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HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT

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REFERENCE: HSB-007-14

LOCAL SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT FUND – 2015/16 BID APPLICATION

Purpose of Report

1. To seek approval for the submission of a bid to the Department for Transport's (DfT's) Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) for 2015/16.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

2. The proposed LSTF project will help achieve the Business Plan goal of working with our partners to support Wiltshire's communities. It will also contribute to the achievement of the long-term vision outlined in the Wiltshire Community Plan (2011-2026); that is: creating an economy that is fit for the future, reducing disadvantage and inequalities, and tackling the causes and effects of climate change.

Background

3. In January 2011, the Government issued a new White Paper on transport entitled 'Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon – Making Sustainable Local Transport Happen'. As part of this White Paper, the Government announced the LSTF.
4. The Council subsequently submitted its sole LSTF bid 'Improving Wiltshire's Rail Offer' in February 2012 (see <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/lstf-application-form.pdf>). Following the DfT's funding award of £4.25 million in June 2012, Cabinet approved the commencement and delivery of the complementary elements of the LSTF project at its meeting on 10 September 2012 (see <http://cms.wiltshire.gov.uk/ielIssueDetails.aspx?IId=30674&Opt=3>). Approval of the procurement of the improved Trans Wilts train service was then given by Cabinet at its meeting on 22 October 2013 (see - <http://cms.wiltshire.gov.uk/ielIssueDetails.aspx?IId=39018&Opt=3>).
5. A number of measures and initiatives have been progressed as part of the 'Improving Wiltshire's Rail Offer' LSTF project including the following:
 - commencement of the improved Trans Wilts train service between Westbury and Swindon on 8 December 2013;
 - providing residents and visitors to Wiltshire with better travel information through the Connecting Wiltshire website (<http://www.connectingwiltshire.co.uk/>); and
 - local station improvements, new/improved walking and cycling routes, better on-the-ground travel information (e.g. signage and real time information) and business, residential and school travel planning initiatives to encourage a greater take up of sustainable transport modes.
6. The Council has also participated in two joint LSTF projects: 'ITSO Smart Ticketing throughout all South West England' and 'Sustainable Transport Solutions for England's two newest National Parks'.

7. On 23 December 2013, the DfT announced the LSTF 2015/16 funding opportunity. Through this LSTF the Government wants to:

“...support initiatives that will take forward sustainable travel proposals that help to reduce carbon emissions whilst aligning with the Local Growth Fund (LGF) commitments of delivering economic growth. We also want to encourage better integration of sustainable transport and cycling and walking, giving people the choice to make healthier and greener transport options”.

8. Other key points of the DfT’s guidance include the following:

- £100 million of capital funding for sustainable travel initiatives has been included in the LGF. To support this, the DfT has £78.5 million in revenue funding available for sustainable travel projects in 2015/16.
- Clear expectation that LSTF revenue bids will align with capital investment outlined in the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) promoted by the relevant Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).
- As there may be further rounds of revenue funding for sustainable travel, bidders should demonstrate their ambition and how they propose to carry on initiatives following the grant period in order to promote sustainable behaviour change.
- Proposals should seek to demonstrate how they are the start of a scaleable approach that could be delivered over a number of years.
- Bids with a strong focus on walking and cycling will be viewed favourably.
- The DfT attaches importance to a wide spectrum of community participation.
- Local transport authorities are able to submit one sole bid, lead on one joint bid and partner a number of joint bids.
- Bids of up to a maximum of £1 million will be accepted. A minimum local contribution of 10% contribution for revenue only projects and 30% for capital and revenue projects will be mandatory on each bid. The greater the overall local and third party contribution the more positively the bid will be considered.
- A letter from the local authority’s Section 151 Officer should be included in the bid confirming that any cost increases or cost over-runs would be met by the authority.
- The DfT will assess bids in line with its Transport Business Case guidance consisting of the strategic, financial, economic, commercial and management cases.
- Bid applications (limited to 20 pages excluding letters of support) have to be made by 31 March 2013. The announcement of successful applications will be aligned to the decisions on the LGF in July 2014.

Main Considerations for the Council

9. In developing the bid proposal, consultation was undertaken with the Wiltshire Station Travel Plans Steering Group and a number of stakeholders as part of the LSTF Stakeholder Forum held on 13 March 2014. At the time of writing, the bid application is still being fully developed.
10. The proposed bid will seek to build upon the success of the current LSTF project under the theme ‘Connecting Wiltshire: travel made simple’. The focus will therefore remain on further enhancing integrated and sustainable travel opportunities in Wiltshire, including by rail.
11. Alongside the revenue bid which is the subject of this report, an associated package of capital improvements is to be included within the SEP which is to be submitted to the Government by the Swindon and Wiltshire LEP by 31 March 2014. The overall project in outline will include the following measures:

Connected infrastructure

- Further implementation of town walking and cycling routes to/from the rail stations and other key interchange points (based on Sustrans comprehensive 'Cycle and Pedestrian Access Study', June 2013).
- Implementation of co-ordinated town walking and cycling signage (based on comprehensive wayfinding strategies developed during the current LSTF project).
- Further implementation of station improvements in collaboration with First Great Western, South West Trains and Network Rail as part of the Wiltshire Station Travel Plan Steering Group.
- Further implementation of electric vehicle charging points at key hubs.

Accessible information

- Further development and promotion of 'Connecting Wiltshire', Wiltshire's one-stop travel web resource (see <http://www.connectingwiltshire.co.uk/#>).
- Delivery of further real time bus-rail information infrastructure.

Integrated travel support and promotion

- Business travel planning (including development of Area Travel Plans at key employment centres).
- Personalised travel planning (PTP) initiatives, building on the market segmentation and PTP work undertaken as part of the current LSTF project.
- Marketing and promotion of sustainable travel, including support for Wiltshire rail services, particularly the Trans Wilts train service.

Integrated ticketing

- Combined ticketing initiatives to provide simpler ticketing options, particularly for multi-stage / multi-modal journeys.

12. As per the DfT's guidance requirement, the way in which the proposed LSTF project supports the Swindon and Wiltshire SEP can be summarised as follows:

- Promoting improved connectivity between core functional economic areas and access to jobs and skills across Wiltshire directly links to the strategic priority of improving connectivity and journey time reliability to local, regional and national markets.
- Promoting integrated journeys (including via the Trans Wilts train service) is key to the success of the A350 corridor as improving connectivity and accessibility enables the interlinked nature of the towns along it (Chippenham, Melksham, Trowbridge, Westbury and Warminster) to be enhanced, so improving the effective density of agglomeration economies.
- Encouraging sustainable travel to and between these towns promotes modal shift thus contributing to maintaining journey time reliability on the A350 corridor which is vital in supporting planned growth in housing and jobs.
- Business travel planning (including Area Travel Plans) promotes stronger links between firms and also improves business productivity / efficiency and economic competitiveness.
- Improving access to education and training will support the attainment of key skills necessary to enable growth in key sectors.

13. In addition, it will be demonstrated in the SEP that the planned sustainable transport packages in Chippenham, Salisbury and Trowbridge will provide one of the means to sustain the measures in the current and proposed LSTF projects beyond March 2016.

14. Notification of the outcome of the bid is expected to be received in July 2014. If the bid is successful, another report will be submitted to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Highways, Streetscene and Broadband seeking formal approval to proceed with the project.

Safeguarding Considerations

15. There are no safeguarding implications as a direct result of this proposal.

Public Health Implications

16. The LSTF project will increase the opportunity for people to travel by more sustainable and healthy modes, such as walking and cycling.

Environmental Impact of the Proposal

17. The bid application will detail the broad environmental impact of the project. If the bid is successful, it will provide additional funding to be invested in sustainable transport options which should help reduce carbon and air pollution emissions.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

18. The bid application will detail the broad equalities impact of the project. If the bid is successful, it will provide additional funding to be invested in sustainable transport options which should increase the opportunity for those people without access to a car to travel to jobs and key services and facilities.

Risk Assessment

19. A summary of key delivery risks and planned measures for managing those risks is required to be included within the bid application.

Financial Implications

20. The proposed funding profile to be submitted as part of the bid application is as follows:

£000s	2015 - 16	2016 - 17	2017 - 18	2018 - 19	2019 - 20	2020 - 21	Total
DfT funding sought (resource only)	760	-	-	-	-	-	760
Local Authority contribution	190	100	100	100	100	100	690
Third Party contribution including LGF	1885	750	750	750	750	750	5635
TOTAL	2835	850	850	850	850	850	7085

21. Approval of the bid by Government in July 2014 would secure up to £0.760 million of extra grant funding for investment in sustainable transport over the period to March 2016. This funding would be paid as resource grant, one quarter in arrears on the basis of the expenditure profile set out in the bid application. There is no opportunity to carry forward any unspent funds into subsequent financial years.
22. A £4.535 million capital element of the project would come via the LGF to be announced by the Government in July 2014. It is envisaged that other LGF funding to support sustainable transport measures (including further LSTF project related measures) beyond 2015/16 would come via the Chippenham, Salisbury and Trowbridge transport packages that also form part of the Swindon and Wiltshire SEP.

23. It is anticipated that the remaining part of third party contribution (£1.100 million) will be made up of developer contributions (£0.600 million) towards sustainable transport measures (secured through Section 106 legal agreements and the proposed Community Infrastructure Levy) and monetary and in-kind contributions from local stakeholders and partners (£0.500 million) in 2015/16.
24. The developer contributions have yet to be formally identified and agreed at the point of writing this report, although officers are confident that the £0.600 million will be able to be secured for the period 2015/16 to 2020/21. There is also the possibility of further contributions being obtained from local stakeholders and partners, particularly through the work of the Wiltshire Station Travel Plans Steering Group.
25. It is proposed that the Council's contribution will be made up of £0.350 million of Local Transport Plan (LTP) capital funds and £0.340 million of revenue funding.
26. The £0.350 million requirement on the LTP capital budget will be built into the LTP Programme and will form part of LTP Programme Annual Cabinet Member Reports.
27. The £0.340 million revenue funding will be made up of 'in kind' contributions of officers' time (£0.325 million) and the cost of the Atkins commission to produce the bid proposal which the DfT allows to be included as a local contribution in 2015/16 (£0.015 million). The salary budgets for these officers will be built into the 2015/16 to 2020/21 budgets and so this element will not be an additional cost requirement on budgets. It will be the diversion of officer's time from their day-to-day tasks onto the LSTF project and related tasks.
28. There are major risks associated with elements of the third party contributions within the bid; namely the securing of the funding from the LGF (£4.535 million) / local stakeholders (£0.500 million) and the identification of available developer contributions up to the required amounts (£0.600 million). At this point there are no certainties around the third party contributions but in developing the bid officers are of the view these will be successfully secured. Should the third party contributions not be secured (or not secured to the required levels) the bid will be reassessed and changes to original plans will be reported back as necessary.

Legal Implications

29. There are no legal implications as a direct result of this proposal. If the bid is successful, a further report, to include any legal implications, will be submitted to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Highways, Streetscene and Broadband seeking formal approval to proceed with the project.

Options Considered

30. Only one sole bid option (i.e. to effectively extend the Council's current LSTF project) has been considered as this would:
 - More readily enable the Council to submit a good quality bid within the tight submission timescale.
 - Allow the Council and its partners to support the current LSTF project beyond March 2015 – this particularly relates to revenue funding for complementary measures (e.g. marketing) in support of the Trans Wilts service which is scheduled to run to at least until December 2016.
 - In association with the SEP, enable the Council and its partners to deliver more of the large number of capital schemes that have been identified through the current LSTF project.

Failure to submit a bid application by 31 March 2014 would not enable the Council and relevant local communities to benefit from potential Government funding.

Reason for Proposals

31. To gain approval for the submission of a bid to the Department for Transport's Local Sustainable Transport Fund for 2015/16 by the deadline of 31 March 2014.

Proposals

32. That the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Highways, Streetscene and Broadband:
 - (i) Approves the submission of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund 2015/16 bid to the Department for Transport prior to the deadline of 31 March 2014, and delegates completion of the application form to the Associate Director for Highways and Transport.
 - (ii) Notes that if the bid is successful, a further report will be submitted to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Highways, Streetscene and Broadband seeking formal approval to proceed with the project.
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The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this Report:

Draft Local Sustainable Transport Fund 15/16 Revenue Application Form