

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	Meeting:	Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Development
2.	Date:	25 April, 2013
3.	Title:	Cycle City Ambition Grant – Rotherham infrastructure proposals
4.	Programme Area:	Environment and Development Services

5. Summary

The report sets out Sheffield City Region's proposed bid to the Department for Transport's Cycle City Ambition Grant and seeks endorsement for the infrastructure improvements for which funding is to be sought. The focus of the bid is to improve cycle access towards urban centres/ interchanges and to improve routes for leisure cyclists, though pedestrians will also benefit from a number of the interventions proposed.

6. Recommendations

It is recommended that Cabinet Member:

- i) Endorses the Rotherham elements of the Cycle City Ambition Grant bid and that these should be included within the overall SCR bid to the DfT.
 - ii) Due to the bid submission deadline authorisation from the Mayor is sought for the decision to be exempt from the call-in procedure.
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7. Proposals and Details

Background

On 30 January 2013, Transport Minister, Norman Baker, announced £42 million of investment in cycling which comprises of two elements – an urban element and an element for rural areas covered by a national park.

The urban element of the funding announced is called the Cycle City Ambition Grant (CCAG) and provides £30m of funding for measures to increase levels cycling that also improve conditions for pedestrians. The CCAG is part of the Governments 'City Deals' proposals and only first wave city deal areas and any city applying to be a second wave city may apply. A maximum of 3 City Deal areas will be awarded funding, i.e. a maximum of £10m per area, with the total fund available in 2013/14 and 2014/15. It should also be noted that the grant is entirely capital funding and cannot support revenue activity.

The CCAG reinforces the Coalition Governments commitment to encourage cycling and walking and follows on from the cycle city demonstration towns funding and the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) grants. South Yorkshire's successful LSTF bid had a core focus on initiatives to encourage and improve conditions for walking and cycling into key economic areas.

Aims of the fund

The ambitions for cycling are continuing to move cycling to the mainstream offering it as a realistic choice for quick, reliable and convenient short journeys. At a time of levelling or even slowing real per capita incomes, rising real costs of motoring and public transport mean there are strong financial incentives to cycle.

Evidence shows that there are declining levels of physical activity together with a range of public health impacts, influenced in part by car dependency and sedentary lifestyles, support for mainstreaming walking and cycling is growing. The transfer of public health to local authorities in England from April 2013 provides a significant opportunity to improve integration of transport and health.

The Government sees more and safer cycling strategies as important tools for cities to unlock a range of cross cutting economic and social benefits that enable growth. These include:

- a. Unlocking capacity on road and public transport networks through large scale shifts to more active commuting patterns.
- b. Better linked communities enabling more choice for getting around within and between neighbourhoods.
- c. Higher productivity through improved fitness and consequently reduced absenteeism and better workforce performance
- d. Improved public realm capable of attracting high value business

- e. Direct savings to NHS through better health
- f. Better access to jobs for disadvantaged groups
- g. Revitalising streets through encouraging more spending on high value services and retail through improved access by foot or bike

The Grant is expected to support a range of different types of cycling measures that form part of a long term strategy to secure transformational change. Decisions on proposals will be taken on how far cities can further Government's aim to promote cycling.

The Department for Transport will assess bids in line with its Transport Business Case guidance consisting of the strategic, financial, economic, commercial and management cases. As a result submitted bids will need to be detailed and had a significant level of economic appraisal to satisfy the DfT's criteria.

The DfT are seeking local contributions towards the initiatives included within bids to the CCAG and outline that the higher the local contributions (local authority and/or 3rd party contributions), and the more the contribution comes from the private sector and other external organisations, the more positively the bid will be considered in the assessment process.

Sheffield City Region's CCAG bid

Sheffield City Region partners considered the objectives of the fund and the eligibility criteria and agreed to prepare a bid based on improving access for cyclists to urban areas/ interchanges and to improve routes for leisure cyclists.

The bid will be entitled South Yorkshire Cycle Loops and Links and will include schemes to improve infrastructure for cyclists across South Yorkshire to be delivered over the bid funding period to March 2015.

The bid will also include a 10 year strategy which will consist of longer term ambitions with a number of proposed routes which will build upon the existing strategic infrastructure which includes:

- The Trans Pennine Trail and National Cycle Network
- Current LSTF infrastructure programme
- Access to public transport

CCAG funding will be sought for three major schemes in South Yorkshire:

Doncaster propose to introduce a 6km cycle lane along Thorne Road towards Doncaster town centre and resurface 11.5km of the Trans Pennine Trail.

Sheffield and Barnsley plan to introduce a 18.91km new and improved route from Langsett through Stocksbridge and towards Sheffield City Centre.

Within Rotherham it is intended to introduce a series of improvements to overcome key barriers and improve access for cyclists and pedestrians to the town centre and interchanges from the western and north eastern side of Rotherham. This would form a continuous route from Masbrough to Dalton via the town centre.

This scheme will improve access to employment both locally and on a wider regional basis due to improved cycling links and enhanced pedestrian facilities to major interchanges in Rotherham town centre.

CCAG bid: Infrastructure improvements proposed within Rotherham

An outline plan of the proposed cycle route is attached as Appendix A. This highlights the proposed continuous route from Masbrough to Dalton via the town centre and each of the elements to be improved as part of the bid are described below:

A630 Toucan Crossing and shared use footway near College Road Roundabout.

A toucan crossing would be introduced over the A630 Centenary Way dual carriageway. This would replace a subway that is not to standard for cyclists and can be uncomfortable and intimidating to use. The toucan crossing would connect the residential area of Masbrough and an existing cycle route within this suburb to the town centre and interchanges. A new, widened shared use footway along College Road would provide direct access from the toucan crossing to Rotherham Train Station.

Bridge Street Cycle Improvements

Bridge Street connects Rotherham Train Station with Rotherham Bus Station. The current environment and access between the two interchanges for cyclists and pedestrians is poor due to the heavy traffic flow along Bridge Street and the lack of a direct/ convenient crossing on desire lines. It is proposed to reduce traffic flow along this road, to create a more comfortable and accessible environment for cyclists and pedestrians and to introduce a toucan crossing on the desire line. The carriageway will also be narrowed where possible. This would provide much improved access between these two major interchanges and provide improved access to Greasbrough Road.

Tescos Cycle Route

A key cycle route to Bridge Street and the town centre interchanges from eastern residential areas would also be introduced for cyclists and pedestrians. This will be developer funded from the new Tesco's supermarket development and will include improvements to the street environment at Nottingham Street. A new toucan crossing on the A6021 Drummond Street will improve access for cyclists across a major road to the pedestrianised area of the town centre. Pedestrian crossing facilities across A630 Centenary Way are also proposed as part of the development

Frederick Street Improvements

A cycle route through the pedestrianised area along Frederick Street would be introduced to link into the proposed improvements at Bridge Street and the Masbrough to Dalton cycle route. This would be as part of existing proposals to allow cycling within the town centre pedestrianised zone. Existing proposals to introduce a town centre 20mph zone will also improve the environment and access for cyclists to the scheme proposals in this bid. This would be funded through the LTP.

Resurfacing the Canal towpath between Northfield and Dalton/ East Herringthorpe

This section of the route consists of the resurfacing of the canal towpath from Northfield Road to Aldwarke Lane (2.6 km in length) with a 2.5m wide surface. The towpath is currently in a poor condition along the majority of the route with an

unmade surface that often becomes muddy. It is proposed to introduce a bound, all weather, waterproof surface constructed off tarmac or similar for use by commuter and leisure cyclists. This element of the scheme would create a direct, flat and off road route towards the town centre for residents in surrounding suburbs of Dalton/ East Herringthorpe. The route would also provide a direct link between the town centre and one of Rotherham largest employers TATA steel and to Parkgate Shopping.

Town Centre to Northfield Route Improvement

A cycle route between Northfield and the town centre is proposed to be provided using LSTF funding and includes a toucan crossing on the A630 Centenary Way and a shared use footway along Greasbrough Road to Bridge Street.

Timescale

The deadline for the submission of bids to the CCAG is 30 April 2013. Due to the deadline authorisation from the Mayor is sought for the decision to be exempt from the call-in procedure.

8. Finance

The total scheme cost is estimated to be £2,211,600

The DfT advise that bids should have match funding in the region of 30%. Bids with a higher level of match funding will be looked upon more favourably.

It is therefore proposed to include the cycling and walking improvements agreed as part of the Tesco's development section 278 works as a contribution towards this scheme as this will improve cycle and pedestrian access to the main route being promoted as outlined above. It is estimated that these section 278 works will provide a contribution towards this scheme of £500,000.

The LTP would contribute £110,000 towards this scheme which will consist of LTP projects which have already been approved for delivery during the 2013/14 financial year.

The Department for Transport expect to see a letter from the promoter's Section 151 Officer confirming that the authority has the available funds to meet the total local funding contribution.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

At the time of writing the status of the SCR bid for Cycle City Ambition Grant funding is not certain. Due to the short timescale to develop a bid and the significant detail that is required not all partners are at the same position regarding the development of their elements of the project that we are. As a result if this information is not completed in time the bid may not be in a position to be submitted.

Should a bid to CCAG be submitted its success is unlikely to be known until June 2013.

Responsibility for estimating and controlling all project costs lies entirely with the bidding authority or authorities. The Department's agreed contribution will be the maximum that the scheme will receive and the Department will not be able to provide any funding beyond 31 March 2015 nor will it entertain any contribution to cost increases that may arise. An initial quantified risk assessment (QRA) indicates that the level of risk would be in the region of £171,600. Effective project and programme management would seek to minimise risk but if realised it is proposed that any over-expenditure would be managed from the 14/15 LTP Integrated Transport programme. This may mean that the number of schemes to be delivered within 14/15 would be reduced but it is considered that the benefits in terms of the additional DfT funding and infrastructure the bid would bring outweigh this.

If successful all of the DfT awarded CCAG funding needs to be spent by March 2013. This may in the short term require additional resource to enable the design and/or construction of these improvements.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The proposed schemes meet the following policies of the SCR Transport Strategy 2011-26:

Policy H: To develop high-quality public places

Policy L: To reduce the amount of productive time lost on the strategic road network and improve its resilience and reliability

Policy N: To develop user-friendly public transport, covering all parts of SCR, with high quality of integration between different modes

Policy S: To encourage active travel and develop high quality cycling and walking networks

Policy V: To improve air quality, especially in designated AQMA areas

Policy W: To encourage safer road use and reduce casualties on our roads

Policy Y: To focus safety efforts on vulnerable groups

11. Background Papers and Consultation

All DfT documents available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycle-city-ambition-grants>

Contact Name:

Tom Finnegan-Smith, Transportation and Highways Projects Manager, Streetpride, extension 22967, tom.finnegan-smith@rotherham.gov.uk