

9 February 2021		ITEM: 5
Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Active Travel Tranche 2		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: N/A	
Report of: Mat Kiely – Strategic Lead, Transportation Services		
Accountable Assistant Director: Leigh Nicholson - Assistant Director, Planning, Transport and Public Protection		
Accountable Director: Andrew Millard – Director of Place		
This report is public		

Executive Summary

Active travel' means walking or cycling as an alternative to motorised transport for the purpose of making everyday journeys. Transport systems and the wider built environment play a crucial role by either promoting or hindering physical activity and the government has provided funding to enable Local Authorities to deliver walking and cycling improvements that will encourage and enable sustainable travel for shorter journeys.

The Secretary of State for Transport confirmed that Thurrock Council's final allocation for Tranche 2 of the national Active Travel Fund is £690,000.

The DfT letter sets out how local authorities are expected to utilise the Tranche 2 funding as a revenue and capital funding investment to support the Government's Active Travel agenda and aspiration to deliver walking and cycling improvements that will encourage and enable sustainable travel for shorter journeys.

This report sets out the Council's Tranche 2 proposals for schemes and measures that will be informed and guided by community input.

The DfT have made emphasis on the need to engage with users of the network and to undertake consultation on the Tranche 2 proposals. The Active Travel Stakeholder Engagement Strategy will be shared with key groups to ensure robust engagement and consultation which informs the development and delivery of walking and cycling schemes and initiatives that local people endorse.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 That the Committee note and endorse the approach to develop and implement a programme of Active Travel Tranche 2 schemes.**
- 1.2 That the Committee note and endorse the engagement and consultation process required to inform the Tranche 2 programme.**
- 1.3 That the Committee notes the requirement to delegate authority to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, to review and make local changes to the Active Travel Tranche 2 programme taking into account local views and priorities.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 In November 2020, the Council submitted a substantial list of potential Active Travel walking and cycling schemes which were to be delivered as part of the Tranche 2 grant sum. The proposed programme of measures will support the Government's aspirations for Active Travel to encourage and enable more sustainable travel by walking and cycling.
- 2.2 However, the list still extends beyond the funding provision, meaning that some proposals will not be delivered but there is a choice to be made and the final list will be determined via the engagement exercise to be undertaken.
- 2.3 Members are advised that the list of schemes was originally developed as a result of historic engagement with walking and cycling groups as well as input from local community forum groups and feedback from ward members and residents. The intention of the Tranche 2 submission was to focus on a range of measures that the Government's direction to increase walking and cycling and address known gaps and barriers within the existing network, deliver route enhancements and support, enable and encourage more walking and cycling for shorter journeys. The bid identifies specific scheme proposals and more generic improvements (such as cycle parking, signage and network monitoring).
- 2.4 Alongside physical infrastructure schemes, the Council will seek to utilise the revenue allocation from the Active Travel fund to support the ongoing delivery of the Tilbury Cycle Hub to act as a legacy element and a focal point to further support and enable walking and cycling within the Borough. The cycle hub has been a great success and an exemplar of the DfT Access Fund and the Council is committed to support and grow the Tilbury Cycle Hub provision.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 The Council's Active Travel funding allocation will be used to plan and deliver a range of walking and cycling improvements across the network that will support increased walking and cycling for shorter journeys.

- 3.2 These improvements will include the implementation of physical infrastructure, development of feasibility studies to inform what can be delivered in specific locations and the provision for additional measures and resource that support increased walking and cycling.
- 3.3 In contrast to the Tranche 1 requirements for the Emergency Active Travel Fund, Tranche 2 allocations are to be used to plan and deliver permanent schemes and measures.
- 3.4 The DfT have requested that the Council commits to developing, prioritising and delivering proposals from the list of schemes and initiatives that were put forward for Active Travel Tranche 2. The proposed schemes and indicative costs are set out below.

Scheme List

Tilbury Cycle Hub	Revenue funding to further enable the delivery of the Cycle Hub project in Tilbury, initially delivered as part of the DfT Access fund. This will act as a central point for enabling access to low cost bicycles and information about active and sustainable travel and working with the community to enable people back into work with low cost transport. This is to be funded using the revenue allocation through to March 2022. (c£100k)
Orsett Cock A128 Signalised Crossing	A new toucan signalised crossing across the A128 at the Orsett Cock junction to enable safe crossing across the road. This will help towards the completion of a segregated cycle route from Grays to Stanford le Hope. (c£250k)
London Road, Stanford le Hope	A new permeant shared path along London Road between A1013 Rookery Corner and Stanford le Hope Railway Station, which will link with works undertaken as part of Tranche 1 in this area, with the potential upgrade of a zebra crossing to a Tiger Crossing. (c£150k)
Purfleet Road, Aveley	New shared use path along Purfleet Road, linking A1306 through to Aveley Community Hub in the village centre. (c£300k)
Branksome Avenue, Stanford le Hope	Measures along the length of Branksome Avenue to create a new on-carriageway cycle route with supportive speed reduction and carriageway relining to create a safer environment, with potential opportunity for a quiet street. (c£250k)

Corringham Road, Stanford le Hope	A new cycle route linking Stanford le Hope town centre through to the Sorrells Roundabout via Billet Lane. This will be a mixture of both on- and off-carriageway infrastructure for cyclists, enhancing cycling access to London Gateway Port. (c£200k)
Cycle Parking and Signage	Enhancements of cycle parking and signage for cyclists and pedestrians across the borough to further enable the uptake of walking and cycling as a mode of transport through the borough. (c£150k)
Monitoring	Investment in monitoring equipment to measure utilisation of new infrastructure by pedestrians and cyclists, and potential impacts on other modes of transport. (c£50k)

Funding

- 3.5 The DfT award letter sets out the capital and revenue allocations that are to be applied in support of the Tranche 2 proposals. The allocations are set out below.

Capital Allocation	£552,000
Revenue Allocation	£138,000
Total	£690,000

- 3.6 These allocations will be used to fund the physical delivery of schemes, the resource support required for the Tilbury Cycle Hub and to enable officers to undertake feasibility and design to inform and develop Tranche 2 schemes.

Engagement

- 3.7 The DfT have stipulated that robust engagement is to be undertaken to inform the roll-out of Tranche 2 and a Stakeholder Engagement Strategy has been developed, setting out how the Council will ensure robust consultation/engagement to support the delivery of the Tranche 2 schemes.
- 3.8 The strategy has identified which key stakeholders the Council will engage with specifically for each scheme. Officers intend to utilise traditional methods of outreach, including letters and flyers to communities and stakeholder in areas which will benefit from these schemes, as well as making use of the Councils Online Engagement Portal. The feedback received through this process will identify support for schemes and will be used to inform which proposals are brought forward for implementation.

- 3.9 On the 11th December 2020, the Council submitted its acceptance letter to the DfT, outlining proposals for consultation and engagement (the DfT response and confirmation of the Tranche 2 allocation has not been received at the time of writing this report). A copy of the letter and outline information on the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy can be found in Appendix A. It should be noted that consultation is not required for the revenue funding element of the Tranche 2 award, and will therefore be focussed on the capital funding proposals.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 This Committee are asked to note and endorse the recommendations in this report, enabling the Active Travel Tranche 2 funding to be applied to the scheme proposals that have been identified.
- 4.2 Following noting and endorsement by this Committee and approval by Cabinet, the Active Travel programme can be developed for implementation over the coming months.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 5.1 The Council will seek to undertake consultation with stakeholders commencing January 2021 through until early February 2021.
- 5.2 The engagement approach will aim to ensure that all groups have an opportunity to feed into the Tranche 2 proposals. It is noted that given safety requirements in relation to the current pandemic it may not be possible to conduct all of these exercises e.g. displays in libraries and community hubs. As such there will be a much heavier reliance on digital methods for engagement.
- 5.3 Further detail relating to the Stakeholder Engagement Strategy is provided in Appendix A.

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

- 6.1 The Active Travel Tranche 2 proposals will help improve and enhance the walking and cycling network across the Borough making it safer, less congested and more accessible, thereby promoting and supporting People, Place and Prosperity within Thurrock.
- 6.2 The need to encourage and enable increased walking and cycling is of vital importance to the Council's emerging Local Plan. Sustainable travel options will support our communities as the Council develops plans for growth in housing and jobs.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Laura Last - Senior Management Accountant**
Mark Terry – Senior Financial Accountant

The Council's Active Travel funding will be paid as capital and revenue grant under Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003. The grant is awarded on the understanding that the authority will deliver the objectives as set out in the original bid.

The full and final allocations are attached at Annex A2 and Annex B2 of the DfT grant award letter (see Appendix A).

The grant is awarded on the understanding that the authority will deliver the objectives as set out in the original bid. DfT have stated that they appreciate that, during implementation, opportunities or challenges may arise that require a change to the project in order for outcomes to be realised to their full potential. Any material changes should be reported to the Department.

Should the Council's ability to deliver the objectives for which funding was awarded be significantly compromised, the Department reserves the right to amend future funding provision as appropriate.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Tim Hallam**
Deputy Head of Legal and Deputy Monitoring Officer

Legal implications are contained within the body of the report.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**
Community Engagement and Project Monitoring Officer

The engagement and consultation requirements, identified within this report, will aim to ensure that all groups have an opportunity to feed into the Tranche 2 proposals. It is noted that given safety requirements in relation to the current pandemic it may not be possible to conduct all of these exercises e.g. displays in libraries and community hubs. As such there will be a much heavier reliance on digital methods for engagement. All consultation exercises will follow best practice and the councils own internal 'digital best practice guidance'. However, it is acknowledged that certain groups, people

without internet access or those with a protected characteristic (as defined by the Equalities Act 2010) e.g. age or disability, may be negatively impacted by their ability to access the consultation information and feedback their views. A CEQA will be undertaken if required.

7.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

8. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- DfT EAT T2 funding award letter

9. **Appendices to the report**

- Appendix A – Stakeholder Engagement Strategy letter

Report Author:

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