contribution. These benefits could include:

- Internal cycle promotion for staff or pupils
- Take up of Bikeability training sessions
- General sustainable travel support e.g. via an active travel plan
- Parking installation costs
- Parking maintenance costs

This suggested approach has received warm support from businesses and schools, many of whom genuinely want to become more sustainable but may not have the financial backing to do so. Most notably, Ventura (now re-named Capita) in the Dearne Valley have already worked and invested with the Council on several LSTF sustainable transport projects. They are keen to continue this work into 2012/13 and particularly want to encourage cycling growth via cycling promotions and new cycle parking installations. The partnership between Capita and the Council is being used as an exemplar and it has generated interest from a further six large businesses in the Dearne Valley.

8 local schools are keen to benefit from cycle parking grants and in return all will pledge to promote cycling amongst their pupils and staff.

8. Finance

As of end of January 2012, one business and three schools (Ventura/Capita in the Dearne Valley) have expressed a definite interest in grant funding and these projects could be funded in the current financial year (subject to planning permission being granted where necessary) resulting in a total proposed spend of around £30,000 from the 2011/12 LTP local allocation. Cabinet Member will be aware that a further £22.5K has been allocated towards a public realm and cycle parking project on Morpeth Street in partnership with the Rotherham College of Arts and Technology. This project does not form part of the proposed grant spending outlined in this report.

A further five schools and three businesses have also expressed interest in grant funding for cycle parking projects. It is proposed that they are implemented in the 2012/13 financial year and are funded from the 2013/13 LTP local allocation (£52K) and the 2012/13 LTP Quality of Life countywide allocation (£8K).

It should be noted that the terms of the £5M Local Sustainable Transport Fund require a degree of match funding from both the private and public sector for LSTF related activity. The provision of grants to businesses meets that requirement and will help draw down some £250K of LSTF funding that will be used in part to promote sustainable travel initiatives with grant recipients of grants.

Rotherham has recently bid for Bikeability cycle training funds via the DfT. As in previous years, the grant will be awarded based on performance but the DfT have added a further criteria based around adding financial value to maximise the benefits associated with Bikeability training. The use of grants to provide cycle parking at schools is an idea that has been informally welcomed by the DfT.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

The use of grant funding will minimise risks for the Council. Parking installations will be the sole responsibility of the site owners. Conditions will be imposed to ensure proper maintenance and use of the asset by businesses and schools who receive a grant. This will reduce future risks and uncertainties associated with the cost of up-keeping cycle parking installations at a time when maintenance budgets are declining.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The provision of cycle parking grants will contribute to the themes in the Corporate Plan, the third South Yorkshire Local Transport Plan and aims and objectives of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund:

- Helping to create safe and healthy communities
- Improving the environment
- Enhancing social inclusion and health
- Reducing emissions
- Maximising safety

11. Background Papers and Consultation

- The Third South Yorkshire Local Transport Plan 2011-25.
- RMBC Corporate Plan.
- A Sustainable Journey to Work in South Yorkshire – a Key Component bid for the Local Sustainable Transport Fund.

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